6100

APOCTHULHU

ROLEPLAYING GAME

ENGELHARDT, KREIL, ROSS, MOELLER AND FRIENDS

CORE RULEBOOK

CREDITS

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STANDING AGAINST THE END:
JO'S FOREWORD

My first exposure to the genre of Post-Apocalyptic fiction was sometime early in my life. Growing up, my favorite things to read were comic books and Greek mythology. Both have remained passions of mine to this day. It was from this love of both that I eventually was led to other mythologies. In particular, Norse mythology.

One thing that stuck with me after reading Norse mythology was the fact that the Norse gods knew the end was coming. Maybe not the exact day but it was sometime soon and they had to be ready for it. Despite this, and knowing that they would likely lose, they did everything in their power to either win or at least swing the odds enough in their favor that they could minimize the amount of damage that would happen during Ragnarok.

Anyone who has read of Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, knows that they lose. Badly. The Norse gods lose so bad that not only do they all die but the entire world is burned to a cinder from Surtr's, the King of the Fire Giant, flaming sword. Norse mythology has a bleak ending where the heroes and gods fail. They fail to stop the end of the world, an apocalyptic event that was always destined to be. However, because of their efforts, two people do survive. Humanity and the world burn but from this ash a new man and woman emerge with the intent of rebuilding a world turned to ash. This rather depressing story ends with a glimmer of hope, a hope that society and civilization can be rebuilt.

This story has stuck with me for a long time because it is one that shapes how I run, and play, a Lovecraftian investigative horror game. Regardless of system. The heroes of these stories, or role-playing games, know that the time of the Stars Coming Right is inevitable. Eventually Cthulhu must wake up and eventually humanity will be destroyed. However, despite this an investigator who knows their worth is not afraid to do everything in their power to forestall this apocalypse. Whether that be by a day, an hour or years. Despite knowing that the end can not be stopped, an investigator will fight for the mere chance of a better tomorrow. This is what, to me, makes Cthulhu gaming so great. A chance for heroics, to make the world a better place and to stand against the inevitable tide of Apocalyptic madness in the hopes that they can buy just a fraction of time. If only two lives can be saved, then their sacrifice was worth it.

APOCTHULHU is a setting in which you can play out such Apocalyptic tales, to see if your survivors have what it takes to forestall the end and give humanity a fighting chance.

Good luck.

Jo Kreil
April 24th, 2020

Clear Credit — Writing

The rules component of this book (pages 1–3 and 14–93) is adapted from previous material written for D100 games identified in the OGL copyright statement on page 323. The rules adaptation was undertaken by Dean Engelhardt, who also wrote the majority of the new material in these sections with input from all other named "original content" writers opposite. Exceptions: boxes on pages 1 and 2 which were written by Michelle Bernay-Rodgers, and new content for the Sanity chapter which was written by Paul Franzese. The sourcebook component of the book (pages 94–123) is newly-written material by Dean Engelhardt, except for: material about equipment (sourced from prior OGL publications), the boxes on page 111 and 102 (written by Michelle Bernay-Rodgers), and many of the guidelines for studying arcane tomes (also by Michelle Bernay-Rodgers). The Sample Apocalypses component of the book (pages 124–153) was written by Dean Engelhardt & Chad Bowser; the concept for Apocalypse #4 is by Jeff Moeller, concept for Apocalypse #5 is by Dave Sokolowski, and concept for Apocalypse #6 is by Christopher Smith Adair. The Night Land Sourcebook chapter is by Kevin Ross, inspired by ideas in the writing of William Hope Hodgson. The scenario "Kick the Can" is written by Jeff Moeller. The scenario "A Yellow and Unpleasant Land" is written by Jo Kreil with boxed additions and vignettes by Dean Engelhardt. Appendix material was contributed by all writers named on the facing page.

ARMAGEDDON DAYS ARE HERE (AGAIN): *DEAN'S FOREWORD*

The human psyche is a strange and irrational phenomenon. Nowhere is this more evident than in our fascination with the very things we fear the most. Horror, at its heart, is a predilection for taking our worst fears — things that by all logic we should NEVER think about — and giving them the power to scare us. Just a little bit. For a while. Because a tiny taste of fictional nightmares provides a glimpse into the forbidden that is as refreshing as it is titillating.

Dystopian and Post-Apocalyptic fiction taps into this same vein. The more our real-life reality is well-ordered and safe, the more we wonder what things would be like if the familiar world were altered ... and made unsafe and disordered. Why would we inflict upon ourselves such flashes of terrifying potential futures? Is it way of reinforcing that which we find safe about our real lives? Or is it a way of highlighting how the indomitable human spirit might survive, against any adversity? Or do we shock our minds with bleak future visions just for the sheer thrill of it? Doubtless there's no one answer to the question ... but one thing is certain, many of us get pleasure or validation from Post-Apocalyptic novels, comics, and movies. It's a genre whose popularity never, ever, goes away entirely.

In this book, we have tried to give you a toolkit for building a wide variety of Post-Apocalyptic roleplaying thrills and terrors to delight you and your friends. The only thing we've baked into the game is the core assumption that "the Apocalypse" is somehow tied to the ideas of cosmic horror pioneered by H.P. Lovecraft. Why? The philosophy of Lovecraft's fiction is infused with the idea that the human race's time as supreme rulers of the planet is inherently finite. Somehow, perhaps through hubris and short-sightedness, or perhaps through vast and uncontrollable cosmic cycles, humanity will be defeated, enslaved, or somehow replaced in the top spot. Despite these ideas having flowed from Lovecraft's pen almost a century ago, they still resonate. In fact, some might say that they are more relevant to this generation than they were to Lovecraft. And they are a fertile springboard for imagining a Post-Apocalyptic future.

We hope that the ***APOCTHULHU*** rules, and their flexibility in covering a diverse range of Post-Apocalypses, encourages you to explore your own visions of broken future worlds. Use them to create tales highlighting mankind's resilience, or stories of humanity on the brink of its final dissolution. Or simply build a tale of average people scavenging a bleak existence in a hostile world. They are all great stories, and all can be fueled with these rules. Between you and your friends, you can ruin the world ... in *YOUR* style.

Dean Engelhardt,
27 April 2020.

PS: we started work on ***APOCTHULHU*** in late 2017 — and wrote pretty much the entire book you hold in your hands well before the alarming real-world events surrounding COVID-19. We hope that nothing in our imaginary visions of the end of the world proves tasteless or inappropriate when viewed in the context of our current world. We've tried our best to be sensitive to these issues, but if we've missed something, please accept our apologies for any offense inadvertently caused.

Clear Credit — Illustration

The cover art for this book, as well as all colour illustrations throughout was sourced from a combination of commercially-licensed stock images, free stock images, and images for which copyright has expired. In some cases multiple sources were composited to form a final image. Original monochrome interior illustrations were by Reuben Dodd of Sorrowking Studios (pages 203, 215, 218, 229, 258, 265, 277, 280) and Anna Helena Szymborska (pages 22, 67, 109, 123, 163, 172, 189). All handout art and cartography was by Dean Engelhardt, who also performed art direction and page design for the book.

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INTRODUCTION

APOCTHULHU is a tabletop game which allows you to play out a broad range of gritty adventures in Post-Apocalyptic versions of our world, as afflicted by the ravages of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos.

There are countless warnings in the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft and other writers about the return of the "Great Old Ones" and their inevitable re-domination of our world. There is also a long history of roleplaying games which put players in the roles of characters faced with the momentous task of halting the insidious plans of otherworldly or extra-dimensional horrors. In those games, it is assumed that the players succeed in halting the 'end of the world'. ***APOCTHULHU*** is a game which explores what happens when those same plucky scholars and adventurers fail, and the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos alter the world forever.

APOCTHULHU doesn't aim to present a single vision of what the Mythos apocalypse and the resulting world look like. Rather it aims to give a group of players the tools to collectively create their own version of the 'end of the world' — whether that be a zombie-haunted wasteland, or a pitch-black world where sentient shadows hunt the few surviving members of humanity. The rules provided here give you the framework to explore any such dark future you and your friends can imagine.

The only assumptions made by the ***APOCTHULHU*** rules are that:

- The Apocalypse happens (or happened) at a time in earth's history when mankind has some level of technology. That could be today, or in the near-future, or it could be the 1890s.
- Whatever caused the 'end of the world' shattered most of the normal infrastructure of human society, leaving survivors that must scavenge and hide to eke out a basic existence devoid of major technological assistance. You will take on the roles of those survivors.

What is a Tabletop Roleplaying Game?

Virtually every core rulebook for a roleplaying game includes a short section which tries to explain what, in fact, the hobby of tabletop roleplaying is all about. While it is certainly possible that this book represents your first introduction to the wonderful world of roleplaying, it's also true that there is a mountain of excellent material out there on the Internet which explains the principles a lot better than we could here. So, if the whole tabletop roleplaying game format is new to you, we'd suggest perhaps checking out some of these websites:

- *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabletop_role-playing_game*
- *http://wheelhouseworkshop.com/2016/04/27/what-exactly-is-a-tabletop-role-playing-game-anyway/*
- *http://unpossiblejourneys.com/*
- *https://wiki.roll20.net/Introduction_To_Tabletop_RPGs*

An even better way to get the hang of what tabletop roleplaying is all about is to see it in action. A few targeted searches on YouTube will discover a wealth of videos uploaded by gaming groups who have shared recordings (either audio or video) of their gaming sessions. A couple of good search phrases are:

- *"actual play cthulhu"*
- *"lovecraft tapes"*

Recordings of Lovecraftian game sessions are also available as podcasts; an excellent site to explore is Skype of Cthulhu (www.cthulhu.me) which has over 600 recordings available for free download.

Finally, the absolute *best way of learning what tabletop roleplaying is about is by playing in a game yourself. If you have friends who are gamers, or if you are a member of a game club which sometimes plays roleplaying games, asking to get included in a game — whatever genre or rule system — will very quickly give you an appreciation of what the hobby is all about.*

Who was H.P. Lovecraft, and what is the Cthulhu Mythos?

APOCTHULHU *is designed to allow you to create Post-Apocalyptic tales inspired by the writings of H.P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft was a horror author who lived in the early part of the 20th Century. Although somewhat obscure during his lifetime (and for many decades afterward), since the 1980s Lovecraft's unique style of horror fiction has become remarkably popular and influential. His influence upon modern horror fiction in general, and the horror sub-genre for tabletop RPGs in particular, cannot be over-stated.*

Lovecraft and his small circle of 1920s and 1930s weird fiction writers sought to create an entirely new set of horrific "creatures," entirely divorced from the traditional terrors of real-world folklore (like vampires and werewolves). They did this because, even in their time, they believed that traditional horrors had become hackneyed and ho-hum. The collection of new monstrosities they invented during the massive game of "collective mythology invention" came eventually to be called the Cthulhu Mythos.

Since becoming a hugely influential figure, a massive amount has been written about H.P. Lovecraft and his creations. Rather than even attempt to summarize his life and art here, the reader is directed to the following sources:

- *https://www.hippocampuspress.com/h.p-lovecraft/about-hp-lovecraft/the-rise-fall-and-rise-of-the-cthulhu-mythos*
- *https://www.biography.com/writer/hp-lovecraft*
- *https://arkhambazaar.com/who-is-h-p-lovecraft/*

All of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction has fallen into the public domain – it is easy to find copies of his fine tales available for free online, e.g.:

- *http://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/fiction/*

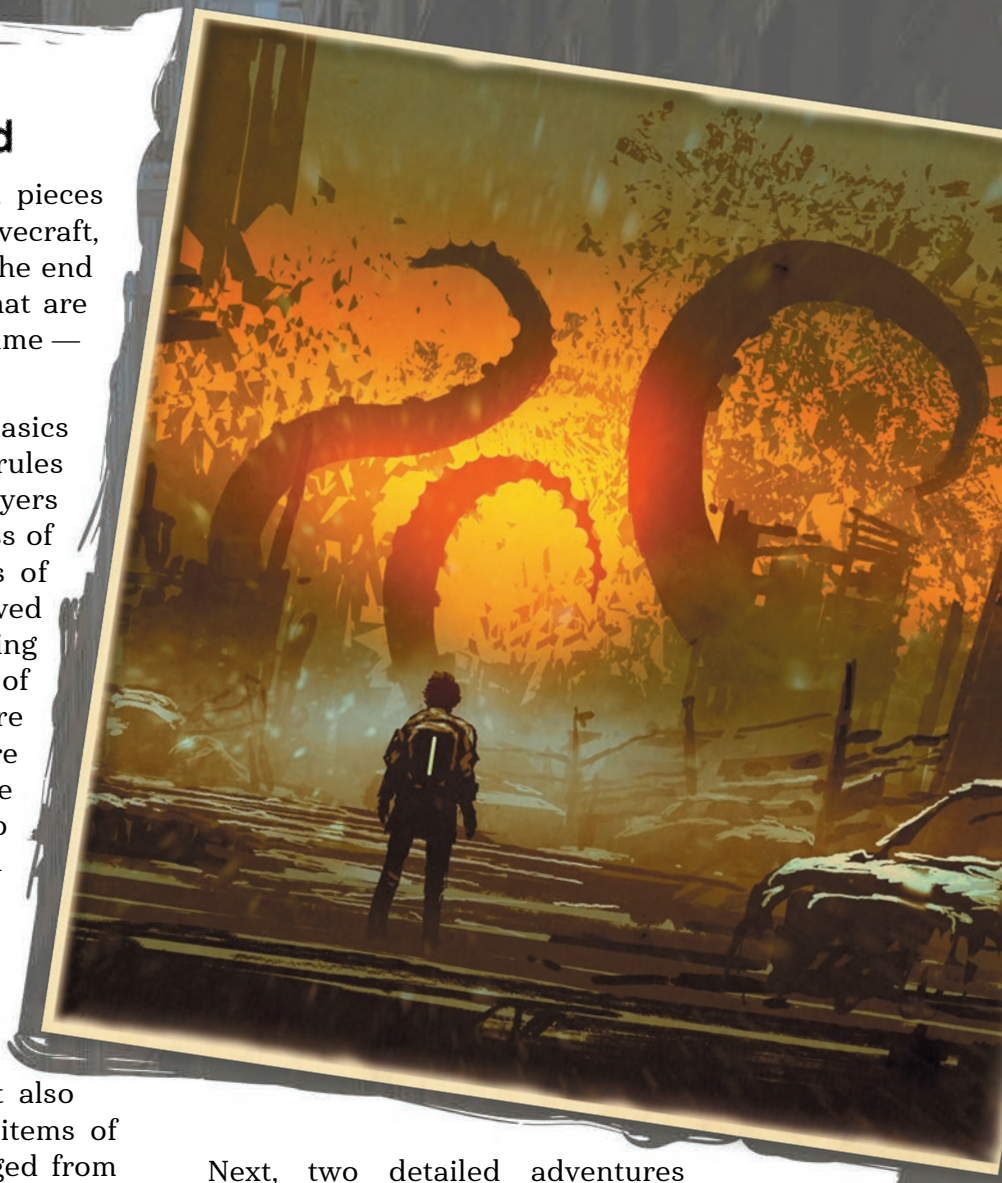
For the purposes of ***APOCTHULHU,*** *there are three important aspects of H.P. Lovecraft's fiction and world-view that shape the types of stories which feature in the game:*

1. ***Nihilistic Cosmic Horror:*** *Lovecraft liked to highlight exactly how insignificant humanity is in the bigger cosmos. While we think of ourselves as undisputed rulers over our entire planet, this is more hubris than reality. There are whole vistas beyond our normal sphere of perception where lurk vastly more powerful entities, few of whom have any reason to take notice of us (any more than a person would think about the feelings of an ant). Humanity might be in charge for now, but if any of those other forces decided to usurp us, they could do so in a heartbeat.*
2. ***Humanity's Time is Over:*** *In many of Lovecraft's short stories the (somewhat disturbing) revelation is made that other intelligent creatures dominated Earth before humanity arose, and other non-human beings are destined ultimately to take — or retake — humanity's top place. . It is only our narrow view of the universe that permits us to arrogantly consider our control of the planet as anything other than a temporary and fragile thing. In* ***APOCTHULHU****, mankind's fall has finally come to pass highlighting how misguided that previous worldview truly was.*
3. ***Humble, Everyday Protagonists:*** *The main characters in Lovecraft's fictions aren't super-human heroic types, but average people. Physical strength or firepower doesn't help much when one is facing unstoppable forces from places beyond our understanding, so the only effective defense comes from unearthing enough about the true nature of what is occurring to be able to somehow misdirect or deflect it. Of course, understanding the truth of reality is dangerous, too, so the protagonists in Lovecraft's tales often pay a hefty price — sometimes with their very sanity!*

How This Book is Organized

The next few pages include short pieces of fiction written or co-written by Lovecraft, describing his unique perspective on the end of the world. Immediately following that are the core rules for the ***APOCTHULHU*** game — divided into two parts.

The main rules section sets out the basics of how to play the game, describing the rules for creating fictional characters for players to roleplay, rules governing the success of character actions, and the outcomes of any combat they may become involved in. This section also has rules for dealing with the psychological challenges of living in a Post-Apocalypse world, where some of the most pernicious threats are those against continued sanity. All the material in the first part is intended to be read by everyone who plays in an ***APOCTHULHU*** game.

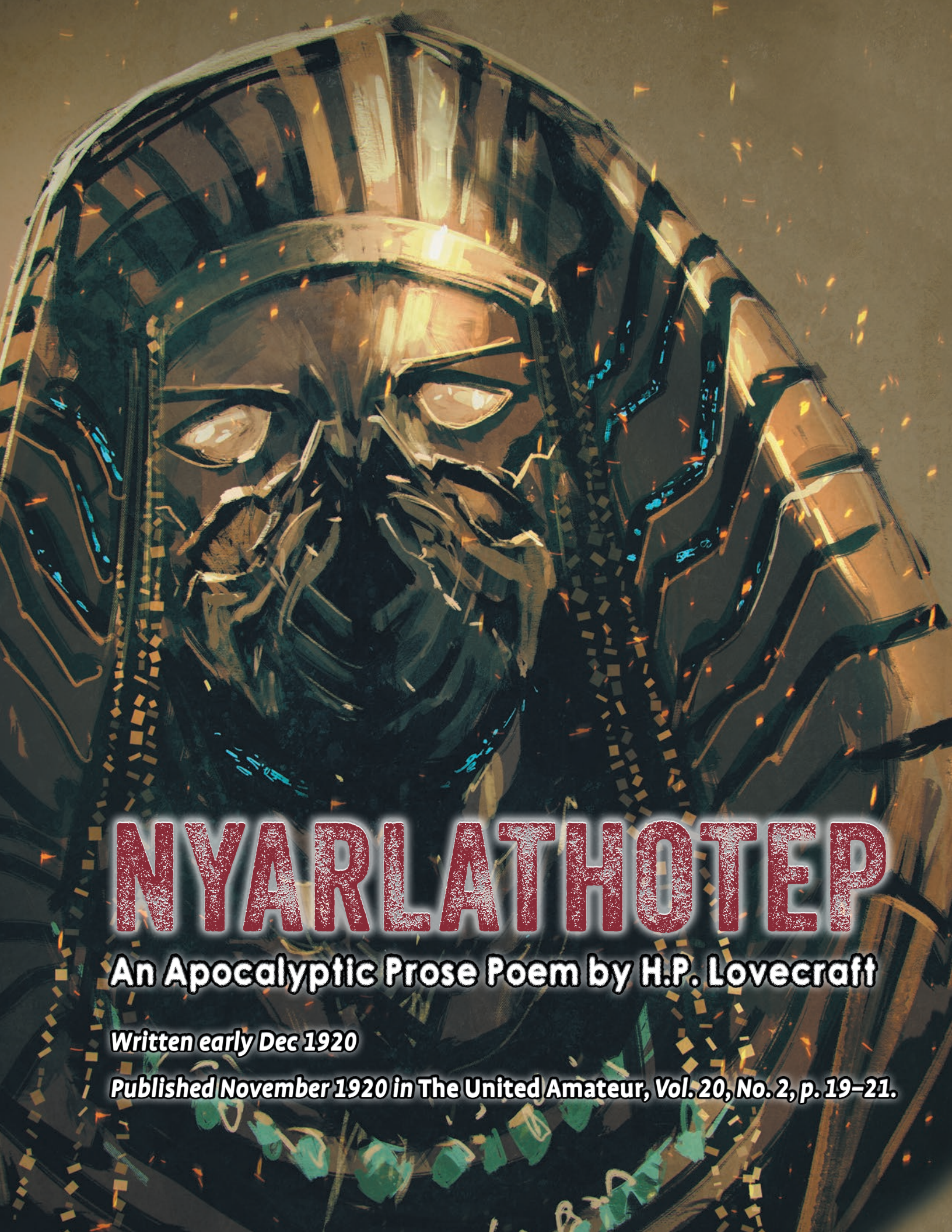


The second rules section provides resources and guidelines for inventing your own Lovecraftian Post-Apocalypse and crafting scenarios to be played out in those settings. It also contains rules for determining what items of working technology might be scavenged from the ruins of the world, and ways in which worn or ruined equipment create additional challenges to success. Also included are guidelines for introducing Lovecraftian monstrosities, supernatural effects, or dread tomes into your ***APOCTHULHU*** game. This second part of the book is intended for players who take on the task of building or running games and isn't required reading for players who simply take part by controlling a Survivor character.

In addition to the rules, this book also includes several example Post-Apocalyptic settings, each with a different Cthulhu Mythos flavor. These are designed to either pick up and use in your games or treat as building-blocks to inspire you towards your own creations. One of the settings — based on William Hope Hodgson's novel *The Night Land* — is included as a detailed sourcebook chapter.

Next, two detailed adventures are included — each set in its own version of a Lovecraftian 'end of the world'. One of these shows our modern world purged by flames as the cult of a malevolent alien 'god' makes the planet ready for its arrival. The other scenario is set in an alternate Victorian England where an insidious force has reshaped society into a cruel, vile, and authoritarian state that corrupts everything to its terrible will.

The book is rounded out by an appendix which includes helpful resources to aid in creating ***APOCTHULHU*** games or inspire ideas for settings. This includes guidelines for converting game material from other roleplaying games with Lovecraft-related themes, as well as a list of suggested films, novels, stories, comics, and games containing ideas about Post-Apocalyptic worlds which have a Cthulhu Mythos 'feel' to them.



NYARLATHOTEP

An Apocalyptic Prose Poem by H.P. Lovecraft

Written early Dec 1920

Published November 1920 in The United Amateur, *Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 19–21.*

Nyarlathotep... the crawling chaos... I am the last... I will tell the audient void...

I do not recall distinctly when it began, but it was months ago. The general tension was horrible. To a season of political and social upheaval was added a strange and brooding apprehension of hideous physical danger; a danger widespread and all-embracing, such a danger as may be imagined only in the most terrible phantasms of the night. I recall that the people went about with pale and worried faces, and whispered warnings and prophecies which no one dared consciously repeat or acknowledge to himself that he had heard. A sense of monstrous guilt was upon the land, and out of the abysses between the stars swept chill currents that made men shiver in dark and lonely places. There was a demoniac alteration in the sequence of the seasons the autumn heat lingered fearsomely, and everyone felt that the world and perhaps the universe had passed from the control of known gods or forces to that of gods or forces which were unknown.

And it was then that Nyarlathotep came out of Egypt. Who he was, none could tell, but he was of the old native blood and looked like a Pharaoh. The fellahin knelt when they saw him, yet could not say why. He said he had risen up out of the blackness of twenty-seven centuries, and that he had heard messages from places not on this planet. Into the lands of civilisation came Nyarlathotep, swarthy, slender, and sinister, always buying strange instruments of glass and metal and combining them into instruments yet stranger. He spoke much of the sciences of electricity and psychology and gave exhibitions of power which sent his spectators away speechless, yet which swelled his fame to exceeding magnitude. Men advised one another to see Nyarlathotep, and shuddered. And where Nyarlathotep went, rest vanished, for the small hours were rent with the screams of nightmare. Never before had the screams of nightmare been such a public problem; now the wise men almost wished they could forbid sleep in the small hours, that the shrieks of cities might less horribly disturb the pale, pitying moon as it glimmered on green waters gliding under bridges, and old steeples crumbling against a sickly sky.

I remember when Nyarlathotep came to my city the great, the old, the terrible city of unnumbered crimes. My friend had told me of him, and of the impelling fascination and allurement of his revelations, and I burned with eagerness to explore his uttermost mysteries.

My friend said they were horrible and impressive beyond my most fevered imaginings; and what was thrown on a screen in the darkened room prophesied things none but Nyarlathotep dared prophesy, and in the sputter of his sparks there was taken from men that which had never been taken before yet which shewed only in the eyes. And I heard it hinted abroad that those who knew Nyarlathotep looked on sights which others saw not.

It was in the hot autumn that I went through the night with the restless crowds to see Nyarlathotep; through the stifling night and up the endless stairs into the choking room. And shadowed on a screen, I saw hooded forms amidst ruins, and yellow evil faces peering from behind fallen monuments. And I saw the world battling against blackness; against the waves of destruction from ultimate space; whirling, churning, struggling around the dimming, cooling sun. Then the sparks played amazingly around the heads of the spectators, and hair stood up on end whilst shadows more grotesque than I can tell came out and squatted on the heads. And when I, who was colder and more scientific than the rest, mumbled a trembling protest about imposture and static electricity, Nyarlathotep drove us all out, down the dizzy stairs into the damp, hot, deserted midnight streets. I screamed aloud that I was not afraid; that I never could be afraid; and others screamed with me for solace. We swore to one another that the city was exactly the same, and still alive; and when the electric lights began to fade we cursed the company over and over again, and laughed at the queer faces we made.

I believe we felt something coming down from the greenish moon, for when we began to depend on its light we drifted into curious involuntary marching formations and seemed to know our destinations though we dared not think of them. Once we looked at the pavement and found the blocks loose and displaced by grass, with scarce a line of rusted metal to shew where the tramways had run. And again we saw a tram-car, lone, windowless, dilapidated, and almost on its side. When we gazed around the horizon, we could not find the third tower by the river, and noticed that the silhouette of the second tower was ragged at the top. Then we split up into narrow columns, each of which seemed drawn in a different direction. One disappeared in a narrow alley to the left, leaving only the echo of a shocking moan. Another filed down a weed-choked subway entrance, howling with a laughter

that was mad. My own column was sucked toward the open country, and presently I felt a chill which was not of the hot autumn; for as we stalked out on the dark moor, we beheld around us the hellish moon-glitter of evil snows. Trackless, inexplicable snows, swept asunder in one direction only, where lay a gulf all the blacker for its glittering walls. The column seemed very thin indeed as it plodded dreamily into the gulf. I lingered behind, for the black rift in the green-litten snow was frightful, and I thought I had heard the reverberations of a disquieting wail as my companions vanished; but my power to linger was slight. As if beckoned by those who had gone before, I half-floated between the titanic snowdrifts, quivering and afraid, into the sightless vortex of the unimaginable.

Screamingly sentient, dumbly delirious, only the gods that were can tell. A sickened, sensitive shadow writhing in hands that are not hands, and whirled blindly past ghastly midnights of rotting creation, corpses of dead worlds with sores that were cities, charnel winds that brush the pallid stars and make them flicker low. Beyond the worlds vague ghosts of monstrous things; half-seen columns of unsanctified temples that rest on nameless rocks beneath space and reach up to dizzy vacua above the spheres of light and darkness. And through this revolting graveyard of the universe the muffled, maddening beating of drums, and thin, monotonous whine of blasphemous flutes from inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond Time; the detestable pounding and piping whereunto dance Nyarlathotep slowly, awkwardly, and absurdly the gigantic, tenebrous ultimate gods the blind, voiceless, mindless gargoyles whose soul is Nyarlathotep.

TILL A' THE SEAS

A Post-Apocalyptic Story by R.H. Barlow and H.P. Lovecraft

Written January 1935

Published summer 1935 in The Californian, *Issue 3, p. 3–7.*

I.

Upon an eroded cliff-top rested the man, gazing far across the valley. Lying thus, he could see a great distance, but in all the sere expanse there was no visible motion. Nothing stirred the dusty plain, the disintegrated sand of long-dry river-beds, where once coursed the gushing streams of Earth's youth. There was little greenery in this ultimate world, this final stage of mankind's prolonged presence upon the planet. For unnumbered aeons the drought and sandstorms had ravaged all the lands. The trees and bushes had given way to small, twisted shrubs that persisted long through their sturdiness; but these, in turn, perished before the onslaught of coarse grasses and stringy, tough vegetation of strange evolution.

The ever-present heat, as Earth drew nearer to the sun, withered and killed with pitiless rays. It had not come at once; long aeons had gone before any could feel the change. And all through those first ages man's adaptable form had followed the slow mutation and modelled itself to fit the more and more torrid air. then the day had come when men could bear their hot cities but ill, and a gradual recession began, slow yet deliberate. Those towns and settlements closest to the equator had been first, of course, but later there were others. Man, softened and exhausted, could cope no longer with the ruthlessly mounting heat. It seared him as he was, and evolution was too slow to mould new resistances in him.

Yet not at first were the great cities of the equator left to the spider and the scorpion. In the early years there were many who stayed on, devising curious shields and armours against the heat and the deadly dryness. These fearless souls, screening certain buildings against the encroaching sun, made miniature worlds of marvellously ingenious things, so that for a while men persisted in the rusting towers, hoping thereby to cling to old lands till the searing should be over. For many would not believe what the astronomers said, and looked for a coming of the mild olden world again. But one day the men of Dath, from the new city of Niyara, made signals to Yuanario, their immemorially ancient capital, and gained no answer from the few who remained therein. And when explorers reached that millennial city of bridge-linked towers they found only silence. There was not even the horror of corruption, for the scavenger lizards had been swift.

Only then did the people fully realize that these cities were lost to them; know that they must forever abandon them to nature. The other colonists in the hot lands fled from their brave posts, and total silence reigned within the high basalt walls of a thousand empty towns. Of the denser throngs and multitudinous activities of the past, nothing finally remained. There now loomed against the rainless deserts only the blistered towers of vacant houses, factories, and structures of every sort, reflecting the sun's dazzling radiance and parching in the more and more intolerable heat.

Many lands, however, had still escaped the scorching blight, so that the refugees were soon absorbed in the life of a newer world. During strangely prosperous centuries the hoary deserted cities of the equator grew half-forgotten and entwined with fantastic fables. Few thought of those spectral, rotting towers... those huddles of shabby walls and cactus-choked streets, darkly silent and abandoned ...

Wars came, sinful and prolonged, but the times of peace were greater. Yet always the swollen sun increased its radiance as Earth drew closer to its fiery parent. It was as if the planet meant to return to that source whence it was snatched, aeons ago, through the accidents of cosmic growth.

After a time the blight crept outward from the central belt. Southern Yarat burned as a tenantless desert — and then the north. In Perath and Baling, those ancient cities where brooding centuries dwelt, there moved only the scaly shapes of the serpent and the salamander, and at last Loron echoed only to the fitful falling of tottering spires and crumbling domes.

Steady, universal, and inexorable was the great eviction of man from the realms he had always known. No land within the widening stricken belt was spared; no people

left unrouted. It was an epic, a titan tragedy whose plot was unrevealed to the actors — this wholesale desertion of the cities of men. It took not years or even centuries, but millennia of ruthless change. And still it kept on — sullen, inevitable, savagely devastating.

Agriculture was at a standstill, the world fast became too arid for crops. This was remedied by artificial substitutes, soon universally used. And as the old places that had known the great things of mortals were left, the loot salvaged by the fugitives grew smaller and smaller. Things of the greatest value and importance were left in dead museums — lost amid the centuries — and in the end the heritage of the immemorial past was abandoned. A degeneracy both physical and cultural set in with the insidious heat. For man had so long dwelt in comfort and security that this exodus from past scenes was difficult. Nor were these events received phlegmatically; their very slowness was terrifying. Degradation and debauchery were soon common; government was disorganized, and the civilization aimlessly slid back toward barbarism.

When, forty-nine centuries after the blight from the equatorial belt, the whole western hemisphere was left unpeopled, chaos was complete. There was no trace of order or decency in the last scenes of this titanic, wildly impressive migration. Madness and frenzy stalked through them, and fanatics screamed of an Armageddon close at hand.

Mankind was now a pitiful remnant of the elder races, a fugitive not only from the prevailing conditions, but from his own degeneracy. Into the northland and the antarctic went those who could; the rest lingered for years in an incredible saturnalia, vaguely doubting the forthcoming disasters. In the city of Borligo a wholesale execution of the new prophets took place, after months of unfulfilled expectations. They thought the flight to the northland unnecessary, and no longer looked for the threatened ending.

How they perished must have been terrible indeed — those vain, foolish creatures who thought to defy the universe. But the blackened, scorched towers are mute ...

These events, however, must not be chronicled — for there are larger things to consider then this complex and unhastening downfall of a lost civilization. During a long period morale was at lowest ebb among the courageous few who settled upon the alien arctic and antarctic shores, now mild as were those of southern Yarat in the long-dead past. But here there was respite. The soil was fertile, and forgotten pastoral arts were called into use anew. There was, for a long time, a contented little epitome of the lost lands; though here were no vast throngs or great buildings. Only a sparse remnant of humanity survived the aeons of change and peopled those scattered villages of the later world.

How many millenia this continued is not known. The sun was slow in invading this last retreat; and as the eras passed there developed a sound, sturdy race, bearing no memories or legends of the old, lost lands. Little navigation was practiced by this new people, and the flying machine was wholly forgotten. Their devices were of the simplest type, and their culture was simple and primitive. Yet they were contented, and accepted the warm climate as something natural and accustomed.

But unknown to these simple peasant-folk, still further rigours of nature were slowly preparing themselves. As the generations passed, the waters of the vast and unplumbed ocean wasted slowly away; enriching the air and the desiccated soil, but sinking lower and lower each century. The splashing surf still glistened bright, and the swirling eddies were still there, but a doom of dryness hung over the whole watery expanse. However, the shrinkage could not have been detected save by instruments more delicate than any then known to the race. Even had the people realized the ocean's contraction, it is not likely that any vast alarm or great disturbance would have resulted, for the losses were so slight, and the sea so great ... Only a few inches during many centuries — but in many centuries; increasing —

* * *

So at last the oceans went, and water became a rarity on a globe of sun-baked drought. Man had slowly spread over all the arctic and antarctic lands; the equatorial cities, and many of later habitation, were forgotten even to legend.

And now again the peace was disturbed, for water was scarce, and found only in deep caverns. There was little enough, even of this; and men died of thirst wandering in far places. Yet so slow were those deadly changes, that each new generation of man was loath to believe what it heard from its parents. None would admit that the heat had been less or the water more plentiful in the old days, or take warning that days of bitterer burning and drought were to come. Thus it was even at the end, when only a few hundred human creatures panted for breath beneath the cruel sun; a piteous huddled handful out of all the unnumbered millions who had once dwelt on the doomed planet.

And the hundreds became small, till man was to be reckoned only in tens. These tens clung to the shrinking dampness of the caves, and knew at last at the end was near. So slight was their range that none had ever seen the tiny, fabled spots of ice left close to the parent's poles — if indeed such remained. Even had they existed and been known to man, none could have reached them across the trackless and formidable deserts. And so the last pathetic few dwindled ...

It cannot be described, this awesome chain of events that depopulated the whole Earth; the range is too tremendous for any to picture or encompass. Of the people of Earth's fortunate ages, billions of years before, only a few prophets and madmen could have conceived that which was to come — could have grasped visions of the still, dead lands, and long-empty sea-beds. The rest would have doubted ... doubted alike the shadow of change upon the planet and the shadow of doom upon the race. For man has always thought himself the immortal master of natural things ...

II.

When he had eased the dying pangs of the old woman, Ull wandered in a fearful daze out into the dazzling sands. She had been a fearsome thing, shrivelled and so dry; like withered leaves. Her face had been the colour of the sickly yellow grasses that rustled in the hot wind, and she was loathsomely old.

But she had been a companion; someone to stammer out vague fears to, to talk to about this incredible thing; a comrade to share one's hopes for succour from those silent other colonies beyond the mountains. He could not believe none lived elsewhere, for Ull was young, and not certain as are the old.

For many years he had known none but the old woman — her name was Mladdna. She had come that day in his eleventh year, when all the hunters went to seek food, and did not return. Ull had no mother that he could remember, and there were few women in the tiny group. When the men had vanished, those three women, the young one and the two old, had screamed fearfully, and moaned long. Then the young one had gone mad, and killed herself with a sharp stick. The old ones buried her in a shallow hole dug with their nails, so Ull had been alone when this still older Mladdna came.

She walked with the aid of a knotty pole, a priceless relique of the old forests, hard and shiny with years of use. She did not say whence she came, but stumbled into the cabin while the young suicide was being buried. There she waited till the two returned, and they accepted her incuriously.

That was the way it had been for many weeks, until the two fell sick, and Mladdna could not cure them. strange that those younger two should have been stricken, while she, infirm and ancient, lived on. Mladdna had cared for them many days, and at length they died, so that Ull was left with only the stranger. He screamed all the night, so she became at length out of patience, and threatened to die too. Then, hearkening, he became quiet at once; for he was not desirous of complete

solitude. After that he lived with Mladdna and they gathered roots to eat.

Mladdna's rotten teeth were ill suited to the food they gathered, but they continued to chop it up till she could manage it. This weary routine of seeking and eating was Ull's childhood.

Now he was strong, and firm, in his nineteenth year, and the old woman was dead. There was naught to stay for, so he determined at once to seek out those fabled huts beyond the mountains, and live with the people there. There was nothing to take on the journey. Ull closed the door of his cabin — why, he could not have told, for no animals had been there for many years — and left the dead woman within. Half-dazed, and fearful at his own audacity, he walked long hours in the dry grasses, and at length reached the first of the foothills. The afternoon came, and he climbed until he was weary, and lay down on the grasses. Sprawled there, he thought of many things. He wondered at the strange life, passionately anxious to seek out the lost colony beyond the mountains; but at last he slept.

When he awoke there was starlight on his face, and he felt refreshed. Now that the sun was gone for a time, he travelled more quickly, eating little, and determining to hasten before the lack of water became difficult to bear. He had brought none; for the last people, dwelling in one place and never having occasion to bear their precious water away, made no vessels of any kind. Ull hoped to reach his goal within a day, and thus escape thirst; so he hurried on beneath the bright stars, running at times in the warm air, and at other times lapsing into a dogtrot.

So he continued until the sun arose, yet still he was within the small hills, with three great peaks looming ahead. In their shade he rested again. then he climbed all the morning, and at mid-day surmounted the first peak, where he lay for a time, surveying the space before the next range.

Upon an eroded cliff-top rested the man, gazing far across the valley. Lying thus he could see a great distance, but in all the sere expanse there was no visible motion ...

The second night came, and found Ull amid the rough peaks, the valley and the place where he had rested far behind. He was nearly out of the second range now, and hurrying still. Thirst had come upon him that day, and he regretted his folly. Yet he could not have stayed there with the corpse, alone in the grasslands. He sought to convince himself thus, and hastened ever on, tiredly straining.

And now there only a few steps before the cliff wall would part and allow a view of the land beyond. Ull stumbled wearily down the stony way, tumbling and bruising himself even more. It was nearly before him, this land of which he had heard tales in his youth. The way was long, but the goal was great. A boulder of giant circumference cut off his view; upon this he scrambled anxiously. Now at last he could behold by the sinking orb his long-sought destination, and his thirst and aching muscles were forgotten as he saw joyfully that a small huddle of buildings clung to the base of the farther cliff.

Ull rested not; but, spurred on by what he saw, ran and staggered and crawled the half mile remaining. He fancied that he could detect forms among the rude cabins. The sun was nearly gone; the hateful, devastating sun that had slain humanity. He could not be sure of details, but soon the cabins were near.

They were very old, for clay blocks lasted long in the still dryness of the dying world. Little, indeed, changed but the living things — the grasses and these last men.

Before him an open door swung upon rude pegs. In the fading ligh Ull entered, weary unto death, seeking painfully the expected faces.

Then he fell upon the floor and wept, for at the table was propped a dry and ancient skeleton.

* * *

He rose at last, crazed by thirst, aching unbearably, and suffering the greatest disappointment nay mortal could know. He was, then, the last living thing upon the globe. His the heritage of the Earth ... all the lands, and

all to him equally useless. He staggered up, not looking at the dim white form in the reflected moonlight, and went through the door. About the empty village he wandered, searching for water and sadly inspecting this long-empty place so spectrally preserved by the changeless air. here there was a dwelling, there a rude place where things had been made — clay vessels holding only dust, and nowhere any liquid to quench his burning thirst.

Then, in the centre of the little town, Ull saw a well-curb. He knew what it was, for he had heard tales of such thing from Mladdna. With pitiful joy, he reeled forward and leaned upon the edge. There, at last, was the end of his search. Water — slimy, stagnant, and shallow, but water — before his sight.

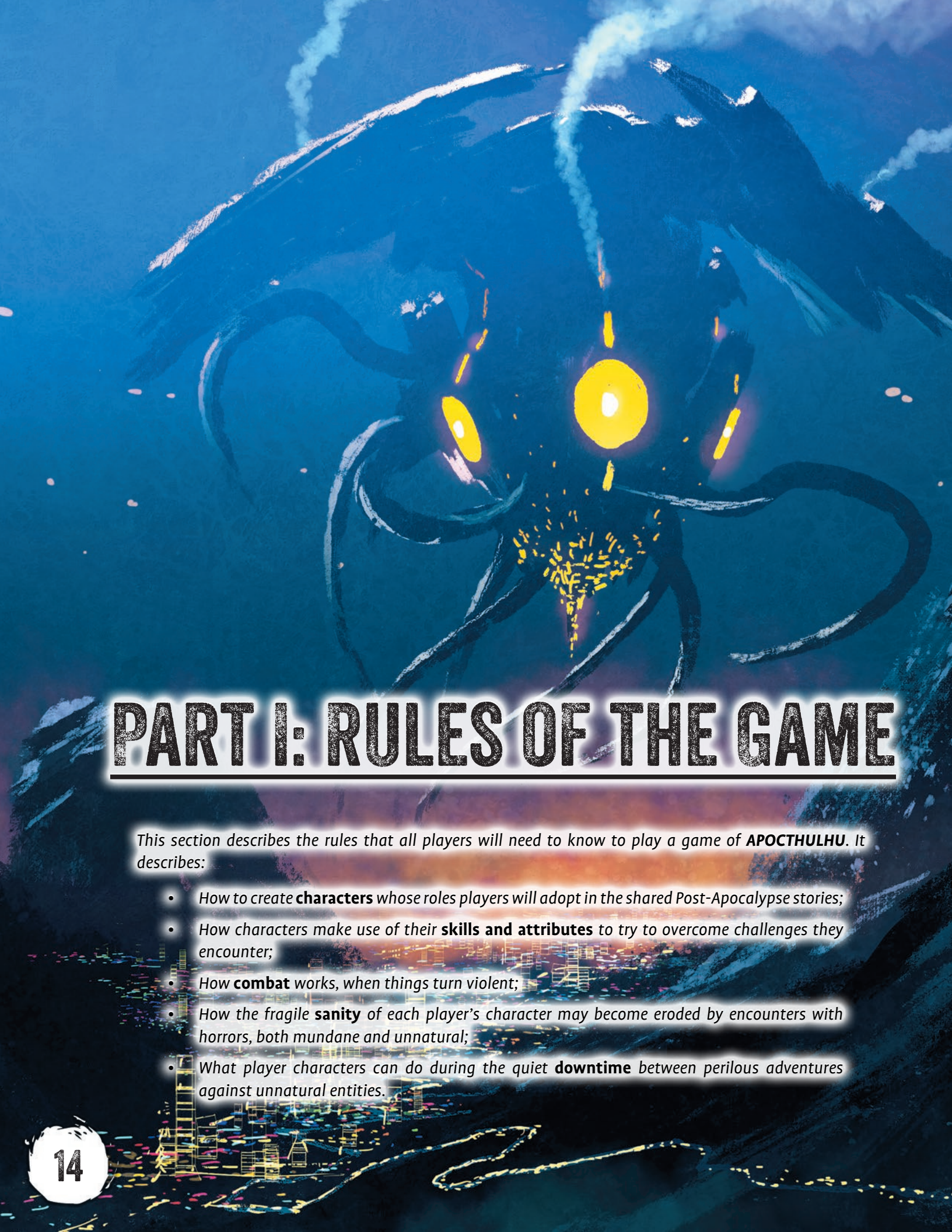
Ull cried out in the voice of a tortured animal, groping for the chain and bucket. His hand slipped on the slimy edge; and he fell upon his chest across the brink. For a moment he lay there — then soundlessly his body was precipitated down the black shaft.

There was a slight splash in the murky shallowness as he struck some long-sunken stone, dislodged aeons ago from the massive coping. The disturbed water subsided into quietness.

And now at last the Earth was dead. The final, pitiful survivor had perished. All the teeming billions; the slow aeons; the empires and civilizations of mankind were summed up in this poor twisted form — and how titanically meaningless it all had been! Now indeed had come an end and climax to all the efforts of humanity — how monstrous and incredible a climax in the eyes of those poor complacent fools of the prosperous days! Not ever again would the planet know the thunderous rampaging of human millions — or even the crawling of lizards and the buzz of insects, for they, too, had gone. now was come the reign of sapless branches and endless fields of tough grasses. Earth, like its cold, imperturbable moon, was given over to silence and blackness forever.

The stars whirred on; the whole careless plan would continue for infinities unknown. This trivial end of a negligible episode mattered not to distant nebulae or to suns new-born, flourishing, and dying. The race of man, too puny and momentary to have a real function or purpose, was as if it had never existed. To such a conclusion the aeons of its farcically toilsome evolution had led.

But when the deadly sun's first rays darted across the valley, a light found its way to the weary face of a broken figure that lay in the slime.



PART I: RULES OF THE GAME

*This section describes the rules that all players will need to know to play a game of **APOCTHULHU**. It describes:*

- *How to create* **characters** *whose roles players will adopt in the shared Post-Apocalypse stories;*
- *How characters make use of their* **skills and attributes** *to try to overcome challenges they encounter;*
- *How* **combat** *works, when things turn violent;*
- *How the fragile* **sanity** *of each player's character may become eroded by encounters with horrors, both mundane and unnatural;*
- *What player characters can do during the quiet* **downtime** *between perilous adventures against unnatural entities.*

CORE GAME CONCEPTS

These rules tell you everything you need to know in order to play ***APOCTHULHU***.

As with most tabletop roleplaying games, when playing ***APOCTHULHU*** one player takes on the responsibility of setting the scene and narrating the events which make up an ***APOCTHULHU*** adventure. That individual is termed the **Game Moderator** (or GM). All other players take on the roles of individual people who have somehow survived the downfall of humanity. These characters are called **Survivors** (with the term capitalized for clarity). Survivors will encounter a multitude of other characters whose roles are *not* being played by other players — those characters are called **Non-Player Characters** (or NPCs) and their actions are controlled by the Game Moderator.

In this book you'll find rules for creating Survivors and a full set of rules for running adventures in a Post-Apocalypse world of your group's choosing or devising.

In addition to this book, you also need pencils to record changes to your character sheet, scratch paper to draw sketches and take notes, and dice.

APOCTHULHU uses polyhedral dice common to tabletop role-playing games: four-sided, six-sided, eight-sided, ten-sided, twelve-sided, and twenty-sided. The game plays best when you have a few of each on the table. Or you can find automated dice rollers on the Web and as mobile apps.

Rolling the Dice

When the rules need you to roll dice, they use a particular nomenclature to save time and space: "#D#," as in "1D8" or "4D6." The first number is the number of dice. The "D" stands for "dice with the following number of sides." The second number is the number of faces on the die. "1D8" means roll one eight-sided die. "4D6" means roll four six-sided dice and add the numbers together. Sometimes you add or subtract a number from the roll. If it says "1D6+2," that means roll one six-sided die and add two to the result.

Percentile Dice (1D100)

Actions in ***APOCTHULHU*** are resolved using percentile dice. That means you roll two ten-sided dice to get a number from 1 to 100. To do this, you don't add the individual die values together but instead treat each number as a digit (0–9). Before you make the roll, designate one die as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit. A zero (0) on the tens die counts as zero except when the ones die is also 0; then the 0 on the tens die counts as 10. For example:

- The tens die comes up "0" and the ones die comes up "3": 03, or 3.
- The tens die comes up "3" and the ones die comes up "0": 30.
- Both dice come up "0": 100.
- The tens die comes up "6" and the ones die comes up "2": 62.

SURVIVORS

Your Survivor represents the fictional persona that you will control in the game. You will spend a lot of time navigating your Survivor through exciting and dangerous situations, so it is worth investing time in creating a character you will enjoy playing.

What Makes a Survivor

All Survivors are composed of six elements:

STATISTICS (STATS): Core capabilities for every Survivor.

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: Ratings that indicate physical and mental resilience, derived from stats.

ARCHETYPE: The type of role your Survivor performs in the Post-Apocalypse world, which informs how many skill points and Bonds he or she has.

SKILLS: What training and education your Survivor has picked up from being taught, or from life in general.

RESOURCES: An abstract rating that reflects your Survivor's access to useful equipment or items.

BONDS: The people and communities your Survivor fights to protect.

Survivor Creation

Follow these steps to create a new Survivor, or see **HOW TO CREATE A SURVIVOR** on page 18 for a quick reference.

STEP 0: ESTABLISH HARSHNESS OF SURVIVOR'S BACKGROUND

Different Post-Apocalyptic settings shape the Survivor's mental and physical development in different ways. In game terms this is dictated by the Harshness Descriptor that the Game Moderator has chosen for the setting. It is important to find out the Harshness of your Survivor's background prior to commencing character creation. The four possible Harshness Descriptors are: **Normal(ish), Harsh, Very Harsh,** and **Nightmarish**.

STEP 1: DETERMINE STATISTICS

Statistics are Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Power (POW), and Charisma (CHA). They range from 3 (the worst) to 18 (the best), with an average of 10 for an ordinary adult. Statistics represent core capabilities possessed by all Survivors. All are important. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: STATISTICS** on page 20.)

You can create stats in two ways: rolling them or assigning points. Pick a method.

1. **ROLL STATS:** For each stat roll 4D6, drop the lowest of the four dice, and add up the other three. Place the six rolls in whichever stats you like.
2. **ASSIGN STATS:** Divide 72 points among the six stats however you like, or pick one of the sets from page 20 and assign each score to one statistic.

After the basic values are assigned for each statistic, modify according to the Harshness Descriptor for the setting:

- For Survivors in **Harsh** settings: add 1 to *either* STR *or* CON (player's choice)
- For Survivors in **Very Harsh** settings: add 1 to *both* STR *and* CON
- For Survivors in **Nightmarish** settings: add 2 to *both* STR *and* CON

STEP 2: CALCULATE DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

Hit Points, Willpower Points, Sanity Points, and Breaking Point are derived from stats. They represent physical and mental resilience. When your Survivor is hurt, exercises mental fortitude, or is traumatized, those scores can drop. If your Survivor has a STR score that is outside the average range (9–12) he or she also has a modifier to the damage inflicted from hand-to-hand combat. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: DERIVED ATTRIBUTES & DAMAGE BONUS** on page 21.)

STEP 3: SELECT ARCHETYPE

What does your Survivor do to stay alive in the Post-Apocalypse world? Archetype dictates what skills your Survivor has, his or her basic resource level, and the number of Bonds he or she possesses. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: ARCHETYPE** on page 23.)

STEP 4: CALCULATE RESOURCES RATING

The Resources rating is a number between 0 and 20 that reflects the Survivor's access to valuable or useful equipment. A Survivor's base Resources rating is dictated by his or her Archetype, however during later steps, you can sacrifice other potential bonus skills in favor of a higher resources score; conversely, you can agree to drop to a Resources rating of 0 (entirely without access to resources) and receive additional skills. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: RESOURCES** on page 34.)

STEP 5: DEFINE BONDS

Bonds indicate the strength of relationships with the most important people and communities in your Survivor's life — like a spouse, a child, a long-time travelling companion, or a local community of survivors holed up somewhere. Bonds help Survivors resist mental trauma—but as your Survivor's life falls apart under the stress of the Post-Apocalypse world, Bonds deteriorate.

There are **two types of Bonds** — bonds with individuals and bonds with an entire community. The latter reflect the Survivor's standing as part of the community and his or her ability to influence the group.

Each **Individual Bond** has a value that starts equal to your Survivor's Charisma (CHA).

Each **Community Bond** has a default value equal to half the Survivor's Resources rating, however during creation of the Survivor the player may elect to sacrifice potential skills in favor of a higher value. Conversely, the player may elect to take a Community Bond with a value of 1 (lowest possible social standing) and receive additional skills. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: BONDS** on page 40.)

STEP 6: SELECT BONUS & ADVERSITY SKILLS

Skills require special training, and come from schooling, experience, or personal interest. Skills are measured from 0% (no training) to 99% (foremost expert in the world).

During Survivor creation, no skill can receive a rating higher than 80%, although later training and experience may increase skill ratings to higher levels (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: SKILLS**, on page 45).

STEP 7: DETERMINE MENTAL DAMAGE FROM HARSH ENVIRONMENTS

Survivors that have grown up in difficult and brutal versions of our world are likely to have picked up some mental scarring along the way. This can leave them hardened to certain types of traumatic stimuli, distant from those around them, or afflicted with mental disorders. (see **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: MENTAL DAMAGE FROM HARSH ENVIRONMENTS**, page 54.)

STEP 8: ADD THE FINAL DETAILS

Start filling in the details that make your Survivor interesting.

How old is your Survivor? What does he or she look like? Where did he or she grow up?

What's your Survivor's name? What is your Survivor's role in the community and what's your personal life like?

And why, despite all the terrifying dangers of the Post-Apocalyptic world, does your Survivor venture out to pursue adventure?

0. HARSHNESS

Ask Game Moderator for the setting Harshness Descriptor your Survivor grew up in:

- ***Normal(ish),***
- ***Harsh,***
- ***Very Harsh,***
- ***Nightmarish.***

1. STATISTICS

Roll **STATISTIC** scores (see page 16) or divide 72 points between the six stats. See page 20 for suggested sets.

Modify STR and/or CON statistic scores based on Harshness:

- Harsh — add +1 to STR or CON (player's choice)
- Very Harsh — add +1 to STR and CON
- Nightmarish — add +2 to STR and CON

High and low stat scores can tell something about your Survivor's physical description. (See **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES** on pages 20–21.)

3. ARCHETYPE

Choose an **ARCHETYPE** from the lists on pages 24–33.

Write down the **ARCHETYPAL SKILLS** for your Survivor's Archetype and record the number of BONDS and starting RESOURCES rating associated with the Archetype.

On a piece of scrap paper, record the Survivor's number of available BONUS SKILL POINT picks (see below). This starts at 10.

6. ADV. & BONUS SKILLS

Your Survivor may get **ADVERSITY SKILL POINTS** (see page 34) which can be used to increase the following skills: ***Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival,*** or ***Unnatural***. Each pick provides +20 rating to the chosen skill; no single skill can receive more than 2.

- Harsh — 1 pick
- Very Harsh — 2 picks
- Nightmarish — 4 picks

After resolving any optional spends of BONUS SKILL POINT picks (in ***steps 4 & 5***) for non-skill benefits, use the remainder to improve ANY skills (except ***Unnatural***). Each pick provides an increase of 20 points (see page 45).

- No skill can start higher than 80%

7&8. MENTAL DAMAGE & PERSONAL DETAILS

If Setting Harshness is anything other than "Normal(ish)", determine any **MENTAL DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENT** (see pages 54–55). This may mean:

- Survivor begins play with **MENTAL DISORDERS**.
- Survivor loses points from Bonds due to emotional distance.
- Survivor begins play **ADAPTED** to Violence or Helplessness.

Finally,

- Choose **NAME, AGE, SEX, BIRTHPLACE** and Current **HOME**.
- As you play, describe up to five **MOTIVATIONS** that are not Bonds. When your Survivor develops a new MENTAL DISORDER, it replaces a motivation.

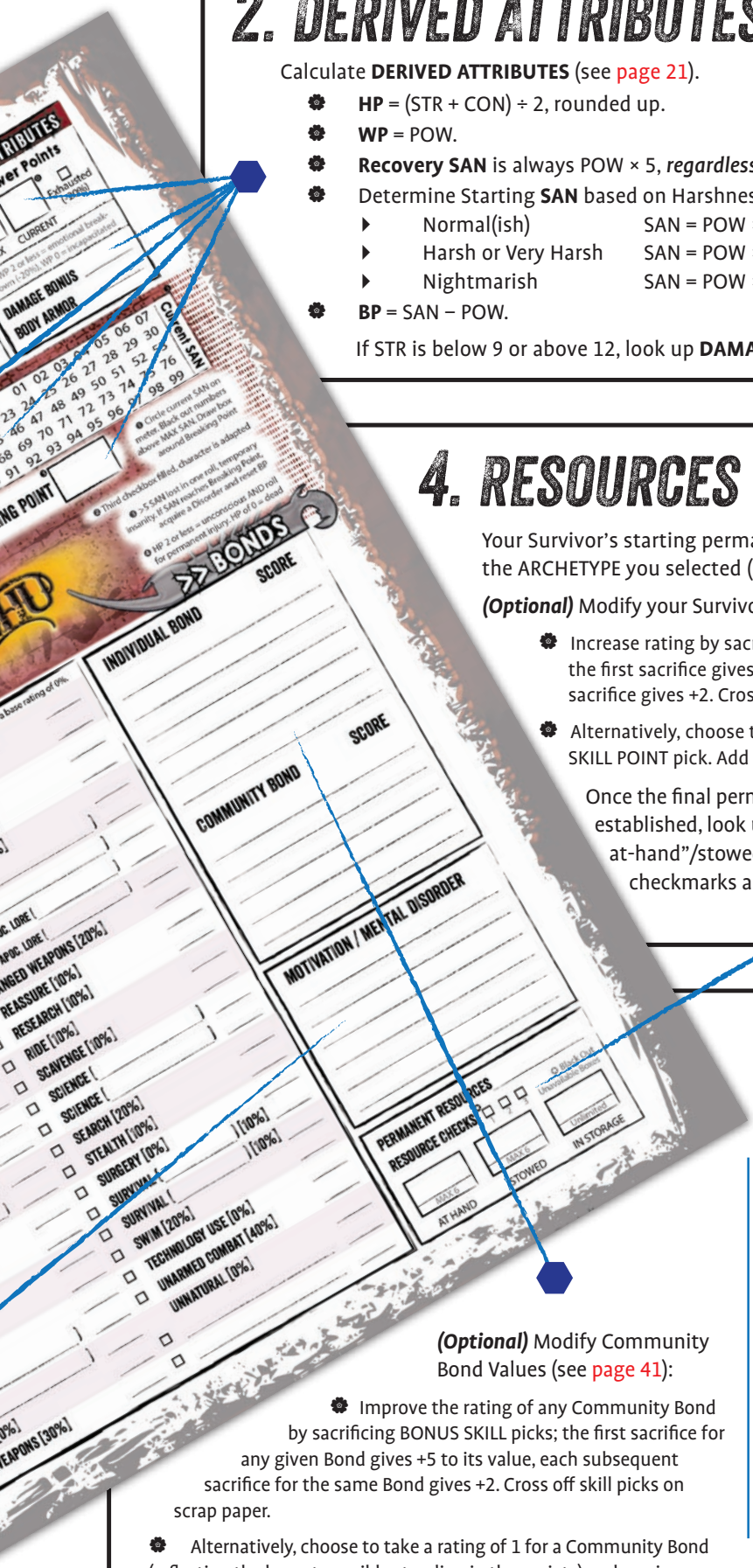
2. DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

Calculate **DERIVED ATTRIBUTES** (see page 21).

- **HP** = (STR + CON) ÷ 2, rounded up.
- **WP** = POW.
- **Recovery SAN** is always POW × 5, *regardless of setting harshness.*
- Determine Starting **SAN** based on Harshness Descriptor:
  - Normal(ish) SAN = POW × 5.
  - Harsh or Very Harsh SAN = POW × 4.
  - Nightmarish SAN = POW × 3.
- **BP** = SAN − POW.

If STR is below 9 or above 12, look up **DAMAGE BONUS** (see page 22).

STR	Damage Bonus
1–4	-2
5–8	-1
9–12	0
13–16	+1
17–18	+2



4. RESOURCES

Your Survivor's starting permanent **RESOURCES** score is deterimed by the ARCHETYPE you selected (previous step).

(Optional) Modify your Survivor's RESOURCES rating (see page 35):

- Increase rating by sacrificing one or more BONUS SKILL POINT picks; the first sacrifice gives +5 to RESOURCES rating, each subsequent sacrifice gives +2. Cross off skill picks on scrap paper.
- Alternatively, choose to reset rating to 0 and receive one extra BONUS SKILL POINT pick. Add one pick to scrap paper.

Once the final permanent RESOURCES rating has been established, look up the breakdown (see page 36) of at-hand"/stowed/stored points and number of Resource checkmarks and copy these to Survivor sheet.

5. BONDS

Define your Survivor's **BONDS** (see page 40).

- The Survivor's Archetype determines how many Bonds he or she has.
- Each Bond is either a Community Bond or an Individual Bond (player's choice).
- Each **Individual Bond** refers to an individual with special significance and begins with a score equal to your Survivor's CHA.
- Each **Community Bond** refers to a community within which the Survivor has a particular standing and begins with a value equal to half his or her RESOURCES rating (see above).

(Optional) Modify Community Bond Values (see page 41):

- Improve the rating of any Community Bond by sacrificing BONUS SKILL picks; the first sacrifice for any given Bond gives +5 to its value, each subsequent sacrifice for the same Bond gives +2. Cross off skill picks on scrap paper.
- Alternatively, choose to take a rating of 1 for a Community Bond (reflecting the lowest possible standing in the society) and receive one extra BONUS SKILL POINT pick. Add one pick to scrap paper.

Detailed Description: Statistics

Every Survivor has six core capabilities: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Power, and Charisma. These are called his or her statistics (or "stats" for short).

STATISTICS

Statistic	*Abbrev.*	*Description*	*Stat Test Examples*
Strength	STR	Physical power, size, and musculature.	Drag an innocent to safety. Break down a locked door. Hold a struggling victim down.
Constitution	CON	Health and physical resilience.	Resist illness, exhaustion, or pain. Hold your breath for a long time. Keep running longer than everyone else.
Dexterity	DEX	Agility, coordination, and nimbleness.	Keep balance. React quickly.
Intelligence	INT	How well a Survivor notices, remembers, and connects things. Along with Archetype, it indicates education and overall brilliance.	Recall a detail. Piece together disparate data.
Power	POW	Force of personality, motivation, and psychic resilience.	Keep your head in a crisis. Stand up to pressure.
Charisma	CHA	Charm, leadership, and personal appeal. May indicate physical attractiveness.	Make a good impression. Talk your way into a private club. Look like you belong.

During Survivor creation, you can either roll **STATISTIC** scores (see page 16) or simply divide 72 points between the six stats however you wish. The table nearby gives some examples of possible assignments.

ASSIGNABLE SET OF STATISTICS

Description	*Stat1*	*Stat2*	*Stat3*	*Stat4*	*Stat5*	*Stat6*
Well-Rounded	13	13	12	12	11	11
Focused	15	14	12	11	10	10
Highly Focused	17	14	12	10	10	9

Each stat has a test score equal to the stat × 5: STR×5, INT×5, POW×5, etc. This means roll five times the stat or less on percentile dice (1D100) to succeed. When your Survivor attempts a difficult action and no skill covers it, the Game Moderator may ask you to roll a stat test for whatever stat is the closest fit.

STAT ADJUSTMENTS FOR HARSH ENVIRONMENTS

Survivors who have managed to eke out a living in a harsh environment are physically tougher than average — weaker individuals simply don't live that long. To reflect this, such Survivors receive a bonus to STR and/or CON as follows:

- **Normal(ish)** setting: no bonus
- **Harsh** setting: +1 to *either* STR *or* CON (pick one)
- **Very Harsh** setting: +1 to *both* STR *and* CON
- **Nightmarish** setting: +2 to *both* STR *and* CON

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

A stat below 9 or above 12 is exceptional. Spare a word or two to describe stats outside the average; see the table nearby for some examples. These descriptors help give your Survivor personality.

Detailed Description: Derived Attributes & Damage Bonus

The derived attributes — Hit Points, Willpower Points, Sanity Points, and Breaking Point — represent your Survivor's physical and mental toughness.

Damage Bonus reflects whether his or her brawn (or lack thereof) will affect damage inflicted through brawling and hand-to-hand weapons.

HIT POINTS (HP): Hit Points represent how much damage your Survivor can sustain. When the Survivor is injured, subtract the damage from HP. At 2 HP, your Survivor falls unconscious. At 0 HP, your Survivor dies. Hit Points are regained through rest and medical attention.

Hit Points equal CON plus STR, divided by two and rounded up.

WILLPOWER POINTS (WP): Willpower Points represent mental fortitude. They fall when your Survivor attempts to suppress the symptoms of mental illness (see **RESISTING INSANITY** on page 86), becomes exhausted (see **EXHAUSTION** on page 62), attempts to resist persuasion, suffers emotional burnout (see **FUMBLE** on page 58), or tries to fuel unnatural phenomena. At 2 WP, your Survivor has a temporary emotional collapse. At 0 WP, your Survivor falls unconscious. Willpower Points are regained with rest. (See **WILLPOWER POINTS** on page 61.)

Willpower Points equal POW.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

*Jo creates a Post-Apocalypse Survivor. Her Game Moderator, Sam, tells her that the upcoming game of **APOCTHULHU** will be set in a **Very Harsh** setting, so that's the kind of environment Jo's Survivor would have grown up in.*

Jo prefers randomness, so she rolls the stats. On 4D6 she gets 6, 4, 2, and 1. She drops the lowest (1) and adds 6+4+2 for 12. She does this five more times and gets 14, 15, 6, 13 and 10. She sets her Survivor's stats as STR 6, CON 13, DEX 12, INT 14, POW 15, and CHA 10. Because Jo's Survivor grew up in a Very Harsh setting, she can add +1 to both STR and CON — this brings STR to 7 and CON to 14.

Jo's Survivor is out of shape (STR 7), but sturdy (CON 14), very strong-willed (POW 15), and particularly smart (INT 14). Already a picture is beginning to emerge.

SAMPLE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Statistic	*3–4*	*5–8*	*9–12*	*13–16*	*17–18*
Strength	Feeble	Weak	(Average)	Muscular	Huge
Constitution	Barely Mobile	Clumsy	(Average)	Nimble	Acrobatic
Dexterity	Bedridden	Sickly	(Average)	Perfect Health	Indefatigable
Intelligence	Imbecilic	Slow	(Average)	Perceptive	Brilliant
Power	Spineless	Nervous	(Average)	Strong-Willed	Indomitable
Charisma	Unbearable	Awkward	(Average)	Charming	Magnetic

SANITY POINTS (SAN): Sanity Points represent mental health: how much mental trauma, or exposure to the unnatural your Survivor can endure before going insane. In moments of mental trauma your Survivor must make a **Sanity test** by rolling SAN or lower on 1D100. If that fails, your Survivor loses SAN. (See **SANITY** on page 78.) Sanity Points are regained through remedial care or by overcoming unnatural threats. At 0 Sanity Points, your Survivor goes irretrievably insane and becomes an NPC permanently under the control of the Game Moderator.

A Survivor's starting Sanity Points depends on the Harshness of the setting in which he or she has spent most time — the harsher the setting, the more brutality and horror the Survivor has been scarred by.

Normal(ish) Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×5.

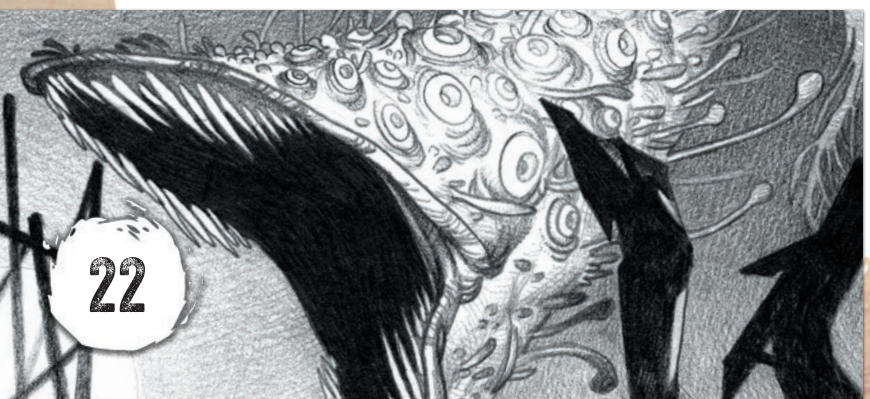
Harsh or Very Harsh Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×4.

Nightmarish Setting: Sanity Points begin equal to POW×3.

BREAKING POINT: The Breaking Point is the point at which loss of SAN triggers a long-term mental disorder. (See **INSANITY AND DISORDERS** on page 80.)

A Survivor's Breaking Point equals SAN minus POW.

The instant the Survivor's SAN reaches the Breaking Point, he or she gains a disorder. Reset the Breaking Point to equal the new SAN score minus POW.



MAXIMUM SAN: The is the absolute maximum number of Sanity Points your Survivor can EVER reach, by any means. Learning more about the true nature of the Cthulhu Mythos (represented by the Unnatural skill) reduces this number.

A Survivor's Maximum SAN always equals 99 minus skill rating in the Unnatural Skill.

RECOVERY SAN: This is the highest Sanity Point total that your Survivor can possibly achieve through mundane methods — relaxation, personal pursuits, caring for loved ones, and seeking help for mental illness. See **RECOVERING SANITY** on page 88.

A Survivor's Recovery SAN equals POW×5, regardless of the harshness of the setting.

(If this number would be higher than Maximum SAN, Recovery SAN equals Maximum SAN).

DAMAGE BONUS: High or low Strength modifies the **DAMAGE** the Survivor inflicts through successful unarmed and hand-to-hand weapon attacks (see page 68). This modifier to damage should be recorded on the Survivor sheet for later reference.

Damage Bonus from STR Score				
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–18
−2	−1	0	+1	+2

EXAMPLE: *Jo's unnamed Survivor's Hit Points are 11 (his STR 7 plus CON 14, divided by 2, rounded up). With POW 15, he or she has 15 Willpower Points. Because the Survivor grew up in a Very Harsh environment, starting SAN is 15×4 = 60, and Breaking Point is 45 (SAN 60 − POW 15 = 45). Recovery SAN is 15×5 = 75. Because he or she has a low STR (7) score, Damage Bonus is −1.*

Detailed Description: Archetypes

Each Survivor is a representative of a broad category of character types suited to the conditions prevalent in the Post-Apocalyptic world. He or she might be one of those familiar characters obsessed with scrounging and hoarding scraps of broken technology, or might be someone who serves as a spiritual leader to a community of survivors. Each such category is called an Archetype.

An Archetype says a lot about a Survivor. It grants a 'kit' of appropriate skills. It also determines the number of Bonds your Survivor has when the game begins, and his or her starting Resource level.

RECOMMENDED STATS: Some Archetypes require people who are particularly fit, stable, or smart. This means the recommended stats should be 10 or higher — or at least they were when your Survivor first took on the Archetype. *(For example, maybe your Former Military Survivor had higher STR when she joined the armed forces, but lost points after a terrible injury suffered during the Apocalypse, and that's why she now has STR 7.)*

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS: Each Archetype has a predefined kit of skills with scores that replace the default skill ratings. This represents the baseline training, experience, and education for that Archetype. See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: SKILLS** on page 45 for their uses.

RESOURCES: Each Archetype dictates a base value for the Resources rating.

BONDS: Each Archetype dictates the number of Bonds your Survivor begins with. Difficult and trying Archetypes mean fewer Bonds but more skills. The player can decide whether each of these Bonds refers to:

- a relationship to an individual (Individual Bonds) or
- standing within a community in the Post-Apocalyptic setting (Community Bonds).

CUSTOMIZING YOUR SURVIVOR WITH OTHER SKILLS

Don't worry if your Survivor at this point looks like a generic representative of his or her chosen Archetype. While the Archetype defines a core set of abilities, those skills and ratings don't represent the full range of everything your Survivor can do.

Later in the character generation process you will have opportunities to pick other skills they are also good at. There are two different types of skill picks:

- **ADVERSITY SKILL POINT PICKS** (see page 34) represent abilities your Survivor has because of the harsh world that he or she grew up in. These picks can only be used to enhance a few specific skills, and cannot be traded in for other benefits.
- **BONUS SKILL POINT PICKS** (see page 45) represent hobbies and general experience he or she learned above and beyond the basics associated with the Archetype. You start with ten such bonus picks to use later in the Survivor generation process. These picks *can* be traded in for other advantages like increased availability of resources-at-hand or standing in a community.

LIST OF ARCHETYPES

When the Apocalypse came, vast numbers of people were killed. Those few that survived came from all walks of life, but suddenly everyone needed to adapt to a world vastly altered.

The set of available Archetypes for your Survivors will depend on whether the ***APOCTHULHU*** game is set in the **early days** after the Apocalypse happened, or **long afterwards.** If the End of the World was a recent occurrence most Survivors will be former members of some Pre-Apocalypse job, slowly coming to terms with life in the new world. If your game is set generations (or even millennia) after the Apocalypse, Survivors will be hardy folk born into the ravaged Post-Apocalypse world and already somewhat skilled at surviving its capriciousness.

RECENT APOCALYPSE ARCHETYPES

The following Archetypes are appropriate for games set shortly after the Apocalypse.

Former Criminal

You were a law breaker before the world ended and have found that those same skills serve you well in infiltrating societies of the Post-Apocalypse world. Where there isn't any written 'law', the whole concept of crime is one big moral gray area that you happily inhabit.

RECOMMENDED STATS: DEX

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Alertness 40%
- Appraise 40%
- Craft (Locksmith) 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Persuade 40%
- Stealth 50%
- Search 40%
- Unarmed Combat 60%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Athletics 70%
- Demolitions 40%
- Disguise 50%
- Dodge 70%
- Firearms 50%
- Insight 50%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Technology Use 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 6

BONDS: 4

Former Doctor

In the world before the Apocalypse you were a medical doctor, either a military medic, EMT, general practitioner or surgeon. Since the world ended, there has been an abundant and ongoing need for medical aid, although there's a distinct lack of suitable equipment and facilities. So, you have learned to improvise, scavenging what you can to patch up the sick and wounded.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- First Aid 60%
- Medicine 60%
- Pharmacy 50%
- Scavenge 50%
- Search 50%
- Surgery 50%
- Survival (choose one) 30%
- Technology Use 30%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Research 50%
- Science (Biology) 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 3

Former Law Enforcer

You were a cop (of some description) in the world before the Apocalypse. There is no law as such in the new world, but there is still a need for justice. You strive to enforce some kind of moral right and wrong, either as part of a larger society or as a travelling 'enforcer' keeping the highways safe.

RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, CHA

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Alertness 50%
- Athletics 60%
- Dodge 50%
- Drive 50%
- Firearms 60%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Melee Weapons 60%
- Persuade 50%
- Search 60%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Disguise 50%
- First Aid 50%
- Forensics 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Stealth 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

STARTING RESOURCES: 4

BONDS: 3

Former Military

You trained as a soldier, naval officer, or marine back before the world ended. Turns out a lot of the training for war is quite useful in a world where everyone is fighting every day to survive. Unfortunately, you don't have access to all the impressive items of technology that you used to, but a weapon is a weapon — and a dead enemy looks the same.

RECOMMENDED STATS: STR, CON

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Athletics 50%
- Drive 40%
- Firearms 60%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Military Science 60%
- Survival (choose one) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Artillery 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Navigate 50%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Stealth 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 4

BONDS: 3

Former Scientist / Technician

Back before the Apocalypse you were a scientist or technical specialist. Perhaps you were a researcher or University egghead, or perhaps you just repaired broken computers. In the days after the end of the world you questioned how relevant your skills were to the altered world. Turns out that the practical application of your understanding of the physical world is quite handy in efforts to re-establish a semblance of society, or even just to understand what caused the old world to end. Perhaps such humble endeavors might even allow humanity to rebuild a better future?

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

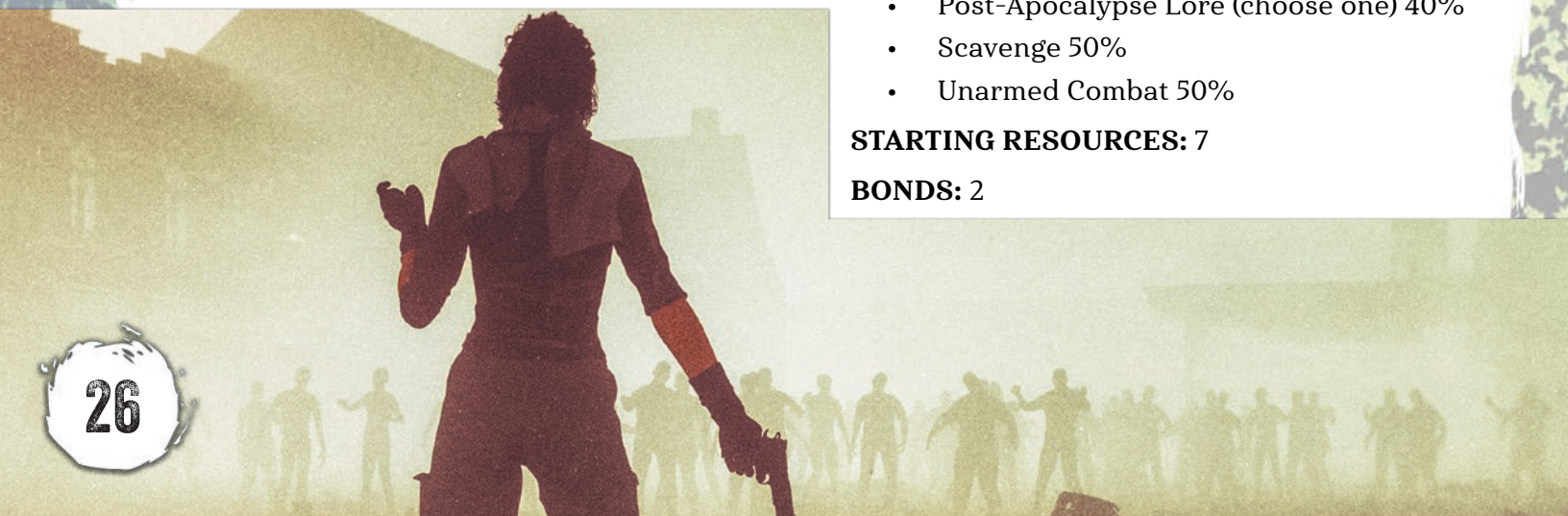
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Dodge 50%
- Research 50%
- Search 60%
- Science (choose one) 60%
- Science (choose another one) 40%
- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Archeology 40%
- Craft (choose another one) 40%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Forensics 40%
- Heavy Machinery 50%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Unarmed Combat 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 7

BONDS: 2



Former Student

You were still at college or school when the Apocalypse struck, or maybe you'd just graduated and were still looking for meaningful employment. Either way, you were a lot more about 'book smarts' than practical skills — shame that most of that theoretical knowledge is worth nothing much now. Still, having some understanding of how the world used to work is not without its benefits.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Art or Craft (choose one) 50%
- History 50%
- Persuade 60%
- Research 50%
- Scavenge 50%
- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 6 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Archeology 40%
- Art or Craft (choose another one) 40%
- Athletics 70%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Occult 40%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Science (choose one) 40%
- Science (choose another one) 40%
- Surgery 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 2

BONDS: 5

Former Survivalist

Back before the Apocalypse came, everyone thought you were crazy. Building a bunker in the back yard and stockpiling weapons and canned goods — sure it seemed a bit 'out there' when society was functioning. But who's laughing now? The self-sufficiency skills you taught yourself back then are now the backbone of your success in the Post-Apocalypse world.

RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, POW

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

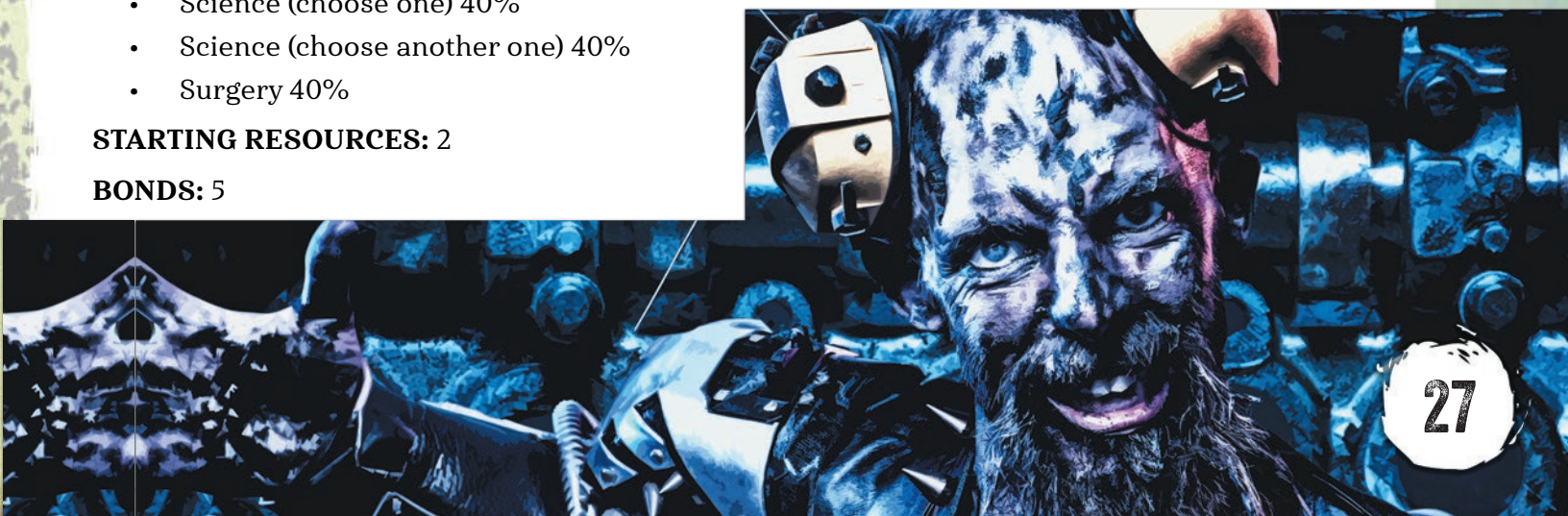
- Craft (Farming) 50%
- Firearms 50%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Machinery 30%
- Insight 50%
- Navigate 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Survival (choose one) 60%
- Survival (choose another one) 40%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Artillery 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Ride 50%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 2



Former Tradesperson

You were always told that learning a trade would pay off. I guess nobody figured that the practical skills they taught you would be what kept you alive in a world where polite society no longer exists. Your talents are now in high demand; it's a shame that most of the tools that you learned with all rely on technology that doesn't work anymore.

RECOMMENDED STATS: DEX

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Appraise 40%
- Craft (choose one) 60%
- Craft (choose another one) 40%
- First Aid 40%
- Heavy Machinery 40%
- Insight 40%
- Persuade 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 70%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Alertness 60%
- Archeology 40%
- Athletics 70%
- Craft (choose yet another one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Dodge 70%
- Melee Weapons 70%
- Science (choose one) 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 3

Former White-Collar Worker

Back before the Apocalypse you worked in an office. Maybe you were a highly paid city lawyer, maybe you just made the coffee. It doesn't really matter now, since all those office skills add up to squat in a world where technology has all gone kaput and surviving each day is a hand-to-mouth affair. To say that this has been a big learning curve would be an understatement ... but you've survived somehow. So far, at least.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT, CHA

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Art or Science (choose one) 50%
- Art or Science (choose another one) 30%
- Dodge 50%
- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 60%, or Research (pick one) 60%
- Search 50%
- Technology Use 60%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Firearms 60%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Forensics 40%
- History 50%
- Occult 50%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 3

Spiritual Guide (Priest / Reverend / Guru)

Back before the End of the World you ministered to a flock whose biggest concerns were how to pay the credit card bill or whether their spouse was cheating on them. Now, the world truly is in a terrible state and people's lives are as close to your vision of Hell as you can imagine. But people need reassurance and spiritual guidance now more than ever — so, despite having thought many times about giving up on religion altogether, you keep on. One day at a time.

RECOMMENDED STATS: CHA, POW

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Anthropology 50%
- History 50%
- Insight 60%
- Persuade 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one religion) 50%
- Reassure 70%

Choose any 4 of these that you don't already have:

- Archeology 40%
- Art (choose one) 40%
- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Occult 50%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one other) 40%
- Stealth 50%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 3

BONDS: 4 (including one Community Bond *with a starting score of 12*)

POST-APOCALYPSE-BORN ARCHETYPES

The following Archetypes are appropriate for games set decades, centuries, or millenia after the Apocalypse.

Deceiver

Life after the Apocalypse is a 'dog eat dog' affair, and the only sensible strategy is to look out for yourself at all costs. Even if it means 'liberating' food or equipment from other people who are likewise scavenging to survive. Of course, there's also benefit to living within a community or society — even if those usually have rules of 'laws' against the kind of subterfuge which comes naturally to you. That's alright, you can work within (or around) any restrictions to get the best of both worlds; isn't that what a sneak does?

RECOMMENDED STATS: DEX

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Alertness 40%
- Appraise 40%
- Disguise 40%
- Insight 40%
- Law (choose one) 30%
- Persuade 60%
- Search 50%
- Stealth 70%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Athletics 70%
- Firearms 60% or Ranged Weapons 60%
- Forensics 40%
- Scavenge 50%
- Survival (choose one) 50%
- Technology Use 40%
- Unarmed Combat 80%

STARTING RESOURCES: 6

BONDS: 2

Explorer

The Apocalypse not only shattered the world, but it also destroyed most people's ability to access reliable and current information about their own world. Not that any of the Pre-Apocalypse maps would be much use anyway. You have made it your mission to explore the new world that has arisen, to help others navigate its dangers.

RECOMMENDED STATS: CON, STR

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Athletics 60%
- First Aid 40%
- Melee Weapons 50%
- Navigate 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one region) 50%
- Ride 30%
- Scavenge 40%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose another one) 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Survival (choose another one) 50%
- Swim 60%

STARTING RESOURCES: 6

BONDS: 3

Healer

Despite there being no hospitals or doctors anymore, people keep getting sick or injured. So, there is always a job for someone with the ability to guide or augment the natural healing process. You have made this your mission, even though supplies of Pre-Apocalypse medicines ran out long ago. There are still the old ways, herbs and poultices. It's the best that anyone can do ... and using those crude tools you still save lives.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- First Aid 50%
- Medicine 60%
- Melee Weapons 50%
- Pharmacy 50%
- Scavenge 40%
- Surgery 40%
- Survival (choose one) 40%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Dodge 70%
- Forensics 40%
- Persuade 60%
- Reassure 50%
- Science (Biology) 40% or Science (Botany) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 4

Leader / Law Giver

There is no official law in the Post-Apocalypse world, but you are determined that there will still be order. Your order. Whether you are the leader of a large community or just the boss of a rag-tag bunch of travelers, you have taken on the responsibility to direct and protect the group. Someone must do it; after all, where would the world be without order?

RECOMMENDED STATS: CHA, INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Insight 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Persuade 60%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 1 of these that you don't already have:

- Anthropology 40%
- Art (choose one) 40%
- Firearms 60%
- Military Science 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Reassure 50%
- Search 60%
- Stealth 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 10

BONDS: 3 (including one Community Bond *with a starting score of 14*)

Muscle

You grew up knowing that you were never the brainiest kid in the compound or the fastest runner. But you could whomp anybody else who crossed you — and that has proven a pretty valuable skill. Turns out that every society of human beings needs someone who can help enforce the law of the land or scare off any rival groups through display of brute force. And you are that force.

RECOMMENDED STATS: STR

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Alertness 60%
- Athletics 60%
- Dodge 60%
- Firearms 60% or Ranged Weapons 60% (choose one)
- Melee Combat 70%
- Persuade 50%
- Unarmed Combat 70%

Choose any 4 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (choose one) 40%
- Demolitions 40%
- Drive 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Military Science 40%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Survival (choose one) 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 3

Outcast

Something bad happened which led to you being banished from the society you grew up in. Maybe it was your fault, maybe it was all just a big misunderstanding. Doesn't really matter, since either way you were turfed-out into the wasteland to die. But you didn't die. You learned to adapt and make use of whatever resources you could scrounge up.

RECOMMENDED STATS: DEX, INT, POW

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Appraise 40%
- Craft (Locksmith) 50%
- Disguise 50%
- Insight 50%
- Navigate 70%
- Scavenge 70%
- Stealth 60%
- Survival (choose one) 70%
- Unarmed Combat 60%

Choose any 6 of these that you don't already have:

- Craft (chose one other) 40%
- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- First Aid 50%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Persuade 60%
- Pharmacy 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%
- Search 60%
- Technology Use 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 1

BONDS: 2

Protector

Those who run the scattered societies of the Post-Apocalypse world — whether it's the fleeting secure compounds where people survive until the walls fall down, or the curious neo-religious orders that have sprung up — all need the same thing. To be protected from those who would do them harm. You have carved yourself a niche as someone who can provide that protection, using a combination of military know-how, cunning, and subterfuge.

RECOMMENDED STATS: STR

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Drive 50%
- Firearms 50% or Ranged Weapons 50% (choose one)
- Insight 50%
- Military Science 50%
- Stealth 60%
- Technology Use 30%
- Unarmed Combat 50%

Choose any 3 of these that you don't already have:

- Disguise 50%
- Dodge 70%
- Navigate 50%
- Persuade 60%
- Pilot (choose one) 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 50%
- Ride 50%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 4

Technology Salvager

The world is scattered with technological junk. Broken items that lie everywhere, discarded. To most people they are nothing but refuse — but not to you. You understand enough about the old Pre-Apocalypse sciences and technologies that you can salvage items and create lash-ups which (for a while at least) solve some of the problems of everyday life. Because of that, folks like having you around. Still, it would be better if your things didn't keep breaking down again. Can't have everything though.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Appraise 30%
- Craft (Mechanical) 40% or Craft (Electronics) 40%
- Heavy Machinery 30%
- Scavenge 60%
- Search 40%
- Survival (choose one) 30%
- Technology Use 40%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Drive 60%
- Firearms 60%
- Heavy Weapons 40%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Ranged Weapons 60%

STARTING RESOURCES: 7

BONDS: 2

Wise One

In the societies that have sprung up after the Apocalypse most people's day-to-day life is consumed with the struggle to survive. But there are a scant few who aspire to keep the wisdom and learning from the past alive, in the hope that one day that may prove helpful to rebuilding a society. You're one of those 'wise persons' who acts as a kind of time capsule for old knowledge and a repository for new learning about the broken world.

RECOMMENDED STATS: INT, POW

ARCHETYPAL SKILLS:

- Art (choose one) 30%
- Foreign Language (choose one) 40%
- History 40%
- Medicine 40%
- Pharmacy 20%
- Post-Apocalypse Lore (choose one) 40%
- Reassure 40%
- Science (choose one) 50%

Choose any 2 of these that you don't already have:

- Forensics 40%
- Law (choose one) 40%
- Occult 50%
- Research 40%
- Science (choose another one) 40%

STARTING RESOURCES: 5

BONDS: 4

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

Jo's Survivor grew up decades after the Apocalypse. She decides her Survivor is a technology salvager, so choses that Archetype. Jo has a vague concept of her Survivor as a plucky female 'Jill-of-all-trades' who collects junk and turns it into bizarre technological masterpieces. She thinks the name 'Maxine' would fit.

Based on that choice, and a few others, Jo determines that Maxine's Archetypal skills are: Appraise 30%, Craft (Mechanical) 40%, Heavy Machinery 30%, Scavenge 60%, Search 40%, Survival (Desert) 30%, and Technology Use 40%. From the "choose two" list she picks Firearms 60%, saying she was always a crack shot at the pistol range growing up; and Post-Apocalypse Lore (Desert of Blasted Pillars) 40%.

Detailed Description: Adversity Skill Points

Depending on the harshness of the environment where your Survivor grew up, he or she may gain Adversity Skill Point Picks. Each such pick provides a 20-point increase in rating for one skill from a pre-defined list.

The number of Adversity Skill Point Picks your Survivor receives depends on the Harshness Descriptor for the setting:

- **Normal(ish)** setting: no Adversity Skill Point Picks
- **Harsh** setting: 1 Adversity Skill Point Pick
- **Very Harsh** setting: 2 Adversity Skill Point Picks
- **Nightmarish** setting: 4 Adversity Skill Point Picks

Adversity Skill Point Picks can *ONLY* be spent to increase ratings in the following skills:

- Any **Post-Apocalypse Lore** skill specialization
- **Scavenge**
- Any **Survival** skill specialization
- **Unnatural**

You can pick the same skill more than once, but no skill or specialization can benefit more than *twice* from Adversity Skill Point Picks.

Detailed Description: Resources

Every Survivor has a **Resources** rating between 0 and 20. This number is an abstraction that represents the size, value, and utility of the personal pool of resources to which he or she has ready access. In the Post-Apocalypse world, access to pieces of half-functioning technology, or rare ammunition is often scarce. In some cases, access to essentials such as food and clean drinking water may be similarly hard to come by. A Survivor with greater access to such resources is "wealthy" (by the Post-Apocalypse definition of the word).

The Resources rating represents a pool of previously unspecified items in addition to any named pieces of equipment that appears on the Survivor's character sheet.

There are two ways in which Resources ratings can become important during a game of ***APOCTHULHU***:

1. The rating can be used as a measure of status and wealth which dictates how Non-Player Characters react to the Survivors; a Survivor who has a sizeable cache of resources might find NPCs more willing to listen to what he or she has to say ... or alternatively more likely to want to take some of those resources away.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

Jo's Technology Salvager Maxine grew up in a **Very Harsh** *environment. This means that Jo can add a few extra skills on top of those from the Archetypal Skills to reflect experience from growing up in a desperate world. She has 2 Adversity Skill Point Picks (of 20 points each) that can be applied towards boosting skill ratings in: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival or Unnatural. Jo decides it's a rare chance to pick up skills in Unnatural, so makes that one of her picks. She elects to use the other to boost her existing Survival (Desert) skill.*

Because every Survivor's Unnatural skill begins at 0, applying the first pick brings that up to an Unnatural skill rating of 20. Maxine already has a rating of 30% in Survival (Desert) from the Archetypal skills, so applying the second pick brings that up to a skill rating of 30+20 = 50%.

Because Jo's Survivor now has an Unnatural score of 20%, her Maximum Sanity score is now 99-20=79%. This means here current Sanity Point rating can never go higher than 79, no matter what (see **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: DERIVED ATTRIBUTES & DAMAGE BONUS**, *page 21).*

2. Game encounters may involve challenges which can be overcome through possession of particular — possibly obscure — items or resources; a Survivor who rummages through his or her trove of (unnamed) personal items may locate just the thing that is needed. Usually this requires a successful Resources test (a 1D100 roll against **Resources × 5**).

A Survivor's Resources rating may change during play as especially significant items are pulled from the 'bag of tricks', items are destroyed, or new equipment caches are picked over for useful additions.

DETERMINING THE STARTING RESOURCES RATING

Your Survivor's Archetype determines the starting value for his or her Resources rating; it is a number listed as part of the Archetype description.

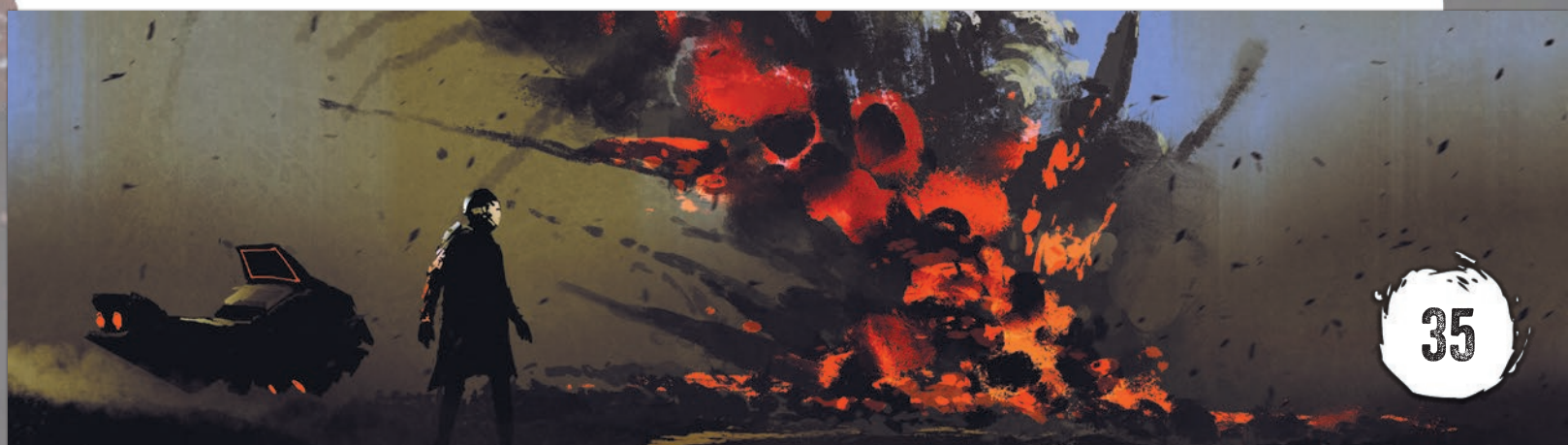
If you would prefer this value to be higher, you have the option to "trade-in" one or more **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks (see page 45). For the first such skill pick traded-in, your Survivor receives a +5 boost to Resources rating. Each additional pick you trade in beyond the first, grants your Survivor a further +2 boost to Resources. You may sacrifice as many skill picks as you wish, although each will reduce your opportunities to round-out your Survivor with extra skills during a later step of Survivor creation.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to play a Survivor who is entirely bereft of resources (i.e., has a Resources rating of 0), you can choose to do so and in return receive one extra Bonus Skill Point Pick for later use.

Rating	*What the Rating Represents*
0	No ownership of any item of value or function. Penury. Near starvation.
1–4	Owns only basic and valueless items; barely enough to eke out a basic life. Always hungry.
5–8	Owns a sparse collection of valuable or useful items, some in terrible condition. Sometimes hungry.
9–12	Owns a modest cache of valuable, useful items. Usually has basic food.
13–16	Owns a fair stock of low-grade valuable items. Occasional access to superior food.
17–18	Owns an impressive collection of useful gear; considered wealthy / well-resourced. Regular access to superior food
19	The envy of most Survivors; owns numerous sought-after items of impressive function. Access to the best food and beverages.
20	Access to unparalleled quantities of valuable or useful items. A stockpile of wealth. Choice of any available food, in any quantity.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

As a technology salvager, Jo's Survivor Maxine has a base starting Resources value of 7. Because she wants her Survivor to have better access to equipment, she elects to sacrifice one Skill Point Pick in exchange for a boost of +5, giving her Survivor a Resources rating of 12. She could sacrifice another skill pick and bring it up to 14 ... but she really wants to use it for boosting Maxine's skills later on.



PERMANENT RESOURCES, RESOURCES AT-HAND, AND RESOURCE CHECKS

The full value established above is called the Survivor's **Permanent Resources** rating, since it measures the sum total of everything he or she owns — regardless of where it is kept.

Carrying around a lot of bulky equipment everywhere is usually not practical, so Survivors with significant Resources ratings (7+ points) will usually need to **stow** some of their junk in a vehicle or conveyance. Those with even more resources will need to **store** the overflow in a fixed 'home base' location.

The table nearby shows a breakdown of 'at hand' vs 'stowed' vs 'in storage' Resource rating points. There is space on the Survivor sheet to record this breakdown of the total Permanent Resource rating into the three categories. The three numbers ('at-hand', 'stowed', and 'in storage') must always add up to the Permanent Resources rating.

The Permanent Resources rating measures both the quantity of items your Survivor has dedicated access to, and their usefulness. This in turn governs how many times per mission or expedition the Survivor can successfully pull out useful items before the pool is temporarily exhausted.

In game terms this is represented by the number of **Resource Check boxes** the Survivor has available — these are explained further below. The number of check boxes available to your Survivor is also indicated on the table nearby: record it on the Survivor Sheet by blacking out but those boxes available to the Survivor (e.g., for a Survivor with only one checkbox available, fill in all but one of the available boxes with solid black — use pencil since your Survivor may open up more boxes later).

Resources Breakdown & Check Boxes

Permanent Resource Rating	"At Hand" / "Stowed" / "In Storage"	Check Boxes
0	0 / 0 / 0	0
1	1 / 0 / 0	1
2	2 / 0 / 0	1
3	3 / 0 / 0	1
4	4 / 0 / 0	1
5	5 / 0 / 0	1
6	6 / 0 / 0	1
7	6 / 1 / 0	2
8	6 / 2 / 0	2
9	6 / 3 / 0	2
10	6 / 4 / 0	2
11	6 / 5 / 0	2
12	6 / 6 / 0	2
13	6 / 6 / 1	3
14	6 / 6 / 2	3
15	6 / 6 / 3	3
16	6 / 6 / 4	3
17	6 / 6 / 5	3
18	6 / 6 / 6	3
19	6 / 6 / 7	3
20	6 / 6 / 8+	3

Pushing the Limits

As indicated in the table, it is typically only possible for your Survivor to keep 6 points of Resources on their person ('at-hand') and another 6 points 'stowed' in a handy vehicle. These aren't hard and fast limits, but represent what can comfortably be carried/transported without impacting travel speed and convenience. If situations arise where the Survivor really needs to carry more (e.g., carry the entire 10 points of Permanent Resources by hand while fleeing a burning building), it is up to the Game Moderator to decide what is possible and what impacts might arise from your Survivor or vehicle being 'overloaded'. The Game Moderator might rule this has an impact on the rate of travel, or require an **Athletics**, **Ride** or **Drive** test to keep moving forward under excess load.

Generally, stretching the limits beyond 12 points carried 'at hand' or 12 points stowed in a vehicle is impossible.

There is no limit to the amount of Resources rating points that can be 'in storage' at a fixed location (e.g., a home base or workshop).

Which Rating for a Test?

Any time your Survivor's Resources rating is the subject of a test, the effective rating number that is used should reflect the situation. It should be determined by the amount of Resources available to your Survivor at that moment. If he or she is at home base, that will probably be the full Permanent Resources amount; if your Survivor is close to his or her vehicle that might be the 'at-hand' value *PLUS* the stowed value. If your Survivor is far away from both home base and vehicle, the number is likely to be just the 'at-hand' number.

Which Rating for NPC Reactions?

When using Resources as a means of determining Non-Player Character reactions, the rating that is used also depends on the situation. Does the NPC in question know all about your Survivor's reputation as a 'wealthy' sort? If so, maybe the full Permanent Resources score can be used even if only some of that wealth is currently on display. Alternatively, if the NPC is suspicious of your Survivor, it might be hard to get him or her to believe in the existence of any resources beyond what they can see for themselves.

THE BAG OF TRICKS

The higher your Survivor's effective Resources rating, the higher the likelihood that his or her accessible personal cache of items may contain something helpful to a situation or problem.

- In situations where **non-specialist resources or items** are needed, simply make a test of your Survivor's Resources × 5. Success means that something helpful was found.
- In cases where a situation requires a **very specialized** resource or item, the Game Moderator might rule it is too rare to find in your Survivor's pool of gear. Alternatively, the GM *may* still permit a test of Resources × 5 roll to locate the rare equipment — *but* rule that success will **permanently reduce** your Survivor's Resources rating by a few points (the number being at the Game Moderator's discretion).

Depending on the specific Post-Apocalypse setting, the difficulty of Resources tests and the quality of the items unearthed through successful rolls may vary. See **A WORLD IN DISORDER** starting page 99.

Rules of Thumb:

- Tests to find items or resource types that are considered Hard to Get in the setting are made at *HALF* the Survivor's effective Resources rating
- Tests to find items or resource types that are considered Very Hard to Get or Impossible to Get in the setting are made at *QUARTER* the Survivor's effective Resources rating
- A test that is a standard success, but which is only just under the target number might yield a sub-standard version of the item or resource. A critical success will always yield the best possible quality available.

CHECKBOXES AND PER-ADVENTURE LIMITS

While your Survivor's personal Resources can prove helpful during an adventure, there are practical limits to the number of times that items can be pulled from it during a single adventure or expedition.

After each Resources test resulting in success, place a check mark in one of the Resource Check boxes on the Survivor's character sheet. When all the boxes are full, the Survivor's resources pool is temporarily exhausted and can't contribute anything more until he or she has some downtime to replenish or reorganize it (see **REPLENISHING RESOURCES, REMOVING CHECKMARKS,** opposite).

POOLING RESOURCES

Sometimes, it may be appropriate for two or more Survivors to pool their personal caches of salvaged junk to improve the likelihood of finding a rare but crucial component. Any Survivor can contribute items to the pool, as long as he or she hasn't temporarily exhausted their resource pool (by filling all check boxes).

When making a roll to search such a **combined** resource pool, the effective Resources rating of the collection is equal to the **highest** individual Resources rating included in the collection **plus *ONE FIFTH*** of the Resources rating of every additional individual stockpile added to the heap (round fractions up). This reflects duplication of items or functions.

Success on a combined test causes a check mark to be placed on the sheet of the Survivor whose full Resources rating was used. Others who contributed a smaller amount to the total do not receive a check mark.

LOSING RESOURCES

A Survivor's Resources rating may decrease due to events that occur during play:

- As described above, producing a highly specialized item as the result of a Resources test may cause the Permanent Resources rating to be reduced by one or more.
- If the Survivor is robbed or otherwise loses control of a significant amount of

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Tinkering in her workshop one day while trying to crack a mysterious coded signal, Maxine decides she needs a small microwave dish — a non-specialist item, but not something listed on her character sheet. Since she's at her 'home base' location, she has access to her entire cache of junk — so her effective Resources rating is the full value of 12. The Game Moderator looks up the resource scarcity notes for the Post-Apocalypse setting and determines that the satellite equipment is Uncommon *— according to the table on page 102, this allows Resources tests at normal chance (but tests that succeed by less than 20 percentiles yield heavily worn equipment).*

The chance of Maxine being able to find the needed satellite equipment buried somewhere in her workshop is 12×5 = 60%, but if she rolls a non-critical success with dice showing 20 or less, the satellite dish she finds will be close to wearing out.

Later on, she decides she also requires a quantum decryptor — a very specialist item. The Game Moderator rules that in this setting such a piece of high-tech equipment would be Very Hard to Get meaning that a test against Maxine's Resources to find it would use only a quarter of the rating (so, the chance would be (12÷4)×5 = 15%), and there's a high probability that the discovered piece would be junk (in fact only a roll of 01 would discover a pristine decryptor). Even worse, the GM decides that such an item is so specialized that even on a successful test, Maxine would also need to make a permanent sacrifice of 3 points of Resources rating to pull one out of her 'bag of tricks'. She decides that is too great a risk and sacrifice; instead she finds another way to solve her problem that doesn't involve such a rare item.

his or her personal equipment, the Game Moderator may decide this warrants a loss of a proportional amount of Resources rating.

- If a proportion of the Survivor's resources are stowed in a vehicle, the theft or destruction of the vehicle is likely to cause some or all to be lost, the exact proportion decided by the Game Moderator.
- If a proportion of the Survivor's resources are stored in a fixed location, a disaster that outright destroys or significantly damages the location will likewise cause a reduction to permanent Resources.

  The points lost are based on the number of 'in storage' rating points stored at the location (i.e., not carried or stowed in a vehicle). The same loss may occur if the permanent location becomes invaded or overtaken by a hostile party — although in that situation the loss might be temporary, assuming the Survivors can win back their former stronghold at some future date.

Whenever Resource rating decreases, the player should recalculate the 'at-hand'/'stowed'/'in-storage' breakdown of points as well as the number of check boxes available to the Survivor.

INCREASING THE RESOURCES RATING DURING PLAY

During an ***APOCTHULHU*** adventure your Survivor may gain access to a cache of items ripe for the taking. When this occurs, the Game Moderator will decide the number of Resources rating points each Survivor might potentially plunder. For a small find this might be modest (1 point or 1D2 points), but for a massive discovery it could be a healthy improvement (1D6 or higher).

Increasing your Survivor's Permanent Resources rating requires a die roll. With percentile dice, attempt to roll above **Permanent Resources rating × 5.** This reflects the fact that the more your Survivor already owns, the harder it is to acquire additional new items he or she does not already have. If the test is successful, increase the Resources rating by the amount or die roll indicated by the GM.

Whenever Resource rating increases, the player should recalculate the "at-hand"/stowed/stored breakdown of points as well as the number of check boxes available to the Survivor.

REPLENISHING RESOURCES, REMOVING CHECKMARKS

The Game Moderator will determine when your Survivor group can take the time to replenish or reorganize their Resources pools. Usually this happens between missions, expeditions, or adventures (see **DOWNTIME**, page 90). Once the Survivors have invested an appropriate period of downtime all check marks can be erased from the character sheet.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Later in her quest to identify the terrifying satellite signal, Maxine and three fellow Survivors venture out beyond the compound walls to stop the vile transmission. She and her companions are travelling on foot, so each of them only has their 'at-hand' Resources rating points (the contents of their backpacks). Stumbling into the haunted server room from which the signal emanates, Maxine realizes that she can't stop the machinery, but can neutralize the transmission with a jury-rigged lash-up of old IT equipment. All she needs is a Firewire cable — this is a standard item with the same scarcity rating as the satellite gear from earlier (i.e., Uncommon*).*

Out here in the field the chances of Maxine having a Firewire cable at-hand is only 30% (6 × 5), and if she rolls 11–30 she will find one, but it will be worn-out.

Her fellow Survivors decide to pool their own resources with Maxine's to see if that would help — her three companions have at-hand Resources scores of 6, 6, and 3 (the last colleague having a very low permanent Resources rating, not even enough to fill a backpack). While that adds up to a total of 15 additional points, the pooling of resources only adds 3 points to Maxine's effective score (one fifth of 15) as there is a lot of duplication. That means Maxine now has a 45% ((6 + 3) × 5) chance of having the required cable handy. She rolls and gets 37, finding the cable somewhere in the pooled junk. Unfortunately, her roll succeeded by less than 20, so the cable she found was heavily worn ... but will do for now. Maxine makes a checkmark in one of the two Resources check boxes on her sheet to reflect the 'successful' rummage. None of the others who helped out need to record a check mark.

Later again, after having defeated the lurker in the server room the group stumbles upon a cache of very valuable Pre-Apocalypse technology. The Game Moderator decides that this stockpile could improve each of the Survivor's Permanent Resources rating by +1D3 — but each will need to make a roll above their current Permanent Resources × 5 to earn that benefit. For Maxine that means rolling above 60 on a percentile die; something she manages with a roll of 72. She rolls an increase of 2, meaning her new Permanent Resources score is 14. This means her new breakdown of resources will be 6 / 6 / 2 and she will now have three check boxes rather than two.

Even though she has some new booty, Maxine still can't erase her existing checkmark — that will require some restful time back at the compound. The group returns there elated with their find, none more so than Maxine.

Detailed Description: Bonds

Bonds measure your Survivor's relationships with the vital people and societies in his or her life: loved ones, family members, and wider communities. A Bond can protect your Survivor from SAN loss (see **PROJECTING ONTO A BOND** on page 87) or offer a chance to repress the effects of a disorder or temporary insanity (see **REPRESSING INSANITY** on page 87).

Bonds are not merely motivations or things your Survivor likes. They are your Survivor's connection to humanity and its social structures. A Survivor with no Bonds is more susceptible to psychological trauma than one who has people waiting back home.

Your Survivor's Archetype determines how many Bonds your Survivor begins with. The more trying and time-consuming the Archetype, the fewer Bonds your Survivor is able to maintain.

There are two distinct types of Bonds, each handled slightly differently — they are **Individual Bonds** and **Community Bonds**. When creating a Survivor, you are free to choose which of his or her starting bonds is of each type.

INDIVIDUAL BONDS

An Individual Bond is an emotional connection to a single person. It could be familial or marital, or it could just be a close friendship or

association. To qualify as an Individual Bond the person must be someone the Survivor believes (hopes?) to be alive.

Each Individual Bond begins with a score equal to your Survivor's CHA. It cannot typically go above this value.

Sample Individual Bonds

- Spouse or ex-spouse
- Son or daughter
- Parent or grandparent
- Best friend
- Members of the same scavenging crew (see **BONDS FORMED THROUGH SHARED ADVERSITY**, page 43)
- Spiritual counsellor

Changes to Individual Bonds During Play

Bonds' scores often deteriorate because of your Survivor's experiences of the horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world. A Bond increases if it is cultivated between adventures (see **DOWNTIME** on page 90). An Individual Bond can never have a score higher than your Survivor's CHA. Any time CHA drops, each Individual Bond drops by the same amount.

Individual Bonds are vulnerable. If the Survivor learns that the individual has died or gone permanently insane, the Bond is destroyed. The Bond is also permanently broken when its score drops to 0 (see **BROKEN BONDS**, nearby).

COMMUNITY BONDS

A Community Bond is a relationship between the Survivor and a broader community of individuals; it reflects the Survivor's status within that community, and the likelihood of other people following his or her instructions or desires.

A community may be a geographical association of people (e.g., 'The Survivors of Compound N') or it may be a society of like-minded individuals (e.g., 'The Church of the Silver Sentinel'). A Survivor can have more than one Community Bond, each describing his or her status within the hierarchy of a different societal structure.

Community Bonds are measured on a scale of 1 to 20, with an indicative meaning shown below:

Rating	*What the Rating Represents*
1	Disgraced member; on the verge of being banished from the society.
2–4	Shunned member of the community; someone who is actively looked down on by most
5–8	Standard member of the community; one of the pack, whose opinion is unlikely to matter
9–12	Well-regarded member of the community; favorably viewed by many other members
13–16	Important member of the community; respected by most other members
17–18	Influential member of community, involved in most decision-making; liked by most
19	An extremely influential member of the community, looked up to by virtually everyone
20	Top-tier of leadership in the community; the head honcho.

If a Community Bond is chosen during the creation of your Survivor, it begins with a default rating of half the Survivor's Permanent Resources rating, rounded up (see **RESOURCES** on page 34). In a few cases, a Survivor's Archetype indicates that he or she has a Community Bond with a certain fixed rating — the final rating should be either that value or half the Permanent Resources rating, whichever is higher.

This value can be optionally increased during the creation of your Survivor by sacrificing one or more **BONUS SKILL POINT** picks (see page 45); the first skill pick sacrificed in this manner gives a bonus of +5 to the Community Bond's rating; each subsequent sacrifice adds +2 (to a maximum of 20).

It is also possible to elect for your Survivor to take a Community Bond with a rating of 1 (and suffer the social effects of being a pariah

to fellow members) and receive one extra Bonus Skill Point Pick to use on purchasing skills later in the process.

Sample Community Bonds

- Group which shelters in the same compound
- Church or support group
- Craft or trade guild
- Secret society

Changes to Community Bonds During Play

The rating for a Community Bond applies individually to every member of that community, and to the community as a whole. If a Community Bond decreases in value, the relationship with each member of the community deteriorates. A Community Bond is permanently broken when its score drops to 0 (and the Survivor is likely cast out of the nominated community).

If the community itself is entirely destroyed (e.g., every member killed or sent insane), or if the Survivor permanently leaves it (e.g., by relocating to live in a new compound) the bond is destroyed.

If a Community Bond is broken by either means, the Survivor will likely suffer negative impacts (see **BROKEN BONDS**, nearby).

During play, events may arise where the reactions of NPCs from the Survivor's bonded community (or the community as a whole) have an impact. In some cases, the Survivor may instigate such situations (e.g., by requesting aid from the community or trying to convince them of impending danger). In such situations the Game Moderator may ask for a test against **Community Bond Rating × 5**. Success means that the NPC or the community reacts favorably.

DESCRIBING BONDS

Identify each Individual and Community Bond: "My Wife." "My Husband and Kids." "The Survivors of Compound N." "My Ex-Partner in the Wasteland Dogs."

An Individual Bond must be a real person or group of people who the Survivor believes to be alive, and with which there is some (potential) opportunity to interact.

A Community Bond must be a real group who recognizes the Survivor as a member.

BROKEN BONDS

When a Bond deteriorates, that relationship becomes strained. Exactly what shape that takes in play is up to you and the Game Moderator (playing the NPCs).

Bonds often fall apart because of events beyond your Survivor's control. An example for Individual Bonds: your Survivor's husband might leave for another woman. An example for Community Bonds: a new leader might ascend to power who is actively antagonistic towards your Survivor.

If such a disaster harms the subject of a Bond, that reduces the Bond's value by 1D4. If that disaster permanently removes the subject of the Bond, that Bond is gone. Cross it off the sheet.

When damage to a Bond reduces it to 0, the relationship is damaged beyond repair. Cross it off the sheet. The only way to regain a Bond with that character or community is to build it from scratch as if it had never existed (see **DOWNTIME** on page 90 for details on creating new Bonds).

The breaking of any Bond is almost certainly traumatic and is likely to trigger a Sanity test due to **HELPLESSNESS** (see page 80).

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

As a technology salvager, Jo's Survivor Maxine has three Bonds according to her Archetype description. Jo chooses two of them to be Individual bonds — Maxine's partner Sam, and the young boy Denny she rescued from the clutches of a shadow creature. She also decides to pick one Community Bond, tying Maxine to 'The Survivors of Compound N', the place where she currently lives.

Maxine has a CHA of 10, so both of her Individual Bonds start at 10.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine (cont.)

By default, her Community Bond begins with a rating of 6 (half her Permanent Resources rating of 12), but Jo worries that this low status might work against Maxine, so she sacrifices one Bonus Skill Point pick to increase the Community bond by +5 giving a final rating of 11. She could sacrifice another five Bonus Skill Point picks to raise Maxine's status all the way up to 20, marking her as top leader of the Compound N community but Jo decides she needs the additional skill points more than the status within the local community.

When you cross a Bond off your Survivor's character sheet, don't erase it. After all, there's no forgetting a vital relationship that went bad.

BONDS FORGED THROUGH SHARED ADVERSITY

Survivors often band together into small tight-knit groups, to enhance their chances. This is true when the group is alone in the wasteland; it's often also true even when they are outsiders in a larger settlement of survivors. If those tight-knit groups go through terrifying ordeals together, there is a strong chance that they will become psychologically bound together through that shared experience.

In game terms, groups of Survivors tend to form individual bonds to one another when they spend most of their time fighting the forces of the Mythos. Whenever your Survivor is part of a team that completes a harrowing adventure, there's a chance of such trauma-generated bonds forming or deepening. This is the case if the scenario played out in a way where:

- One or more members of the team suffered temporary insanity, or
- One or more members of the team gained a new psychological disorder, or
- One or more members of the team died or was incapacitated by physical injuries, or
- Any other event occurred that the Game Moderator thinks was shocking enough to constitute severe trauma.

In the downtime after the adventure (see **DOWNTIME** on page 90), all Survivors that made it back must make a SAN test. If the roll succeeds, nothing changes. If your Survivor fails the SAN roll, he or she gains or strengthens an individual bond with ***each*** fellow Survivor who also made it through the same trauma (up to a maximum of five fellow Survivors).

For each such fellow trauma-sufferer,

- If your Survivor has **no previous bond** with that person, he or she gains a brand-new individual Bond to that person at a rating equal to half your Survivor's CHA. Add the new Bond to your Survivor's character sheet. This focusing of attention comes at a detrimental cost to other pre-existing Bonds — you must lose 1D4 points from one other bond of your choice (either an Individual or Community Bond).
- If your Survivor **already has an Individual Bond** with that person, the bond is increased by 1D4 points (up to a maximum value equal to CHA); at the same time 1 point must be subtracted from another bond of the player's choice (either an Individual or Community Bond). Note that even if all your Survivor's existing bonds are already at the maximum score (and hence can't increase), you still need to pick a bond to weaken by 1.

Remember that if a Bond is ever reduced to 0 or less it is broken, as per the previous section.

When choosing a Bond to weaken during this process you ***cannot*** pick a bond to an individual who was with your Survivor on the recently completed adventure. You ***may***, however, pick an Individual Bond gained from an earlier shared traumatic encounter.

Rather than treating this as a mechanical process, you and your Game Moderator are encouraged to work together to describe the changed dynamic between your Survivor and those around them. If points have been gained with fellow adventurers, does that mean they are beginning to feel comfort that their colleagues will always have their back? Or has the shared experience kindled a romance of sorts? Conversely, if a bond has been weakened, does that mean the Survivor has been neglecting a member of their circle of friends and both are now feeling their friendship is slipping away?

If a community bond has weakened does it mean that the excessive time spent socializing with the tight-knit group has alienated others in the community to the point that they have lost confidence in the Survivor? Or has he or she just missed so many gatherings that their standing as a high-status member of society has eroded?

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine and a party of two other Survivors —Flamingo Ray and Sam — with whom she frequently goes on expeditions, experience a harrowing encounter in which they were almost wiped out by a Mythos horror in a lonely communications station. All of them return to Compound N severely traumatized by what they have been through: Ray was incapacitated by an impossible dimensional horror, while Maxine suffered a moment of temporary insanity. All three Survivors are required to roll against their SAN to see what effect this shared experience has on their Bonds. Ray and Sam both make their SAN rolls, but Maxine fails. That means she will gain or strengthen bonds with Ray and Sam.

Maxine doesn't have any current individual bond with Ray, so she will gain a new Bond with him with a score of 5 (half Maxine's CHA). The downside is that Maxine will need to lose 1D4 from another Bond. Jo rolls 2 and decides that the loss should come from her Bond to Denny — the boy shared earlier traumatic adventures with Maxine but wasn't with her on the most recent one. Jo reasons that Maxine's narrow focus on the team has created a distance between her and the youngster. That takes the individual bond with Denny from 10 down to 8.

Maxine already has an individual bond with Sam, and this new experience would normally strengthen that bond by 1D4 — however her bond with Sam is already at the maximum score of 10 (equal to Maxine's CHA) and so she won't get any increase. Regardless, Jo needs to sacrifice 1 point from another bond: that can't be the bond with Sam or the new bond with Ray, since both were with her on the most recent traumatic adventure. It must be either the individual bond with Denny (again) or the community bond with 'Compound N'. She chooses the latter, reducing her community bond from 11 to 10. Jo reasons that the many late nights spent drinking with the "old gang" (truly the only people who understand what she went through) has caught up with Maxine: she's been found hung-over at important leaders meetings and general respect for her as a fine and upstanding citizen of Compound N has slipped a little. That's the price of being dragged through the wringer with a handful of similarly broken screw-ups.

Detailed Description: Bonus Skill Points

The skill package associated with your Survivor's Archetype coupled with the Adversity skills from the harshness of the world, represent his or her core proficiencies. But they certainly aren't the full story about everything the Survivor is good at.

Each Survivor **begins with ten Bonus Skill Point Picks.** Each pick provides a boost of 20 points to whichever skill it is applied. Alternatively, some of these skill picks can be traded-in for non-skill benefits instead (see box nearby).

When applying a skill pick to a skill which has *NOT* been set by the Survivor's Archetype or increased through Adversity Skill Picks, then add the 20 to its **base rating.** Otherwise, add 20 to its **current score.** This allows your Survivor to specialize in certain Archetypal skills or to learn a little about skills not included in his or her Archetype. You can even boost a single skill more than once, adding +20 each time.

Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, you can't raise a skill higher than 80% during Survivor creation. You must assign (or trade-in) all bonus points to skills before play begins.

Detailed Description: Skills

A skill represents expertise gained with intensive training or study. If you make a skill roll, your Survivor is doing something that would leave untrained people lost. Anyone can attempt a **DEX×5** test to keep from falling over in an out-of-control wasteland truck; only someone who's been trained in the Drive skill can steer the battered vehicle away from the grasping, howling *thing* tearing at its cabin.

Roll your Survivor's skill or lower on 1D100 to succeed at using the skill under dire circumstances. Skills improve through practice and experience.

BASE RATING

Every skill lists its base rating. If a skill has a base rating of 1% or greater, anyone can attempt to use it. A skill at 0% can't be used at all. No skill can be higher than 99%.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

Jo's Survivor already has a basic complement of skills due to her Archetype and Adversity Skills: Appraise 30%, Craft (Mechanical) 40%, Firearms 60%, Heavy Machinery 30%, Scavenge 60%, Search 40%, Survival (Desert) 50%, Post-Apocalypse Lore (Desert of Blasted Pillars) 40%, Technology Use 40%, and Unnatural 20%.

However, Jo also has Bonus Skill Picks she can allocate to further boost these skills or pick up additional skills. Normally she would have 10 picks that could be applied to any skill (except Unnatural) to gain 20 additional points. However, during the determination of the Survivor's Resources and Bonds, Jo already sacrificed two of those picks, leaving her with only 8 to spend now. She's allowed to pick the same skill more than once.

Jo chooses Alertness, Navigate, Scavenge, Search, Stealth (twice), Technology Use, Unarmed Combat. Because she already has scores in Scavenge, Search, and Technology use, those picks add 20 to the previous score — all the others add 20 to the base rating for the skill. In the case of Stealth, 40 points (two picks' worth) are added to the base.

At the end of the skill allocations, 'Mad' Maxine has the following skills: Alertness 40%, Appraise 30%, Firearms 60%, Craft (Mechanical) 40%, Heavy Machinery 30%, Navigate 30%, Post-Apocalypse Lore (Desert of Blasted Pillars) 40%, Scavenge 80%, Search 60%, Stealth 50%, Survival (Desert) 50%, Technology Use 60%, Unarmed Combat 60%, Unnatural 20%.

HOW SKILLS WORK

For details of specific skills, see the listing in **SKILL DESCRIPTIONS** starting on page 47.

When your Survivor uses a skill, sometimes you roll dice and sometimes you don't.

USING A SKILL WITHOUT A ROLL: When circumstances are calm and controlled, you don't roll dice to have your Survivor use a skill; the Game Moderator just needs to know how high your Survivor's rating is. Driving a truck when things are calm simply requires a certain amount in the Drive skill. Using a skill without rolling

Trading-in Bonus Skill Point Picks

As described in previous sections on **RESOURCES** *(page 35) and* **COMMUNITY BONDS** *(page 41), you have the option during Survivor creation to trade-in one or more Bonus Skill Picks in return for non-skill advantages. Alternatively, your Survivor can earn an extra Bonus Skill Pick or two if you are willing to sacrifice some of the normal benefits of those other starting ratings.*

TRADING SKILL POINT PICKS FOR RESOURCES RATING

You may elect to sacrifice one or more Bonus Skill Point Picks to improve your Survivor's starting rating in Permanent Resources:

- *Sacrificing one Bonus Skill Point Pick grants a +5 increase to Permanent Resources.*
- *Sacrificing further Bonus Picks grants +2 for each extra pick sacrificed.*
- *There is no limit to how high the Permanent Resources rating can go.*
- *Note that boosting Permanent Resources rating will also increase the starting value of all Community Bonds (which start equal to half this value).*

As an alternative, if you are willing for your Survivor to have a Resources rating of 0 (absolutely without any worldly goods), that sacrifice earns one EXTRA Bonus Skill Point Pick.

TRADING SKILL POINT PICKS FOR COMMUNITY BOND RATING(S)

You can elect to sacrifice one or more Bonus Skill Point Picks to improve the starting rating of your Survivor's Community Bonds.

- *Sacrificing one Bonus Skill Point Pick grants a +5 increase to the value of one Community Bond.*
- *Sacrificing further Bonus Picks to the same Bond grants +2 for each extra pick sacrificed. Sacrificing a pick towards a different Bond achieves the full increase stated above.*
- *Community Bond strengths can only be increased to a maximum of 20 (at which point your Survivor is the community's top leader).*

As an alternative, if you are willing for your Survivor to set a Community Bond to a value of 1 (ready to break at the slightest provocation, with possibly disastrous social outcome), that sacrifice earns one EXTRA Bonus Skill Point Pick. You can claim this reward multiple times if you wish to set several Community Bonds to 1.

means randomness is not a factor. It's about having the right skill, looking in the right place, and asking the right questions. The more subtle the clue, the higher the skill your Survivor must have to figure it out.

USING A SKILL WITH A ROLL: Roll skill dice only when the outcome is in doubt. That usually means there's a crisis or the circumstances are not under your Survivor's control. The higher the skill rating, the better your Survivor's chance of success. For details, see **USING SKILLS** on page 56.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Most Survivors picked up some basic knowledge as they grew up in the horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world (or lived through the Apocalypse). Because of this, they have some basic understanding of common things like the nature of the terrors that stalk the land; and some basic abilities like how to flee danger. These don't require specific skills.

Skills represents deep, specialized training or education, but Survivors can sometimes get by on common knowledge. Calling on common knowledge requires an **INT×5** test or having a certain level of **INT**. Charming someone with unskilled art is usually a **CHA** or **DEX** test. Other efforts use other stats. The Game Moderator decides whether a task requires the general ability of a stat or the specialization of a skill.

IMPROVING SKILLS

We learn from failure. If your Survivor has at least 1% in a skill, it can improve when your Survivors attempts to use it and fails. Gaining an entirely new skill requires special training (see **DOWNTIME** on page 90). The **Unnatural** skill is a special case, and cannot be improved through either of these methods.

On the character sheet, next to every skill except Unnatural, there is a check box. When your Survivor tries to use a skill and fails, put a checkmark in that skill's box. At the end of each game session, add 1 percentage point to every skill that has a check next to it and erase the check.

FAILING WITHOUT ROLLING: If your Survivor attempts a challenging task that requires a certain level of skill but not a roll, and fails because the task requires more skill than your Survivor has, put a check in the box.

Skill Descriptions

ALERTNESS

Base Rating: 20%

Alertness detects danger. Use it to hear a safety being switched off, to understand the mumbling on the other side of a wall, to spot the bulge of a flare gun hidden under a jacket, or to catch someone who is trying to escape notice using **Stealth**.

ANTHROPOLOGY

Base Rating: 0%

The study of living human cultures. Use it to understand morals, religious beliefs, customs, and mores, and to identify (but not translate) obscure languages. Where **History** is about the distant past and **Archeology** studies physical artifacts, Anthropology is about the behaviors of living cultures and how they relate to each other and the past.

Rating	*What the Rating Represents*
01% to 19%	Dabbler.
20% to 29%	A dedicated hobbyist; with a foreign language you can have rudimentary conversations.
30% to 39%	Equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse College minor or basic training.
40% to 59%	Equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse College major or years of experience; with 50% in a foreign language you have native fluency.
60% to 79%	Decades of experience, or equivalent of a pre-Apocalypse graduate or doctoral degree.
80% to 99%	A lifetime's pursuit or equivalent of multiple related pre-Apocalypse doctorates.

APPRAISE

Base Rating: 10%

The ability to quickly determine the true value of an item, in the context of the Post-Apocalypse world (where value is not defined by money but by utility or aesthetic value). This is an important skill in ensuring that bartering exchange deals are favorable to you. It is also helpful in knowing what items or resources others might be willing to trade to obtain.

ARCHEOLOGY

Base Rating: 0%

The study of physical remains of human cultures. In a world where mass cataclysms have demolished vast swathes of the old cities and structures, there is no shortage of things to dig up. Use it to analyze a ruined structure to determine useful information about its purpose before the Apocalypse or the circumstances of its destruction. Where **Anthropology** is about living cultures and **History** is a broad study of the past, Archeology discerns meaning from the artifacts left behind by the Apocalypse.

ART (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

Expertise at creating or performing a work that sways emotions and opinions. It also encompasses knowledge of techniques and trends in your field, and the ability to tell a particular creator's real work from a fake. Anyone can draw a rough sketch; the Art skill reflects knowledge, practice, and talent.

Each type of Art is a separate skill: Acting, Creative Writing, Dance, Flute, Forgery, Guitar, Painting, Poetry, Scriptwriting, Sculpture, Singing, Violin, etc.

ARTILLERY

Base Rating: 0%

Safe and accurate use of mortars, missiles, howitzers, tank cannons, and other heavy gunnery. Use it to destroy troops or a hard target in battle.

ATHLETICS

Base Rating: 30%

Your Survivor trains to get the most out of his or her strength and agility. Strength and Dexterity cover raw physical power and manual dexterity; the Athletics skill represents long practice doing things like running, jumping, climbing, and throwing.

Use Athletics to:

- Outrun someone (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 60).
- Jump an intimidating gap.
- Climb in a crisis.
- Land safely in a fall of up to three yards.
- Hit a target with a thrown knife or put a grenade exactly on target.
- Catch something without warning, such as intercepting a thrown grenade.

CRAFT (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

Making and repairing sophisticated tools and structures. A job that most people could figure out does not require the Craft skill, only an INT or DEX test. Use Craft for specialized work that needs training: **Craft (Mechanic)** to get a broken engine working — or to sabotage one beyond repair; **Craft (Locksmith)** to open a lock without a key; **Craft (Gunsmith)** to repair a broken firearm, and so on.

A common specialization is **Craft (Jury-Rigging)** which represents an ability to create lash-ups of equipment to perform a function when the proper tool for the job is unavailable.

The Game Moderator decides whether a task requires Craft. Each Craft type is a separate skill: Blacksmith, Carpenter, Farmer, Gunsmith, Jury-Rigging, Locksmith, Mechanic, etc.

DEMOLITIONS

Base Rating: 0%

Safe handling of explosives in a crisis. Use it to disarm a bomb, set a charge to destroy a target remotely, create home-made explosives from supplies at the hardware store, or analyze a blast to determine exactly what caused it. Failure when handling a bomb means your Survivor needs more time. If it's a crisis that requires a roll, a fumble means an accidental explosion.

DISGUISE

Base Rating: 10%

Alter your Survivor's appearance, voice, posture, body language, and mannerisms to avoid recognition without drawing attention.

Summary of Base Ratings for All Skills

Alertness 20%	Drive 20%	Melee Weapons 30%	Ride 10%
Anthropology 0%	Firearms 20%	Military Science 0%	Scavenge 10%
Appraise 10%	First Aid 10%	Navigate 10%	Science (Type) 0%
Archeology 0%	Foreign Language (Type) 0%	Occult 10%	Search 20%
Art (Type) 0%	Forensics 0%	Persuade 20%	Stealth 10%
Artillery 0%	Heavy Machinery 10%	Pharmacy 0%	Surgery 0%
Athletics 30%	Heavy Weapons 0%	Pilot (Type) 0%	Survival (Type) 10%
Craft (Type) 0%	History 10%	Post-Apoc. Lore (Type) 0%	Swim 20%
Demolitions 0%	Insight 10%	Ranged Weapons 20%	Technology Use 0%
Disguise 10%	Law (Type) 0%	Reassure 10%	Unarmed Combat 40%
Dodge 30%	Medicine 0%	Research 10%	Unnatural 0%

DODGE

Base Rating: 30%

Evading danger through instinct and reflexes. Use Dodge to avoid an attack. Against firearms and explosives, Dodge is only useful to get to cover (see **DODGING RANGED ATTACKS** on page 67).

DRIVE

Base Rating: 20%

Handling any ground-based vehicle (e.g., automobile, wagon, motorcycle) safely in a crisis. Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, every Survivor can drive a vehicle safely in normal conditions. Use this skill to keep a vehicle safe in a high-speed pursuit or on dangerous terrain.

FIREARMS

Base Rating: 20%

Safe and accurate shooting with small arms in combat. Use it to hit a target despite the adrenaline, panic, and shock of violence interfering with hand-eye coordination.

FIRST AID

Base Rating: 10%

The initial treatment and stabilization of injuries. Use it to help a character recover lost Hit Points. By comparison, Surgery corrects a severe wound and Medicine ensures long-term recovery. (See **HEALING** on page 70.)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

Fluency in another language. Each foreign language is a distinct skill.

Having 20% allows halting conversations; at 50% your Survivor speaks and reads like a native.

The greater the skill, the greater the complexity of the information your Survivor comprehends and the less time it takes.

You don't need to roll a Foreign Language skill unless the Game Moderator says the situation is exceptionally difficult.

FORENSICS

Base Rating: 0%

Gathering detailed information and evidence based on an assessment of human remains. Use it to hypothesize about the cause of a fire, trace the trajectory that a bullet followed, or determine whether a pool of blood is consistent with a major or minor injury.

Most of the technology that helped forensic scientists before the Apocalypse is not generally available or functional, so this skill is more focused on things that can be deduced from a knowledge of the human body and common modes of injury.

HEAVY MACHINERY

Base Rating: 10%

Safe operation of a tractor, crane, bulldozer, tank, heavy truck, or other big machine in a crisis.

HEAVY WEAPONS

Base Rating: 0%

Safe and accurate use of man-portable heavy ordnance such as machine guns and rocket launchers. Use Heavy Weapons to suppress enemies or destroy a vehicle in combat.

HISTORY

Base Rating: 10%

Uncovering facts and theories about the past including life prior to the Apocalypse, the circumstances which caused the 'end of the world', and (where appropriate) the events that have shaped the world since the Apocalypse. Use it to remember or find a key fact about ancient civilizations or human society just before the Apocalypse. While **Anthropology** is about living cultures and **Archeology** studies the meaning of ancient relics, History is a broad study of humanity.

INSIGHT

Base Rating: 10%

Insight obtains information about a subject — especially information the subject would rather conceal — through observation, conversation, or examining patterns of behavior and relationships. Use Insight to recognize signs of dishonesty from verbal cues and body language, gauge attitude and intentions, cultivate sources of information about a subject, determine what it would take to get a subject to cooperate, or recognize clues of what a subject wants to conceal.

Insight can expose signs of mental illness but **Reassure** would be needed to assist with a specific malady. A subject who deliberately tries to deceive your Survivor can attempt an opposed test comparing their Persuade against your Survivor's **Insight** (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 60).

LAW (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

In the world after the Apocalypse, few formal 'laws' are still observed. However, that doesn't mean there isn't an order to how society functions. Use this skill to understand and manipulate the power structures that exist within society, to either influence outcomes or bullshit your Survivor's way out of trouble.

Different societies in the Post-Apocalyptic world have their own systems of law — the understanding of each is a separate skill. Because all societies are based on common human behavior, you can attempt to use your Law skill at half chance to navigate the vagaries of a an entirely new and unfamiliar social order.

MEDICINE

Base Rating: 0%

The study and treatment of injury and illness. Use it to diagnose the cause of an injury, disease, or poisoning, identify abnormalities such as toxins

or diseases, identify the cause and approximate time of death, identify a dead person's last meal, or prescribe proper long-term care. By comparison, **First Aid** keeps a patient alive until surgery is possible, and **Surgery** corrects a severe wound. (See **HEALING** on page 70).

MELEE WEAPONS

Base Rating: 30%

Lethal use of melee weapons in combat. Use it to hurt or kill an opponent with a knife, axe, club, or other hand-held weapon.

MILITARY SCIENCE

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of military culture, techniques, and regulations. Use it to identify threats in a battlefield, find accurate ranges, recognize weaknesses in a fortification, deduce the training level of a soldier or unit, reconstruct the events of a battle, or deploy forces advantageously in combat.

NAVIGATE

Base Rating: 10%

Finding your way quickly with maps, charts and tables, orienteering, compass, or dead reckoning.

OCCULT

Base Rating: 10%

The study of the supernatural as understood by human traditions, including things like conspiracy theories, folklore, and cryptozoology. Use Occult to examine and deduce the intent of a ritual, or to identify occult traditions, groups, grimoires, tools, symbols, or legends. Occult can never tell a Survivor what's genuinely unnatural and what's just superstition or mythology. That's the province of the **Unnatural** skill.

PERSUADE

Base Rating: 20%

Changing another's deeply held decision or desire. Use Persuade to get your Survivor's way when the subject is so stubborn, what your Survivor wants is so valuable, or the deception is so flagrant that Charisma isn't enough.

With Persuade, your Survivor might convince a witness that what she saw was innocuous and not unnatural, talk a compound leader into helping you cover up an outbreak to avoid a mass panic, or draw useful information out of an unwilling subject. This skill also allows your Survivor to resist persuasion and interrogation in opposed Persuade rolls (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 60).

PHARMACY

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of drugs and herbal remedies, from their ingredients and creation, to their effects, uses, and misuses. Use it to identify and produce medicines and antidotes — as well as poisons.

Identifying a drug or medicinal herb requires at least 20% skill. Preparing a particularly powerful treatment safely, such as one with psychoactive effects, requires at least 40% skill or a successful roll. Misusing Pharmacy is a quick way to kill a patient (see **POISON AND DISEASE** on page 74).

PILOT (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

Piloting, navigating, and captaining waterborne, or airborne vehicles. Use it to keep a vessel safe in a crisis, such as through a storm or in a dangerous pursuit. Each vessel type is a separate skill: Airplane, Drone, Helicopter, Airship, Small Boat, Ship, etc.

POST-APOCALYPSE LORE (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

When the Apocalypse came, thousands of years of human culture and society was swept away in an instant. Civilizations shattered; religions were snuffed out. What replaced them was a patchwork of different local cultures, organizations, and belief systems created by the few who survived.

This skill represents knowledge of one such culture, organization, or belief system. It doesn't cover the in-depth customs and regulations of such groups — that is the province of the **Law** skill.

A Survivor may have knowledge of several different facets of the Post-Apocalypse world — each is represented by a separate Post-Apocalypse Lore skill.

Types might be:

- region-based (e.g., "Desert of Blasted Pillars"),
- supernatural-creature-based (e.g., "Sentient Shadows"),
- organization-based (e.g., "New Beginnings Community Network"), or
- new-religion-based (e.g., "Church of Melqart").

RANGED WEAPONS

Base Rating: 20%

The ability to accurately hit targets with ranged non-firearm weapons such as Bows, Crossbows, and Slings.

This skill isn't used for thrown weapons like Spears — those make use of the **Athletics** skill instead.

REASSURE

Base Rating: 10%

The world after the Apocalypse is corrosive to the mental health of Survivors. But humanity is a resilient species and even in a world where clinical psychotherapy no longer exists there are still tried and true methods for healing a shattered mind through empathy.

Use this skill to understand the mental illness afflicting a person, help an afflicted person along the journey back to sanity, or talk someone down when the mental illness threatens to take hold.

You can also use this skill to assist in social interactions with someone, to calm them from an agitated state in order to extract information from them.

You cannot use Reassure on yourself.

Using Reassure to aid someone who suffered exposure to Unnatural forces might cost the reassuring Survivor Sanity Points; see **THREATS TO SAN** on page 78.

RESEARCH

Base Rating: 10%

The ability to find specific information in a large repository or buried in files, records, or ledger books. Sure, most of the actual 'libraries' might have been destroyed in the Apocalypse, but there are still scattered collections that the knowledgeable can use to track down important information. Your Survivor can use this skill to navigate the ruins of a library catalogue system, pull out buried details in account records, or otherwise locate whatever relevant information lies buried in the ashes of the world.

Note that this is different to the **Scavenge** skill, which is used to locate physical resources or items rather than information.

RIDE

Base Rating: 10%

Handling, training, and riding an animal — horses, donkeys, camels, whatever. Use it to keep safe on an animal in a crisis and to keep riding animals safe, calm, and healthy.

SCAVENGE

Base Rating: 10%

The Post-Apocalypse world is littered with useful items, buried in amongst the rubble and junk. Use this skill to find and salvage helpful pieces of equipment or locate valuable resources like food and water. Anyone can find items in places where they are likely to be found (e.g., bandages in a hospital); use this skill to find things in places where nobody else would think to look.

Depending on the Post-Apocalypse setting, the difficulty of Scavenge tests and the quality of the items unearthed by successful rolls may vary. See **A WORLD IN DISORDER** starting page 99.

Note that efforts to rummage for information rather than items is handled by the **Research** skill instead.

SCIENCE (TYPE)

Base Rating: 0%

The deep study of the processes of the world. This is more than common schooling; anyone can attempt an INT test to remember facts from whatever (rudimentary) schooling they received. Science is used to find a key insight about the way the universe works — or at least, the way it's supposed to work.

Each Science is a separate skill: Astronomy, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Engineering, Genetics, Geology, Mathematics, Meteorology, Physics, Planetology, Zoology, etc.

SEARCH

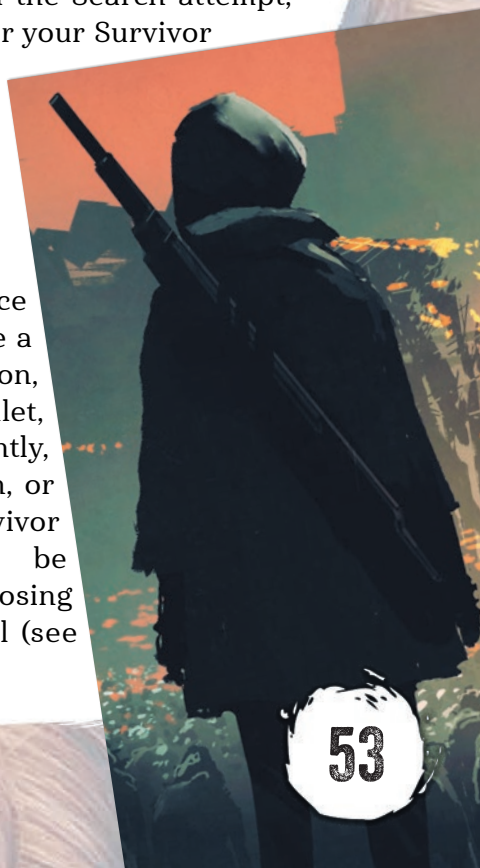
Base Rating: 20%

Finding things that are concealed or obscured from plain sight. Searching an abandoned convenience store may not require the Search skill, only time and effort, or a sufficiently high INT. Use Search to find an object that was hidden with the Stealth skill or is otherwise so well hidden or disguised that it needs an expert. The Game Moderator may roll the Search attempt, so you don't know whether your Survivor succeeded or failed.

STEALTH

Base Rating: 10%

Concealing your presence or activities. Use it to hide a pistol, camouflage a position, conceal an occult amulet, pick a pocket, move silently, follow without being seen, or blend into a crowd. A Survivor attempting Stealth can be detected only by an opposing **Alertness** or **Search** skill (see **OPPOSED TESTS** on page 60).



SURGERY

Base Rating: 0%

The treatment of an injury or abnormality, by invasive means. By comparison, **First Aid** keeps a patient alive until surgery is possible, and **Medicine** ensures long term recovery. (See **HEALING** on page 70).

SURVIVAL (TYPE)

Base Rating: 10%

Knowledge of the natural world. Use it to find tracks and trails, plan an expedition, predict weather, recognize when fauna or flora are unusual, use the environment to gather other information, or find food, water, and shelter. Each type of Survival is its own skill. Common types are Desert, Jungle, Tundra, Urban.

SWIM

Base Rating: 20%

Most Survivors can swim for leisure. Use the Swim skill in a dangerous crisis: going a long distance in choppy water, keeping a friend from drowning, or getting to a boat before the tentacled thing below grabs you.

TECHNOLOGY USE

Base Rating: 0%

In the days immediately following the Apocalypse most types of modern technology stopped working; electrical and gas distribution ceased, and the communication networks halted because there was nobody to operate them. That doesn't mean that the world is not littered with useful pieces of potentially functional technology; just that it takes some in-depth knowledge to get those items to do anything beneficial.

Use this skill to boot-up long dead computer systems long enough to extract some key data, get a rusted-out steam engine working, or to short-circuit the jury-rigged surveillance camera that someone has set up to secure their base. It is often complemented by Craft skills like **Craft (Jury-Rigging), Craft (Locksmith)** and **Craft (Mechanics)**.

UNARMED COMBAT

Base Rating: 40%

Self-defense. A fight between untrained combatants often involves more shoving and shouting than real violence. Use Unarmed Combat to hurt or kill an opponent with your Survivor's bare hands (or feet, elbows, teeth, or head).

UNNATURAL

Base Rating: 0%

Knowledge of the fundamental, mind-shattering secrets of the universe. The things that slithered into the world when the Apocalypse happened. Use it to remember, recognize, or research facts about the things humans consider unnatural. This goes far beyond the occult, because the Unnatural skill represents things that are real. Use it to sift through the darkest parts of myth and folklore and recognize which of it is true.

Your Survivor's SAN score can never be higher than 99 minus his or her Unnatural skill rating.

Detailed Description: Mental Damage from Harsh Environments

Survivors that have grown up in difficult and brutal Post-Apocalyptic worlds are likely to have picked up some mental scarring along the way. This can leave them hardened to certain types of traumatic stimuli. It might also make them psychologically distant from those around them, or even afflicted with mental disorders.

Summary of Mental Damage from Harshness

Harshness Descriptor	Potential for Mental Damage
Normal(ish)	None
Harsh	If CHA or POW Is less than 7, Survivor loses 1D4 from two Bonds (player choice, each can be either an Individual or Community Bond)
Very Harsh	1. *Make a POW×4 test; failure indicates 1 starting mental disorder* 2. *If CHA or POW Is less than 10, Survivor starts Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (pick one; apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds, see below)*
Nightmarish	1. *Make* **two** *POW×4 tests; each failure indicates a starting mental disorder* 2. *Survivor starts Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (pick one). If CHA or POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to both. Apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds (see below).*

Mental Damage gained from a harsh early life can take several forms:

1. Becoming adapted to specific types of psychological trauma (see **ADAPTING TO SAN LOSS**, page 86),
2. **MENTAL DISORDERS** (page 82), or
3. Generally becoming more distant with other people.

The table nearby shows the possible mental damage to your Survivor based on the Harshness Descriptor for the environment he or she grew up in.

Roll to determine mental disorders first; if any are acquired work with the Game Moderator to pick something appropriate from the list of mental disorders starting on page 83.

If the Survivor begins the game Adapted to either Violence or Helplessness place a check mark in the appropriate box on the character sheet and make the following adjustment to statistics and bonds:

- If **Adapted to Violence:** Reduce CHA by 1D6 and subtract the same number from every bond (both Individual and Community).
- If **Adapted to Helplessness:** Reduce POW by 1D6.

The Making of 'Mad' Maxine

Jo's Survivor Maxine grew up in a Very Harsh *environment, which means she may very well have picked up some kind of mental disorder or adaptation to trauma.*

First Jo must roll a test against POW×4 with failure indicating a mental disorder. Maxine has a POW of 15 and Jo rolls 62 ... just narrowly missing the test. She works with the Game Moderator and decides that an appropriate mental disorder for Maxine is Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder, since she is already somewhat pedantic about fine details of precision anyway.

Next Jo needs to determine whether her Survivor starts with an adaptation to Violence or Helplessness. To do this she must determine whether the Survivor has a CHA or POW score under 10. Fortunately, Maxine has a CHA 10 and POW 15, which means she (just) avoids picking up an adaptation.

THE GAME

APOCTHULHU is a game about the resilience of humanity. The world has been shattered by forces of the Cthulhu Mythos, and society as we know it has been torn to shreds. But despite all those defeats, there are those who live on after the Apocalypse. And they fight on. For friends, for family, and for survival.

Here's how the game works.

Using Skills

The ***APOCTHULHU*** rules focus on skills. You decide what your Survivor attempts to do; the Game Moderator determines what skill to use. In a typical adventure, Survivors use many different skills.

Sometimes using a skill requires a roll of dice. The most important rule is this: *The Game Moderator determines if, when, and what you roll.* If the Game Moderator says a roll isn't needed, the skill rating itself determines success or failure.

RESOLVING A TEST WITHOUT DICE

If the Game Moderator decides you don't need to roll, it comes down to what you're trying to do and how high your Survivor's skill is. If the fact is common knowledge for your Survivor's Archetype, or can be found with a little research, he or she might be able to get it by just expending time and effort. If it requires special knowledge, your Survivor may need a certain amount of a skill.

If the Game Moderator thinks a fact should be known by a history expert with at least 60% skill, then a Survivor with **History** at 60% or better knows the fact without rolling. Or perhaps a Survivor with 40% can learn some clues but a Survivor with 60% would learn more.

Sometimes a combination of skills can overcome a lack in one. A clue that needs 60% History might be available if the Survivor has both History and some other relevant skill at 40%.

How Much Skill Does the Task Require?

Only a little training; a hobbyist	20%
Basic training or minor training	30%
Years of experience or training	40%
Decades of experience or training	60%
A lifetime's mastery	80%

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Jo's Survivor Maxine, is looking for a missing fellow Survivor — Gibson — her mentor in Compound N. She has found his notebook and his trademark pneumatic nail gun abandoned at a waystation sometimes used as a temporary shelter out in the wilds. The nail gun was damaged from an impact, which concerns Maxine.

She spends the next few days taking it apart and repairing it. The Game Moderator decides that's not a matter of luck, just time and skill, so it doesn't need a roll. It needs the Craft (Mechanic) and Technology Use skills both at 40% or higher. Maxine has Craft (Mechanic) 40% and Technology Use 60%, so she handily repairs Gibson's nail gun.

RESOLVING A TEST WITH DICE

If the Game Moderator tells you to roll a skill, it's a skill test. The dice determine success or failure. Roll two ten-sided dice to get a number from 01 to 00 (1 to 100).

Roll your skill test rating or lower to succeed. Rolling higher than the skill test rating means failure.

There are three criteria for rolling dice for a skill test:

ROLL WHEN IT IS DIFFICULT: A skill test means the Survivor is attempting something difficult. After all, even an expert in a skill might have only a 60% or 70% rating. A skill test is for a situation when even an expert might fail.

ROLL WHEN THE SITUATION IS UNPREDICTABLE: Having to roll means the situation is out of control. Randomness plays a major role. Surprising, possibly disastrous things can happen, no matter how skillful you are.

ROLL WHEN THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES: Failing a skill roll means ugly things are going to happen. Maybe failing at the crisis is the punishment — or with a failed roll, your Survivor succeeds but the consequences are severe. The fallout is up to the Game Moderator.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine has followed clues found in the notebook alongside her colleague's nail gun. These have led her to a nearby township that's abandoned but known to be ghoul-infested. She wanders the refuse-strewn streets until she sees a suspicious man, possibly a cultist, rifling through the ruins of a fallen church. Maxine follows him when he leaves the church. The Game Moderator says that requires a roll because the outcome is unpredictable — there are so many variables in the ghoul-haunted street — and the target is wary. Maxine's player must roll a **Stealth** *test.*

IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE SKILL

If your Survivor has a 0 in a skill, he or she can't even attempt to use it. It requires specialized training or education that your Survivor lacks.

USING A STAT

If your Survivor tries to do something that anyone ought to be able to do — something that's hard, but doesn't require specific training like a skill — then the Game Moderator might look to one of your Survivor's stats, for a stat test. A stat test is the relevant stat × 5. (So with STR 11, a STR test is 55%.)

Use **STR** if the challenge requires physical power, **CON** if it requires endurance, **DEX** if it requires agility, **INT** if it requires attention to detail, **POW** if it requires mental resilience, or **CHA** if it requires charm.

The stat's score itself may tell the Game Moderator whether your Survivor succeeds, without the need for a roll. Does it need someone with at least average Strength? Then your Survivor needs a STR of 10 or more. If it needs someone with above-average Intelligence, your Survivor must have an INT of at least 13. If only one person in a hundred would have enough stamina, your Survivor needs a CON of 17 or 18. (See **DETAILED DESCRIPTION: STATISTICS** on page 20.)

How Much Stat Does the Task Require?

Anyone could do it	3–4
Nearly anyone could do it	5–8
An average person could do it	9–12
Only an unusually gifted person could do it	13–16
Only a prodigy could do it	17–18

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

Having to make a skill test in the first place means there's a substantial chance of failure. But if the odds are really against your Survivor, the Game Moderator might impose a penalty, down to a minimum chance of 1%. If the situation is a little more in your Survivor's favor, the Game Moderator might allow a bonus, up to a maximum chance of 99%.

If a bonus or penalty applies, it's usually +20%/–20% or rarely +40%/–40%.

Bonus or Penalty	*Frequency*	*Description*
+40%	Rare	You *almost* shouldn't even bother to roll
+20%	Uncommon	Circumstances are noticeably in your favor
No modifier	Most circumstances	The action is difficult and unpredictable
–20%	Uncommon	Circumstances are noticeably worse than usual
–40%	Rare	You *almost* shouldn't even bother to roll

WHO ROLLS?

A group of Survivors is searching the cult leader's compound. Who makes the **Alertness** skill roll to spot the tripwire? Good question.

If it's a task where having more help is useful, use the highest skill among the team.

If it's a task where a crowd is a hindrance, use the lowest skill among the team.

If it's a task where you need to know whether every Survivor succeeds or fails ("How many of you get a good look at the thing in the shadows?"), each player rolls.

EXAMPLE: *Maxine has help from another Survivor who's also shadowing the weird cultist guy. Maxine and her collaborator are coordinating by covert hand-signals, making sure only one is in sight of the quarry at a time. The Game Moderator says that means they can use the higher of their Stealth skills. One roll tells whether the cultist notices them.*

Success and Failure

On any skill or stat test, there are only four possible outcomes. From best to worst they are: *Critical Success, Success, Failure, and Fumble.* Ordinary success and failure are most common. Critical successes and fumbles represent exceptionally good or terrible outcomes.

CRITICAL SUCCESS

A critical success is a roll of 01 or any success where the dice digits match one another. So if your Survivor's skill is 50%, you achieve a critical success with a roll of 01, 11, 22, 33, or 44. A critical success automatically succeeds, and exceeds expectations. A critical is twice as good as an ordinary success. What twice as good means must be taken in context of the action. **In combat, a critical success means double damage,** but during an investigation, it might mean the action takes half as long.

SUCCESS

A success is a roll *equal to or less than* the test chance. With a success, your Survivor accomplishes what he or she set out to achieve.

FAILURE

A failure is a roll that's *higher than* the test chance. Sometimes that means your Survivor suffers harm.

There may be times when a failed roll means a Survivor achieves what he or she wanted — but it comes with an unpleasant complication. The Game Moderator always decides whether that's the case and what the cost will be. For a few possibilities, see the effects of fumbling a roll.

FUMBLE

A fumble is a roll of 00 (100) or any failure where the dice digits match one another. So if your Survivor's skill is 50%, you fumble on a roll of 55, 66, 77, 88, 99, or 00. A fumbled roll fails, no matter how high your Survivor's chance of success, and has additional, catastrophic consequences.

In a car chase, a fumble might mean your Survivor crashes. In a gunfight, a weapon might jam, or you might accidentally shoot yourself. The exact complications are up to the Game Moderator. Here are some possibilities.

PHYSICAL STRAIN: Lose 1D6 HP or temporarily lose 1D4 STR, CON, or DEX.

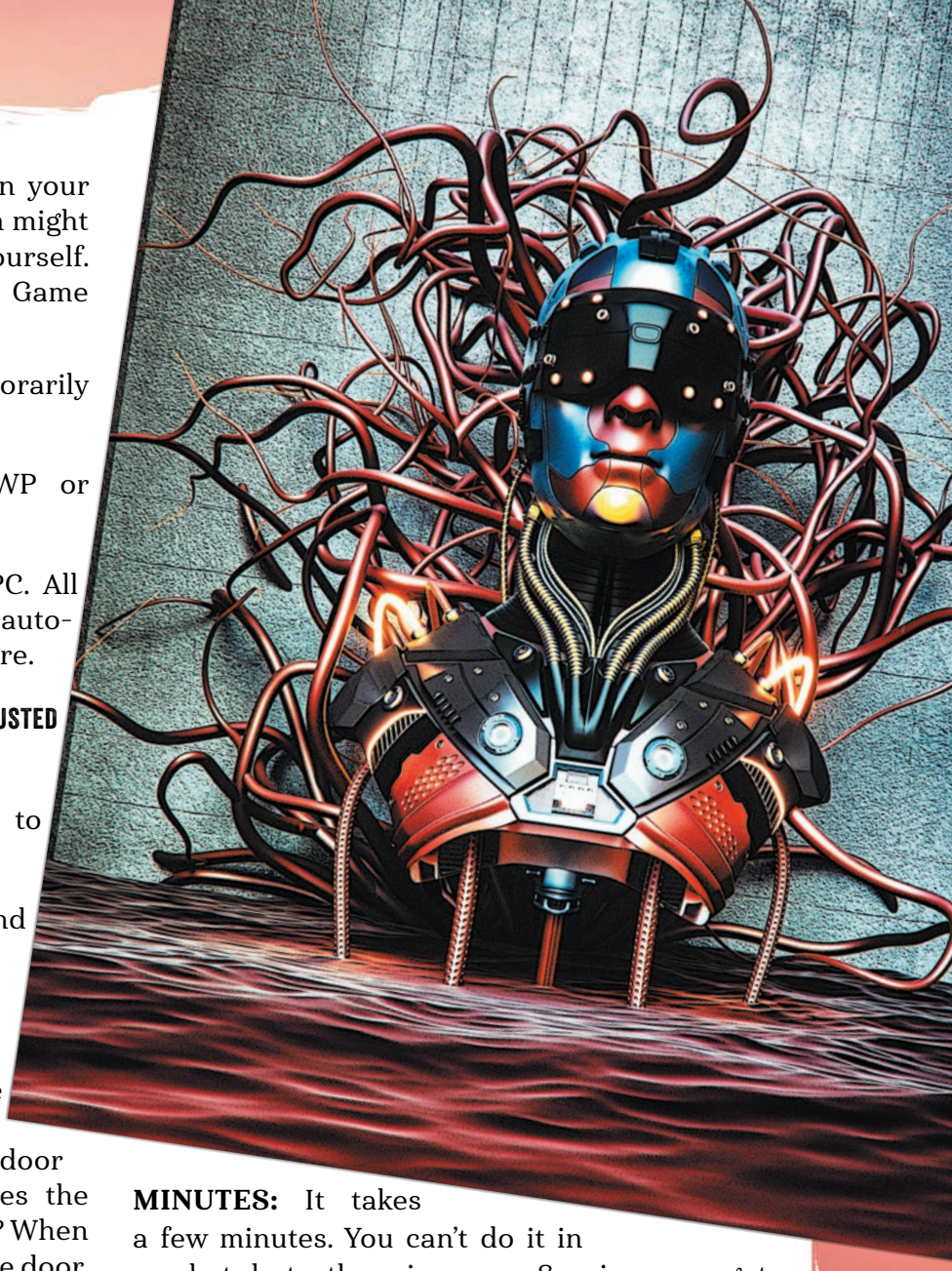
EMOTIONAL BURNOUT: Lose 1D6 WP or temporarily lose 1D4 INT, POW, or CHA.

ALIENATION: Offend an important NPC. All CHA or **Persuade** tests with the NPC automatically fail until the end of the adventure.

EXHAUSTION: Immediately become **EXHAUSTED** (see page 62).

DISTRACTION: Suffer a –20% penalty to your next test.

CONFUSION: You make a major error and gain false information.



The Luck Roll

Events often come down to pure chance. Are the scavengers awake when your Survivor picks the lock on the front door of the derelict convenience store? Does the stolen car have a first aid kit in the trunk? When an unexpected burst of fire tears down the door, does a bullet find you? If the Game Moderator calls for a Luck roll, there's a 50% chance that things go your Survivor's way. It doesn't depend on psychic talent or your Survivor's connection with the cosmos or anything else. Just roll the dice. With a critical success or a fumble, your Survivor's luck is extra good or bad.

Time Required

Sometimes speed counts. The Game Moderator determines how long it takes to perform a test.

TURNS: It takes a few combat turns (see **THE TURN** on page 63) or, at most, sixty seconds. Combat, some skill tests, and most stat tests are resolved in turns.

MINUTES: It takes a few minutes. You can't do it in combat, but otherwise, your Survivor can get through it rapidly. Many skill tests are resolved in minutes.

HOURS: It takes hours. Your Survivor can typically attempt two to four such tasks per day (four only if your Survivor goes without rest; see **EXHAUSTION** on page 62).

DAYS: It takes a day or more. Some extended skill tests, requiring multiple rolls, take days.

LONG-TERM: Efforts that take place outside normal gameplay, like research and training, fit here. It could be a week, a month, or years. It's up to the Game Moderator.

Opposed Tests

An opposed test happens when someone takes action to interfere with another's action. This might be a player rolling a Survivor's **Insight** to sense the lies in a compound leader's **Persuade** roll, a Survivor escaping a pursuer with opposed **Athletics** tests, a degenerate cultist trying to wrestle a sacrificial victim to the ground in opposed **Unarmed Combat** tests, or a Survivor's **Dodge** trying to oppose an alien monstrosity's attack roll.

Usually, skills oppose skills and stats oppose stats. A stat opposes a skill only when one character must use very specific knowledge or training (and therefore rolls a skill) but the other does not (and therefore rolls a stat). It is up to the Game Moderator.

By nature, opposed tests are very unlikely to succeed. Not only must your roll succeed, but you must overcome the opposition's roll as well.

If two characters' skills oppose each other but neither needs to roll, the higher rating wins.

Pursuit

A pursuit is a series of opposed tests. The most basic chase is a single test for each side, pursuer and quarry. If the quarry wins, he or she escapes and the chase ends. If the pursuer wins, he or she (or it) runs the quarry down and the chase ends. Usually that means combat.

A more prolonged chase may require two wins by one side or the other. Wins cancel each other out. If the pursuer wins one but the quarry wins the next, that cancels out the pursuer's win. Then, the quarry needs to win twice more to escape. An especially wide-open chase might require three wins to either catch up or escape.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine follows a man who she thinks may have been involved in her mentor Gibson's disappearance. The Game Moderator says the streets are deserted but the suspect is wary, so Maxine must succeed at **Stealth** *to go unnoticed. The Stealth description on page 53 says it is opposed by the target's Alertness or Search skill; the best roll wins. In this case, the Game Moderator says it's Alertness.*

Maxine's Stealth is 50% and she rolls 67, failing. Her target has Alertness 40% and rolls 49, also failing.

The suspect's failure was a lower roll than Maxine's failure (49 vs 67), so the suspected cultist wins. He realizes he's being followed.

In each test, one side or the other wins. If both fail their rolls, the lowest failure wins. A critical success with a chase test counts as two wins. A fumble counts as two failures thanks to a wreck or some other disastrous accident.

WHICH SKILL APPLIES: A chase on foot requires Athletics; one in vehicles uses Drive, Pilot, or even Heavy Machinery; in the water, it uses Swim; on horseback, it uses Ride.

AID AND ADVANTAGES: Coordinating with multiple pursuers (whether they're in sight of each other or have constant radio contact), having air support in radio contact, or being substantially faster and/or more maneuverable grants a +20% bonus to each chase test, or +40% if the advantages are overwhelming.

OPPOSED TESTS AND PURSUITS

Outcome	*Opponent Succeeds*	*Opponent Fails*
You Succeed	A critical success beats a success. Otherwise, whoever rolled higher succeeds and the other fails.	Your action succeeds and the opposed action fails.
You Fail	You fail to stop the opposed action.	Nobody succeeds; or whoever rolled lower succeeds and the other fails (Game Moderator's choice).

SEEKING AN EDGE: Instead of the usual roll to catch up or get away, pursuer or quarry may attempt to gain some advantage by testing a skill that applies to the situation, such as **Alertness, Navigate, Stealth,** or **Survival**. If this test wins the contest, instead of a "win" it grants a +20% bonus to the next chase roll, or +40% with a critical success. Failure and fumbling have the usual effects.

COMBAT DURING A CHASE: A passenger in a vehicle in a chase can shoot at the opposition before the pursuer and quarry roll to pursue and escape. Attacks use the **COMBAT** rules, beginning on page 63. Each contest in the chase is equivalent to one combat turn. If your Survivor is the driver or is on foot, attacking instead of rolling to pursue or escape means the opponent's roll to pursue or escape automatically wins that exchange.

Willpower Points

Willpower Points are mental fuel. Survivors require Willpower Points to keep going despite exhaustion, to resist unwanted persuasion, to resist the effects of terror and mental disorders, and, on rare occasions, to resist or enact unnatural rituals.

LOW WILLPOWER POINTS: A Survivor whose WP hits 1 or 2 has an emotional breakdown. The Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all actions until WP rises above 2.

RUNNING OUT OF WILLPOWER POINTS: A Survivor whose WP hits 0 collapses, completely incapacitated and perhaps unconscious. The Game Moderator controls your Survivor until WP returns to 1 or higher. A Survivor with 0 WP cannot succeed at any tests — including SAN tests.

REGAINING WILLPOWER POINTS: When your Survivor gets a full night's sleep (but no more than once in a 24-hour period), he or she regains 1D6 WP. If you play up one of your Survivor's personal motivations in a way the Game Moderator finds compelling, your Survivor regains 1 WP.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine is following the cultist, but her quarry got on a rusted-out motorcycle and raced away. Maxine got in a barely-holding-together pickup in pursuit. Unfortunately, Maxine's Drive is only 20%. She is supported by another Survivor in radio contact. He's in a second vehicle. That grants Maxine a +20% bonus, bringing her chance to 40%. The cultist has Drive 40%, and his motorcycle is faster and more maneuverable than the pursuing vehicles, which grants a +20% bonus and brings his chance to 60%. The chase is through a sprawling bombed-out industrial area with long streets and fair visibility, so the Game Moderator says the chase needs two wins by one side or the other.

In the first set of opposed chase tests, Maxine rolls 36, succeeding. The cultist rolls 62, failing. Maxine wins the contest and gains on her quarry. With another win, she'll run the cultist off the street or trap him.

In the second set of tests, Maxine attempts an Alertness roll to gain an edge, watching for alleys that connect the industrial parks. Her Alertness skill is 40% but she rolls 58, failing. The cultist rolls 33, a critical success! That counts as two wins, which cancels out Maxine's earlier win and gives the cultist a one-win lead. Maxine lost sight of the cultist while trying to find shortcuts.

For the third set of chase tests, Maxine again seeks an edge with Alertness. She rolls 35, succeeding. But the cultist rolls 49, succeeding with a higher roll — and escapes.

EXHAUSTION

A Survivor who works too long or faces extreme danger and injury without resting becomes exhausted. When this comes into play is up to the Game Moderator, but a good rule of thumb is that going a night without sleep or refusing to rest after losing SAN or Hit Points leads to exhaustion.

An exhausted Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all skills, stat tests, and SAN tests, and loses 1D6 WP. The exhausted Survivor loses another 1D6 WP after going another night without sleep, after working hard for a few hours, or after running or fighting for a few minutes. A full night's sleep cures exhaustion.

STIMULANTS: Taking stimulants offsets the exhaustion penalty for 1D6 hours. Harder drugs offset it for 2D6 hours. During this time, your Survivor can't sleep. A Survivor can take more stimulants to keep going, but every dose after the first costs 1D6 WP.

If your Survivor gains a new mental disorder while using stimulants, the Game Moderator has good reason to say the disorder takes the form of addiction to them. (See **DISORDERS** on page 82.)

SLEEPLESSNESS

The first time your Survivor tries to sleep after suffering temporary insanity or gaining a new mental disorder (see **TEMPORARY INSANITY** and **DISORDERS** on page page 82), you must make a SAN test. If it fails, your Survivor wakes in terror, losing the possibility of regaining any WP for 24 hours.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine finds another cultist roaming the streets of the abandoned township and follows him around. Her quarry is in no hurry. He stops for a few minutes here, a few hours there. Maxine's CON is 14, but she has limits. After the 14th hour of pursuit, she loses 1D6 WP. She rolls a 4 and her WP drops from 15 to 11.

She chooses not to rest, and continues the pursuit, so the Game Moderator declares she's exhausted, and at a –20% penalty to all actions. But she has a bottle full of amphetamines. These pills remove the –20% penalty for 2D6 hours, and she rolls a 5.

Maxine is alert when the subject starts moving again in hour 17 of his pursuit. At last, he stops at the "Temple of the New Light", some kind of weird neo-religious militia outfit. Still buzzing from the drugs, Maxine follows her quarry inside.

SEDATIVES: A Survivor can drink heavily or take sleeping pills to sleep despite trauma. This gives a +20% bonus to the SAN test to get to sleep.

If the test fails, the Survivor gets no rest despite taking sedatives. In addition, the Survivor is sick the next day, at a –20% penalty to all tests until he or she gets a full night's rest. If your Survivor gains a new mental disorder while using sedatives, the Game Moderator has good reason to say the disorder takes the form of an addiction to them.

COMBAT

A serious fight, where people are trying to kill each other, is chaotic, frightening, and fast. That's what these rules represent. Being skilled, having better weapons, or being in a superior position helps, but the inescapable randomness of combat can claim even the most skilled combatant's life.

Lovecraft's fiction presaged humanity's urge to reduce any confrontation with the unnatural to base combat. "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" features a massive military assault on a U.S. town. The artist in "Pickman's Model" blazes away with a revolver when the ghouls come. In "The Call of Cthulhu," Inspector Legrasse leads a raid on a Cthulhu cult that turns into a pitched battle. Johansen on the *Alert* rams his ship *through Great Cthulhu itself.*

Humanity's weaponry are as ridiculous to the unnatural forces that control the universe as an ant wielding a pebble is to the bulldozer razing the field the ant hill stands in. Combat rarely resolves any unnatural threat.

The Turn

Combat is measured in ***turns***. A turn is a few seconds, or as long as it takes everyone to complete a single action.

The Game Moderator counts down by **DEX** for all characters, from highest to lowest. Each character acts when his or her number comes up. If DEX scores tie, the actions occur at the same time or the Game Moderator can choose some tiebreaker.

During a turn, a combatant can attempt ***one*** of the following actions.

AIM

Sacrifice one turn to aim and gain a +20% to your attack next turn. Aiming requires no roll. After the next turn, or if your Survivor suffers any damage before attempting it, the bonus is lost.

ATTACK

An "attack" encompasses anything from throwing a punch to firing an anti-tank rocket. The "standard" attack (ranged or hand-to-hand) is a skill test to see if your Survivor hits a target; damage is inflicted based on the weapon used. Usually it's **Firearms** for a gun, **Ranged Weapons** for a bow or crossbow, **Athletics** for a thrown weapon, **Melee Weapons** for a hand-to-hand weapon, or **Unarmed Combat** for a punch or kick.

The number of shots fired in a single firearm attack depends on the weapon used — a bolt-action rifle fires one shot while a semi-automatic pistol might fire two or three shots — but it's always a single attack roll and a single damage roll.

Attacking with unarmed combat or a melee weapon (but not with a firearm or ranged weapon) also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

CALLED SHOT

A called shot is an attack to a particular body part (the head, the hand, the leg). A called shot allows your Survivor to roll a grenade past cover to explode on the far side, or to shoot someone in the leg and avoid body armor. If the attack is automatic gunfire that can hit multiple targets, the called shot affects only the first target.

A called shot is more difficult than a standard attack, so it has a penalty:

PARTLY COVERED (–20%): The target is partially covered (half the body).

MOSTLY COVERED (–40%): The target is mostly covered (all but a limb or head).

Making a called shot with unarmed combat or a melee weapon (but not with a firearm or ranged weapon) also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

DISARM

An attempt to knock an object from the target's grasp using the **Unarmed Combat** skill. This is possible only if your Survivor has both hands free and is in hand-to-hand range. If your roll succeeds, the target drops the object.

Attempting to disarm also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

DODGE

This is a **Dodge** skill test to get out of the way of an attack (or a disarm or pin). This opposed test pits your Survivor's Dodge skill against the attack roll. If your roll overcomes the attack roll, your Survivor avoids harm. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

ESCAPE

A roll to escape a pin. Roll either **STR×5** or **Unarmed Combat**, whichever is better. This acts as a defense roll against the character pinning your Survivor (See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66); it's opposed by the pinning character's attack roll against your Survivor. If the pinning character is not attacking, the escape is opposed by either **Unarmed Combat** or **STR×5** (whichever is better). If the escape roll succeeds, your Survivor is no longer pinned — and the escape roll defends against other attacks until your Survivor's next action. If it fails, your Survivor remains pinned and cannot defend against attacks.

FIGHT BACK

If someone attacks your Survivor with a melee weapon or unarmed combat (not a firearm, ranged attack or an explosive), your Survivor can fight back with **Unarmed Combat** or **Melee Weapons** to block and counterattack. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

One Action Per Turn

A Survivor can take only one action per turn. A weapon like a submachine gun or a rocket launcher might hit multiple targets, or one target multiple times, with a single roll (see **LETHALITY RATING** *on page 70), but it's still just one action per turn. If this seems counterintuitive ("a good boxer can throw three jabs a second!") don't think of every roll as a single action but as a few seconds of fighting or moving.*

MOVE

An action that moves your Survivor a significant distance: 10 yards jogging, 20 yards running, or 30 yards sprinting (or you can move about 3 yards while performing some other action).

Usually moving requires no roll, but if Survivors are running or sprinting, players may need to make a **DEX×5** test to keep their footing. Fail, and your Survivor falls prone and must spend a turn recovering.

If there's cover at the end of your Survivor's movement, getting behind it provides protection (see **PROTECTION IN COMBAT** on page 72). This can give your Survivor armor against firearms, ranged weapons and explosives — if the Survivor is behind cover when the attack happens.

PIN

An attempt to immobilize a target, either on the ground or up against something, using **Unarmed Combat.** This is possible only if your Survivor has both hands free and is in hand-to-hand range. If it succeeds, the target is pinned.

All unarmed or melee weapon attacks against a pinned target are at a +20% bonus. A Survivor pinning a target can attack the pinned target in later turns.

A pinned target can attempt escape once per turn (see the **ESCAPE** action, above) but nothing else.

Attempting to pin a target also means your Survivor is parrying and blocking. See **DEFENSE ROLLS** on page 66.

WAIT

Survivors can choose to wait to take any action after their DEX order comes up. At any time before your next turn, you can insert your Survivor's action before the next action in DEX order. Your Survivor can't wait until another character acts and then jump in before it's resolved, but your Survivor can jump in before the other character's turn comes up.

ANYTHING ELSE

Drink a test-tube full of a glowing liquid, throw open an unlocked door, hit the power button on a winch, grab a rope, reload a gun, stand up from a prone position — anything that takes a moment's concentration. The Game Moderator decides whether it requires a stat or skill test.

Attack Rolls

An attack is a skill roll which inflicts damage, disarms or pins the target, depending on the attacker's action.

CRITICAL HITS AND FUMBLES

An attack roll that's a critical success (see page 58) is a **critical hit.** A critical hit inflicts double damage.

EXAMPLE: *Maxine shoots the nearest cultist with a handgun. She rolls 22: a critical success! Normally Maxine's pistol inflicts 1D10 damage, but a critical hit doubles it. She rolls a 4 and doubles it for 8 HP damage. The cultist collapses.*

An attack roll that fumbles (see page 58) is bad news. The exact outcome remains up to the Game Moderator and can include:

1. A gun misfires, requiring 1D4 turns to clear it.
2. A bow or crossbow has its string or wire snap
3. A weapon drops and it takes a turn to pick it back up.
4. The attacker accidentally hits a friend, a bystander, or himself / herself.
5. The attacker stumbles and falls.

EXAMPLE: *Now it's the last cultist's turn to attack Maxine. He attacks with his knife and rolls 55: a fumble! The Game Moderator says the cultist stumbles over one of the bodies and falls prone.*

ATTACK MODIFIERS

When you make an attack roll, it means the situation is out of control. Combat is chaotic and unpredictable even for the most highly trained fighters. The combatants' skill ratings and the luck of the dice usually tell everything you need to know.

Bonuses and penalties in combat apply only in extraordinary circumstances. The **COMBAT MODIFIERS** table, nearby, lists the likeliest modifiers. If they do apply, Attack bonuses stack up to a maximum +40%. There's no limit on penalties.

No matter the bonus or penalty, a roll of 01 always hits and a roll of 00 (100) always misses.

THROWN WEAPONS

Survivors use the **Athletics** skill to attack with a thrown weapon such as a knife or grenade.

SURPRISE ATTACKS

If your Survivor is out to kill someone who's unaware or helpless (and nobody is trying to stop you), that's hardly combat. You may not even need to make a roll.

Target Is Totally Helpless — Bound Or Asleep: No roll is needed to murder the target in one turn.

Target Is Active But Unaware And Combat Has Not Yet Begun: Make an attack roll at +20%. Any success is a critical hit. If it fails, the attack misses. Maybe your Survivor flinched at the last instant or maybe the target moved. Work out the details with the Game Moderator.

SHOOTING INTO A CROWD

Use a **CALLED SHOT** to hit a particular target in a crowd with a ranged attack. Otherwise a random member of the crowd takes the hit.

Defense Rolls

Dodging and hand-to-hand combat (with unarmed or with melee weapons) are tests that protect your Survivor by opposing an attack roll.

DODGING AND FIGHTING BACK

Your Survivor can Dodge or fight back against an incoming attack even before your Survivor's DEX order in a turn. If you do this, it becomes your Survivor's single action for that turn. A Survivor who has already taken another action that turn can't Dodge or fight back until the next turn.

Optional Rules

Other Called Shots

If the Game Moderator agrees, you can make a called shot for some effect other than ignoring armor. Here are some possibilities.

DOUBLE TAP (–20%): *Make two attack rolls. Both must be on the same target. If two potential targets are close enough that you could hit either one, randomly determine which one takes each hit. Not an option with bows, bolt-action or one-shot weapons.*

STUN (–20%): *A hit stuns the target (see STUN, page 68).*

FLESH WOUND (–40%): *A hit inflicts half damage (round up).*

HEAD SHOT (–40%): *A hit is critical without matching dice.*

Other Critical Hits

If the Game Moderator agrees, a critical hit can inflict normal damage (not double) and have some additional effect: STUN or DISARM the target; knock the target PRONE; make the hit a CALLED SHOT; or allow the attacker to immediately roll a SECOND ATTACK.

A roll to Dodge opposes ***all*** hand-to-hand attacks that turn, and lets your Survivor duck behind cover to evade all ranged attacks that turn, if you win the contest. Dodging never inflicts damage.

Fighting back blocks ***all*** hand-to-hand attacks that turn, if you win the contest. It does not protect you against ranged attacks unless you're close enough to push the ranged weapon away. Choose an offensive action for fighting back: **ATTACK**, **CALLED SHOT**, **DISARM**, or **PIN**. If your roll beats the attack, your Survivor takes no damage and your Survivor's action affects the attacker.

Combat Modifiers

Circumstance	+20% Bonus	–20% Penalty	–40% Penalty
Very Long or Very Short Range	Shooting at point-blank range (3 yards or less)	Beyond base range (up to 2×)	Beyond 2× base range (up to 5×)
Unusual Target Concealment or Visibility	Using a laser sight	Terrible visibility due to smoke or darkness	Little to no visibility
Called Shot or Area Attack	Explosive weapon	Target about half covered or smaller than a human body	Target mostly covered or very small
Unusual Target Condition — Ranged Attack	Target standing totally still	Target prone or running	Target moving as fast as a speeding car
Unusual Target Condition — Melee Attack	Target pinned down or standing totally still	Target in a vehicle or running	Target moving as fast as a speeding car
Unusual Attacker Condition	Carefully aiming for a full turn	Suffering from pepper spray; shocked by a stun gun; exhausted	Suffering from tear gas; staggered by a stun grenade

In order to Dodge or fight back, your Survivor must know an attack is coming and be physically able to block or evade it. If your Survivor is pinned, if the attack occurs before he or she realizes it, or if your Survivor can't see or hear the attacker, your Survivor can't Dodge or fight back. For an example illustrating the Dodge and fight back mechanics in practice, see the following page.

DODGING RANGED ATTACKS

An ordinary **Dodge** roll can avoid an arrow or a thrown weapon. Nobody can react as fast as bullets and shrapnel, but your Survivor can use Dodge to scramble for cover. If your Survivor is within three yards of cover and knows gunfire or an explosion is imminent, make a Dodge roll for the Survivor to get behind the cover. If there's no cover, Dodging does no good. This is why people get nervous when guns come out.

DEFENDING AFTER ATTACKING

When your turn comes up, declare your Survivor's action — **ATTACK**, **CALLED SHOT**, **DISARM**, OR **PIN** — and make the roll. Your Survivor can harm, disarm or pin only one target per turn (the attack might hurt others, but all attacks have a single target).

A roll to attack, disarm, pin, or make a called shot also opposes each **Unarmed Combat** and **Melee Weapons** attack against your Survivor until your Survivor's next action. If an attack fails to overcome your roll, it does no harm.

To oppose an attack, your Survivor must know the attack is coming. That requires seeing or hearing the attacker. The Survivor must also be physically able to block the attack, if it is melee. A pinned Survivor can't defend, nor can a Survivor who has already successfully pinned a target.

An attack roll with a ranged weapon or firearm does not oppose attack rolls against your Survivor.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine confronts a Seer of the New Light, a member of a murderous cult currently standing over the corpse of her mentor Gibson. Maxine has her pistol drawn. Her DEX is 12 and the cultist's DEX score is 13.

The cultist acts first, rushing Maxine, trying to subdue her with a pin action. The cultist has 40% in Unarmed Combat and rolls 09, succeeding. Maxine can't afford to be pinned, so she fights back with Unarmed Combat. *Maxine has 60% skill and rolls 31. That succeeds and it's higher than the cultist's roll, so Maxine fends the cultist off. She rolls damage for her unarmed attack but gets zero damage — she's neutralized the attack but failed to hurt her opponent. That's Maxine's action for the turn.*

In the next turn, the cultist attempts to pin Maxine again. He rolls 45, failing. Maxine shoots with the attack action. Maxine has 60% in Firearms and rolls 25. The shot hits. Jo rolls high damage and the cultist collapses.

That same turn, two more cultists arrive from the next room, daggers drawn. They act at DEX 11 and DEX 9. They rush at Maxine and attack. The first rolls 43, which fails. The next rolls 27, which succeeds. Maxine already acted this turn, so she can't try to Dodge or fight back. And her attack action used Firearms, not Melee Weapons or Unarmed Combat, so it cannot oppose the attack roll. Maxine takes damage from the knife.

Damage

Combat is about inflicting damage. Each weapon or attack has a damage rating measured in dice. When an attack hits, roll the weapon's damage dice and subtract the result from the target's Hit Points.

DAMAGE BONUS: High or low Strength modifies the damage of unarmed and hand-to-hand attacks, to a minimum of 0:

Damage Bonus from STR Score				
1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16	17–18
–2	–1	0	+1	+2

STUN: Stun attacks startle and impair. While stunned, your Survivor can't act. When it's your Survivor's turn, you may attempt a **CON×5** test to recover and act normally next turn. If a single attack inflicts half of your Survivor's current HP, the Survivor is automatically stunned.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS: If your Survivor is reduced to 2 or fewer HP, he or she falls unconscious. An unconscious Survivor is helpless and can be killed with a single attack without having to roll. At 3 HP or more (or after an hour passes), the Survivor regains consciousness.

PERMANENT INJURY: Any time your Survivor is reduced to 2 or fewer HP, make a **CON×5** test. Failure indicates permanent injury. The Game Moderator selects a stat to be permanently reduced by the number on the *lowest ten-sided die of the failed CON×5 roll.* Stats can only be reduced in this way to a minimum score of 3. If STR or CON drop, adjust HP accordingly.

DEATH: If an attack brings your Survivor to 0 HP, he or she is dead. HP do not go below 0.

OPTIONAL RULE: OTHER PERMANENT INJURIES

At the Game Moderator's discretion, a permanent injury may have some effect other than stat loss: a permanent penalty that can't be corrected with surgery. Usually it's a –20% penalty that applies in certain circumstances. Here are some possibilities.

PARTIALLY BLINDED: The Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all tests requiring good eyesight.

PARTIALLY DEAFENED: The Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all tests requiring good hearing.

ARM CRIPPLED OR SEVERED: The Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all tests requiring two hands.

LEG CRIPPLED OR SEVERED: The Survivor suffers a –20% penalty to all tests requiring movement.

Table of Example Weapons

Melee Weapons	
Sample Weapons	*Damage*
Bare hands and feet	1D4–1*
Brass knuckles or steel-toe boot	1D4*
Taser	STUN
Ordinary knife or hatchet	1D4*
Combat knife, garotte or nightstick	1D6*
Tomahawk, machete, or baseball bat	1D8*
Large sword, chainsaw	2D6*

** Damage bonus is added for this weapon*

Ranged Weapons		
Sample Weapons	*Damage*	*Base Range*
Bow	1D6	30 yards
Crossbow	1D8+2	50 yards
Sling	1D4	60 yards
Shuriken	1D3*	20 yards
Thrown Knife	1D4*	STR×5 feet
Thrown Spear	1D8*	STR×5 yards

** Damage bonus is added for this weapon*

Small Arms		
Sample Weapons	*Damage*	*Base Range*
Small-caliber pistol	1D8	10 yards
Medium Pistol	1D10	15 yards
Carbine or very large pistol	1D12	100 yards for carbine; 20 yards for heavy pistol
Rifle	1D12+2	150 yards
Shotgun blast, close range	2D10	50 yards (full damage up to 10yds; reduced to 1D10 for 10—20yds; reduced to 1D6 for 20+ yards)

Automatic and Heavy Weapons				
Sample Weapons	*Skill*	*Base Range*	*Lethality*	*Kill Radius*
Submachine gun, fully automatic	Firearms	50 yards	10%	1–3 yds
Assault rifle or carbine, fully automatic	Firearms	100 yards	10%	1–3 yds
Very heavy sniper rifle	Firearms	250 yards	20%	None
Light machine gun	Heavy Weapons	200 yards	10%	3 yds
Heavy machine gun	Heavy Weapons	400 yards	20%	3 yds
Hand grenade	Athletics	20 yards	15%	10 yds
Improvised explosive device	Demolitions	N/A	15%	10 yds
Grenade launcher	Heavy Weapons	150 yards	15%	10 yds
Rocket-propelled grenade	Heavy Weapons	200 yards	30%	10 yds

Selective Fire			
Type of Fire	*Ammo Used*	*Lethality*	*Kill Radius*
Short Burst	3	10%	None
Long Burst	5	10%	1 yard
Short Spray	10	10%	2 yards
Long Spray	20	10%	3 yards

HEALING

There are four types of healing: *Resuscitation, Stabilization, Treatment, and Recuperation.*

RESUSCITATION: Sometimes it's possible to resuscitate a dead character. If the Game Moderator says resuscitation is possible, someone must make a **First Aid** test. This must occur within a number of minutes after death equal to the victim's CON score. If it succeeds, it restores 1D4 HP (doubled for a critical success) and allows the patient to recover. If First Aid fails, the victim dies and may not be resuscitated.

STABILIZATION: Stabilizing a wounded character with a successful **First Aid** test immediately heals 1D4 HP. A critical success doubles the amount healed; a fumble *inflicts* 1D4 damage. Once your Survivor receives first aid, success or failure, the Survivor can't benefit from it again until he or she suffers damage again.

TREATMENT: Treatment is medical care in a clean, calm location with extensive tools and medicines. A doctor can attempt a **Surgery** or **Medicine** test once per week: Surgery for critical care of severe wounds; Medicine for poison, disease, and ongoing healing. If treatment succeeds, the patient recovers 1D4 HP. This is doubled with a critical, while a fumble *inflicts* 1D4 HP damage. At the Game Moderator's discretion, having worn-out tools or poor quality medicines (not uncommon in a Post-Apocalyptic world) may incur a penalty.

RECUPERATION: Over time, the human body repairs itself. A patient who rests in a safe place with proper food and water can attempt a **CON×5** test once per day to recover 1 HP (in addition to any HP recovered due to medical treatment). On a critical success, the patient regains 1D4; on a fumble, the patient loses 1 HP.

COMPLICATIONS

After medical treatment, and until the patient heals all lost Hit Points, undertaking strenuous activity (any physical stat or skill test) inflicts 1D4 HP damage as sutures rip, broken bones shift, or fever sets in.

RECOVERING STAT POINTS

Unless the Game Moderator says otherwise, temporarily lost stat points are restored at 1 point per day.

Lethality Rating

Certain attacks inflict damage well beyond the possibility of survival; a burst of heavy machine gun fire or an artillery shell makes fast work of human anatomy. Rather than rolling many dice for damage or many separate attacks, a weapon like this has a **Lethality** rating.

If your Survivor hits with a weapon that has a Lethality rating, there's a chance it simply kills the target outright. Instead of rolling normal damage, roll percentile dice against the weapon's Lethality rating. If the Lethality test

succeeds, a human target immediately drops to 0 HP. If the Lethality test fails, add the two dice together as if they were individual D10s (0 is 10) and apply that as HP damage.

Lethality rolls do not fumble or critically succeed, but the attack roll can. If the attack roll is a critical success, double the Lethality rating, and double the HP damage if the Lethality roll fails.

KILL RADIUS

If a weapon has a Kill Radius, a successful attack inflicts a Lethality roll on each character in that radius. The center of the Kill Radius is the initial target of the attack.

With explosive weapons, Kill Radius attacks don't need to be as precise as ordinary attacks; hitting a zone within the Kill Radius of a target is enough. That adds +20% to the chance to hit.

A failed attack roll means the Kill Radius lands harmlessly outside the intended area. The attack does no harm—but may still suppress targets (see **SUPPRESSION**, below). Whether a failed Kill Radius attack does unwanted collateral damage is up to the Game Moderator.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine has finished off the third cultist from the shootout and gone deeper into the lair of the Seers of the New Light. She comes upon a room with six cultists inside, meditating and unaware. She thinks they look fanatical, so she doesn't want to try subduing them with just her pistol and threats. Instead, she tosses a hand grenade into the room.

The Game Moderator says she doesn't even need to make an attack roll since she can take her time. Instead the GM asks the player to roll damage for a cultist. The grenade has a Lethality rating of 15%. Jo rolls percentile dice and scores an 80. That's higher than the Lethality chance, so the grenade fails to kill the cultist outright. Instead Jo adds the dice together for hit point damage: 8 + 10 = 18 HP. The cultist had 10 HP, so he dies in the blast anyway.

Why Lethality Ratings?

The Lethality rating replaces the need to roll lots of separate attacks and lots of dice for damage. Without it, a common weapon like an assault rifle might require nine separate attacks and damage rolls to spray nine targets, or a heavy weapon like a Hellfire missile might require rolling and adding up 12D6 for damage. In the middle of combat, rolling that much breaks the tension.

If you'd rather roll damage the old way, it's 1D6 damage for every 3% of Lethality. So a weapon with 35% would do 12D6 HP damage.

MANY TARGETS: A single attack with a Kill Radius usually affects everyone in the Kill Radius. If that doesn't make sense for the situation, the Game Moderator can decide who gets hit.

The Game Moderator is welcome to let players roll the Lethality results for NPCs to speed things up. But really, you need to roll Lethality only for characters who are important enough to track in detail. Since even a failed Lethality roll inflicts between 2 and 20 damage, it's safe to just assume that most humans caught in a Kill Radius are either dead or incapacitated.

SUPPRESSION

An attack with a Kill Radius is terrifying. Any time your Survivor knows that he or she is inside an intended Kill Radius, *even if the attack roll misses,* your Survivor's fear-riddled nervous system forces him or her to go to ground. Your Survivor must either find cover or go prone as his or her next action. Your Survivor can stifle his or her terror and act normally at a cost of 1 SAN.

In a firefight, often targets don't realize they're under attack. When in doubt, call for an **Alertness** test. An unaware target isn't subject to suppression.

A character adapted to violence (see **ADAPTING TO SAN LOSS** on page 86) loses no SAN for braving suppressing fire. For NPCs, it's easiest to assume the average human goes to ground when suppressed. Only insane, hardened, or fanatical enemies stand up in the face of fire.

OPTIONAL RULE: SUPPRESSION WITHOUT A KILL RADIUS

What if your Survivor wants to blaze away with an ordinary pistol or rifle — something without a Kill Radius — to force an enemy to keep his or her head down? That's possible if the Game Moderator says so. Designate the center of a one-yard Kill Radius and make an attack roll. If it succeeds, it does no damage, but anyone inside the Kill Radius is suppressed. On a critical, it hits one target for normal damage and everyone in the radius is suppressed. On a fail, nobody is suppressed

SELECTIVE FIRE

Some small arms, like submachine guns and assault rifles, have selective fire. The shooter chooses how it's used; each pull of the trigger can fire a single shot, a short burst, a long burst, a short spray, or a long spray. A weapon set for single shots attacks normally. A burst or a spray has a Lethality rating.

A short burst fires three bullets in one trigger pull. It affects a single target. A long burst fires five shots with a Kill Radius of 1 yard. Short and long sprays empty the magazine faster, but cover a larger Kill Radius. Some firearms allow only single shots or short bursts ("three-round bursts").

BLOWING THINGS UP

If your Survivor wants to disable or destroy a vehicle or hardware, a heavy weapon with a Lethality rating is the way to do it. Small arms can do this, but it takes longer. Large objects have Hit Points (see **EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES**, page 107), and they are considered huge targets (see **HUGE**, page 73).

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Even the meditating Seers of the New Light have been stirred by Maxine's gunshots and hand grenade. One of their guards leans around a corner with a submachine gun and fires a burst. The guard's Firearms skill is 30% and he rolls 35, missing. But it suppresses Maxine. On her turn, Maxine has to choose: attack anyway and lose 1 SAN from the terror, or run for cover. She runs for cover.

Protection in Combat

We've seen how to injure, kill, and dismember targets, but how do you protect them?

There are five stages of protection, categories that determine how easy a Survivor or other creature is to harm, regardless of their ability to get out of the way.

FRAGILE

Fragile targets drop to 0 HP instantly if they suffer ***any*** damage from a deliberate attempt to injure them. A helpless human is Fragile and may, at the Game Moderator's discretion, be reduced to 0 HP with one attack without bothering to roll damage.

EXPOSED

Exposed is the default for humans and many creatures. It means the target is aware of danger and trying to avoid it, but doesn't have any real protection. Attacks operate normally against Exposed targets.

ARMORED

Being *Armored* reduces the damage of attacks. Armor has an Armor rating which reduces the HP damage of attacks. Armor 5 means reduce damage by 5.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine exchanges fire with the guards of the Seers of the New Light. Both are hiding behind temple walls for cover, granting an Armor Rating of 5. Maxine is also wearing body armor that's worth 4 points of protection. The guard fires a burst and hits with a roll of 13. The guard rolls against the burst's 10% Lethality and gets a 10.

Maxine has cover, so she's not subject to the Lethality success. Adding the dice together, the attack inflicts 11 damage. Maxine's player subtracts 5 for the wall and another 4 for her body armor, so she loses 2 HP. Being targeted by a Kill Radius means Maxine is suppressed again.

Armor comes in two forms: *body armor* and *cover*. They both reduce the damage of ordinary attacks, but have different effects on Lethality attacks. If you have more than one source of armor (such as wearing body armor while behind a wall), add them all together.

Some weapons are armor piercing, which in turn reduces armor (see **ARMOR PIERCING WEAPONS**, page 74).

BODY ARMOR: Body armor reduces the damage of an ordinary attack by its Armor Rating. Body armor protects against the damage of a failed Lethality roll, but does nothing whatsoever against a *successful* Lethality roll.

COVER: Finding cover means using a hard barrier as armor against attack. Cover protects more completely than body armor. If you have cover against a Lethality attack, the Lethality roll automatically fails, but still inflicts the sum of the dice as damage. Subtract the cover's Armor rating from that damage.

What if your Survivors are completely enclosed in a structure or vehicle? That's definitely cover, but it's the Game Moderator's call. Maybe they take damage reduced by the cover, or maybe they take no damage until the cover is breached.

Being behind cover does not make Survivors immune to suppression (see **SUPPRESSION** on page 71). If your Survivor is suppressed, his or her next action must be to hide behind that cover instead of attacking.

Armor	*Armor Rating*
Kevlar helmet (adds damage reduction to other armor)	+1
Kevlar vest (concealable)	3
Reinforced Kevlar vest (typical for uniformed police)	4
Tactical body armor (typical for soldiers	5
and SWAT teams), wall or thick door, makeshift vehicle cover	
Bomb suit; thick wall, concrete, or moderate rock; light vehicle armor	10
Reinforced wall, big rock, or sandbag; medium vehicle armor	15
Heavy vehicle armor or light tank armor	20
Heavy tank armor	25

HUGE

A huge target loses Hit Points from ordinary weapon damage as usual. But Lethality ratings don't affect huge creatures in the same way they do a human sized target. Instead, the Lethality attack does flat HP damage equal to the Lethality rating.

TRANSCENDENT

Transcendent entities are immune to physical damage. This might mean they exist partly in dimensions we barely perceive, or are so organized that mere excesses of force and matter cannot harm them.

Nothing of this Earth is Transcendent. Only through the use of unnatural techniques, under extremely dangerous and limited situations, can humans become Transcendent.

ARMOR PIERCING WEAPONS

An armor piercing weapon reduces the Armor value of a target by 5 points. Heavy armor-piercing weapons reduce armor by 10 points or more.

An explosive weapon's armor-piercing rating applies to its specific target, not to victims in its Kill Radius.

EXAMPLE: *Further into the Temple of the New Light, something erupts from a hole in floor and hits Maxine. It does 3 HP damage — but the sharp, strong claws are armor piercing, reducing Maxine's armor by 5, so her Armor rating of 4 is treated as 0. She loses 3 HP as the claws rip through Kevlar and into her flesh.*

Other Threats

The world is full of threats, combat isn't the only thing that can kill a Survivor.

POISON AND DISEASE

Every poison or disease has two ratings: Speed and Damage.

Speed indicates how soon the poison or disease inflicts damage. A poison inflicts damage once and then passes from your Survivor's system. A disease requires a series of CON tests to resist damage.

Damage is ordinary HP for a disease, while poisons have Lethality ratings.

POISONS: A poison has a Lethality rating. If the Lethality roll fails, the victim makes a **CON×5** test to withstand harm. Success means half damage, and a critical success means the victim loses only 1 HP. A fumble doubles the damage.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine, wounded and suppressed, grits her teeth and takes aim at the guard leaning around the corner. The guard has a wall for cover that blocks 5 damage, so Maxine tries a called shot. The Game Moderator says it's a –20% penalty, reducing Maxine's 60% Firearms to 40%. The dice come up 29 — a hit! Maxine rolls 1D10 damage and gets a 9. The guard drops.

Maxine escaped from the monstrosity in the Temple of the New Light, but its stinger contained an ugly neurotoxin. The Game Moderator says the toxin is a poison with Speed of 1D6 hours and 10% Lethality. The symptoms are convulsions, spasms, and circulatory failure.

The Game Moderator rolls for the poison's Lethality rating and fails with a 19, inflicting (1+9) 10 HP. Maxine has a CON of 14, so her CON×5 test is 70%. She's hospitalized (well, in the compounds makeshift clinic) when it takes effect — that adds a +20% bonus and brings her chance to 90%. She succeeds with a 23. The damage is halved to 5.

'Hospitalization' (makeshift or otherwise) grants +20% to the victim's CON test.

DISEASES: Diseases inflict HP damage. If your Survivor succeeds at a **CON×5** test, he or she suffers half damage and recovers from the disease. On a failure, he or she suffers full damage and must make the **CON×5** test again after another Speed interval. A fumbled CON test doubles the damage. While under the effects of a disease, the Survivor cannot gain Hit Points back. 'Hospitalization' grants a +20% bonus to the CON test. Serious diseases may come with a penalty to the CON test.

A persistent disease — such as HIV/AIDS — means succeeding at the CON test only buys time; the disease subsides and your Survivor recovers lost HP. But every time the Survivor is badly hurt (losing more than half his or her HP) or suffers from some other poison or disease, the Survivor must make a **CON×5** test to resist a resurgence.

Combat Protection Summary

Target Status	Effect of Normal Damage	Effect of Lethality Success	Effect of Lethality Failure
Fragile	Reduced to 0 HP	Reduced to 0 HP	Reduced to 0 HP
Exposed	Roll HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Reduced to 0 HP	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage
Behind Cover	Roll HP damage. Subtract the cover's Armor value from the damage.	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. Subtract the cover's Armor value from the damage.	Add up the Lethality dice to determine HP damage. Subtract the cover's Armor value from the damage.
Huge	Roll HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Take the Lethality rating as HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.	Take the Lethality rating as HP damage. If Armored, subtract the Armor value from the damage.
Transcendent	No damage	No damage	No damage

ANTIDOTES: Many poisons and diseases can be cured with medication. If a physician has the antidote for a poison or the right antibiotics for a disease, a **Medicine** or **Pharmacy** test before the ailment takes effect renders the poison or disease harmless. An antidote given after the ailment takes effect halves the Lethality rating and the HP damage.

FALLING

Falling is extremely dangerous to humans. Even a bad slip can be lethal. A fall from a short distance (one to three yards) does 1D6 damage, or 2D6 if it's a particularly uncontrolled fall. Beyond that, a fall instead has a Lethality rating of 1% per yard fallen. A Survivor who survives a fall must make a **CON×5** test or be **STUNNED** (see page 68).

IMPACT

Slamming into a barrier can be deadly. It has a Lethality rating of 10% for every 25 mph (40 km/h) of speed. Double the Lethality rating if your Survivor slams into a wall and there's nowhere to tumble. A Survivor who survives an impact must make a **CON×5** test or be **STUNNED** (see page 68). For damage from a vehicular crash, see **VEHICLES** on page 107.

SUFFOCATION

Suffocation is a slow death. If your Survivor takes a deep breath before holding it, he or she can go without breathing for CON×5 turns. After that, your Survivor's oxygen-starved brain begins to die. Once every turn, make a **CON×5** test. If it fails, your Survivor suffers 1D6 HP damage. If the CON test succeeds, your Survivor suffers 1 HP damage instead. This continues until your Survivor can breathe again or he or she dies.

If your Survivor doesn't get a breath before suffocating, the damage starts immediately and lasts until someone clears his or her airway with a **First Aid** test. Armor does not protect against suffocation damage.

Sample Poisons

Poison	Entry Route	Speed	Lethality	Symptoms	Antidote?
Spider venom	Bite	1D6 hours	5%	Pain, chills, nausea; possibly necrosis	Yes
Dangerous drug administered with failed **Pharmacy** skill use	Varies	1D6 hours	5%	Usually pain, diarrhea, convulsions, or asphyxiation	Yes
Arsenic	Ingestion	1D6 hours	10%	Pain, diarrhea, cramping	No
Scorpion or rattlesnake venom	Bite or sting	1D6 hours	10%	Pain, weakness, hemorrhaging, convulsions	Yes
Phosgene gas	Inhalation	2D6 hours	15%	Blistering, coughing blood, asphyxiation	No
Hydrogen cyanide gas	Inhalation	1D6 turns	20%	Asphyxiation	Yes
Sarin gas	Inhalation or absorption through skin	2D6 turns	20%	Muscle contractions, spasms, asphyxiation	Yes
Ricin	Injection or powder inhalation	2D6 hours	20%	Diarrhea, shock, seizures, circulatory failure	No

Sample Diseases

Disease	Route	Speed	CON Test Penalty	Damage	Symptoms	Cure
Bacterial meningitis	Airborne	1D6 days	−40	1D4	Stiff neck, nausea, confusion	Antibiotics
Bacterial pneumonia	Inhalation	1D6 days	None	1D6	Cough, fever, chills	Antibiotics
COVID-19	Inhalation	1D6 days	−20	1D6	Cough, fever, loss of smell	None yet developed
Gangrene	Dirty wounds	1D6 days	−20	1D6	Discoloration, oozing, numbness	Antibiotics, excision, or amputation
Plague	Flea bite (bubonic plague), inhalation (pneumonic plague)	1D6 days	None	1D6	Fever, chills, lymph node swelling, coughing (if pneumonic), shock	Antibiotics
HIV/AIDS	Injection or unprotected sex	1D6 months	None	1D6	Weight loss, fever, swelling of lymph glands, collapse of immune system	No cure; persistent; antivirals can keep it in check
Ebola virus	Contact with infected blood, bodies, or meat	1D6 days	−40	1D6	Fever, diarrhea, nausea, bleeding, shock	None

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Sadly for Maxine, facing the monstrosity in the Temple of the New Light exposed her to alien microbes that have catastrophic effects on the human biome.

The Game Moderator says it's a disease with a Speed of 1D6 days, a Penalty of –40%, Damage of 1D6, and symptoms of fever, weakness, diarrhea, and shock. For Speed, the Game Moderator rolls 3 on 1D6, so the disease sets in after three days.

Maxine's CON test is 70% for CON 14. She has +20% for hospitalization but –40% for the disease's Penalty, for a total chance of 50%. She fails with a roll of 54. The 1D6 damage roll comes up 4, so Maxine loses 4 HP. That brings her down to 2 HP, and she slips into a coma.

The Game Moderator rolls 1D6 for the next interval and gets a 4, so in four days Maxine must attempt another CON test. She rolls 48, succeeding. The 1D6 damage roll is 2, halved for the successful CON roll, so Maxine loses 1 HP. She has beaten the disease and can begin to recover.

FIRE

Fire damage suffered depends on the flame's intensity. The victim suffers a damage roll every turn of exposure.

Intensity	*Examples*	*Damage*
Minor	Candle	1/turn
Moderate	Flaming brand; momentary exposure to a larger fire	1D6/turn
Large	Campfire	2D6/turn
Major	Scalding steam; bonfire; blast furnace	Lethality (10%) each turn

After taking damage from any moderate, large or major source of fire, the victim must make a **DEX×5** test or catch fire, suffering half damage each turn until extinguished. Being surrounded by a raging fire also causes suffocation as the fire consumes oxygen. (See **SUFFOCATION** above.)

COLD

Survivors can last for CON in minutes exposed to freezing temperatures unprepared, or CON×5 minutes if partially prepared. Fully prepared and well equipped (decked out for an Arctic expedition, for example) Survivors can last CON hours.

After this, their bodies start to fail. Players must make a **CON×5** test every five minutes. Each failure reduces CON by 1. When a Survivor's CON hits 1, the Survivor can no longer move and suffers 1D8 HP cold damage every five minutes. Exposure to warmth and shelter restores 1 point of CON per minute. Hit Points heal normally.

The Aftermath

When the smoke clears and the fighting stops, it's time for the Game Moderator to look to the consequences of combat. There are always consequences.

First, violence damages sanity. Unless your Survivor is a hardened operator, getting into a deadly fight calls for a Sanity roll. So does getting hurt. So does killing someone. (See **THREATS TO SAN** on page 78.)

Next, was anyone killed or badly hurt? If so ... who's going to come looking for them?

SANITY

Sanity Points represent the resilience of the relationship between your Survivor's personality and the world. With high SAN, your Survivor has confidence in his or her place in the world. A high SAN score is marked by insight, self-awareness, and a life-affirming view of reality. With low SAN, the deadly truth of the universe has begun to overwhelm your Survivor. With no SAN, your Survivor is forever lost.

Unlike the protagonists in many tabletop roleplaying games, ***APOCTHULHU*** Survivors are likely to begin play with a level of mental scarring due to the harshness of their environment and the pervasiveness of Cthulhu Mythos threats. This scarring can manifest itself in different ways — reduced Starting SAN, mental disorders, or adaptation to traumatic stimuli. The Survivor creation rules outline mechanics for determining this psychological damage (**MENTAL DAMAGE FROM HARSH ENVIRONMENTS**, page 54).

Sanity Losses

When your Survivor faces a threat to sanity, make a SAN test: roll his or her current SAN or lower on 1D100 to take a diminished loss of SAN points; roll higher than your Survivor's SAN and he or she suffers a greater loss of SAN points.

Sanity losses look like: 0/1D4 or 1D6/1D20. The number on the left is how much SAN your Survivor loses on a successful SAN test; the one on the right is how much SAN your Survivor loses on a failed test.

Rules of Thumb for SAN Loss

If the cost of failing a SAN test is 1D6 or less, the cost of success is usually zero. If the cost of failure is 1D8 or 1D10, the cost of success is usually 1. Some unnatural events and encounters are even more catastrophic.

A critical success with a Sanity roll means your Survivor loses the least possible SAN. If the loss for succeeding at the Sanity roll would have been 1D4, he or she loses 1 point.

Fumbling a Sanity roll means your Survivor loses the most possible SAN. If the loss for failing the Sanity roll would have been 1D20, he or she loses 20 points.

Explore the Loss

When your Survivor loses SAN, take a second to describe it. If the Survivor loses a few points, how does that look to the people around him or her? Does the Survivor jump or cry out in terror? Does the Survivor stare in shock? Does the Survivor back away involuntarily? If your Survivor kills someone and loses no SAN, what does that say about the Survivor?

What are the long-term effects of repeatedly losing SAN? What strong beliefs or motivations are eroding as your Survivor's SAN falls? The game is more potent when you play out those details and let them shape your Survivor.

Threats to SAN

The three major threats to SAN are Violence, Helplessness and the Unnatural.

These categories can overlap. Being tied up and tortured might trigger both Violence and Helplessness. It's up to the Game Moderator to decide which aspects affect the Survivor.

Optional Rule: Keep SAN Secret

For greater suspense, each player should keep his or her Survivor's current SAN secret from the other players (of course, the Game Moderator must also know all SAN scores). Knowing Maxine has precisely 12 SAN feels very different from knowing that Maxine "has never been the same since she saw that awful thing in the tunnels".

Another approach is for the Game Moderator to keep the current SAN of all Survivors a secret even from the players. You know your Survivor has lost SAN and you'll know when your Survivor goes insane, but you won't know the point totals, adding a welcome uncertainty to the game.

Suffering Violence

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Ambushed or hit by gunfire	0/1
Find a corpse or a mangled carcass	0/1
Find mutilated corpse of infant or loved one	0/1D4
Stabbed, strangled or shot	0/1D4

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Suffer a permanent injury	0/1D6
Set on fire	0/1D6
Reduced to 2 HP or less	0/1D6
Tortured	0/1D10

Inflicting Violence

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Incapacitate or cripple an innocent	0/1D4
Destroy a teammate's body to thwart discovery*	0/1D4
Kill in defense of oneself or another*	0/1D4
Kill a murderous enemy in cold blood*	0/1D6

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Torture a victim	0/1D8
Accidentally kill an innocent*	0/1D8
Kill an innocent in cold blood, even for a very good reason*	1/1D10

** For a failed roll, add 1 per victim beyond the first, up to the maximum possible die-roll: 4 for 1D4, 6 for 1D6, etc.*

Helplessness

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Being dismissed from one's role/job	0/1
Nearly get an Individual Bond hurt or killed	0/1
Losing all personal Permanent Resources	0/1
A friend suffers permanent harm or gains a disorder	0/1
A Bond's score is reduced to zero	0/1D4
Imprisoned or held against will	0/1D4
Waking paralyzed or blind	0/1D4
Find a friend's remains	0/1D4
An Individual Bond suffers permanent harm or gains a disorder	1/1D4

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Shunned by all members of a Community Bonded organization	1/1D4
Flung into a pit of corpses	0/1D4
See or hear a friend being gruesomely killed	0/1D6
Learn an Individual Bond has been killed	1/1D6
See or hear an Individual Bond gruesomely killed	1/1D8
Learn that a Community Bonded organization has been destroyed	1/1D6
Act in a way that directly leads to collapse of a Community Bonded organization	1/1D8

The Unnatural

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Attempting **Reassure** on a character who lost SAN to the Unnatural	0/1
Witnessing a supernatural effect that's apparently benign	0/1
Witnessing a violent supernatural effect	0/1D6

Occurence	Sanity Loss
Seeing a corpse walk	0/1D6
Subjected to an overtly supernatural effect	0/1D6
Suffering a violent supernatural assault	1/1D8 or more

VIOLENCE

Killing other humans is inherently harmful to sanity. While wrestling and punching people is within biological norms, bludgeoning someone to death is not instinctive. The blasting noise and fire of mechanized violence overwhelm the human brain. Violence can drive you insane if you're not careful.

In combat, you must make a SAN test for a trauma *the first time it happens in that fight.* Outside of combat, every individual incident triggers its own SAN loss.

HELPLESSNESS

The essential human impulse is to act. True inactivity is unwholesome to the human psyche.

Note that helplessness often makes violence worse, just like violence makes helplessness worse.

THE UNNATURAL

Finally there's the unnatural, the inhuman things of the Cthulhu Mythos that haunt the edges of existence. The unnatural troubles us because it is wholly outside of human experience. It wounds our sense of connection to the world by causing huge gaps in understanding.

This is why your **Unnatural** skill limits maximum SAN. The more you understand of man's actual position in the cosmos, the harder it is to navigate in the 'real' world.

If a Survivor faces the Unnatural and loses 0 SAN, it may mean the Survivor has adapted to the reality of the Unnatural in some small way — or it may mean simple denial, refusing to admit the Unnatural experience was real. It's up to the player.

Insanity and Disorders

Survivors who lose excessive SAN lose control of themselves, suffering insanity and mental disorders.

TEMPORARY INSANITY (below): A Survivor who loses 5 or more points of SAN in a single roll suffers temporary insanity.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine's POW is 15. Her starting SAN was 60, so her Breaking Point is 60 – 15 = 45. Thanks to some traumatic experiences in the recent past, she was already at 52 SAN when she went in search of her mentor Gibson. In the Temple of the New Light, she found Gibson's corpse, killed four cultists in self-defense in two shootouts and six in cold blood with a grenade.

Finding her friend's remains cost 0/1D4 SAN. She failed the Sanity roll, but lost only 1 point.

After the shootout with three knife-wielding cultists, the Game Moderator said she'd lose 0/1D4 SAN. Maxine succeeded at the Sanity roll and lost no points.

After blowing up a roomful of cultists with a grenade, Maxine's SAN roll failed. The loss was 1D6 plus 1 per victim beyond the first, up to a maximum of 6. There were six victims so the failed roll cost Maxine 6 SAN. She went temporarily insane from the stress and trauma.

That brought her SAN down to 45, her Breaking Point. Jo (Maxine's player) made a note that Maxine would soon develop a disorder. Jo reset Maxine's Breaking Point to 30: her current SAN (45) minus her POW (15).

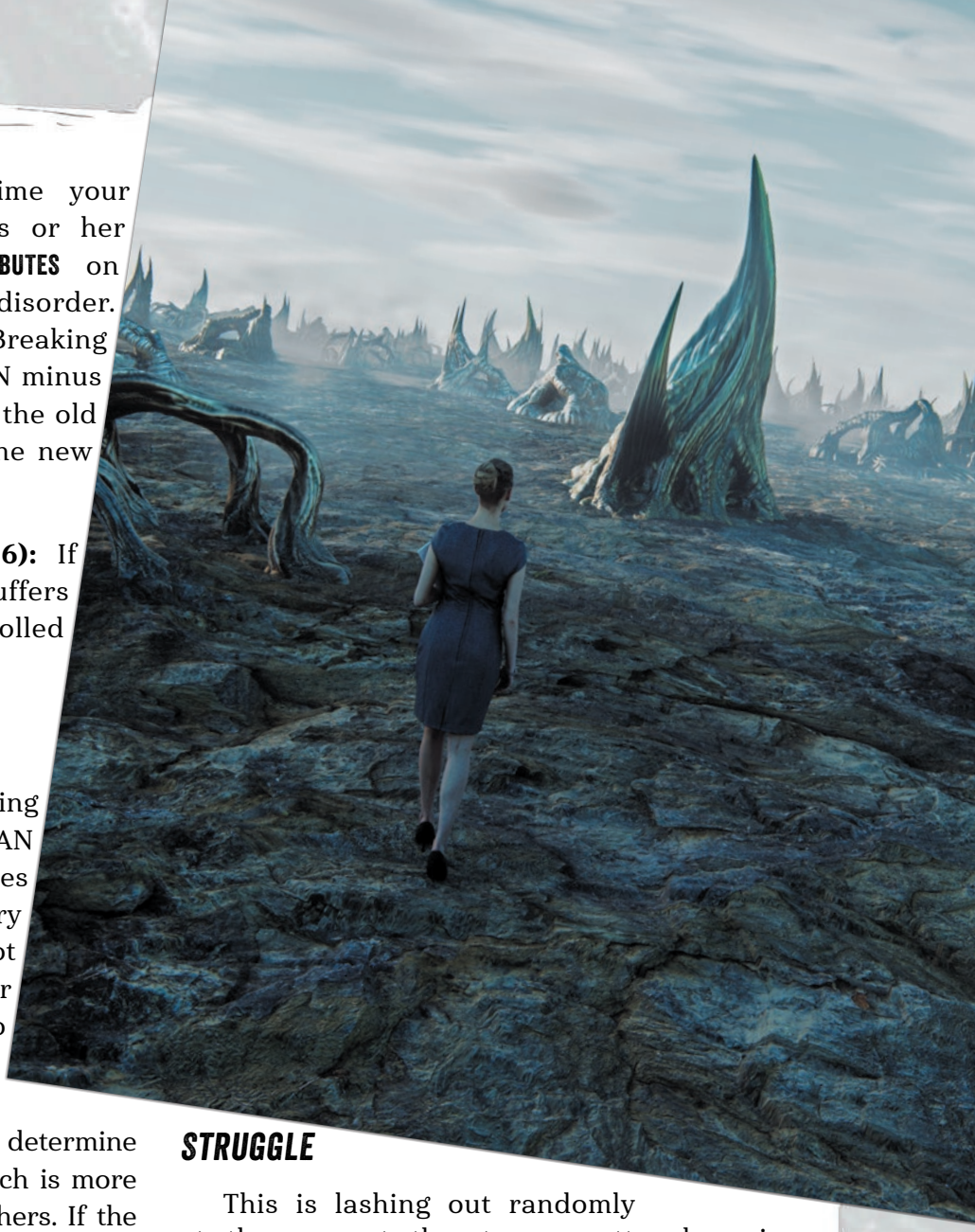
In the shootout with the cultist, Maxine faced a 0/1 loss for being shot and a 0/1D4 loss for killing the guard in self-defense. Maxine failed the first Sanity roll and lost 1 SAN. Then she failed the other and rolled 4 on the 1D4. That brought her to 40.

When Maxine was ambushed by a half-glimpsed monstrosity a little while later, she faced a 1D4/1D10 SAN loss from the Unnatural. Her Sanity roll failed, but with a lucky roll, she lost only 4 SAN bringing her to 36.

Finally, she went to 1 HP thanks to the disease she caught from the monstrosity. When Maxine awakens and realizes how close she came to death, she faces a 0/1D6 loss. She fails the roll, rolls 6 on 1D6, and loses 6 SAN. That means temporary insanity — and it brings her past the Breaking Point again. Jo resets Maxine's Breaking Point to 15 and makes a note that she'll develop yet another disorder.

DISORDER (page 82): Every time your Survivor's SAN is reduced to his or her Breaking Point (see **DERIVED ATTRIBUTES** on page 21), he or she gains a new disorder. Immediately reset your Survivor's Breaking Point to your Survivor's current SAN minus POW. Even if SAN rises back above the old Breaking Point, the disorder and the new Breaking Point remain.

PERMANENT INSANITY (page 86): If your Survivor hits 0 SAN, he or she suffers permanent insanity and is now controlled by the Game Moderator.



Temporary Insanity

In a moment of overwhelming stress — after losing 5 or more SAN ***in a single roll*** — your Survivor loses self-control. We call it temporary insanity. For a short time, you cannot control your Survivor's actions. Your Survivor's primitive brain switches to pure panic, with one of three possible responses: *Flee, Struggle,* or *Submit*.

Work with the Game Moderator to determine which stance your Survivor takes. Each is more likely in some circumstances than others. If the circumstances are calm, someone making a **Reassure** roll can talk your Survivor down from temporary insanity. Otherwise your Survivor loses control until the insanity runs its course.

FLEE

Your Survivor must move away from the SAN-affecting stimulus at top speed in any direction. Your Survivor must do this for a number of turns equal to his or her CON, whereupon your Survivor falls to the ground exhausted (see **EXHAUSTION** on page 62), or until your Survivor feels 'safe', whichever happens first. This is a common reaction against Unnatural and Violence SAN threats.

STRUGGLE

This is lashing out randomly at the nearest threat, no matter how insurmountable it might be. Once this course is set upon, your Survivor has no choice but to fight until he or she is killed, unconscious, or restrained. This is a common reaction against Helplessness and Violence SAN threats.

SUBMIT

This is shutting down or passing out from shock. If conscious, your Survivor is catatonic and paralyzed until the Game Moderator decides he or she snaps out of it. When your Survivor comes to, it's likely he or she has suppressed the trauma that caused his or her collapse. Remembering details requires an **INT×5** test and is terribly stressful. This is a common reaction against Unnatural and Helplessness SAN threats.

UNDERSTANDING THE UNNATURAL

Whenever your Survivor goes temporarily insane or develops a disorder due to an encounter with the Unnatural, he or she also gains some deeper understanding of the true nature of reality.

If your Survivor had no prior knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos (i.e., has an Unnatural skill rating of 0), such an experience causes him or her to gain +5 percentiles in the Unnatural skill. Even if they already knew about the Unnatural, such an experience grants a further +1 percentile to the Unnatural skill.

This increase also serves to reduce the Survivor's maximum SAN (and if current SAN is higher than this value, also causes it to drop to the new maximum).

Disorders

A Survivor whose SAN reaches the Breaking Point gains a disorder. When suffering from a disorder, the mind maladapts to mental trauma with long-term neuroses. A disorder is like a release valve for intolerable stress. Indulging in it helps your Survivor cope. It's possible to suffer from multiple disorders at the same time.

Any disorder is negative in the long term, but some are worse than others. Whatever the source of the disorder, it takes the form of an irrational adaptation to the trauma that produced it. It may manifest a few hours after the trauma, or it might take days, weeks, or months to appear. The player and the Game Moderator negotiate the exact nature of your Survivor's psychological trauma, so it makes sense. If your Survivor saw his or her partner die in a fire, developing *pyrophobia* makes sense, while developing *erotomania* based on the feel of fur is ridiculously unlikely.

ACUTE EPISODES

A disorder is a chronic, ongoing condition. It lurks under the surface, threatening to erupt when things get bad.

Optional Rule: Insane Insight

Sometimes Survivors who face massive psychological damage from unnatural trauma come away with strange insights. If your Survivor suffers temporary insanity due to an Unnatural trauma, he or she might gain some special insight into the specific creature or Mythos Power encountered.

Immediately after going insane, the Survivor can attempt an **INT×5** *test — if this roll fails, the Game Moderator can provide the Survivor with some salient detail about the monstrosity, which may prove helpful in defeating it.*

Any time your Survivor loses SAN, and any time your Survivor faces a trigger that pertains directly to his or her disorder, you must make a follow-up SAN roll. If that fails, your Survivor's disorder takes over. If your Survivor suffers from more than one, the Game Moderator decides which comes to the fore. As long as the Survivor is in the crisis or in the presence of the trigger, he or she succumbs to the disorder's internal logic and must act accordingly.

Suffering an acute episode of a disorder often means your Survivor can't take some actions (or can attempt them only with a penalty), or your Survivor must take some actions. The Game Moderator always decides the exact repercussions, and whether it happens immediately or builds gradually, in the aftermath of the trauma.

When your Survivor is going through an episode, it is obvious to everyone that something is wrong. An **Insight** roll can diagnose your Survivor's particular disorder.

Someone who makes a **Reassure** roll can talk your Survivor down despite the crisis or the presence of the trigger, reducing the impact of the disorder so the Survivor can regain self-control. That takes a few minutes.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

In one of her early adventures Maxine ventured into a Mythos-haunted communications station to switch off a reality-altering radio signal. On that trip she was accompanied by two colleagues, Flamingo Ray and Sam. During this mission all three encountered an extra-dimensional horror which almost killed Ray.

Prior to this deadly encounter, Maxine already had some experience of the Cthulhu Mythos (having an Unnatural skill of 20%). But her two friends were completely unexperienced with the Unnatural.

Both Maxine and Flamingo Ray lost a half dozen SAN points during the encounter; both went into Temporarily Insanity. At that time, Ray immediately gained 5 percentile points in Unnatural, but Maxine only gained an additional +1 (bringing her to 21%). Sam didn't lose any SAN points and didn't go insane, so got no additional skill points.

Just after recovering from their bout of Temporary Insanity, the Game Moderator permitted both Maxine and Flamingo Ray an Insane Insight roll.

Maxine's roll was against her INT×5 (70). Jo rolled a 91, normally an unlucky roll but in this case, it allowed Maxine's rational brain to take a back seat as her subconscious began to piece together the horrific implications of what it had experienced. She suddenly understood that the terrible thing in the server room was somehow linked with the amulet that her mentor Gibson had brought back from a raid on a compound run by a strange cult.

SAMPLE DISORDERS

There are many adaptations the mind makes when exposed to traumatic events, whether they be violence and gore, feelings of utter helplessness, or the inherent 'wrongness' of unnatural Cthulhu Mythos beings. The specific disorder received by a Survivor should never be a random roll on a table, but something specifically selected to relate to the trauma they suffered.

Addiction

Addictions are a reliance on a harmful habit or substance to get one through the stress of life. No matter how much stress and harm the addiction causes, a part of your Survivor needs the relief it offers — even knowing that it might ruin relationships and even kill him or her in the end.

Addiction can be low-key and manageable. But when things go bad, your Survivor will do irrational, unreasonable, self-destructive things to feed it. If he or she goes a day without feeding the addiction, your Survivor suffers a penalty which **halves** every test until he or she gives in to it.

Amnesia

This is the most common disorder to result from an encounter with the bizarre or unnatural. The brain cannot process the event. Everything surrounding the episode is blank unless your Survivor finds a way to bring it back.

Depression

Depression means total despair, a crushing inability to get anything done. It sometimes takes the shape of overwhelming guilt. It's caused by biological and psychological factors and is triggered by reminders of the mental trauma your Survivor suffered or inflicted. During an acute episode, all skills are **halved**.

Hysterical Blindness / Deafness / Paralysis

Collectively called conversion disorder, this can manifest as non-physical blindness, deafness, or paralysis (pick one). Whenever you fail a **SAN** test, the disorder strikes and leaves your Survivor blind, deaf, or paralyzed with numbness and tremors until the source of stress goes away.

Mania

Your Survivor displays a euphoric and perhaps irritable mood that is consistently present. This may include frenzied activity for no obvious reason, uncharacteristic garrulousness, a random stream-of-consciousness flow of ideas, or difficulty sleeping. During an acute episode all tasks which require concentration or fine control are at **one-fifth chance**.

Psychoactive Sedatives

*In some **APOCTHULHU** settings, the Survivor may have access to drugs which can stave off the onset of an acute episode or dull its effects. These are, at best, short-term remedies and come with their own negative impacts.*

Taking a benzodiazepine like diazepam or clonazepam gives your Survivor a +20% bonus to resist an acute episode of a disorder at the cost of a –20% penalty to everything else. Using such drugs frequently makes addiction to them a likely result of your Survivor's next disorder. If that happens, the drugs no longer confer any bonus to reduce acute episodes of a disorder, but still inflict the penalty.

Heavy drinking or marijuana gives your Survivor a +10% bonus to resist an acute episode at the same –20% penalty to other actions. Alcohol runs the same risk of addiction as benzos.

Megalomania / Narcissistic

What does it mean to look upon the face of a dead god and live? Some see themselves as messiah figures. Others realize this elevated perspective exempts them from ordinary morality. When this disorder is triggered, it makes your Survivor impossible to interact with; all uses of **CHA, Disguise, Persuade,** and **Reassure** fail, as every doubt about your Survivor's superiority fills him or her with indignation.

Multiple Personalities

Called 'Dissociative Identity Disorder'. Most of the time, your Survivor seems fine, but in an acute episode — when under extreme stress — he or she takes on an alternate identity with its own personality and memories. The longer your Survivor suffers this disorder, the more alternate identities may surface. The Game Moderator decides when and whether you keep control of your Survivor's behavior.

Obsession

Your Survivor becomes fixated on some person, place, event, act, or idea. In an acute episode, any long-term action or skill use — anything taking more than a day or two — is halved because your Survivor's mind is so often wrapped around its obsession.

Paranoia

A state of extreme suspicion, in which a fear of invisible enemies pervades one's worldview. Paranoiacs interpret any event as a clue to a conspiracy against them. Unless your Survivor finds a way to stifle his or her paranoia, he or she can't trust or rely on anyone.

Paraphilias

This is a general classification for psycho-sexual disorders which revolve around a desire for sexual gratification through something other than interaction with another human being. While an interesting character quirk, such disorders can be uncomfortable to bring to the game table (and thus should only be given to Survivors if everyone in the game is OK with such subject matter and can treat it in a mature way).

Phobia or Philia

A common affliction arising from traumatic experiences is the development of an irrational fear of something related (directly or by association) with the incident. These are called phobias and can be quite debilitating. Whenever a Survivor is in the presence of a trigger for his or her phobia, there's little choice but to suffer the Flee or Submit response to temporary insanity (see page 81). A nearby box provides some examples of phobias; searching online will reveal a huge array of other (sometimes quite weird) phobias.

A less common response to experiencing something shocking is the development of an irrational fetish or allure for something odd that is associated with the situation (perhaps

which somehow related to the Survivor's survival). These are called philias and work in a similar way to phobias in that whenever the afflicted Survivor is in the presence of his or her irrational fetish a **SAN** roll is required to maintain any degree of self-control. If failed, the Game Moderator will dictate your Survivor's actions until he or she regains control.

The list of phobias shown nearby can be converted into philias by simply inverting them: for example, where scotophobia is a fear of darkness, scotophilia is an obsessive and irrational predisposition to shroud oneself in darkness.

Psychogenic Fugue

Your Survivor may shut down into catatonia or wander off in an unconnected daze. It often manifests in the face of emotional or personal complications. During acute episodes, your Survivor may disappear for days at a time, returning with no memory of his or her recent past.

Schizoid

Your Survivor's personality changes towards an uncharacteristic emotionlessness. He or she will be perceived as cold or aloof by most people. This can have a devastating effect on interpersonal relationships. In game terms, all personal interaction skill tests or **CHA** tests are halved; during an acute episode such tests are made at **one-fifth chance**.

Phobias

- *ACROPHOBIA: Fear of heights*
- *AGOROPHOBIA: Fear of open places*
- *AILUROPHOBIA: Fear of cats*
- *ANDROPHOBIA (for female Survivors): Fear of males*
- *APIPHOBIA: Fear of bees*
- *ARACHNOPHOBIA: Fear of spiders*
- *ASTROPHOBIA: Fear of thunder, lightning and storms*
- *BACTERIOPHOBIA: Fear of bacteria*
- *BACTRACHOPHOBIA: Fear of frogs and toads*
- *BATHOPHOBIA: Fear of the deep sea*
- *BELONEPHOBIA: Fear of pins and needles*
- *BOTANOPHOBIA: Fear of plants*
- *CATOPTROPHOBIA: Fear of mirrors*
- *CLAUSTROPHOBIA: Fear of confined spaces*
- *DEMOPHOBIA: Fear of crowds*
- *DENDROPHOBIA: Fear of trees*
- *DORAPHOBIA: Fear of fur*
- *ENTOPHOBIA: Fear of insects*
- *GYNEPHOBIA (for male Survivors): Fear of females*
- *HEMATOPHOBIA: Fear of blood*
- *HYLEPHOBIA: Fear of forests*
- *IATROPHOBIA: Fear of doctors*
- *MONOPHOBIA: Fear of being alone*
- *NECROPHOBIA: Fear of dead things*
- *OPHIOPHOBIA: Fear of snakes*
- *PYROPHOBIA: Fear of fire*
- *SCOTOPHOBIA: Fear of darkness*
- *TAPHEPHOBIA: Fear of being buried alive*
- *TECHNOPHOBIA: Fear of technology*
- *THALASSOPHOBIA: Fear of the sea*
- *TRICHOPHOBIA: Fear of hair*
- *TRISKADEKAPHOBIA: Fear of the number 13*
- *XENOPHOBIA: Fear of foreigners*
- *ZOOPHOBIA: Fear of Animals*

PTSD aka "Shell Shock"

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a psychiatric disorder that occurs following life-threatening events. Some people shake off such horrors, while others have stress reactions. Victims of Shell Shock/PTSD relive the experience through nightmares and flashbacks, have difficulty sleeping, are subject to depression, and can be overcome by anxiety when presented with a similar situation.

Permanent Insanity

A Survivor who drops to 0 SAN is effectively 'lost.' Just as being reduced to 0 Hit Points permanently removes your Survivor from your control through physical death, being reduced to 0 SAN permanently removes your Survivor from your control through insanity. Survivors at 0 SAN have embraced a world of violence, helplessness, and death. No therapy or treatment will ever bring them back.

It remains up to the Game Moderator to determine when the Survivor is 'removed' from play. Sometimes it is instant; after the SAN loss, the Survivor collapses weeping and refuses to re-engage with reality.

Sometimes it's more subtle. Many dangerous psychopaths get by for months or years without detection. A player who enjoys this kind of challenge may work in tandem with the Game Moderator to keep playing a character with 0 SAN as if things were normal. If you keep all SAN totals secret (see **OPTIONAL RULE: KEEP SAN SECRET** on page 78), this should not be difficult.

Usually, a character who reaches 0 SAN is either *Catatonic*, *Delusional*, or *Psychopathic*.

Catatonia

Catatonia is complete separation. Your Survivor's mind refuses to engage with the world that injured it. Your Survivor no longer speaks, or eats (without prompting), or looks after him or herself; your Survivor stares into space in a trance. Some catatonics go so deep they no longer react to physical pain. Others rise in and out of consciousness.

Delusions

Your Survivor is raving, incapable of holding a conversation that does not stray into insanity. Your Survivor is absolutely certain of the truth of his or her delusions and acts and responds as though they are completely real, even if that means violence. Nothing can dissuade your Survivor of their reality.

Psychopathy

This goes beyond ordinary sociopathy. At 0 SAN, empathy has been burned out of your Survivor. The feelings and needs of others cannot touch him or her. People are mere objects for his or her amusement or use. Your Survivor sometimes engages in appallingly merciless actions for gratification. Some psychopaths with 0 SAN appear fine; they are no longer emotionally functional or concerned with people on a human scale, but they keep a simulated veneer of civility. Many serial killers have been classified as functional psychopaths.

Resisting Insanity

It's possible to resist SAN loss and insanity through adaptation and by placing stress on Individual and Community Bonds. But suffering a trauma always comes with a cost.

ADAPTING TO SAN LOSS

People can become hardened to traumatic stimuli. What sends one Survivor fleeing may seem mundane to an individual who has survived it often enough. Adaptation to Violence or to Helplessness means you always succeed at a Sanity roll for that type of trauma.

Adaptation to Violence or adaptation to Helplessness occurs after your Survivor has lost SAN from that kind of trauma three times in a row without going temporarily insane from it or hitting the Breaking Point. The character sheet has spaces to mark your Survivor's progress toward adaptation. Each time Violence or Helplessness reduces your Survivor's SAN by 1 or more, mark a box on your character sheet to keep track of it.

If your Survivor suffers insanity from Violence *before* all three boxes are marked, erase all the 'Violence' boxes and start again. If your Survivor suffers insanity from Helplessness before all three boxes are marked, erase all the 'Helplessness' boxes and start again. If you fill in all three boxes for Violence or all three for Helplessness, your Survivor becomes adapted to that type of stressor.

ADAPTING TO VIOLENCE: Unfortunately, being adapted to Violence means your Survivor's empathy suffers. He or she permanently loses 1D6 CHA and the same amount from *every* Bond (Individual and Community).

ADAPTING TO HELPLESSNESS: Being adapted to Helplessness means your Survivor's personal drive suffers. As soon as your Survivor becomes adapted to Helplessness, he or she permanently loses 1D6 POW.

ADAPTING TO THE UNNATURAL: There is no adapting to the Unnatural. Things that exist beyond human comprehension are beyond 'getting used to.' Every new encounter is a fresh shock. The only way to 'adapt' to the Unnatural is to reach 0 SAN, whereupon the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos make perfect sense and no longer inflict mental damage.

PROJECTING ONTO A BOND

When your Survivor loses SAN, you may spend WP to reduce the loss. The amount is always 1D4: roll the die and reduce your WP by that much.

If your Survivor still has at least 1 WP, reduce the SAN loss by the amount of WP spent — the amount you rolled — to a minimum of zero.

Now reduce one of your Survivor's Bond scores by the **same** amount. It could be an Individual Bond or a Community Bond. The next time your Survivor interacts with the subject of the Bond, decide what shape the projection takes. Does the Survivor grow hostile and angry, irrationally blaming his or her loved one for imagined wrongs? Does the Survivor abandon his community in favor of relationships with less importance and meaning? The stresses faced by Survivors often wreck the families, friendships and associations that give them strength.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

In the Temple of the New Light, Maxine lost 6 SAN from blowing up a room full of cultists. That sent her temporarily insane. Then she lost 1 SAN for standing up to suppressing fire and 4 for killing a guard in self-defense. That's two sources of SAN loss from violence in a row — but at that point she gained a new disorder. The countdown to adaptation resets to three.

* * *

After nearly dying, Maxine loses 5 SAN, which brings her past her Breaking Point. Desperate to stave off a new disorder, she projects some of that loss onto her 8-point Individual Bond with Denny, her young ward. She rolls 1D4 and it comes up 3. She subtracts 3 from the SAN loss, losing only 2 SAN. But she must reduce the Bond by 3. The player decides this will manifest as distance growing between them as Maxine struggles to cope with her trauma.

USING BONDS TO REPRESS INSANITY

Sometimes it's easier to cope with mental trauma if you pull strength and motivation from the relationships that give life meaning. You may attempt to repress the blind panic of temporary insanity or an acute episode of a disorder by spending Willpower Points. The amount is always 1D4: roll the die and reduce your WP by that much.

If your Survivor still has at least 1 WP after spending the 1D4, describe how a Bond might help your Survivor keep it together and reduce the Bond by the same amount.

Now attempt a SAN roll. If it succeeds, your Survivor suppresses the insanity or disorder and behaves normally. If it fails, the attempt to repress the effects did not succeed — they occur as normal, despite the points of WP and Bond strength sacrificed in the attempt.

Either way, make a note to describe later how the Bond has strained because your Survivor has taken so much support from it.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine gained a new disorder and the Game Moderator decides it's alcoholism.

An ex-member of the Temple of New Light who wishes to turn informant contacts her and insists on meeting at a makeshift bar in a nearby burned-out township. The Game Moderator reminds Maxine's player that a nice, soothing bathtub tequila (or five) would smooth things out: this may trigger an acute episode of Maxine's disorder. Maxine fails a Sanity test and the disorder starts to take over. That could be a disaster, so she attempts to repress the episode.

Maxine has a Community Bond with the "Survivors of Compound N" that has a score of 10. She focuses on the loyalty oath she made in front of the community council, and the promises made to the leader of Compound N, to curb her drinking. Jo spends 1D4 Willpower Points and rolls a 1, so Maxine loses 1 WP. She loses 1 point from the Community Bond, bringing it down to 9. That lets Jo (Maxine's player) roll another SAN test. If it succeeds, Maxine stifles her urge to drink, despite the temptation. If it fails, her alcoholism kicks in.

What shape the damage to the Bond takes is up to Jo and the Game Moderator. It might mean a humiliating episode where her drunken behavior publicly embarrasses her in front of the council of leaders of Compound N, tarnishing her reputation and permanently reducing her status in the community (again).

Recovering Sanity

There are a few ways to restore mental health. These are described below.

DEFEATING UNNATURAL CREATURES

The Unnatural in ***APOCTHULHU*** represents such an affront to the human mind that gaining any control over it is a sort of victory. At the Game Moderator's discretion, any destruction of a Cthulhu Mythos infiltration by a Survivor can restore hope — and in the process, SAN.

As a rule, destroying an unnatural creature or an object known to contain otherworldly power restores an amount of SAN equivalent to the lowest amount that could be lost for encountering it.

If the SAN loss is 1/1D6, for example, destroying it restores 1 SAN. If the SAN loss is 1D6/1D20, your Survivor gains 1D6 SAN for destroying it.

This can mean your Survivor gains more SAN from overcoming the threat than he or she actually lost from facing it. But it can never bring SAN higher than the **Maximum SAN** score: i.e., 99 minus your Survivor's rating in the Unnatural skill.

Each Survivor who was directly involved in putting the threat down gains this SAN increase.

CONCLUDING A DANGEROUS MISSION OR ADVENTURE

Once a deadly mission or adventure has been successfully brought to a close, all Survivors left alive can breathe a sigh of relief that – for now at least — the world is a safer place. The Game Moderator is justified in awarding such Survivors a small increase in SAN (and published scenarios may include specific SAN rewards associated with different levels of success). Such gains can never push the Survivor's current SAN any higher than **Maximum SAN** (99 – Unnatural).

DESTROYING ACCOUNTS OF THE UNNATURAL

To a Survivor whose sanity has been blasted by revelations about the horrors of the Unnatural, the fact that tomes or records exist which lay bare such secrets is disturbing. It is via such dire accounts that the madness spreads. Accordingly, some who have lost sanity from unnatural Mythos encounters make it their mission to track down such physical or electronic records and destroy them. What better way to protect humanity than rid it of these dangerous traps? This, in part, explains why true written accounts of the Unnatural are so rare.

Survivors who have experienced the Unnatural and who *deliberately* destroy a tome or

similar repository of secret information can earn a small boost to SAN, at the discretion of the Game Moderator. To qualify, the text or video account in question must be an actual authentic tome (see page 110) and the Survivor's actions must be deliberate, willful, and cause the permanent and total destruction of the book, hard disk, or whatever media it is recorded upon. The Survivor must also believe in the veracity of the account.

The amount of SAN increase depends upon the how many Mythos secrets the account reveals — this is measured by the Unnatural skill point gain associated with reading/viewing the tome or record.

Unnatural Skill Gain	*SAN gain from Destruction*
+1 to +3	1D3
+4 to +6	1D6
+7 to +12	2D6
+13 to +16	2D8
+17 or more	2D10

Such gains can never push the Survivor's current SAN any higher than **Maximum SAN** (99 – Unnatural).

GETTING HELP WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

After the adventure your Survivor can attempt to recuperate with empathetic colleagues or by focusing on his or her Bonds; the things that give your Survivor strength (see **DOWNTIME**, below). Any such recovery can never push the Survivor's current SAN any higher than his or her **Recovery SAN** (POW×5), or **Maximum SAN**, whichever is lower.

PURSUING PERSONAL GOALS OR CARING FOR INDIVIDUALS

Time spent between adventures doing things that naturally reassert your Survivor's 'normal' life can slightly improve his or her SAN (see **DOWNTIME**, below). This can only increase current SAN up to his or her **Recovery SAN** (POW×5), or **Maximum SAN**, whichever is lower.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Remember when Maxine was ambushed by the monstrosity in the Temple of the New Light? She's still drinking to forget it. After she scrambled away from its claws, Maxine had one chance to drop a grenade into the hole where the monstrosity lurked. She didn't have much hope, with an Athletics skill of only 30%. But she rolled 01! The creature exploded in a spray of glowing, blue-green chunks.

The SAN loss for facing the creature was 1D4/1D10. Maxine, laughing and screaming, regained 1D4 SAN. The player rolled 3, so Maxine's SAN rose by 3 points.

DOWNTIME

Games of ***APOCTHULHU*** should feature occasional scenes that focus on Survivors' everyday lives. These short vignettes should last no more than a few minutes. Typically, they occur between adventures, but the Game Moderator always decides when and whether one is appropriate. These vignettes are a chance to explore the most important things in your Survivor's life — and to see whether those things are deteriorating thanks to the Survivor's experience of the secret horrors of the Post-Apocalypse world.

What Changed

In a downtime vignette, take stock of what changed for your Survivor in the last adventure.

BONDS DAMAGED OR BROKEN: Describe how each relationship has deteriorated.

PERMANENT INJURIES: Describe what they look like.

DISORDERS GAINED: Did your Survivor hit the Breaking Point during the adventure? Now's the time for the Game Moderator to decide what disorder the Survivor gains.

COMMUNITY: If your Survivor misused his or her contacts, authority, or resources from his or her home community, describe how actions during the adventure may have impacted your Survivor's reputation or standing. Does this impact any Community Bonds?

JUSTICE: Did your Survivor break the rules of the local community? Does that impact any Individual or Community Bonds?

Personal Pursuits

For the vignette, the player chooses one of the following pursuits. Describe how your Survivor is pursuing it, and roll the appropriate stat, skill, or SAN test to resolve it.

Choose from these pursuits:

FULFILL RESPONSIBILITIES TO INDIVIDUALS

If your Survivor focuses on day-to-day obligations and relationships, describe something the Survivor is doing to support an Individual Bond. Roll a SAN test. Success improves the Individual Bond by 1D6 (up to your Survivor's CHA); a critical success also adds 1 SAN (up to your **Recovery SAN**). A fumble means some disastrous conflict reduces the Individual Bond by 1D4 and your SAN by 1. Describe how the relationship has improved because of your Survivor's efforts or worsened despite them.

REORGANIZING AND REPLENISHING PERSONAL RESOURCES

As described in **REPLENISHING RESOURCES, REMOVING CHECKMARKS** (page 39), if your Survivor actively drew from his or her personal pool of Resources during an adventure, there will be check marks on the character sheet to record this. By investing some downtime (half a day or more) to reorganize or replenish your stash of gear, all such checks marks can be erased. Describe the lengths your Survivor goes to tidy up or restock.

GAINING FAVOR OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

Your Survivor may choose to spend time attempting to improve his or her status within a group or society, as represented by a Community Bond he or she ***already has***. This may involve influencing key individuals to build a support-base or working hard to solve the community's problems and earn their respect.

A major investment of time warrants a SAN test — success means that your Survivor's actions have drawn the attention of key people in the community. A fumbled SAN roll means that some terrible error of judgement by your Survivor creates a negative reaction: this reduces the bond value by –1D3 and causes a loss of 1 point of SAN.

If the SAN roll succeeded, there is a chance that the positive attention from the community

may convert into an increase in status. Make a second D100 roll and compare it to current **Community Bond rating×5.** If the roll is higher than the target, the Community Bond value improves:

- If the original SAN roll was a **normal success**: +1 to Bond value
- If the original SAN roll was a **critical success:** +2 to Bond value

The causes of the increase or decrease in status should be described, along with their impact.

BACK TO NATURE

Your Survivor can spend time in contemplative seclusion, minimizing stress, distractions, and obligations. This isn't a vacation with the family; it's extended time alone, or mostly alone, in an environment that's physically active but places few other demands on the Survivor. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Roll a SAN test. Success adds 1D4 SAN, or 4 for a critical (up to your **Recovery SAN**). A fumble costs 1D4 SAN.

ESTABLISH A NEW INDIVIDUAL BOND

Your Survivor may attempt to create a new Individual Bond with a character. This is not done lightly. It means this new character is developing into an essential, important part of your Survivor's life. Attempt a **CHA×5** test. Success establishes a new Individual Bond with a score equal to half your Survivor's CHA (round up). Unfortunately, devoting so much attention to the new Bond reduces the value of one other Bond — either reduce an Individual Bond by 1D4 or a Community Bond by 1.

ESTABLISH A NEW COMMUNITY BOND

Your survivor attempts to establish membership in a new community and assert some kind of status within its 'pecking order'. You might do this because you have just arrived in a new place, or because you wish to take on a position of standing within a group (e.g., a religious congregation) that provides social benefits. Getting accepted to a position of trust within a community is not easy. Attempt a **CHA×5** test. Success establishes a new Community Bond with a score equal to **half** your Survivor's Permanent Resources rating (round up).

Devoting energy to currying the favor needed to establish the new Bond reduces the value of one other Bond — either reduce an Individual Bond by 1D4 or a (different) Community Bond by 1.

GET HELP WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES

There is no such thing as clinical psychotherapy in the Post-Apocalypse world. The days of well-ordered professional help for mental health issues ended when the fabric of society unraveled.

However, that does not mean that there are no methods to heal a damaged mind. Most of the remaining options involve the time-honored method of sharing with an empathetic person an account of the circumstances which created the mental trauma. This other person might be a spiritual adviser, a folk-psychiatrists, or just a kind-hearted fellow member of the community that is willing to calm and reassure you.

Being helped through the process of recovering from mental trauma is an ongoing process requiring honesty and commitment. Your Survivor must decide whether to truthfully tell the empathetic person what caused the SAN loss.

- If your Survivor tells the truth, there are risks. If the original SAN loss came from confronting the Cthulhu Mythos, and the empathic person *believes* your Survivor's account, he or she may themselves lose SAN.

  In order to determine whether your Survivor benefits from the reassuring catharsis, roll against the empathic person's **Reassure** skill. If your Survivor has described unnatural events and the empathetic person thinks they're delusions, this roll is at a –20% penalty. If it fumbles, your Survivor loses 1 SAN. If it succeeds, your Survivor regains 1D6 SAN (or 6 with a critical success), up to his or her Recovery SAN.

- If, on the other hand, if your Survivor *doesn't* tell the empathetic person the truth, the potential for healing is limited. Make a **Luck** Roll. If it fumbles, your Survivor loses 1 SAN. If it succeeds, your Survivor regains 1D4 SAN (or 4 for a critical success), up to his or her **Recovery SAN**.

If your Survivor suffers from a disorder, a critical success with the empathetic person's Reassure or Luck roll cures it. Your Survivor also develops a Bond with the empathetic person equal to half your Survivor's CHA (or add 1D4 to it if your Survivor already has that Bond, up to the Survivor's CHA).

He or she also loses points from another Bond of your choice (1D4 from one Individual Bond or 1 from a Community Bond). Write a note saying "cured" next to the disorder on the character sheet — but do not erase it. The next time you gain a disorder, you must roll another SAN test. If that fails, the "cured" disorder returns in full force alongside the new one.

Regardless of whether the rolls result in improvements, the long hours spent with an empathetic person reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse.

IMPROVE A SKILL OR STAT

By training or studying extensively, your Survivor can try to boost a stat or a skill. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Describe what your Survivor is doing to improve the stat or skill: poring over crumbling textbooks for INT or a skill, lifting weights for STR, meditating to strengthen self-discipline for POW, socializing or taking leadership courses for CHA, working with the compound's medic to regain stat points permanently lost from an injury, etc.

If you wish to gain points in a skill you don't already possess and which has a Base Chance of 0%, you can only do this if you are being trained by someone who has at least 20% in that skill. Under no circumstances can the Unnatural skill be improved through training.

Attempt a test of the stat × 5 or the skill. If the test fails, your Survivor has improved. Add 1D10 percentage points to the skill (to a maximum of 99%) or one point to the stat (to a maximum of 18).

PERSONAL MOTIVATION

Your Survivor indulges in the things that he or she finds meaningful. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. Roll a SAN test. Success adds 1 SAN, or 1D4 for a critical (up to your Survivor's **Recovery SAN**). A fumble costs 1 SAN.

READING MYTHOS TOMES / LEARNING RITUALS

Your Survivor may have unearthed books or other records which claim to contain wisdom about the Cthulhu Mythos forces which now haunt the world. He or she can devote time to trying to delve into such accounts or trying to learn the arcane rituals they describe. See **TOMES OF TERROR, AND APOCALYPTIC REVELATIONS** on page 110 for more on how such research is performed.

FRENZIED RESEARCH INTO THE WORLD OF THE POST-APOCALYPSE

Your Survivor can spend every waking hour poring over whatever information is known about the state of the Post-Apocalyptic world. This reduces one Bond (either Individual or Community) by 1 as you let other responsibilities lapse. The Game Moderator secretly rolls **Occult, History,** or a relevant **Post-Apocalypse Lore** skill for your Survivor.

Success means you uncover some pertinent secret about the world, of the Game Moderator's devising. If the roll was a critical success, this secret is an especially valuable one. Failure means you find nothing. A fumble means you think you find a valuable secret, but it will turn out to be dangerously wrong. Either way, your Survivor might gain or lose a little SAN. Roll 1D6-3: if the result is a positive number, add it to SAN as a benefit gained from coming to terms with the new reality of the world. If the roll was negative, still add it to SAN (thereby reducing SAN) — this is the price of obsessing over the Post-Apocalypse world self-destructively.

PART II: APOCALYPSE-BUILDING RESOURCES

This section consists of a series of resources which are designed to help a Game Moderator create an Apocalypse of his or her own, and to design exciting and dangerous scenarios to challenge a Survivor Group.

Unlike many other tabletop roleplaying games ***APOCTHULHU*** *isn't designed with any one setting (or even style) in mind, hence the notes here are guidelines to support the building any number of Mythos Apocalypses.*

The section includes:

- *Guidelines for defining the nature of your Mythos Apocalypse*
- *Rules for finding and using equipment in the Post-Apocalypse setting*
- *Guidelines for creating horrific Mythos creatures and Gods, based on the wealth of material published for other games*
- *Brief notes on creating Post-Apocalyptic analogues of the classic "Mythos Tomes" and rituals that are staples of other Lovecraft-inspired games*

CHOOSE YOUR OWN APOCALYPSE

The Cthulhu Mythos is a vast and sprawling literary family of terrors from beyond. Many of them have the potential to scourge the Earth or transform it to such a degree that humanity's well-ordered societies would instantly crumble into barbarism and chaos. Some of those Mythos elements — we are reliably informed in prophetic passages from ancient tomes of forbidden lore — are even destined to one day wipe out or replace humanity altogether.

With this vast choice of Mythos powers that might potentially be the cause — deliberately or accidentally — of the downfall of civilization, the Game Moderator has a wide choice of Post-Apocalyptic versions of our world in which to run an ***APOCTHULHU*** game.

The exact conditions which prevail across the depopulated and scarred ruins of Earth will obviously depend on the type of Mythos entity whose blight has visited upon it. A Post-Apocalypse in which Great Cthulhu has risen and sent his army of Star-Spawn to smash every major human coastal city will have many differences from a world in which baleful shadow entities have crept through a breach between dimensions and silently transformed 90% of humanity.

APOCTHULHU is designed to be used as a rules engine that can fuel any of this multitude of possible nightmare worlds. The first and most important task for the Game Moderator is to pick one such Mythos Post-Apocalypse and define it in a way that will allow game scenarios — or even whole campaigns — to play out in that setting.

Getting Started

The definition of a setting begins with a basic idea. Maybe you think it would be interesting to set your game in a world where the icy breath of the Windwalker has swept from the North and South Poles to encompass the globe with icy conditions? Or maybe you wonder what might have happened if the players in your globe-trotting 1920s campaign against the schemes of Nyarlathotep had failed to stop that malevolent god's plans from reaching fruition?

Once you have a core idea for a Mythos Post-Apocalypse, the challenge then becomes elaborating it into a game setting. The notes below provide some ideas for carrying out this development. They are, however, mere guidelines — if you find your own ideas flowing freely, go with your own inspiration. If you get stuck at some point, however, you may find that returning to these notes helps get your creative processes unstuck.

Defining Questions

Once you as Game Moderator have a basic idea of the type of Mythos-shattered world you would like to use as setting, the next task is to develop that basic idea into a form that helps build the game environment. We have found that one helpful way of doing this is by going through the process of creating answers to a series of 'defining questions,' below.

As an aid to this process of definition, a number of 'worked examples' of Mythos Apocalypses is provided starting on page 126, each defined in terms of answers to these questions.

Q1: When did the Apocalypse Happen? At what point in the established human history did it occur? Or is it about to take place in our own near (21st Century) future?

Q2: What event triggered the Apocalypse?

Q3: What changed when the Mythos Forces achieved dominance?

Q4: How long after the Apocalypse is the game going to be set? What has happened in the interim?

Q5: What is the world like now? How easy is it to find basic resources (like food, water, and clean air)? What about equipment (or ammo)? Is there any remnant of Pre-Apocalypse technology that still works?

Q6: What communities exist where humans cling to life (and where the player character Survivors live)? How sparsely spread out are the remnants of humanity? Have some humans been altered by the Apocalypse or become worshippers of the dark Mythos forces?

Q7: What Mythos entities or forces are the Survivors most likely to encounter? What goals and motivations drive these horrors?

Q8: Is there any hope for humanity to regain control of the planet? Or are the Survivors merely eking out an existence as the very final members of the human race?

Harshness of the Environment

An important factor in defining the Post-Apocalyptic setting is deciding upon the level of harshness and adversity it presents to those who must eke out a living within it. Some settings may be not much worse than Pre-Apocalypse times, just with a hidden Mythos menace haunting the world. At the other end of the spectrum, it is possible to conceive of warped versions of our world that are literally hellish or nightmarish realms of constant pain and suffering.

The degree of harshness of the world is an important consideration when creating Survivor characters (as described in the Survivor creation rules in the first half of this book).

To assist the Game Moderator in describing the harshness of his or her Post-Apocalyptic world, ***APOCTHULHU*** defines four broad descriptors — **Normal(ish), Harsh, Very Harsh,** and **Nightmarish**. The game mechanic impacts of each descriptor are summarized in the table nearby.

Note that it is not necessarily the case that the entire Post-Apocalypse world operates at the same level of harshness — the Game Moderator might decide that parts of the setting are much more dangerous than others. Or perhaps some characters come from a more sheltered background than others. The important consideration for players creating new Survivors is knowing the harshness descriptor for the place where *their Survivor* grew up or spent most time. There is no overall positive or negative in game terms to growing up in harsher or less-harsh backgrounds, although some will shape the Survivors fortitude more than others, and drive specialization of their skills.

Apocalypse Where?

When the Game Moderator is creating a scenario or campaign set in a Post-Apocalyptic version of our own world, the exact geographical location of the action matters a lot less than the ***nature*** *of the places involved. It's key to know whether the story is going to be in the broken ruins of a once-great city, or in a wasteland, or deep in a haunted forest. Exactly which Pre-Apocalypse city it is, or whether the wasteland is the remnants of the Midwestern prairies or the blasted remnants of Western Massachusetts, makes less difference to the setting's story potential.*

However, one factor we have observed during many sessions of playtesting ***APOCTHULHU*** *is that most players like to have some connection between the broken places in the Post-Apocalypse world and geography that they know from our world. Sure, it may not matter much whether the ice-shrouded ruined city haunted by Shantaks was once Chicago or Indianapolis or Mumbai, but players find it easier to visualize the shattered world if some of this detail is sketched in. You can think of it as the same sense of curiosity that vests such significance to the moment of revelation in 'The Planet of the Apes' when a major New York landmark is discovered.*

With this in mind, we would strongly suggest that you consider dropping a few such links into your scenarios and definition of your Post-Apocalyptic world. That's not to say that you as GM need to provide all this detail: for many game groups, throwing the question back to the players at the start of the scenario is equally valid and sometimes even more satisfying.

Effects of Setting Harshness on Survivor Creation

Harshness Descriptor	Effect on Statistics	Adversity Skill Points	Starting SAN and Disorders	SAN Hardening
Normal(ish)	No change	None	Starting SAN is POW×5 No starting disorders	None
Harsh	+1 to *either* STR *or* CON (pick one)	+20 points which must be spent on either: **Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival,** or **Unnatural**.	Starting SAN is POW×4 No starting disorders	If CHA *or* POW Is less than 7, Survivor loses 1D4 points from two Bonds (*player choice,* each can be either an individual or community bond)
Very Harsh	+1 to *both* STR *and* CON	+40 points which must be spent in 20-point blocks on: **Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival,** or **Unnatural**.	Starting SAN is POW×4 Make a **POW×5** test; failure indicates 1 starting disorder	If CHA *or* POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (*pick one* and apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds)
Nightmarish	+2 to *both* STR *and* CON	+80 points which must be spent in 20-point blocks on: **Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival,** or **Unnatural**. No single skill may receive more than 40 points from this pool.	Starting SAN is POW×3 Make TWO **POW×4** tests; each failure indicates a starting disorder	All Survivors are Adapted to either Violence OR Helplessness (*pick one*). If CHA *or* POW Is less than 10, Survivor is Adapted to both. Apply the necessary modifiers to stats and bonds

Note: when applying the effects of Harshness to Survivor generation, it is important to start with the first column (Statistics modifications) and proceed column-by-column to the right. Some changes may affect subsequent rolls. It is particularly important to determine Starting SAN and mental disorders *before* applying the effects of SAN Hardening (which have the potential to reduce POW).

Going from Setting to Scenarios

Once you as Game Moderator have a good handle on how the Mythos Apocalypse played out, what the world looks like now, and what horrors haunt its landscape, you're ready to start creating scenarios in that world.

The details of the setting should already inspire some thoughts about possible stories that could be told in the game world. Here are a few categories of common Apocalyptic tales (see **SUGGESTED READING VIEWING**, page 300 for lots more sources and potential plots):

- **Basic Survival:** if the environment is so harsh, then just remaining alive through to the end of the story can be an exciting adventure in itself.
- **Thirst for Knowledge:** Something made the world crumble, and if only the Survivors could learn enough about those events, they might just be able to reverse it ... but such knowledge is hard to find in this desperate and shattered world.

- **Dark Side of Human Nature:** While it was the Mythos that killed-off most of humanity, the biggest challenge now is the barbarism or tribalism to which the few human survivors have descended. In a world free from laws and governments, the darker sides of human nature are free to come to the fore.
- **Those Who Revel:** Most of the humans who survived the Apocalypse might be huddling in fear of the devouring horrors, but for some this is the future they have always dreamed of. Perhaps they even helped bring it about. What might such Mythos worshippers want next from their newly manifested Gods?
- **The Bonds That Matter:** Even in this shattered world the bonds between people are significant; perhaps they are even more so than before. When loved ones from a Survivor's family are missing, that might create a strong motivation to undertake a long and arduous quest to find them.
- **Rebuilding Industry or civilization:** In the time immediately after the Apocalypse there is literally no organizing force to bind Survivors into a cohesive society and no coordinated knowledge to allow industries to be redeveloped. But as time goes on, these could possibly arise — and perhaps that is the Survivors' goal.

THE GLOBAL SALVAGE YARD

One of the staples of Post-Apocalyptic stories is that resources — in the form of traditional modern equipment and supplies — are scarce. This stands to reason: if human society has broken down in the wake of some terrible event, nobody is manufacturing any brand-new gadgets, gizmos, medicines, or processed foods. At the same time, the few humans that have survived the Apocalypse have a reason to stockpile as many of these things as possible. After all, if they don't loot the supermarkets and hardware stores someone else will get in first. Then the good stuff will be gone by the time the need arises to warrant claiming it.

This is a basic primal aspect of human nature: when uncertainty arises, greedily taking control of as many of the limited resources as possible is the winning strategy. Unfortunately, once multiple Survivor groups have picked over the readily accessible supplies of goods ... there isn't much left for anyone who goes looking for fresh supplies.

Over time, even stockpiles of resources diminish — food gets eaten, medicines get used, mechanized or electronic equipment breaks down. This means that the more time that has passed since the catastrophic event, the scarcer resources become. There's less food available, and fewer working devices (although there may still be plenty of partially working, worn-out, and junk versions out there).

All of this makes the task of locating equipment, vehicles, and even staples the Survivors need to live, uncertain. This represents a significant difference to the settings for most tabletop roleplaying games — even in a medieval or fantasy setting, some kind of 'economy' exists and player characters can exchange 'money' they own for items in towns or markets. In the Post-Apocalypse there is no money. There are likely to be few markets, and there might not even be any functioning townships or large-scale settlements.

So, how are the Survivors supposed to get supplies and new equipment? The short answer is that they must either scavenge it, make it, or already have it in the stash of junk they carry around with them. The notes below give some suggestions for representing these options in terms of game mechanics.

Immediately following those guidelines, some spot rules are presented for different categories of weaponry and some game mechanics for vehicles.

A World in Disorder: Finding Resources in the Wreckage of the World

All items that are in short supply in the Post-Apocalypse world are considered under the generic term of 'resources'. This includes equipment, vehicles, consumable supplies, and even basic food and water.

If a Survivor wants to obtain a resource, there are two ways:

1. By rummaging through the stockpile of junk that he or she hauls around as a personal 'resource pile', or

2. Searching the environment to try to locate an abandoned or unclaimed supply of that resource.

Each of these methods uses a different game mechanic. The former is a use of the Survivor's Resources rating, while the latter is a use of his or her Scavenge skill.

In both cases, the difficulty of the test to locate a usable item depends on the characteristics of the particular Post-Apocalypse setting, as well as:

- *[For rummaging the resource pool]* — whether the item is small enough to realistically be carried around from place to place (e.g., it's unlikely that anyone's at-hand resource pool includes a 90 foot wind turbine).
- *[For scavenging]* — whether the location being searched is a likely or unlikely place for such resources to have been stored or abandoned (e.g., it's reasonable to expect a helicopter might be at a military base but less likely at a school).

The results of a test can indicate that an item has been discovered, or describe utter failure of the search/rummaging. However even if the roll is successful there is no guarantee that the resource discovered will be in good condition — the discovered item might be heavily worn or maybe even utter junk (see box nearby).

RESOURCE CATEGORIES AND SCARCITY

When defining a Post-Apocalypse setting, the Game Moderator should give some thought to the scarcity of different types of resources in the setting. Things to consider include the nature of the original Apocalyptic event, how long ago it happened, and whether humanity has been able to recover some semblance of manufacturing or agriculture since then.

- The first factor can be important if the catastrophic event especially affected certain things more than others (e.g., if the Mythos Apocalypse caused poisonous oil to rain from the sky all around the globe, fresh water is likely to be especially scarce).
- The second factor is important since the more time that has passed, the more survivors of the catastrophe will have picked over obvious stockpiles of equipment, and more consumable items will have been used up.
- The third factor might be important for games that are designed to be set decades or centuries after the Apocalypse, when humanity has cobbled together some ability to again manufacture or grow/farm certain types of resources. In such settings, the availability of those resources will begin to improve.

In order to assist the GM in describing resource scarcity for his or her Apocalypse, some representative categories and scarcity 'ratings' are described below. Think of these as convenient tools to use or tweak as you wish, and over-ride whenever seems appropriate.

The Scarcity Ratings

As an abstraction, the scarcity of a resource can be rated on the following scale (from least to most scarce):

- **Abundant:** *The resource is virtually everywhere; the average person probably has at least some of it at any given time.*
- **Uncommon:** *The resource isn't something that you'd just stumble upon accidentally but if you put concerted effort into it, you would probably find some.*
- **Hard to Get:** *The resource is in short supply or is somehow heavily regulated; most people don't have ready access to it at all but if you have special access or know the right people, you can probably get some.*
- **Very Hard to Get:** *The resource is absent from all the common places and even people with special access find it a significant challenge to track some down. Don't be surprised if you can't get any at all.*
- **Impossible to Get:** *Stockpiles of this resource simply don't exist (anymore); people that are especially resourceful might have been prudent enough to snare some for their personal supply, but that's it.*

The scarcity rating of a resource affects a Survivor's attempt to either scavenge from the environment or rummage through their personal 'resource stash' to find it. The table below summarizes the effects of scarcity.

Pre-Loved Items and Spoiled Goods

JUNK

In the Post-Apocalypse world many vehicles, weapons, and other pieces of equipment are damaged, poorly maintained, or just badly made. If your Survivor is stuck with a junk piece of gear, it **fumbles** *not just on a failed roll with matching numbers, but also on* <u>any</u> *roll higher than 95.*

A junk item also incurs a –20% penalty to every use of it.

HEAVILY WORN ITEMS

Some of the items which the Survivor finds aren't junk but have seen considerable previous use and are heavily worn. Items like this work alright but are at the risk of becoming junk every time the Survivor puts them into service. After each use the Survivor must make a **Luck** *roll. On failure, the worn item has turned into junk (as per above).*

It's up to the Game Moderator to decide when a perfectly normal item has had so much wear-and-tear that it qualifies as being considered Heavily Worn. This should only happen to equipment or devices that have received considerable 'on screen' use, or which were purloined from a source which is likely to have heavily over-used it.

SPOILED AND POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONSUMABLES

If the Survivor is searching for a type of consumable resource (e.g., water, fuel, or ammo) and gains a less-than-perfect outcome, it is possible that some quantity of the resource has been found but in a spoiled condition that may be potentially dangerous to use/ingest.

The Game Moderator will need to interpret what this means in the context of the resource type, and whether the spoiling is obvious or requires a skill test to detect.

- *Ingesting spoiled food or water is treated as an exposure to poison (see* **POISON AND DISEASE** *on page 74). The default toxicity is [Speed 1D4 hours; Lethality 2%], but as Game Moderator you can vary this to fit the situation.*
- *Administering spoiled pharmaceuticals can be considered as per food and water (if the original medicine was something relatively minor), or as per the failure of a* **Pharmacy** *roll during administration of a dangerous drug [Poison; Speed 1D6 hours; Lethality 5%].*
- *Attempting to use other "spoiled" consumables (e.g., gasoline or weapon ammo) usually results in them being inert and useless, although the Game Moderator might decide they result in dangerous situations for the users (explosions, damage to weapons, vehicles, etc.)*

Impacts of Scarcity

Scarcity Rating	CONSUMABLE RESOURCES		NON-CONSUMABLE RESOURCES	
	Effect on Scavenge Tests	*Effect on Resources Tests*	*Effect on Scavenge Tests*	*Effect on Resources Tests*
Abundant	No test required; search is automatically successful.	On successful **Resources** test, a full 'unit' of the resource is found in Survivor's collection, in perfect condition.	No test required; search is automatically successful.	On successful **Resources** test, a pristine version of the item is found in Survivor's collection.
Uncommon	May be found with a standard **Scavenge** test.	On successful **Resources** test, some quantity of the resource is found. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, the discovery is half a 'unit'. A critical success, or a standard success with a die roll of 21+, discovers a full 'unit'	May be found with a standard **Scavenge** test.	On successful **Resources** test, some form of the item is found. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, the item is heavily worn A critical success, or a standard success with a die roll of 21+, discovers a pristine item.
Hard to Get	May be found with a **Scavenge** test modified by –20. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed. A critical success, or a standard success with a die roll of 11+, finds a safe supply.	**Resources** tests are made at ***half*** the effective Resources rating. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed. A standard success with a roll of 21+ yields a safe resource but only half a 'unit'. Only if the test was a critical success, is a full 'unit' of a perfectly safe resource discovered.	May be found with a **Scavenge** test modified by –20. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a junk version of the resource is found. A critical success, or a standard success with a die roll of 11+, finds a pristine version of the resource.	**Resources** tests are made at ***half*** the effective Resources rating. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a junk version of the resource is found. A standard success with a die roll 21+ finds a heavily worn version. Only if the test was a critical success, is a pristine version of the resource discovered.

A convenient short-hand way of describing resource scarcity is to define it relative to the pre-Apocalypse scarcity for the same item. For example, clinical drugs might already be **Hard to Get** in the Pre-Apocalypse world while First Aid Supplies are **Abundant**; if the Game Moderator states that all Medicine resources in his or her new setting are "two steps more scarce than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline" that would mean that clinical supplies are now **Impossible to Get** (two steps scarcer than Hard to Get) and First Aid Supplies are now **Hard to Get** (two steps scarcer than Abundant).

To make this kind of notation easier to write, a full Resource Scarcity breakdown for a typical Pre-Apocalypse Earth is defined on page 125.

The Fine Art of Jury-Rigging

Survivors may often find themselves faced with an inability to track down the equipment or devices that they really need to get something done. No amount of **Scavenging** or rummaging through each person's resources pool will track down something that no longer exists. What can a Survivor group do to get around such a

Impacts of Scarcity (cont'd)

Scarcity Rating	CONSUMABLE RESOURCES		NON-CONSUMABLE RESOURCES	
	Effect on Scavenge Tests	*Effect on Resources Tests*	*Effect on Scavenge Tests*	*Effect on Resources Tests*
Very Hard to Get	May only be found with successes on ***both*** a **Luck** roll and a **Scavenge** test at –40. If the Scavenge test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed. A critical success on Scavenge, or a standard success with a die roll of 11+ finds a safe supply.	**Resources** tests are made at ***quarter*** the effective Resources rating. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a spoiled and potentially dangerous version is unearthed. A standard success with a roll of 21+ yields a safe resource but only half a 'unit'. Only if the roll was 01, is a full 'unit' of a perfectly safe resource discovered.	May only be found with successes on ***both*** a **Luck** roll and a **Scavenge** test at –40. If the Scavenge test is a standard success and the die roll is 10 or less, a junk version is unearthed instead. A standard success on Scavenge with a die roll of 11+ finds a heavily worn version. A critical success on Scavenge finds a pristine version.	**Resources** tests are made at a ***quarter*** of the effective Resources rating. If the test is a standard success and the die roll is 20 or less, a junk version of the resource is found. A standard success with a die roll 21+ finds a heavily worn version. Only if the roll was 01, is a pristine version of the resource discovered.
Impossible to Get	No test required; search automatically fails.	**Resources** tests are made at a ***quarter*** of the effective Resources rating. Any test that is not a critical success fails to find the item in the Survivor's collection in any quantity or quality. Critical rolls locate spoiled and potentially dangerous stocks unless the roll was 01, in which case a further **Luck** roll is made: failure indicates a half 'unit' of a safe resource; success a full 'unit' of a safe resource.	No test required; search automatically fails.	**Resources** tests are made at a ***quarter*** of the effective Resources rating. Any test that is not a critical success fails to find the item in the Survivor's collection in any form. Critical rolls locate junk versions unless the roll was 01, in which case a further **Luck** roll is made: failure indicates heavily worn items; success indicates pristine.

roadblock? One option is to devise a plan to hunt down a collection of less-scarce component items and cobble together some kind of hodge-podge out of the parts. This is the fine art of jury-rigging.

In ***APOCTHULHU***, all attempts to build these kinds of lash-ups are governed by the **Craft (Jury-Rigging)** skill or other similar **Craft** specializations. The players should describe exactly what they plan to construct and what components they hope to use. Ideally there should be some kind of logic or science behind why such items might come together in the way imagined, but ultimately it is up to you as Game Moderator to decide whether the planned jury-rigged device has any chance of working.

Once the plan is made, choose a scarcity for each component parts — hopefully somewhat better than the scarcity of the original item — and the Survivors can venture forth (or rummage around their resource pools) to see if they can find all the pieces they need. Once they have each part, one or more tests against **Craft (Jury-Rigging)** will be needed to successfully assemble the final item or device.

At best, a lash-up created in this way qualities as a 'heavily worn' version of the real item or device. If any discovery rolls along the way yielded up sub-standard parts, or the Craft (Jury Rigging) rolls were only marginally successful, you might decide the lash-up is barely-functional 'junk' (see **PRE-LOVED ITEMS AND SPOILED GOODS** on page 101).

RULES FOR EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

Most equipment that Survivors will find and use does not require any special rules — if the Survivors have the equipment, and it is in working order then they can use it (possibly with a skill or stat test) to do things.

Two categories of equipment are exceptions to this: weapons and vehicles. Both may appear in combat or action sequences, hence their impact on tests may change the results of tense, potentially life-threatening, situations.

Optional Spot Rules for Weapons

There's a staggering variety of personal firearms and weaponry. Their usefulness in Post-Apocalypse adventures may be limited, of course, depending on who or what the Survivors face.

The primary game statistics relating to different types of weapons may be found on the **EXAMPLE WEAPONS TABLE** on page 69. The availability of any class of weapon will be dictated by the style of Post-Apocalyptic setting, the technology that existed prior to the Mythos incursion, and the scarcity of weapon resources (see preceding section).

What follows are some spot rules for Survivors who have access to common 'modern-day' (20th or 21st Century) weapons. Obviously if an Apocalypse took place in a different era (say the 18th Century or hundreds of years in our future), the weapons available to Survivors will be dictated by whatever technology existed at that time.

CONCEALING WEAPONS

Knives and pistols can be concealed under ordinary clothing. Someone deliberately looking for a concealed weapon can attempt an **Alertness** test to spot it. A heavy pistol or especially big knife means a +20% **Alertness** bonus.

If a Survivor is wearing an overcoat or duster, he or she can attempt to conceal a bigger gun like a submachine gun or sawed-off shotgun, or a larger hand weapon (e.g., a hatchet or machete) and incur no Alertness bonus.

There's no way to conceal a full-size rifle or a large melee weapon.

HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

Unarmed attacks, like punching, kicking, and strangling, use the **Unarmed Combat** skill. All melee weapons use the **Melee Weapons** skill.

PRIMITIVE RANGED WEAPONS

Old-fashioned ranged weapons like crossbows, bow, and slings use the **Ranged Combat** skill. All such weapons require some kind of ammunition (arrows, bolts, bow) and are useless if the supply is exhausted.

FIREARMS

Depending on when and where the game is set, the Post-Apocalypse world may include a number of firearms, some of which may still be in working order and reliable.

If the Survivors are trekking across the ruins of the United States, they may easily stumble upon the remains of a police squad car in which the standard-issue police carbine or a shotgun is still stowed. Alternatively, they may unearth stores of weapons previously intended for soldiers or tactical teams — such could easily include carbines or assault rifles. And, of course, the Survivors may actively decide to loot weapons from gun shops, in which case any of the abovementioned weapons — in semi-automatic form — might be found.

Firearms can be heavily accessorized. Popular Pre-Apocalypse gun add-ons include tactical

lights, sound suppressors, holographic sights, telescopic sights, night sights, and targeting lasers. Many rifles can also be fitted with an under-barrel shotgun or grenade launcher. Whether any (or all) of these accessories are still available in the Post-Apocalypse world is a matter for the GM to decide.

Pistols

Lightweight pistols fire low-powered cartridges and are of limited use even against humans. Medium pistols are the standard sidearms in law enforcement and the military everywhere. They fire moderately powerful rounds. Most revolvers hold six shots, but some late models hold seven or eight. Pocket revolvers sometimes take only five. There's a huge variety of ammunition capacities for semiautomatic pistol magazines, but 15 is typical, although 17 or even 20 is not uncommon. Large-caliber pistols often carry less. A typical figure for a heavy pistol is eight.

Shotguns

A typical pump-action shotgun holds five shots, although there are many with extended magazines for eight or more. Double-barrel shotguns hold one shot per barrel and can fire both barrels at one target with one attack roll. Shotguns can fire shot (a spread of small projectiles), slugs (a single heavy bullet), or "non-lethal" ammunition such as bean bag rounds, baton rounds, or rubber shot.

FIRING SHOT: Grants a +20% bonus to hit at all ranges: at point-blank due to the target being so close (see **ATTACK MODIFIERS** on page 65) and beyond that due to the spread of projectiles. Double the Armor Rating of armor or cover against it.

FIRING BOTH BARRELS: You can fire both barrels of a double-barrel shotgun at one target with one attack roll. For shot, that inflicts an extra +1D10 damage up to 20 yards away or +1D6 beyond 20 yards. For a slug, it adds +2D6 damage up to 75 yards, but no extra damage beyond that as the slugs separate.

OTHER GAUGES:

These rules assume a standard 12-gauge shotgun. Modify the damage by +2 for a heavier gauge or –2 for a lighter gauge.

Submachine Guns

Submachine guns fire full-automatic bursts but are often also capable of semi-automatic fire. When firing semi-automatic, the weapon inflicts ordinary damage; with automatic fire, it uses a Lethality rating (see **LETHALITY RATING** on page 70).

Rifles and Carbines

Rifles fire more powerful cartridges than pistols or submachine guns, for better penetration, wounding, and range. However, they are also bulkier. Some military rifles — assault rifles in smaller calibers and automatic

rifles in heavier calibers — are capable of firing full-automatic bursts with Lethality ratings. Especially heavy rifles have Lethality ratings with single shots.

Older rifles and many hunting rifles use a bolt action that must be manually worked before each shot, which delays aiming. An attack with one in the turn immediately after it's already been fired is at –20%. A bolt-action rifle gets no benefit from the **AIM** action in the turn immediately after it's fired.

HEAVY WEAPONS, DEMOLITIONS AND ARTILLERY

Many unnatural things that Post-Apocalypse Survivors face are inscrutable perversions of physics no more vulnerable to explosions than they are to crucifixes. This never stops Survivors from trying.

The Base Range for each weapon reflects the fact that it needs to be accurate enough only to get a target within the Kill Radius. Machine guns fired while off their bipod, tripod, or vehicle mount *halve* Base Range.

Many of these weapons actually fire in automatic bursts as well, which is subsumed under their Lethality ratings and Kill Radius. The Ammo Capacity of these weapons also varies widely, often depending on the vehicle on which they are mounted.

Only the lightest of Heavy Weapons will be commonly found, usually in military bases and the like. Most of the heavier ones are vehicle-mounted or specialized gear designed for military support units; these will typically be hard for the Survivors to get their hands on, and even harder for them to transport to where they need firepower.

WEAPONS WITH SPECIAL EFFECTS

Some types of weapons do something other than (or as well as) inflicting damage to Hit Points.

Tear Gas and Pepper Spray

These irritant chemicals make eyes tear, lungs seize, and exposed tissues sting like hell. If hit, the target must make a **CON×5** test or be stunned and suffer a penalty (usually –20%) to all actions for one hour. If the **CON×5** roll succeeds, the target is not stunned and suffers half the usual penalty. As described on page 68, **STUNNED** individuals can't take further combat actions until they succeed at a **CON×5** test, which may be attempted once per turn.

A tear gas grenade only needs to land near a target to have effect, so the attack roll has a bonus of +20%. A tear gas grenade's cloud lingers in the air only a minute or two. Pepper spray is best used before combat begins, when no attack rolls are needed. If a pepper spray attack roll fails, the attacker partially sprays himself or herself. The attacker must make a **CON×5** test at +20% to avoid being stunned and suffers a –20% penalty for one hour.

Wearing a gas mask protects against these effects but incurs a –20% penalty to **Alertness** and **Search** tests.

Stun Grenades

A "flash-bang" is a grenade that makes a huge noise and bright flash which deafens, blinds and staggers everyone within a 10-yard radius (indoors) or 5 yards (outdoors).

Unusual Ammunition

Most small-arms ammunition uses the standard, listed damage ratings. Special types are available.

ARMOR-PIERCING: *Pistols, rifles, and submachine guns can fire bullets designed to pierce body armor. An armor piercing bullet reduces Armor by 5 (see* **ARMOR PIERCING WEAPONS** *on page 74; this replaces the weapon's usual Armor Piercing rating, if any), but it does –1 damage (to a minimum of 1 point).*

HOLLOW POINT: *Pistols, rifles, and submachine guns can fire expanding bullets designed to cause greater tissue trauma at the expense of penetration. A hollow point round does +1 damage but armor is twice as effective against it.*

Each target is stunned (unable to act until a **CON×5** test succeeds; check each turn). After the stun wears off, the target suffers a –40% penalty to all actions for 1D6 turns. Survivors with eye or ear protection reduce the penalty to –20%.

A stun grenade only needs to land near a target to have effect, so the attack roll has a bonus of +20%. If someone is tossing it into a closed room with the benefit of surprise, it doesn't even require a roll.

Bright Lights

A bright flashlight in darkness can dazzle someone up to 10 yards away by shining it in the target's eyes. This is an action in combat. It requires a **DEX×5** test, which is **opposed by the target's DEX×5** test. A dazzled target is at a –20% penalty to all rolls for 1D6 turns.

Electroshock Weapons

A conducted energy device or stun gun discharges a high-voltage electrical shock into the target, causing the target's muscles to spasm violently. The victim must roll a **CON×5** test to resist being stunned. If stunned, he or she is unable to act until a **CON×5** test succeeds (attempted each turn). After the stun wears off, the victim suffers a –20% penalty to all actions for 1D20 turns.

Human bodies are excellent conductors of electricity. Anyone holding the target of an electroshock attack suffers the same effects.

Rules for Vehicles

Depending on the nature of the Post-Apocalypse setting, functioning motorized vehicles might be scarce or common. If the Survivors or their adversary have access to such vehicles, the following guidelines may assist when dangerous and/or action-oriented scenes involving vehicles arise during play.

Vehicles have three basic statistics:

- **Hit Points** and **Armor**, in case they're involved in combat, and
- **Speed** ratings that affect chases.

HIT POINTS AND ARMOR

Each vehicle counts as a Huge target (see **HUGE**, page 73). It takes damage from unarmed attacks and small weapons such as knives and clubs only when the Game Moderator thinks it makes sense.

A vehicle that loses ***half*** its Hit Points is badly damaged. It can't be operated without a **Drive** or **Pilot** test (depending on the type of vehicle). The next time a Drive or Pilot test *fumbles*, the vehicle fails altogether until repaired. Repairing a damaged vehicle requires time, parts, and successful application of one or more skill tests (at the GM's discretion; most likely to be some sort of **Craft** skill and a relevant **Drive** or **Pilot** skill). Even if repaired, the vehicle might now qualify as 'heavily worn' or 'junk' (see **PRE-LOVED ITEMS AND SPOILED GOODS**, page 101).

A vehicle that loses *all* of its Hit Points is demolished. It will never function again.

SPEED

There are two broad categories of vehicle speed: Surface and Air. Any vehicle with an Air Speed rating can automatically outrun a vehicle

Some Example Vehicles

Land/Water Vehicle	Hit Points	Armor	Speed
Motorcycle	15—20	0	Fast
Medium Car	25—30	3	Average
4WD or Jeep	30—35	3	Average
Armored Car	40	10	Slow
Small Truck	35—40	3	Average
Semi-Trailer	45	3	Slow
Tank	90	20	Slow
Speedboat	25	0	Average
Hovercraft	35	3	Average
Jet Ski	15	0	Fast

Air Vehicle	Hit Points	Armor	Speed
Helicopter	20	0	Average
Light Plane	25	0	Average
Hot Air Balloon	10	0	Slow (see nearby)
Zeppelin	20	0	Slow-Surface
Passenger Jet	50	0	Slow (see nearby)
Fighter Jet	40	0	Slow (see nearby)
Flying Zardoz Head	300	15	Slow

with a Surface Speed rating (except for Hot Air Balloons, which can't outrun any vehicle, and Zeppelins which are considered equivalent speed to a Slow Surface vehicle).

Within the same vehicle category, some are faster than others. A vehicle with a 'Fast' rating grants a +20% bonus to any **Drive** or **Pilot** test to pursue or escape. A 'Slow' vehicle incurs a –20% penalty instead. An 'Average' rating confers no modifier.

Jet planes have a speed rating of 'Special.' A jet automatically outruns any vehicle except another jet, and a fighter jet outruns any other kind of jet.

A vehicle that's notorious for poor handling or that's in bad shape might count as 'heavily worn' or 'junk' (see above) at the GM's discretion.

RAMMING

A ramming vehicle has a **Lethality** rating equal to the ***sum*** of its Armor and its maximum HP. The ramming vehicle itself suffers Lethality damage with a rating equal to half the maximum HP of the target (round up). If the target of the ramming is a huge creature or another vehicle, the ramming vehicle also suffers damage equal to half the target's Armor.

Every passenger in a ramming vehicle takes 1D6 damage on impact. Every passenger in the rammed vehicle takes 2D6 damage. Wearing a seat belt or activating an air bag halves the damage. A passenger in a vehicle that rams a target less than *huge* size suffers no damage.

If the ramming vehicle is going significantly slower than usual, halve the damage to vehicle, target, and passengers.

CREATURES AND GODS OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS

APOCTHULHU is a game focused on describing Post-Apocalyptic settings where the alien and extra-dimensional creatures first imagined by H.P. Lovecraft have assumed (resumed?) dominion over our world. In such settings, it is entirely possible that the Survivors will regularly come face-to-face with Mythos creatures (or even the terrifyingly powerful Mythos 'gods'). Or perhaps the forces of the Mythos are present but remain lurking in the shadows, ever waiting to lure Survivors to their doom.

This book does not include a 'bestiary' of Mythos monstrosities, however when creating a scenario, it is very easy to translate game stats from other tabletop RPGs that do incorporate such catalogues of horrors. GMs looking for example monstrosities with statistics for ***APOCTHULHU*** should also consult the sample Mythos Apocalypses, starting on page 126, each of which includes an original horrific creature specific to the setting.

Using Horrors from the *Delta Green RPG*

If you own a copy of the Delta Green RPG's Handler's Guide (i.e., the book published by Arc Dream intended for Game Moderators), you will already have access to game statistics for dozens of Cthulhu Mythos gods and horrors. These can be used largely unchanged with ***APOCTHULHU***.

Using Horrors from the *Open Cthulhu SRD*

Although not yet published at the time of writing, the *Open Cthulhu RPG* has a freely available **System Reference Document** (SRD) that includes a wealth of statistics for creatures mentioned in H.P. Lovecraft's fiction.

The *Open Cthulhu SRD* document is available as a free PDF download; it includes statistics for the following creatures:

Colour Out Of Space	Deep Ones	Dimensional Guardian
Elder Things	Fire Devil	Flying Polyps
Ghasts	Ghouls	Great Race of Yith
Gugs	Hounds of Time	Hunting Flyers
Leng Spiders	Mi-Go (Fungi From Yuggoth)	Moonbeasts
Night-Gaunt	Rat-Things	Serpentine Humanoids
Shantaks	Shoggoths	Spectral Vampires
Star Spawn of Cthulhu	Subterranean Land Serpents	Winged Servants

Also included in the SRD are game statistics for non-Lovecraftian creatures and generic horrors (Ghosts, Werewolves, Vampires, Zombies, etc).

To convert creature statistics from the Open Cthulhu SRD for use in ***APOCTHULHU***, follow the guidelines given in **TRANSLATING CREATURES FROM D100 GAMES** starting on page 291.

Using Horrors from Other D100 Games

Most roleplaying games of Lovecraftian horror have, historically, evolved from games featuring a percentile system for describing skills – these games are commonly called "D100" games. Some of them include vast bestiaries of creatures derived from the writings of Lovecraft and his circle, or invented for other tales of cosmic horror. Seeking out a book or two of such Cthulhu Mythos game statistics will give the Game Moderator many options for horrific encounters to challenge Survivors in a Lovecraftian Post-Apocalypse.

Conversion guidelines may be found in the Appendix, starting on page 291.

Using Horrors from Gumshoe Games

While many of the most popular tabletop roleplaying games derived from Lovecraft's writing are rooted in the D100 system, there is one major exception to this rule — the excellent Lovecraftian (and Lovecraft-adjacent) games created by Pelgrane Press using the Gumshoe system. Most notable of these is ***Trail of Cthulhu*** which incorporates statistic blocks for the various horrors mentioned in Lovecraft's fiction.

Trail of Cthulhu even has a glorious bestiary book called ***Hideous Creatures*** that expands the notion of classic Mythos horrors by linking them to traditional folklore and suggesting ways to vary specific features or powers while retaining the flavor of the original creatures. That book also includes statistics for some more obscure horrors mentioned in passing by Lovecraft but overlooked in most game bestiaries.

If you are looking for original (non-Lovecraft) horrors, the Gumshoe system also has a bestiary of monstrosities which fit that bill — the *Book of Unremitting Horror*.

Guidelines for converting creatures from Gumshoe for use in ***APOCTHULHU*** may be found starting on page 297.

TOMES OF TERROR, AND APOCALYPTIC REVELATIONS

A common feature of Cthulhu Mythos tales is the existence of musty old tomes which describe the 'truth' about mankind's perilous place in the universe, and the powers thirsting for cosmic upheaval. In most Mythos Post-Apocalypses such revelations are less important — the ravaged nature of the world is evidence of the baleful potency of the Mythos, and the broken remnants of humanity are testament to mankind's frailty.

That is not to say that revelatory tomes and the secret information they contain cannot be important parts of an ***APOCTHULHU*** game.

The core idea of Lovecraftian scenarios which unfold through perilous investigations of a central "weird mystery" applies equally to ***APOCTHULHU***. It's just that the mystery may be less about the existence of the Mythos and more about learning details of the alien powers that roam the land, their weaknesses, and whether the ruination of the world can be reversed.

All of those secrets might be buried in books — or old newspapers, TV news spots, and the like. Some of the revelations might describe supernatural powers or 'magickal effects' that Survivors might be able to utilize to fight back the shadows. Often these will require they perform time-consuming rituals drawn from mystical traditions.

GMs looking for several example 'tomes' with game statistics for the ***APOCTHULHU*** system should consult the sample Mythos Apocalypses, starting on page 126. Each example setting includes details for an original 'tome' tailored to the specific Post-Apocalypse world.

Depicting Vast Cthulhu Mythos Powers: Some General Principles

*As an **APOCTHULHU** Game Moderator, you may wish to introduce the hugely powerful forces of the Cthulhu Mythos — Great Cthulhu, Azathoth, Shub-Niggurath and their ilk — as manifestations of the Unnatural in your game scenarios. In order to evoke a similar tone to that of Lovecraft's fiction, you should always keep the following guidelines in mind:*

HINT RATHER THAN SHOW OUTRIGHT

Through implication or subtle half-glimpses of horrific manifestations, it's possible to communicate the vast power and utter alienness of Mythos Powers without ever having to nail down a concrete 'appearance' for them. A literal description is never going to be as frightening as what each player mentally fills into the gap left by a sketchy half-hinted portrayal. This is one of the techniques that Lovecraft uses most effectively to create a vague mythology whose individual entities would probably seem more ridiculous than scary if depicted in a detailed way.

MYTHOS POWERS SHOULDN'T BE "BOSS MONSTERS"

Gamers love to have grand adversaries to fight off at the conclusion of their epic campaigns. For the most part explicit encounters with Mythos Powers don't serve this need. This is because Powers embody such vast and horrific energies that a physical confrontation is far more likely to result in the entire Investigator party being wiped out than in a dramatically satisfying epic battle. Using the threat of a Mythos Power manifesting is usually more dramatic; as is providing a non-combat encounter to engineer a 'close call' between the Investigators and the terrifying forces of the Mythos.

FOCUS ATTENTION ON HUMAN WORSHIPPERS

Some Mythos Powers may have 'cults' of followers in the Post-Apocalyptic world; others might be 'worshipped' by lone-wolf types who yearn for forbidden and secret power. Pitting the Investigators against these types of adversaries is often a convenient way of providing physical challenges where the odds of success are closer to even. Interacting with the human agents of Mythos Powers — who may be somehow guided by the Power or may just think they are doing their god's bidding — is a good way to hint at the true nature of the entity, through the lens of the cult's belief system.

MENTAL CONTACT IS DANGEROUS, PHYSICAL CONTACT IS DEADLY PERIL

Mythos Powers are ancient forms of existence that are totally unlike anything human beings have experienced. They are intelligent, but in a way that makes no sense to us. Having your mind connected to such a being is like sticking a fork into an electric socket — a massive shock to the system which might just leave you a broken wreck. This is, however, nothing compared to the experience of physically encountering such a being.

Few survive even a short period in the presence of matter inherently corrosive to our concept of universal existence and laws of physics.

POWERS ARE NEVER CONSISTENT; NEVER PREDICTABLE

Some individual worshippers of Mythos Powers and occult scholars who try to comprehend the Cthulhu Mythos like to invent systems for categorizing Mythos Powers. Such taxonomies are inherently imperfect, based as they are on the extrapolations made by broken minds from scarcely understood facts.

You should freely adopt these labels if needed, calling this or that Power a member of the group of "Great Old Ones" or "Elder Beings" or "Outer Gods". Equally, you should feel free to contradict any previous statements or information about the Powers or their categorization.

Human wisdom will never understand the Cthulhu Mythos, hence anything that men and women claim to 'know' might just as easily be an imperfect or incorrect assumption. Or simply a lie. This gives you, as Game Moderator, infinite freedom to deliberately contradict previous 'facts' about a Mythos Power or upend anything the players believe they know about the Cthulhu Mythos. Indeed, by doing so you can reinforce the basic principle that the Mythos is fundamentally unknowable.

Researching the Mythos

If you as Game Moderator want to include a 'Tome of Terror' or some other form of revelatory information source in your game, there are a few factors to consider:

- How will the Survivor's locate it?
- What skill rolls are needed to read it (or view it, or otherwise access its information)?
- How long does it take to study the information before it is understood?
- Does the information cause a Sanity Loss to those who learn it?
- Does understanding the revelations cause an increase in skills?
- Does it impart some other benefit, such as the chance to learn a magickal ritual?

Mythos tomes are one of the few ways in which Survivors may increase their rating in the **Unnatural** skill. Each has an associated amount of Unnatural skill gain that it might potentially impart ... if only the Survivor is able to see past its disordered jumble of insane ideas. Simple treatises on the Cthulhu Mythos might impart just a few points (+1 to +3, perhaps) while weighty grimoires like the infamous *Necronomicon* might offer the reader thorough and dangerous insight (+15 or more points of increase in **Unnatural**).

FINDING INFORMATION

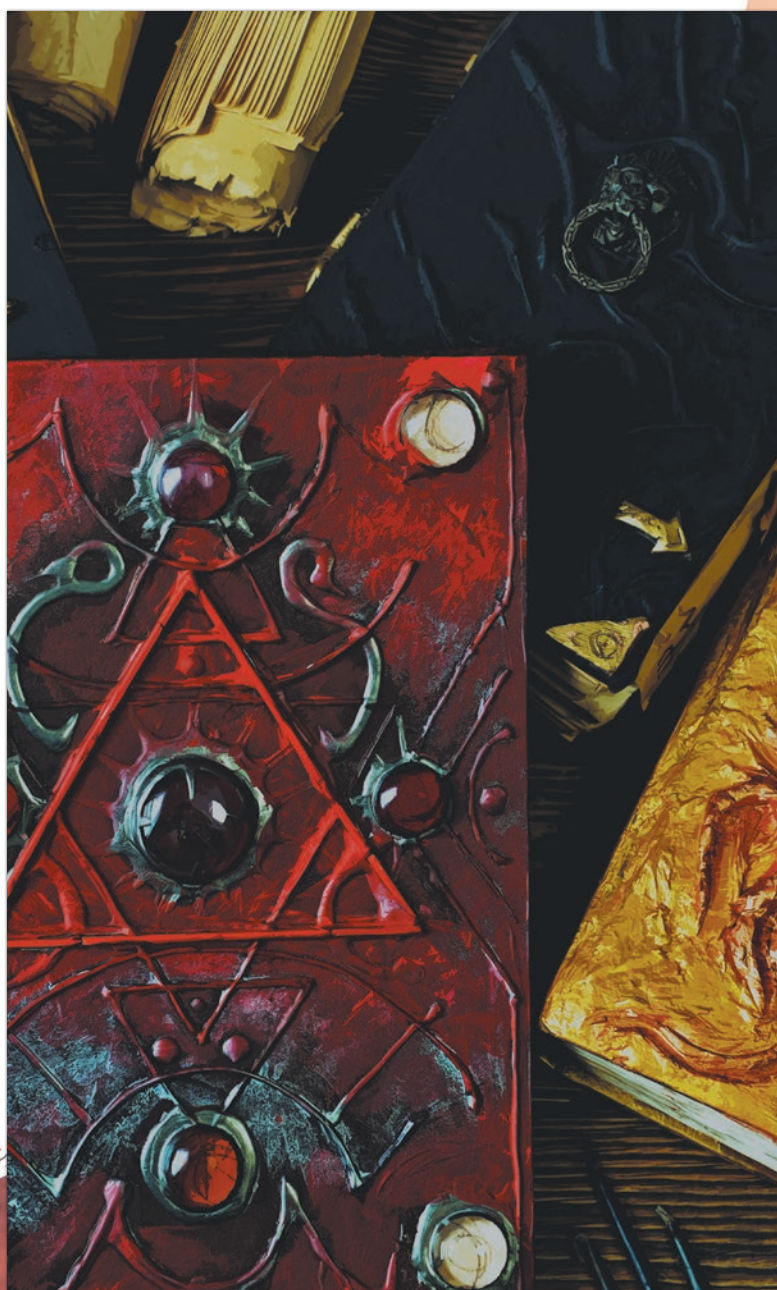
If the 'tome' (or newspaper or video cassette, etc.) is stored away as part of a vast collection – as in a library or private hoard – Survivors may need to exercise their **Research** skill in tracking it down. Or maybe interpersonal skills will allow them to get directions to it from people who are knowledgeable about the collection?

ACCESSING AND UNDERSTANDING THE CONTENTS

If the item is expressed in a language other than the common vernacular, understanding it might require a **Foreign Language** test. This is especially true if the information is expressed in archaic or highly technical language.

If the knowledge locked up in the item is highly contextualized on esoteric systems of thought it might also require an **Occult** test; if it is so full of references back to old Pre-Apocalypse knowledge that it can't readily be understood, perhaps a **History** or **Anthropology** test might be required. On the other hand, if the knowledge is closely tied to people, places, and events from *after* the Apocalypse then maybe a relevant **Post-Apocalypse Lore** test may be needed.

If the information is locked away in some technological recording — on a video camera or busted server — there may be a need for Survivors to succeed in Technology Use tests, or track down replacement parts, or even use Craft skills to build apparatus to decode and display the information in a human-readable form.



IMMERSION

To the layman, a 'tome of terror' looks like nothing more than a random collection of disjointed thoughts, none of them imparting any real meaning. This is because most people have no prior experience of the Cthulhu Mythos and thus have no reason to think that the gibbering ravings might be something meaningful.

If the Investigator undertaking the research has an **Unnatural** skill rating of 0, he or she will be likewise unconvinced. Such an individual will be unable to become sufficiently 'immersed' in the Tome's buried secrets to learn anything useful at all.

On the other hand, a researcher with skill in **Unnatural** may be able to see beyond the disconnected rantings and perceive the implied secrets. This requires an **Immersion test:** a roll against the Survivor's current Unnatural skill × 10 with a negative modifier based on the tome's weightiness (measured by the amount of potential additional **Unnatural** skill it may afford the cautious reader).

Tome's Unnatural Skill Gain	*Modifier to Immersion Test*
+1 to +3	0
+4 to +6	-10
+7 to +12	-20
+13 to +16	-30
+17 or more	-40

If this roll fails, the researcher becomes convinced that the Tome is a fake. No matter how many days or weeks he or she invests in studying it, that belief will prevent any deeper understanding of its contents.

If this roll is a *critical success*, the researcher becomes obsessed with the tome — and will want to pursue its analysis at all costs. This might present some difficult situations, but also means the research (see below) will be completed in **half** the normal time.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine returns to the Temple of the New Light and quietly breaks in, discovering their sacred library of texts. Amongst these moldy old volumes, she discovers a copy of the Latin translation of the Necronomicon, *which she recognizes by its dark reputation. She pockets the book. Days later — after she and her associates have put paid to the evil plans of the New Light cult — Maxine decides she would like to study the Necronomicon, which she suspects is a Tome of Terror. Sam the Game Moderator determines that the full research project will take seven months of game time (which can be spread among several blocks, for example between adventures) and that if successful such an effort will earn a +16 bonus to* Unnatural *skill.*

Sam doesn't tell Jo how long the process will take but does ask her to make an Immersion Roll to see if Maxine can see beyond the apparent gibberish of Al Hazrad's text. Maxine's Unnatural skill is currently 7% and the Necronomicon's potential skill gain means that a modifier of -30 must be applied. That means that the test that Maxine must pass is against: (Unnatural × 10)-30, or (7×10)-30 = 40.

Maxine's immersion roll is 34 – a standard success. Thus, Maxine will become immersed in the book and can see beyond the confusing detail of Wormius' cryptic allusions ... perhaps to her peril. If she had instead rolled 11 — a critical success — she might have finished the research in 3½ months instead of 7 ... but would have been thoroughly obsessed by the book during that time, perhaps refusing requests to accompany her friends on missions.

INVESTING TIME

Reading a musty old tome might take months, especially if it's written in rambling and confusing language; on the other hand, viewing a video recording might only take a few minutes, especially if the relevant information is explained in a clear and concise way. You as Game Moderator should make a call as to the amount of time that a

Survivor must invest in order to properly appreciate the contents of the knowledge source — in general, the more cryptic and voluminous, the longer it will take. Conceivably, some arcane tomes written with elliptical logic might take months to properly understand.

If the Game Moderator determines that some form of skill test is required to comprehend the information (e.g., if it is in a foreign language or recorded in a highly unorthodox way), that roll should only be allowed after the necessary research time has been invested. In general, it isn't necessary for the research process to be uninterrupted, but a long break might prove a setback which lengthens the overall task.

DANGERS OF UNDERSTANDING

Lovecraft famously wrote that the most merciful thing in the world is mankind's inability to correlate all the pieces of knowledge at its disposal. It's this "island of ignorance" that saves humanity from going insane from the realization of the true horrors underlying the world. Deliberately diving into the study of the hidden truth is a potentially perilous undertaking.

Revelations about terrible or shocking events or disgusting practices of Cthulhu Mythos entities or their followers, might warrant a **SAN** Loss. Compared to other Lovecraftian tabletop roleplaying games, however, such losses should generally be smaller — after all, Survivors are already well aware of many terrifying truths about the Mythos.

SKILL INCREASES

The main reason to unlock the hidden wisdom of tomes or other obscure knowledge-sources is to gain information that is relevant to the state of the current world or the scenario/campaign that is being played. In this regard, you as Game Moderator should reward successful research with some helpful details or facts which will aid in solving a problem or remaining alive in the broken world.

In addition to this, you might rule that the knowledge learned through research increases the Survivor's skill ratings in some way. The most common 'reward' is an improvement to the **Unnatural** skill (which captures hidden knowledge about the Cthulhu Mythos and its attendant horrors).

A minor tome might provide +5 skill points (or fewer) to Unnatural, while certain rare and shocking volumes might offer as much as +15.

When improving the Unnatural skill, don't forget that a Survivor's Sanity cannot ever be higher than (99 minus the Unnatural skill rating). If changing this cap means current Sanity is too high, that number must also be reduced to match this new **Maximum SAN**. Such losses may trigger Temporary Insanity or a new Disorder.

In addition to learning about the Unnatural, successful research might improve other knowledge-based skills as well. For example:

- Information about obscure human beliefs might improve **Occult**
- Information about the world before the Apocalypse or the cause of the Apocalypse might improve **History** or **Archeology**
- Information about the world as it is now might improve **Post-Apocalypse Lore**
- Information about human civilizations, either Pre- or Post-Apocalypse might improve **Anthropology**

More mundane knowledge might be learned as well, which improves **Art, Craft, First Aid, Law,** etc.

Usually the amount of skill gained through such means will be variable and relatively small (e.g., 1D4 to 1D10).

LEARNING RITUALS

Tomes may also include descriptions of rituals which, if correctly performed, can create a supernatural effect. Rituals typically involve (potentially complex) patterns of action, chants, and associated paraphernalia. The manifestations created through rituals can be significant, but unlike magic in most tabletop roleplaying games such supernatural workings are laborious. They are typically time-consuming and may require the coordinated actions of a group of people to have any chance of succeeding.

Despite such inherent limitations, supernatural rituals represent perhaps the most powerful source of otherworldly influence which Survivors (or their human adversaries) are ever likely to have under their control. As such there are some individuals who scour the blasted landscape of the Post-Apocalyptic world searching for tomes which can instruct them in such rituals. Some even believe rituals may be the pathway towards restoring the world to its unbroken state.

When a Survivor has successfully read a tome in its entirety the Game Moderator should provide him or her with a list of any rituals it contains. Not every tome contains rituals, and not every description of supernatural effects in a tome is detailed enough to allow it to be reproduced. But for those that are present in such form, you should provide a sketchy description of what the ritual seems designed to do. This should be a description in vague game-world terms rather than in terms of game mechanics: "seems designed to bring forth a shadow entity" is preferable to "summons a Night-Gaunt".

A Survivor might decide to attempt to study the specifics of a ritual described in a tome. If so, he or she will need to devote time and effort to that endeavor. This is in addition to the time spent researching the tome itself and represents study that can only begin when the tome has been successfully read in full.

Exactly how much time is needed to study a given ritual depends on its complexity – that is, whether it is considered **Simple**, **Complex**, or **Elaborate**. Typically, the more powerful the potential effects of a ritual, the more complex it will be.

Simple rituals take research in the order of hours or days to learn; **Complex** rituals can only be learned through the application of days or weeks of study; and **Elaborate** rituals can take weeks, months, or years to master. The time investment to learn a ritual does not have to be a single continuous block of research but can be split across many shorter periods of intense study.

Rolling to Learn A Ritual

If the Survivor invests the requisite time, he or she will still need to make a roll at the end of the period to see whether the time invested paid off. The Survivor must attempt a **SAN** roll — and ***fail*** the roll — to learn the ritual.

If the roll **does not** indicate a successful learning of the ritual, it means the Survivor does not grasp the nuances required to master it. He or she can try again but will need to start from the beginning and again invest the same amount of time again before re-attempting the test.

If, on the other hand, the roll **does** indicate the Survivor learned the ritual, he or she loses SAN. This is the price of internalizing unnatural truths about the universe and weird techniques for manipulating it. For **Simple** rituals, the Sanity loss should be modest (e.g., 1 point, 1D4, or 1D6); for **Complex** rituals a more substantial loss is warranted (e.g., 1D6, 1D8, or 1D10), while learning **Elaborate** rituals will always be damaging to Sanity (e.g., 1D10, 1D12, or 1D20 point loss). Learning an Elaborate ritual ***also*** grants a Survivor +1 percentile in the **Unnatural** skill.

Once a ritual has been successfully learned, the Survivor may attempt to perform it (see below).

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine spent 7 months of hard slog reading through the cryptic pages of the **Necronomicon**, *devoting all of her downtime between adventures to that end. At the end of the study, Sam (her GM) says that Maxine has earned the full +16% to Unnatural skill as well as +15% in Occult. The increase to Unnatural also reduces the maximum amount Maxine's SAN can ever reach by an alarming 16 points. Maxine's SAN is pretty low anyway, just 33 points, so this doesn't cause her to lower the value to stay under the new limit.*

Unfortunately, Sam also says that the terrible secrets in the Necronomicon require a SAN loss of 2D8 — Maxine gets lucky and rolls 4. That brings her SAN down to 29.

Now that Maxine has read through the terrible tome, Sam reveals that the book contains at least 3 rituals. One of them — named only as "To Bring Forth The Shadow" — piques Maxine's interest and she decides to try to learn it. The GM has decided that this is an **Elaborate** *ritual which will take several weeks to master.*

After Maxine has devoted a couple of weeks of study to the ritual, Sam allows her to roll to see if she's memorized its many complex nuances. The roll she needs to make is against SAN, but she needs to fail the roll. Given her SAN in 29 this isn't too hard — she rolls a 51. That means she's mastered "To Bring Forth The Shadow."

It is only at this point that Sam reveals that learning this powerful ritual comes with its own cost — Maxine needs to lose another 1D10 SAN ... but at least she gains a further point of **Unnatural**, *since the ritual is considered Elaborate.*

Tomes With Multiple Rituals

Some tomes, in particular so-called 'grimoires', contain descriptions of many different supernatural rituals. Learning rituals from such sources requires each effort to be attempted separately, using the method described above.

Keeping Failed Rolls Secret

The Game Moderator may choose to keep the SAN roll made at the conclusion of a research attempt secret from the player. If the outcome is a clear success or failure the Survivor should recognize it as such, but if the roll was a marginal success or failure the Game Moderator might choose to tell the player that the Survivor believes he or she has memorized all the subtleties but is not 100% sure. The only way to know for certain is to attempt the ritual — and if the learning attempt was a failure, such an attempt will never properly succeed. Although it may still generate an unintended supernatural effect.

Performing Rituals

The specific actions, chants, and paraphernalia required to successfully perform a ritual are particular to each and should be designed as part of the ritual's description.

Any attempt to carry out a ritual without the necessary knowledge or components is doomed to failure ... although it is possible that flawed ritual activities might still generate some kind of supernatural effect, just not the one intended by the person conducting the ritual. The Game Moderator should use his or her judgement to determine any such random supernatural side-effects; they should almost always be dangerous and detrimental to those involved.

In terms of game mechanics, the successful performance of a ritual (once the correct pieces are in place) is achieved via an investment of time/effort, the sacrifice of points in one or more game attribute (usually Willpower Points), and a successful Ritual Activation Test (see below). If all these steps are successfully achieved, the supernatural effects of the ritual will manifest.

GMs looking for some example rituals with game statistics for ***APOCTHULHU*** should consult the sample Mythos Apocalypses, starting on page 126.

TIME INVESTED IN THE RITUAL

The amount of time required to perform a ritual depends on its complexity rating — Simple, Complex, or Elaborate.

- **Simple** rituals are relatively quick to carry out, requiring somewhere between a turn and a minute.
- **Complex** rituals are more time-consuming, needing somewhere between a few minutes and an hour.
- **Elaborate** rituals are serious undertakings, consuming anything from a few hours to a day or maybe more.

During the time taken to perform a ritual, assume that all participants are completely occupied (chanting, carrying out prescribed actions, using paraphernalia in particular ways). A short interruption might not destroy the momentum of the ritual but a longer break likely will.

POWERING THE RITUAL

The description of a ritual should outline the type and number of personal attribute points that must be sacrificed to provide mental energies that fuel the supernatural effect.

The most common form of sacrifice is Willpower Points — to create relatively minor effects might only require 5 or 6 WPs; a substantial effect might require 15; a vastly powerful effect might require 30; and a truly cosmic-level effect might need 100 or more WPs.

When a Survivor makes a deliberate sacrifice of WPs, check to see whether the new total carries any effect upon him or her (see **WILLPOWER POINTS**, page 61). In particular, remember that reaching a WP total of 1 or 2 indicates a mental collapse of some kind, and reaching 0 WP causes unconsciousness.

Whenever a sacrifice of WP is called for, a participant in the ritual may always choose to sacrifice points of permanent POW instead — each such point is equivalent to 10 WPs for the purposes of fueling a ritual. Such sacrificed points do not refresh, but Survivors can attempt **DOWNTIME** activities to try to get some back (see page 90)

Some rituals also call for a sacrifice of Hit Points, either from the participants or from elsewhere (animal, human, or other living entity). Note that Survivors who knowingly harm another person, or even cruelly harm or kill an animal are likely to be subject to Sanity loss due to **VIOLENCE** (see page 80).

Depending on the nature of the specific ritual, it may be possible for several people to cooperate in the performance. For especially large effects this may be the only way to generate enough mental energies. While the leader of the ritual must have learned it in full (using the process described in the previous section), helpers can be instructed through simple notes and rote learning. Each assistant chooses for themselves how many points of attributes they will sacrifice.

THE RITUAL ACTIVATION TEST

If the requisite amount of time has been devoted to the ritual and the necessary number of attribute points sacrificed, the individual leading the performance may make a roll to see if the effort was ultimately successful.

Successfully activating a ritual depends on the ritual leader's Sanity, but success is more likely with a lower SAN. The **Ritual Activation Test** is a SAN test that must be ***failed*** for the ritual to work as planned.

If the roll indicates the ritual did not work, all the chanting and ceremony has been for naught. The ritual leader has two options — he or she can either:

- **Abandon the ritual:** nothing supernatural happens at all, and half of the sacrificed points are returned to all participants; or
- **Force a connection** to the supernatural: this involves the leader personally sacrificing 1 POW permanently to turn a failed roll to a successful one. The ritual effects happen after all, despite the roll.

SANITY COSTS TO RITUAL PARTICIPANTS

The simple act of being involved in a supernatural ritual performance is damaging to a character's Sanity, regardless of whether the ritual was successful or not.

If the performance was completed but something went awry (e.g., insufficient mental energy was raised, or the Ritual Activation Test indicated the effort was fruitless), all participants suffer an automatic SAN loss. For rituals intended to create small effects this will be modest, perhaps just 1 SAN point; if attempting a substantial supernatural effect, the loss is 1D4; if attempting a vastly powerful effect it might be 1D6; and for a cosmic effect it might be 1D20.

On the other hand, if the ritual succeeded and the supernatural effect is generated it is quite likely that the experience of witnessing something bizarre created by one's own actions will damage each participants Sanity. The precise losses should reflect the effect that is created, as described by the spell description. As a guideline, a minor supernatural effect might warrant a SAN loss of 1 point, a substantial one might be worth 1D8, a vast effect might lead to a loss of 1D12, and a truly cosmic manifestation might cause a Sanity loss of anything up to 1D100.

The Testing of 'Mad' Maxine

Maxine is far too excited by the new ritual she learned called "To Bring Forth The Shadow". In fact, she can't wait to try performing the ritual to see what happens. She thinks the ritual sounds like something simple enough she can do without a group of helpers — which is probably just as well since nobody else in Compound N wants anything to do with so foolhardy a plan.

Maxine goes out into the desert wastes with her collection of ritual paraphernalia and performs the hours-long ritual. The GM says that a sacrifice of 9 WPs is all that's needed to fuel the extradimensional effect. Maxine doesn't really know what to expect but happily sacrifices the points. She then needs to succeed on the Ritual Activation Test. This is a test against SAN that she needs to fail. Maxine's SAN is 29. That means if she rolls over 29 her ritual will be activated and perform its intended purpose.

Maxine rolls a 41. A few moments later there is a weird flash in the sky above, and she is surprised by the sound of great leathery wings rapidly descending on her. The Night-Gaunt that her spell summoned has arrived from some other dimension ...

Objects with Unnatural Powers

In constructing a Post-Apocalyptic world, you may wish to include items with the power to create supernatural effects reminiscent of those wrought through rituals. Using such an item does not require any special training or learning, and no Ritual Activation Test is needed. The user of an object with supernatural powers may, however, still need to sacrifice attribute points to fuel the effect (as per the GM's description of the item) and might suffer SAN loss from the experience.

SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS

There are lots of weird, supernatural things that can happen in your game of ***APOCTHULHU***. In most cases, the style of weirdness and its scope of effect should be tied to the specific setting, or the current adventure/campaign/plotline being played out. As such ***APOCTHULHU*** doesn't provide a ready-made 'grand grimoire' of supernatural rituals and effects to plunder. Effects should relate to significant plot points or elements of the setting rather than being generic RPG 'spells'.

The following guidelines may be helpful to Game Moderators inventing custom super-natural powers for their own Post-Apocalypse game settings.

Calculating the Scope of the Supernatural Effect

The manifestations associated with a supernatural effect can be virtually anything the Game Moderator can imagine. Where such effects require game mechanics, these can be designed on a case-by-case basis.

For determining the attribute cost of a ritual, as well as its potential for creating Sanity losses, it is useful to gauge the overall 'magnitude of the effect being generated — this is termed the scope of the effect. For convenience, a scale of eight scope ratings (from least to greatest) is shown below, along with a representative Willpower Point cost for fueling effects at each rating.

Supernatural Effect Scope	*Indicative WP Cost*
Minor	6
Small	9
Significant	12
Substantial	15
Major	22 (*or* 12 WP + 1 POW)
Vast	30 (*or* 10 WP + 2 POW)
Sweeping	45 (*or* 15 WP + 3 POW)
Cosmic	110 (*or* 10 WP + 10 POW)

The scope of an effect is based on how sweeping a change it causes to the physical (or mental) world. The sections which follow give guidelines regarding how specific types of effects might be rated using this scale.

One basic factor for consideration is the range of the supernatural effect (i.e., how far from the ritual site the effect manifests). Generally, it is much easier to create effects nearby and harder to influence reality a long distance away. The table below gives a rough guide.

Range of Effect	*Base Scope Rating*
Nearby (10 yds away)	Minor
Local (100 yds away)	Small
Line of Sight (1 mile away)	Significant
Distant (100 miles away)	Substantial
Global (anywhere on Earth)	Major
Beyond earth, but within our galaxy	Vast
In another galaxy	Sweeping
In a separate dimension	Cosmic

Use these base scope ratings as a starting point, adapting them according to the criteria specific to different effect types as shown on the next page. Wherever multiple criteria apply, always pick the greater of the two possible scope ratings (e.g., if one criterion suggests a *Significant* rating and another a *Vast* rating, the scope of the effect is actually *Vast*).

Designing Supernatural Effects: Some General Principles

*Supernatural effects in **APOCTHULHU** are unlike the forms of magic that appear in most roleplaying games, especially games set in the fantasy genre. Rather than wielding a flashy fireball into the midst of combat, a ritual magician in **APOCTHULHU** might create a supernatural effect as the result of hours of ritual incantation placing his or her mind into communion with extradimensional horrors.*

The following general guidelines will help you in depicting magic in a suitably low-key and creepy fashion:

SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS ARE SELDOM FLASHY

While some spells might create a spectacular if shocking manifestation of unnatural horror, most work with little or no visible or physical effect. Frequently, people who aim to unleash supernatural effects have no way to tell whether their ritual succeeded or not, until hours, days, or even weeks have passed. And even then, its effects may be subtle changes that most people would never notice.

SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS ARE ALWAYS DANGEROUS TO INVOKE

Generating a supernatural effect is equivalent to opening one's mind and essence to the unknowable forces which make up the Cthulhu Mythos. These powers are inherently corrosive to reality as we know it. So, coming into direct mental or physical connection with them always causes some form of lasting damage to the spellcaster, and maybe others as well.

SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS ARE USUALLY TIME-CONSUMING TO CREATE

Many supernatural effects require lengthy rituals which are repetitious and wearying to perform. While there are a handful of smaller, casual effects which might be useful in a tactical, fast-paced situation, most play out far too slowly to help in tactical environments.

SUPERNATURAL EFFECTS ARE THE ENEMY OF SANITY

Connecting with the forces of the Mythos is inherently dangerous to one's Sanity. In game terms this manifests as a mandatory sacrifice of SAN; but in narrative terms you should play up the highly disturbing experience of touching an unknown and unknowable extra-dimensional force whose very existence is anathema to everything that the caster has ever known or experienced. Generating supernatural effects should hurt. Every single time.

Common Types of Effects

As Game Moderator you're free to invent any type of supernatural effect that complements your vision of the Post-Apocalypse world. For settings which emulate the styles of otherworldly phenomena found in H.P. Lovecraft's fiction, a few common categories of effects may prove useful starting points for broader invention.

SUMMONING SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES

In many Lovecraftian settings there exist a family of rituals designed to compel a supernatural being of the Cthulhu Mythos to manifest at the location where the ritual is performed. The specific details of the chants and actions that must be performed to achieve this outcome vary according to the type of creature to be **summoned**.

In determining the Scope rating for this supernatural effect, the most pertinent factor is the POW characteristic of the supernatural creature summoned.

POW of Supernatural Entity	*Scope Rating*
1–8	Minor
9–12	Small
13–16	Significant

POW of Supernatural Entity	*Scope Rating*
17–20	Substantial
21–30	Major
31–40	Vast
41–60	Sweeping
61+	Cosmic

BINDING SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES

Another category of rituals found in many Lovecraftian settings are those compelling a supernatural creature of the Cthulhu Mythos to obey the will of the ritual leader (at least for a period of time). This control is called **binding**.

As with summoning, the Scope of such an effect is governed primarily by the POW of the creature — use the table above. Binding spells which have a long duration (more than a day) may warrant a higher Scope rating than that mentioned on the table.

MENTAL CONTACT WITH ALIEN GODS

While the Cthulhu Mythos includes numerous races of supernatural creatures, the major Powers are more properly thought of as individual alien 'gods'. This includes vastly powerful entities that are trapped in obscure places on our planet (like Cthulhu) through to cosmic forces that define our very reality (like Azathoth).

Certain insane sorcerers have at different points in history devised rituals to make **mental contact** with one of these vast unknowable intelligences. In determining the rating for the scope of such an effect the primary consideration is the potency of the Alien God.

Magnitude of Alien God	*Scope Rating*
Minor (e.g., Nodens)	Substantial
Major (e.g., Dagon)	Vast
Significant (e.g., Cthulhu)	Sweeping
Cosmic (e.g., Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth)	Cosmic

OPENING PHYSICAL CONDUITS TO ALIEN GODS

Some sorcerers are not content with communing with the vast and corrosive intelligences of the Alien Gods, but instead wish to open conduits for their physical avatars to enter our reality.

Again, the primary consideration in determining scope is the potency of the Alien God, although the act of opening a physical conduit is at least one step greater in scope than merely communicating telepathically.

Magnitude of Alien God	*Scope Rating*
Minor (e.g., Nodens)	Major
Major (e.g., Dagon)	Sweeping
Significant (e.g., Cthulhu)	Cosmic
Cosmic (e.g., Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth)	Cosmic

DIMENSIONAL TRAVERSAL

Lovecraftian settings often incorporate the idea of extra-dimensional locales, whether remote parts of our own universe, realms created by the collective human unconscious mind, or entirely different dimensions. Stories set in such worlds may involve a myriad of different supernatural effects that permit mere mortals to cross the barrier between the normal (ravaged) world and one such outside region.

In determining the scope of an effect which allows dimensional traversal, consider the distances involved. Use the range table on page 119, re-imagining the range values as referring instead to the distance traversed.

CURSING AND DAMAGING

Although far less common than in traditional tabletop roleplaying games, supernatural effects may exist in Lovecraftian settings which directly inflict physical harm on individuals. The scope for such an effect can be estimated by considering the amount of physical damage which may be potentially inflicted, usually represented by a dice value or Lethality rating.

Damage Inflicted	*Scope Rating*
1D4	Minor
1D6	Small
1D10	Significant
1D20	Substantial
10% Lethality	Major
20% Lethality	Vast
40% Lethality	Sweeping
90% Lethality	Cosmic

WARDING AND PROTECTION

As counterpoint to supernatural effects which may cause physical harm, it is equally possible for supernatural effects to exist which protect individuals from such harm. When estimating the scope of such an effect, consider the worst or most-serious type of damage the effect is likely to mitigate and consult the table from the previous section.

Using Hypergeometric Rituals and Objects from the *Delta Green RPG*

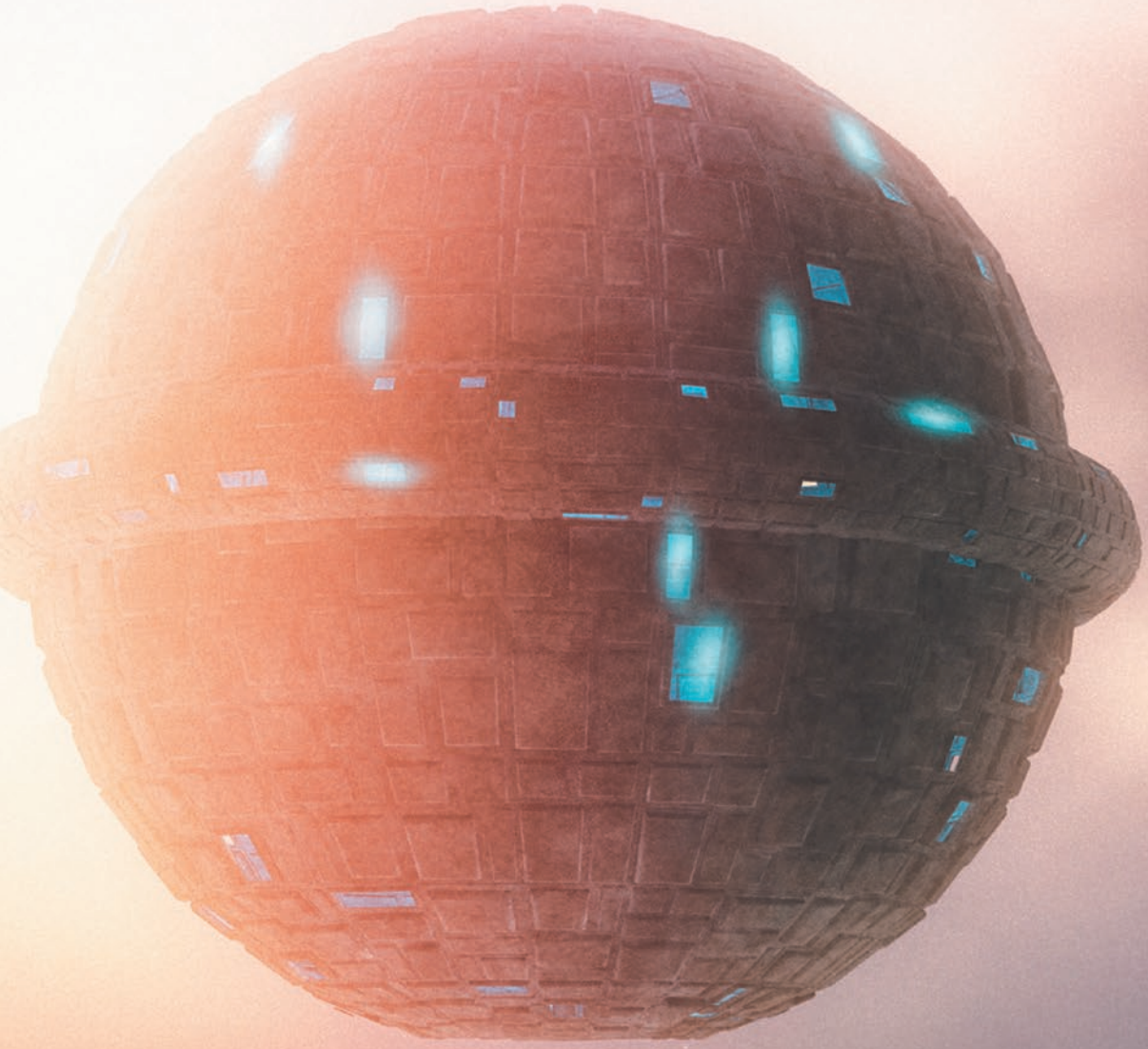
If you own a copy of the Delta Green *Handler's Guide* (published by Arc Dream publishing), you have access to a wealth of pre-defined supernatural effects which can be adapted for use with ***APOCTHULHU***. In the *Handler's Guide* such effects are described under the umbrella term "hypergeometric ritual", but beyond that naming convention other game mechanics carry across largely unchanged.

Translating D100 Spell Effects

The task of converting the many "spell effects" found in decades' worth of D100-game supplements — including the *Open Cthulhu SRD* — involves some minor translation effort.

Supernatural effects described for the D100-game spells can usually be converted across using a similar process to that described for special creature abilities on page 293. Any references to "magic points" in spell effects can be substituted for ***APOCTHULHU*** Willpower Points.

It is strongly suggested that any resource costs described in the source game for casting D100-game spells are ignored and replaced with a Willpower/POW cost derived from considering the scope of the supernatural effect. Use the descriptions and tables in the preceding section to estimate the scope of the most-significant supernatural outcome of the spell and reference the table of attribute costs for the relevant scope of effect.



PART III: SAMPLE APOCALYPSES

APOCTHULHU *is designed to support an endless variety of different Post-Apocalyptic settings. To demonstrate just a fraction of its potential eight examples of Apocalypses are shown below. As Game Moderator you could pick up and use any of these for your game – or recycle several into something of your own devising.*

THE PRE-APOCALYPSE WORLD

It's not expected that your games of ***APOCTHULHU*** will involve significant action set in the Pre-Apocalypse time. However, as Game Moderator you may wish to set flashback sequences in this setting or even begin a game in the Pre-Apocalypse and play through the Apocalyptic event itself.

The Pre-Apocalypse world is also a convenient baseline for setting Resource Scarcity (see **A WORLD IN DISODER**, page 99). Scarcity descriptions included in the sample Apocalypses which follow are often made as relative to the Pre-Apocalypse rating (e.g., in Apocalypse 1 all Technological Items except military vehicles are described as *"one step scarcer than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline; military vehicles are one step less scarce"*).

As described in the section on scavenging, the five scarcity ratings are (from least to most scarce): **Abundant, Uncommon, Hard to Get, Very Hard to Get,** and **Impossible to Get.**

Resource Scarcity in the Pre-Apocalypse

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — others	Hard to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Abundant
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Abundant
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Abundant
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Uncommon
Weapons — military	Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Uncommon
Protective Equipment	Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Abundant
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Abundant

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Abundant
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Uncommon
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Abundant
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Uncommon
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Abundant
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	N/A
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Uncommon
Animal-Based Transport	Uncommon

NOTE: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

APOCALYPSE 1: THE STARS TURN, TURN, TURN

Several of H.P. Lovecraft's stories allude to vast cosmic cycles of time, some of which are inimical to the physical existence of alien forces of the Cthulhu Mythos. Mankind evolved in one such lacuna in the dominance of extradimensional terrors. While we enjoyed thousands of years believing ourselves the ultimate intelligence and power on Earth (perhaps even in the Universe), humanity's pre-eminence was always destined to be short. When the cosmic cycle turned and Mythos beings could once again exist, all the might and history of the human race could not save it from near-instant destruction at the hands of Great Cthulhu and his ilk.

Alien cities rose from the oceans and from beneath the ground. Great and terrible horrors crushed whole cities beneath a single enormous foot or tentacle. Almost the whole of humanity was wiped out in just a few months — the nukes didn't save us, the might of the world's militaries didn't save us, the satellite weapons didn't save us. Nothing saved us.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is ***Very Harsh***.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** Humanity's dominance over the Earth ended sometime in the first half of the 21st Century.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** The world 'ended' through no particular action, but merely because a pre-appointed cosmic cycle had come to an end.
- **What Changed?** Cities were crushed, armies of inhuman creatures swarmed out of the oceans and the dark places below the earth. Rampaging monstrosities as large as a planetoid came down from the stars and crushed entire continents, leaving the outlines of once familiar landmasses scarred. At the same time, certain hidden ancient places — like sunken R'lyeh — returned to the surface.

- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting occurs a decade after humanity's grasp over the world came to an end.

- **What is the World Like?** Much of the world remains as it was, although (mostly) devoid of human population. Instead, colonies of Mythos creatures are dominant inhabitants to be found on land and at sea. It is common to find sights where familiar — even comforting — landmarks from before the fall are juxtaposed with alien and terrifying constructs, supernatural manifestations, or extra-dimensional creatures.

- **What Communities Exist?** The vast majority of humanity was wiped out in the months after the Mythos forces rose. Those who still survive can be broken into two categories — those humans who have submitted to become servants of the horrors (at terrible cost to their sanity), and those who cling to a tenuous life in shadowy places stealing food and dreaming of the days when humanity thrived.

- **What Mythos Entities?** The Game Moderator can populate the world with any of the Mythos races described by H.P. Lovecraft (and other authors). Similarly, the presence of any of the terrifyingly powerful alien gods can be justified — after all, now that a new cycle of cosmic reality has begun, any of those ancient horrors might take an interest in humanity's former playpen.

- I**s There Any Hope?** If playing in a 'purist' interpretation of Lovecraft's writing, there is no real hope of reversing the turn of the great cosmic cycle. That's not to say that Survivors cannot make a significant change to the world, perhaps even beating back the forces of oppression and re-establishing a kind of civilization. But the wolves will always be at the door.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 1

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Mythos-ravaged world and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 309).

- The Resource Scarcity for all Human Consumables and Livestock is *two steps scarcer* than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline.
- All Technological Items except military vehicles are *one step scarcer* than in the baseline; military vehicles are *one step less scarce*.
- Navigation Tools are **Uncommon**; Maps and charts that accurately reflect the new geography of the world are **Impossible to Get** (since so many landmasses have been permanently scarred or modified).
- Books from before the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get;** those written after the Apocalypse are **Very Hard to Get**.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — THE WOLF

The Wolf lurks in the shadows, waiting for prey. It might have once been a wolf. It might have once been a human. The archivists don't know. The guns don't know. Hell, the settlement's brains-trust doesn't know. All everyone knows is The Wolf is death incarnate.

It looks like a balding man with a wild fringe of hair; rotten, blackened teeth, with the breath to match; mismatched eyes — one yellow and one blue; a five-day stubble always coated in gristle and gore, and fingers that end in ragged talons. In a world of monsters, The Wolf hunts alone. But it never takes solitary prey. The Wolf sneaks into supposedly secure compounds and buildings to tear into the sleeping and vigilant.

Like its animal namesake, The Wolf possesses an uncanny sense of smell and the ability to see in near-darkness. Even more terrifying, though, The Wolf is able to walk into one shadow and emerge from any other shadow within sight. It

sometimes uses this technique to toy with prey, slashing at hamstrings and exposed flesh with its diseased claws.

When prey is captured, The Wolf tries to silence it first by slashing its neck with a claw or even tearing out its throat with a savage bite.

Although it stalks its prey silently, after feasting the Wolf can't help but whisper, hum, or even sometimes flatly sing old folk songs by Leonard Cohen — "So Long, Marianne" and "Master Song" are his favorites.

STR 17 **CON** 15 **DEX** 17 **INT** 18 **POW** 16
HP 16 **WP** 16

Armor: 1 point of thickened skin.

Skills: Alertness 70%, Athletics 40%, Persuade 30%, Stealth 65%, Unnatural 20%.

Combat:

Knife-like talons 55%, damage 1D8, Armor Piercing 3.

Grapple 55%, pins the target.

SHADOW-STEP: The Wolf is able to walk into one shadow and out another. This costs it 4WP. The other shadow only need be in view from the first. One of its favorite tactics is to emerge from a person's shadow to strike from behind.

SAN Loss: 0/1 to see the Wolf's unwholesome appearance.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE AFTER-ACTION REPORT (AAR) OF POLICE SGT. DUNCAN O'NEILL

Sgt. Duncan O'Neill was on patrol when it seemed like the world ended. What he didn't know at the time was, it really was ending ... and his side wasn't going to win. Several police interceptors rendezvoused at a hospital and attempted to make a stand against an encroaching, formless monstrosity.

Whenever there was a lull in the fighting, Sgt. O'Neill wrote notes in the hopes that someone would find them. The notes detail the creature as well as the appearance of a mysterious woman who seemed to appear from out of nowhere and struck at the creature with her mere words before she too eventually succumbed.

His After-Action Report is a spiral-bound notebook on the passenger seat of his interceptor. The penmanship goes from neat, block letters to hastily scrawled cursive as he recounts the four-day stand against this monster. He initially writes in ink, but soon shifts to blood, before ending with the last few pages in a strange, black, ichor.

When viewed under the dark of a new moon — as was the last day of his battle — the ichor shifts and swirls, reforming to reveal the Body Armor ritual (below).

In English. Study Time: weeks. Law (pre-Apocalypse America) +1D4%, Occult +1%, Unnatural +1%. SAN lost 1/1D3

Suggested Rituals: Body Armor.

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — BODY ARMOR

Complex ritual. Study time: 1D6 days; 1D4 SAN.

Activation: 10 minutes; 10 WP, 1D6 SAN.

Some believe that sacrifices are necessary in war if one is to survive. Sacrificing morals is a valid choice to make.

The caster is able to make body armor that ONLY reduces damage from extraplanar creatures, but reduces the effects of each successful attack by 1D4 Hit Points. (The definition of what's extraplanar is solely at the discretion of the Game Moderator). The armor can take a total of 4D8 points of damage before its rendered useless.

To craft the armor, the caster must flay the flesh from another human. Over the course of 10 minutes, a balm of various oils and ichors is rubbed into the flesh. When the ritual is over, the flesh is still pliable and can be stitched into suitable armor.

The armor provides no protection against mundane attacks. It only wards against extraplanar creatures.

APOCALYPSE 2: NYARLATHOTEP UNMASKED

In the mid-1920s, a world-wide conspiracy of cults devoted to Nyarlathotep forged a bold plan to open a dimensional rift through which the Great Old Ones could return (early). Their covert machinations came to the attention of a group of occult investigators who undertook a globe-trotting adventure to track down and defeat the monstrous plan.

They failed.

At the appointed hour, in the shadowy half-light of a solar eclipse a rocket was launched from an island in China and exploded high above the world – the final act needed to open the invisible gateway.

Great yet insidious evil descended upon the world. While the way had been opened for the ancient and terrible gods, the nature of reality was still not ready for their physical manifestation. But their mental — and even more importantly, moral — influence certainly took shape across the face of the globe. Wars became bloodier, politicians more mean-spirited and greedy. By the time the Atomic age had been ushered in, the hidden influence of the Great Old Ones was in the hearts of many world leaders, whether they understood it or not. This dark stain led ultimately to the nuclear holocaust that shattered the civilized world. It began with a small rogue Asian nation obtaining atomic weapons and ended with a series of tactical strikes that killed hundreds of millions and pushed the world into nuclear winter.

Today, remnants of humanity still linger in many places — although isolated and without most of the trappings of technology and civilization. But the cruel stain of the Great Old Ones lives on as well, poisoning the minds of people. It bends them towards actions which work to wipe out humanity, or groom it as a slave race ready to mindlessly follow Great Cthulhu and his ilk ... whose physical forms surely must approach their long-awaited reawakening.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Very Harsh**.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** The downfall of humanity can be traced to actions in the 1920s, but the nuclear exchange that directly led to the current state of the world happened in the mid-1950s.

- **What Event was the Trigger?** The gate was opened by the Nyarlathotep cultists; the atomic war was the product of human greed and fear urged onwards by subtle whispers and dreams from the Great Old Ones.

- **What Changed?** Scores of cities burned under the mushroom clouds; electromagnetic pulses rendered most complex electronics inoperable. Electrical grids and communications fell.

- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting takes place in the immediate aftermath of the 1950s atomic war.

- **What is the World Like?** The fall of most infrastructure has left isolated bands of survivors huddled in small groups. Their lives were bad enough, with the after-effects of radiation casting a pall over everything. Then the RADHAZ-suited execution squads began roaming the countryside following orders given by national leaders, each a thrall to one alien god or another. They were accompanied by things that seem to be even more unnatural than the mutations.

- **What Communities Exist?** Small groups of people are common, many of them survivors who weathered the atomic war in fallout shelters in their backyards or towns. There are not yet any large-scale communities established, although some people have a dream to reunite people into a form of civilization. But do those people work for the good of humanity ... or are they compelled by whispered instructions from the Great Old Ones?

- **What Mythos Entities?** This game setting is light on physical manifestations of the Cthulhu Mythos, although a handful of monstrosities may be found. Far more common are dark mental and moral influences pushing people to commit terrible — sometimes inhuman — acts.

  Perhaps this is the world as Nyarlathotep, lord of chaos, truly wants it to be? Or perhaps it is the unintended impact of close mental contact between sensitive human minds and the now-adjacent realities where the Great Old Ones wait at the door?

- **Is There Any Hope?** In theory, humanity may still recover from the nuclear winter and re-establish some form of civilization. But for any such efforts to be long-lasting, the taint of the Great Old Ones must be removed or blocked, else any semblance of order that is brought into being will soon crumble under their insidious shadow influences.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 2

These are the differences between resource scarcity in Nyarlathotep's Earth and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 310).

- The Resource Scarcity for Food and Water is **Hard to Get**; for Medicine (all types) it is also **Hard to Get**.
- Technological Items except Weapons-related items are all *two steps scarcer* than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline, while Weapons-related items are *one step less scarce.*
- Navigation Aids are *one step scarcer* than in the baseline.
- Books from before the Apocalypse, and those written since the Apocalypse are both **Very Hard to Get**.
- Livestock resources are **Impossible to Get**.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — THE HOLLOW MEN

In the aftermath of the nuclear winter supplies are scarce and safety in short supply. Many communities lack the means to effectively protect themselves against ranging bandit groups ... let alone the Hollow Men.

Rumor has it that the Hollow Men were once men who have been warped and twisted by the radiation that permeates the world. That's just a rumor, though. The reality is much worse. The Hollow Men are normal men and women driven mad by what they've seen and experienced. These are people who have lost any sense of mercy or morality.

While bandits loot, pillage, and rape, Hollow Men sweep across the landscape utterly devastating whatever life they encounter. In the grips of their psychoses, they can't stop until they're dead.

STR 17 **CON** 15 **DEX** 12 **INT** 13 **POW** 12
HP 16 **WP** 12

Armor: Varies. Some wear none. Others wear whatever is available.

Skills: Alertness 30%, Athletics 40%, Post Apocalypse Lore 40%, Survival 75%, Unnatural 10%.

Combat:

Submachine Gun 55%, Lethality 10%, Kill Radius 1-3m.

Machete 55%, Damage 1D8.

SAN Loss: None.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE OL' 16

There are rumors that there's a safe place. Somewhere the dangers of the world can't reach. Could it be Shangri-La or Shamballa? Perhaps Xanadu? No one can say for certain, but stories tell of a low-quality 16mm motion picture that will guide people through the steps to reach safety.

The Ol' 16 stutters and skips and imperfections mar the viewing. But it does contain the steps needed to survive, if the viewer is willing to undertake the depravities the cheerful, bob-haired announcer describes. It's a very dense narrative that only truly makes sense after multiple viewings.

In English. Study Time: hours. Science (Anatomy) +1D6%, Surgery +1D3%, Unnatural +1%. SAN loss 1D4/1D6.

Suggested Rituals: Survival (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — SURVIVAL

Elaborate ritual. Study time: weeks; 1D8 SAN.

Activation: 8 days; 10 WP, 1D6 SAN.

In the nuclear aftermath, bodies break down much faster than they used to. A few powerful men believed that the only way to truly survive was to find a new body. They hired occultists, bribed spiritualists, and forced academics at gunpoint to find a way to make this happen.

Eventually someone stumbled upon an old manuscript in the steppes, purported to be by Nicholas Roerich and claiming to do exactly what the powerful wanted. Move their consciousness to a new body.

There are a few requirements. The target body must be alive. There is no way to make this work with a dead body. A compound of equal parts yak's milk, ichors of a fallen "star beast" (Game Moderator's discretion as to what this is), and tetraethyllead must be consumed by both parties each day of the ritual. A guide who knows the ritual must be present every day to expend the WP and SAN to facilitate the transfer.

Each day of the ritual, in addition to the cost in WP and SAN paid by the guide, the old and new bodies must each make a **CON** test. On a failure, they lose 1D4 HP from the toxic substance they're consuming. It's possible one or both bodies will die during this time, because no healing is possible. It would dilute the necessary concoction as it moves through the bodies.

On the 10th and final day, the transference is complete. An **opposed POW vs POW** test is required, pitting one consciousness against the other. If the source consciousness wins, it inhabits the new body. If the source consciousness fails, no transference occurs. If the source consciousness fumbles, it enters the new body but loses 2D10 SAN.

In the new body, the new consciousness keeps all its mental and knowledge skills and stats at their current level but takes on the physical skills and stats of the new body.

APOCALYPSE 3: THE GOD FROM THE UTTERMOST SOUTH

In the early 1930s a pair of expeditions braved nigh-unsurpassable challenges to travel to the Antarctic regions — to not only reach the so-called 'Mountains of Madness' but explore the ancient city ruins they contain. These structures, millions of years old, were built by the Elder Things as the heart of their empire. The twin expeditions uncovered a terrible secret that had lain buried for vast eons: in the distant past, the Elder race had constructed a vast technological marvel. This machine could attract a powerful Mythos god from space and trap it in stasis. During a long-forgotten war the machine was used to lure and trap a vastly powerful (unnamed) thing — perhaps a Great Old One, perhaps a cosmic god. When the human expeditions reached the city of the Elder Things, they found that the trapped god-thing was still within the machine ... and still alive. The only problem was that long millennia of entropy and decay had left the apparatus on the verge of permanent failure. Quick thinking was called for by the assembled expedition crew ... but sadly they failed to avert the collapse of the machine.

With the ancient trap now ineffective, the terrible and unknowable alien power was free to exert its influence across Earth for the first time. It began slowly, ejecting seedlings up into the atmosphere to fall across most of the Southern Hemisphere. Incredible news stories of black eruptions from volcanos in Antarctica hit the headlines. The ebony pods from these eruptions served two purposes. Firstly, they devoured living things as a means to channel much-needed energy down to the frozen thing at the South Pole. Secondly, the pods ensnared the minds of people with low character. These men and women worked to help spread the god's influence still further by arranging for larger and larger samples of its alien flesh to be shipped around the world.

In time entire countries went dark, halting their communication with the rest of world.

Those places were ruthlessly depopulated by men and women mindlessly enslaved to the silent will of the alien god. Within a year, all communication from the southern half of the world had ceased and certain countries north of the equator were starting to fall as huge masses of the dark seeds were somehow smuggled into their borders. After another year, the entire world was under the influence of the once-imprisoned god, who had also now sufficiently warmed from its million years of icy slumber to leave its ancient jail.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Harsh**.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** The spread of the god's influence started in 1935 but did not entirely consume the world until late 1937.

- **What Event was the Trigger?** The original cause was the breakdown of the Elder Thing machinery that had long held the trapped god in stasis.

- **What Changed?** The goal of the alien god is to subsume all of humanity into itself, and to kill anyone it cannot mentally integrate into its global telepathic control network. In the Post-Apocalypse world there is no need for communications technology (since everyone gets their instructions via telepathy and nobody has independent thoughts to share with one another). But all other forms of technology are still maintained – there is functioning electrical grids and well-maintained transport networks, both used extensively to harvest brains from captured "dissenters" (those who cannot be integrated) and ship them to wherever the alien god now resides.

- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting takes place a couple of years after the last 'normal' parts of the world finally fell to the influence of the alien god and its insidious dark seeds.

- **What is the World Like?** Silent, and highly ordered. The controlled members of humanity work as an insect-like hive, following instructions issued telepathically by the once-imprisoned god. Concentration camps have been set up to house anyone who has not been successfully integrated — these people are subject to intensive 're-education' and if that fails, they are slaughtered and their brains extracted as food for the god.

- **What Communities Exist?** Not everyone has fallen under the spell of the ancient god; people of high integrity, will, or sensitivity have proven far more resistant. Such people, if they can survive the silent squads which trawl the cities and countryside in search of outcasts, still live a normal life scrounging what little they can safely obtain. Many small societies of such people have sprung up, but the larger the group the more likely they are to be tracked down by the black-suited elite squads.

- **What Mythos Entities?** As the influence of the once-imprisoned god has gained dominance, it has become bolder in sending forth other extra-dimensional beings to work side-by-side with its mindless human workforce. Nobody knows whether these horrific alien monstrosities are parts of the god itself, children of the god, or simply allied creatures it has brought from some otherworldly or extra-dimensional place.

- **Is There Any Hope?** The Game Moderator can decide whether there is any possibility of putting the alien god 'back in the box' or somehow banishing it from Earth. If either of those (nigh-impossible) tasks could be achieved, it may be possible that the humans under its thrall could return to being independent.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 3

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Cold Gods's Earth and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 311).

- Human Consumables, Navigation Aids, and Livestock are all at the *same levels of scarcity* as in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline.
- All Technological Items except those relating to long-distance communication are also at the *same level of scarcity* as the baseline; Communications-related technology is **Impossible to Get**.
- Books from before the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get;** those written since the Apocalypse are **Impossible to Get.**

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — TEKELI-LI ALMO

Although they take the outward form of two-foot-tall shaggy 'toys', the Almos have become a universally feared figure of terror, oppression and devastating violence in many areas of the Post-Apocalyptic world.

The origins of these curious creatures — technically homunculi — are shrouded in mystery but they are believed to be the product of cult attempts to manufacture a universal foot-soldier to slavishly enforce the cruel and capricious pronouncements of the new god. Efforts to use entire human brains to animate artificial bodies proved disastrous failures with the resulting creatures instantly turning on their cultist overlords. Only by cutting away the centers of higher cognition and grafting proto-Shoggoth matter to the human brainstem was it possible to create a stable, cold-hearted, unquestioning killer.

Why the cult scientists chose the Almo dolls — a popular children's fad in the last years before the Apocalypse — to house these disgusting hybrid minds is anyone's guess. It may have been a cruel sense of irony, or a simple act of practicality (since there were millions of the dolls already well-scattered around the developed world).

While some Tekeli-li Almos still retain their cute out-of-the-box appearance, many look like miniature creatures of foul and gore-matted (fake) fur. Their extending nerve baton is a much-feared weapon — not only can the Almos wield it with immense hydraulically-supplemented physical strength, but when engaged, its neuro scrambler can leave victims a mindless husk cowering and repeating simple phrases over-and-over.

STR 40 **CON** 15 **DEX** 25 **INT** 09 **POW** 01
HP 28 **WP** 10

Armor: None, but attacks against anything other than an Almo's head will cause minimum damage (bullets and weapons pass straight through the fabric of the doll).

Skills: Alertness 50%, Athletics 65%, Dodge 55%, Search 50%, Stealth 75%, Surgery (Neuro) 40%.

Combat: Neuro Scrambler Baton 60%, damage 1D6; when powered on, neuro-scramble field causes additional cognitive damage on contact (see below)

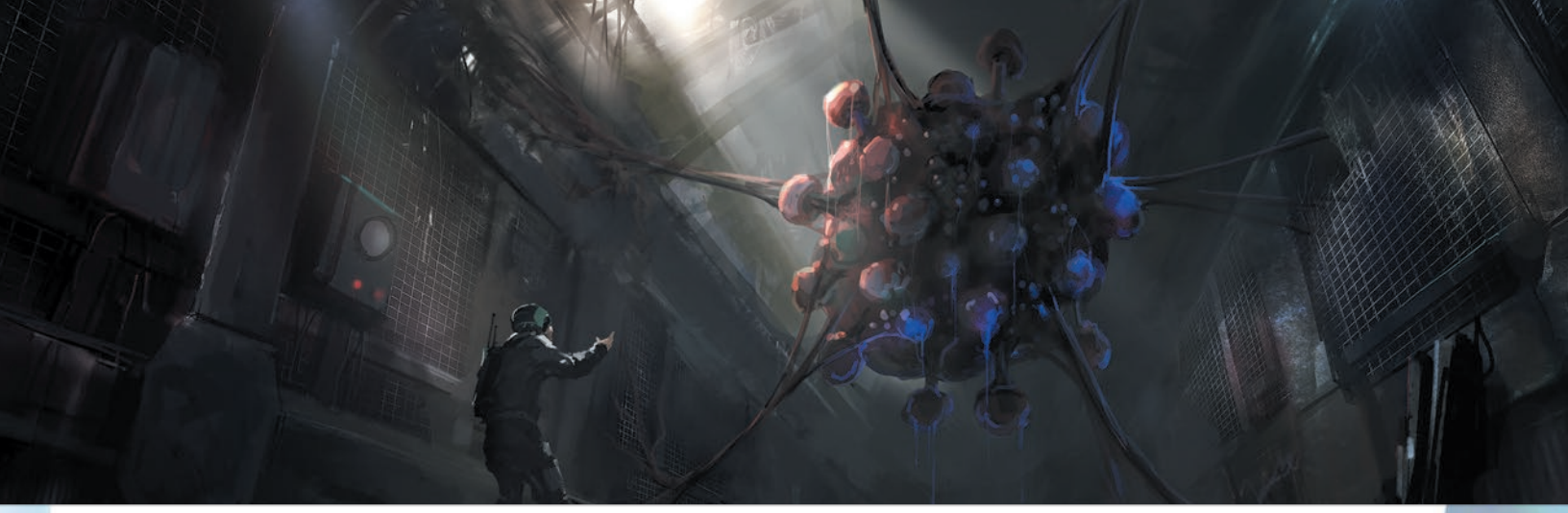
SCRAMBLE COGNITION: Anybody coming into contact with the live metal surface of a Neuro Scrambler Baton must immediately make a **SAN** test. Failure means a loss of 1D6 SAN and reduction to a febrile state for an equal number of turns. If the SAN roll is a *fumble*, the victim is permanently affected — instantly gaining a **PSYCHOGENIC FUGUE** disorder (see page 85) and resetting the character's Breaking Point to Current SAN minus POW.

SAN Loss: No loss to see an inert Almo doll, but being assaulted by the blood-thirsty thing costs 1/1D6 SAN.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — CAR 648

Those controlled by the world's new god use the existing train infrastructure to ship the brains of dissenters to the central collection points. Sometimes, things go off the rails. Literally. Each train consists of the locomotive, a tender car, a guard car, and however many 'cerebral cars' are needed. This train only had one.

Car 648 was carrying a supply of brains to the depot. What many don't understand is that the god feasts upon the psychic energies of the brains, not the gray matter in and of itself. To that end, it's a common occurrence for the god's followers to link together the brains into a single psychic entity and torture it, creating even more food for their master.



A landslide eroded the tracks Car 648 was scheduled to use. As the train rolled over the weakened rails, it plummeted off the track and down a defile. The custodians of Car 648, as well as the crew and guards were all killed as the train plummeted. The one thing that didn't die was the fused psychic entity.

Wounded and alone, in the wilderness, trapped in the train car, it thrashes in the psychic maelstrom, believing itself a veteran of a psychic war that was never fought.

It has access to numerous psychic abilities (at the Game Moderator's discretion) and could be a friend or foe, depending on how it's approached and treated.

STR N/A **CON** N/A **DEX** N/A **INT** 43 **POW** 62
HP 10×31* **WP** 62

Armor: 4-point reinforced canisters for each brain.

Skills: Alertness 30%, Persuade 60%, Post Apocalypse Lore 45%, Reassure 70%, Science (Any) 45%, Unnatural 30%.

Combat: Psychic Whip 55%, damage 1D8, Armor Piercing 3.

***BRAINS IN JARS:** Car 648 is full of thirty-one brains-in-a-jar. Each brain has 10 Hit Points. If a brain is destroyed, reduce Car 648's POW by 2. When it reaches 0 POW it shuts down permanently.

SAN Loss: No loss to encounter the train carriage. Realizing that it houses a hostile psychic entity costs 1/1D4 SAN.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME"/ITEM — NEURAL NETRIX

Created by the followers of the new god, these contraptions are a series of mental probes inserted into human brains and linked via cables. Each probe can be no more than a foot from the next and each netrix is limited to 256 probes.

Inserting a probe is an incredibly painful process as smaller feeler probes emerge and root their way through the neural pathways of the target brain. Once they find the memories they need — and it's not one specific memory, it latches onto a different memory in each brain — it begins to interface and all the memories collide, creating a psychic feast for the new god.

If these probes are ever inserted into a living host and removed before the host dies, they cause 1D8 damage and 1D8/1D10 SAN loss. The victim also loses the memories of how to use a given skill, returning it to its base value.

In any/all languages. Study Time: weeks. Random Skill +1D3%, Unnatural +3%. SAN loss 1D8/1D10.

Suggested Ritual: Open the Brain (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — OPEN THE BRAIN

Complex ritual. Study time: days; 1D4 SAN.

Activation: 10 minutes; 7 WP, 1D4 SAN.

When someone opens their brain, they're reaching out to the new god and all the psyches it's already consumed. To activate this ritual, the person must spend 10 minutes clearing their mind. Once it's begun, the practitioner can attempt a POW test. If successful, the practitioner can determine a rough location (within 20-mile radius) for any single living person. A dead person can't be located.

On a failure, the practitioner senses that the person being viewed is learning the practitioner's location as well. On a fumble, the practitioner collapses into a shaking fit that lasts 1D10 minutes and causes 1D4 damage.

APOCALYPSE 4: THE FIRELANDS OF MELQART

In the near-future (of the early 21st Century), the world has been decimated by a vast fire — or more accurately, millions of fires — that fell upon every landmass from space, or from somewhere 'beyond'. Nobody is sure how or why this wave of fiery near-total destruction came, but those few who survived the sudden conflagration must live on in a scarred and burned-out land.

In the days leading up to the last normal day, a crackpot religion — the Church of Melqart — achieved some notoriety on-line with their paid messages advertising a forthcoming "great cleansing of the earth". The mysterious group sunk vast sums of money into publicizing their upcoming "day of Prophecy" through saturation marketing in print, TV, radio, and the Internet. For the most part, people derided their messages, casting the Church as the latest doomsday cult and lambasting it through innumerable short-lived memes. But despite all this, some people — the lonely, isolated, and eccentric — listened and believed; they even sent the $999 "devotion pledge" the Church asked in return for its survival kit.

On the foretold night, when the 'falling stars' — sentient fireballs — descended on every city throughout the world the faithful were safe in pre-prepared bunkers complete with supplies of food and water. These were designed to wait out the 'purification' that preceded the coming of Melqart. Everyone else burned. No fire-fighting techniques or equipment could halt the onslaught of the flame, and not even the most protected of locations was spared the devastation brought by the conflagration. In the confusion, few noticed that the fires seemed somehow 'alive', able to chart a course which delivered maximum destruction and loss of life.

The purification by fire lasted an entire year but ended as suddenly as it began. Then, CB Radios within each of the bunkers sprang into life, receiving the first radio signals in months. These were a confused and random jumble

which seemed to contain messages from the past and others exhorting the faithful to leave their bunkers and start the holy pilgrimage to the nearest place of worship ... because the day of Melqart's fiery coming was nigh at hand.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Very Harsh**.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** The fiery plague of destruction began a year ago.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** Millions of points of sentient fire descended from the heavens.
- **What Changed?** Everything outside the Church of Melqart's specially prepared bunkers was swept clean by a purging wave of fire.
- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting explores the days just after the flames suddenly departed the world, approximately one year after they began.
- **What is the World Like?** Everything is charred and ruined, especially in cities and places where large stands of combustible forests once stood. The devastation is not random but has targeted the wholesale wiping out of man-made infrastructure. The sustained fires and the smoke they caused has triggered a global freeze which has left the world even more barren and lifeless.
- **What Communities Exist?** Numerous groups survived the Apocalypse in Church of Melqart bunkers around the world. Others were fortunate enough to be at sea or in deep caves when the conflagration first struck and have been able to somehow wait out the destruction.
- **What Mythos Entities?** The most common supernatural entities that still exist on the Earth are the Children of Melqart, the sentient fireballs who carried out their lord's cleansing of the planet. Other types of Cthulhu Mythos monstrosities may also follow Melqart or have some part to play in his upcoming manifestation.
- **Is There Any Hope?** There is no way to reverse the damage done by the global fires, but there is still some chance to stop the next stage in Melqart's arrival on Earth.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 4

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Firelands and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 312).

- Human Consumables and Livestock resources are all *three-steps scarcer* than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline.
- Low-Tech Ground Transport is the *same scarceness* as in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline, but all other Non-Consumable Technological Items are *two steps scarcer*. Technological consumables are *three steps scarcer.*
- Navigational tools are **Hard to Get**, while Reliable maps and charts are **Very Hard to Get**.
- Books from before the Apocalypse (except Melquart cult manuals) are **Very Hard to Get;** Melqart propaganda is **Uncommon** outside bunkers and Melqart camps but **Abundant** within them. Books written since the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get**.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — CHILD OF MELQART

Glowing little balls of floating fire, shifting colors constantly, beautiful to look at, that move with obvious intelligence and purpose. They are completely alien and ruthless, but generally stick to following whatever instructions they are given. They are about as smart as a below-average human, and hence can be tricked or distracted.

About the size of a grapefruit, a Child of Melqart can fit through appropriately sized openings. They think nothing of burning down buildings to create sufficient openings.

They move as fast as a human, but they fly and do not tire. Eventually, one will run a fleeing human down unless he or she manages to break line of sight and escape with a successful Stealth check. They have no senses other than their equivalent of vision (including perfect sight in the dark) but they see in 360 degrees. They communicate with one another by fluctuating their colors.

STR N/A **CON** 07 **DEX** 16 **INT** 09 **POW** 13
HP 04 **WP** 13

Armor: The Children take no damage from most physical attacks (but see Weaknesses below). Enchanted weapons may have effect at your discretion.

Skills: Alertness 30%, Stealth in Daylight 90%, Stealth at Night 10%.

Combat: Combat 85% when attacking/40% when defending. Damage 2D6 (fiery touch, see below)

FIERY TOUCH: The touch of a Child of Melqart causes extreme burns, but a successful **CON** test halves the damage. They can set immobile, flammable targets alight by touch, and enjoy doing so to the clothing of unconscious humans who have crossed them.

WEAKNESS: A bucket of water, blast from a fire extinguisher, trapping them in an airless room, or similar things that might put out a blaze do 2D6 damage to a Child. Scale the damage up or down depending on the size of the 'weapon'; turning a fire hose on a group of them works wonders.

SAN Loss: 0/1D6 to see a Child of Melqart.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — THE SCORCHER

Unchecked fire can have a damaging impact on the environment as it rages and consumes everything in its path. Survivors have recalled seeing occasional gouts of flame that erupt in sequence in a straight line along the ground, usually beelining toward living targets. Too methodical to be anything but a living flame, people have learned to recognize the high 'hiss' that precedes the first eruption.

The lucky few have taken to calling these entities "scorchers". They are fire brought to life by the Mythos god of flame and imbued with a desire to hunt mankind.

The Scorcher

STR N/A **CON** 15 **DEX** 16 **INT** 13 **POW** 15
HP 08 **WP** 12

Armor: Scorchers take no damage from physical weapons. Enchanted weapons do normal damage. Water does 1D2 damage per gallon, fire extinguishers do 1D4 damage.

Skills: Alertness 30%, Stealth in Fire 70%. Stealth at Night 10%.

Combat: Flame Gout 55%, damage 1D4.

SAN Loss: 1/1D4 to see a Scorcher.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE SIGNAL

While the cycle-cranked CB systems installed in the Church bunkers only pick up the most powerful of broadcasts, there are other signals floating around in the ether. People who have resurrected old communications towers and radio masts routinely pick up weird things which seem to originate vast distances away. Diligent scanners for transmissions are even used to the occasional outré broadcast. Even rarer still are the messages that those in the know refer to as "The Signal".

When The Signal comes through, there's a quick burst of static across the radio receiver or cell phone. Then a random person's eyes in the room glaze over and that person begins rattling off a series of numbers so fast onlookers worry that the speaker will bite their tongue.

Each Signal, when decoded, is different but they always pertain to the Cult of Melqart, and never in a positive light. Sometimes there are rumors about its origins, or how to fight it. On even rarer occasions, a ritual might be learned by decoding The Signal.

In English. Study Time: days (including decoding time). Occult +1D3%. Unnatural +2%. SAN loss 1D3/1D4.

Suggested Ritual: This Fire Shall Kill (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — THIS FIRE SHALL KILL

Simple Ritual. Study Time: days; SAN 1D4.

Activation: Minutes; WP 4; SAN 1D4

Some survivors have learned that you can indeed fight fire with fire. Wisdom unearthed from the book Worshippers of Fire has taught a select few to summon a fire that can out-compete normal resources for fuel, effectively smothering the target fire.

The ritual requires the caster to brand their body with a burning iron brand to activate it. The particular brand-mark doesn't matter, but the caster can choose to take 1, 2, 3, or 4 Hit Points of damage in addition to the SAN and WP expenditure. The caster sends their fire after a target fire. For each point of damage taken, the fire deals that many D4s in damage to the target fire or fire-based creature.

APOCALYPSE 5: UNDER THE CHARCOAL SKY

In the near future (of the 21st Century) most of humanity has been wiped out by a sudden invasion of supernatural creatures who take the form of Sentient Shadows. The cities and countryside alike are a barren and depopulated wasteland, haunted by predatory groups of these Shadow entities. Scattered throughout the world, however, are small pockets of humanity that have somehow survived their ravages. These communities live beneath a perpetually charcoal-colored sky.

What few know is that the spontaneous appearance of the extra-dimensional Sentient Shadows was not the result of some grand cosmic event, but the results of a disastrous accident created by humans meddling with forces they did not understand. A classified U.S. military research project named PROJECT ABERDEEN had been looking for improved ways to intercept electronic communications around the globe. The project seemed doomed to failure after years of fruitless experimentation. Then it was contacted by a University professor who claimed knowledge of natural "weak spots" in reality which can be stimulated to perfectly capture electrical impulses anywhere in the world. Nobody cared that the academic's knowledge was derived from ancient occult tomes: small-scale experiments proved her ideas had merit.

To test the scheme on a larger scale, seventeen secret 'nexus locations' around America were found — these places were compulsorily acquired by the government. Each was converted to be a pilot site for the revamped PROJECT ABERDEEN intercept network.

On the day that the distributed snooping net was first switched on, few could have expected what was to follow. The 'weak spots' or 'nexus points' all blew wide open, and out of them swarmed millions of Sentient Shadow creatures. And it wasn't just the seventeen military sites where this occurred — the same thing occurred at hundreds of other nexus locations around the globe. The Sentient Shadows streamed into our reality from whichever alien dimension they call

home. Once they had arrived the Shadows soon found the conditions in our universe inimical to their survival. The only way for them to avoid dissolution was to take refuge inside the bodies and minds of human beings.

People so afflicted take on a 'second shadow', a penumbra visible only in strong light. Unfortunately for the host bodies, this hostile takeover erodes the physical form at a rapid rate. This means that to survive the Sentient Shadow must leap from one host to another, even as the old body perishes from erosion.

Years of such chaos, death, and insanity has caused civilization to fall. Billions have been consumed and discarded as temporary homes for the Sentient Shadows, leaving just a small percentage of unafflicted humanity. To make matters worse, it is not always easy to tell whether someone bears the taint of the second shadow without close inspection. This makes the lives of scattered nomads in this depopulated world just that little bit more perilous.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Harsh**.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** This apocalypse takes place in the near future of the early 21st Century.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** The powering up of the ABERDEEN intercept network, which inadvertently destroyed the boundary between our dimension and another.
- **What Changed?** Millions of Sentient Shadows 'invaded' our world and took refuge inside humans, using up their lifeforce before jumping to new hosts. Most of the world's population perished in waves, even as those who remained struggled in vain to understand and contain the spread of the Shadows. Civilization fell.
- **How Long Afterwards?** The invasion of the Sentient Shadows took place five years ago.
- **What is the World Like?** The cities are clogged with the dead former-hosts of the Shadows as well as desperate Shadow-possessed people looking for their next body. Sane people have abandoned high-density settlements to roam the countryside, dodging the Shadows wherever they can and surviving on whatever is left to scavenge.
- **What Communities Exist?** Societies exist mostly in closed and self-contained communities highly distrustful of strangers. Everyone knows that allowing even one Shadow-possessed person inside could spell the end.
- **What Mythos Entities?** The main supernatural threat comes from the Sentient Shadows, but they are not the only things that have found their way to our world through the permeable boundary between dimensions.
- **Is There Any Hope?** While most of humanity has perished, there is always a chance that things could (eventually) be restored to a semblance of civilization if only the Shadows could be banished back to their own dimension. This would likely involve somehow enticing the Shadows out of their current human hosts to return through the nexus points, then finding a way to re-establish a solid boundary between the dimensions.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 5

These are the differences between resource scarcity Under the Charcoal Sky and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 313).

- Human Consumables, Navigation Aids, and all Technological Items are *one step scarcer* than in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline.
- Livestock are at the *same level of scarcity* as shown in the baseline.
- Books from before the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get;** those written since the Apocalypse are **Very Hard to Get.**

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — SHADOWS

The Shadow creatures come from another dimension, though they have (unwillingly) broken through to ours. They manifest as intelligent but insubstantial shadowy forms that can either live inside real shadows or live inside a human being. The former state is painful for them, and they cannot survive for long like that — thus they seek out people to inhabit, hopping from one host to another as their presence slowly corrodes the host form to ash. Different people last different periods of time; the sensation of being occupied by a Shadow is also ruinous to sanity as the creature exerts a level of influence over the host's mind.

To other people, someone possessed by a sentient shadow seems to have a second shadow, just marginally off from his or her natural shadow — and only visible in strong light.

STR N/A **CON** N/A **DEX** 18 **INT** 11 **POW** 19
HP N/A **WP** 38

Armor: Sentient Shadows take no damage from physical attacks (but see Weaknesses below). Enchanted weapons may have effect at your discretion.

Skills: Stealth (outside a host) 60%.

Combat: Possess Body 55%, damage Shadow Possession (see below).

SHADOW POSSESSION: A victim possessed by a Shadow must immediately suffer the SAN loss shown below and a **CON** test. If the latter fails, he or she instantly loses 1D8 HP; even if it succeeds the victim loses 1D2 HP. If the victim's SAN and CON tests were both successful, the host body is one of the rare examples which is not corroded by the presence of the Shadow. Such victims can theoretically survive forever while possessed.

On the other hand, if either test failed, the host body slowly starts to decay due to the Shadow's presence — each day, the possessed must make a **POW** test; each failure causes a loss of 1D6 HP and 1D6 points of permanent CON. When CON reaches zero, the host's body collapses into ash.

SHADOW COMPULSION: While possessed, the Shadow feeds ideas and impulses to the host mind, occasionally compelling them to act according to its wishes — following the mental commands costs only 1 point of SAN, trying to resist them requires an **opposed test of POW vs POW**. Success on the test produces physical signs of sweating and anxiety, but the Shadow's commands can be ignored. Failure on the test means the instruction must be obeyed and the possessed host suffers 1D4 loss to both SAN and WP as punishment.

SPOT SHADOW: Detecting a Shadow that is inside a host requires a strong light and a successful **Insight** test.

WEAKNESS: Exposure to strong light causes the Shadow to lose WP; if it ever reaches 0 WP it is dispersed permanently, effectively killed. If the Shadow loses more than half its current WP in a single exposure, it must make an **INT** test or instinctively flee from the host body.

A strong torchlight might cause 1D4 WP damage per turn of exposure; a blindingly bright light source might cause 1D10 WP per exposure. Catching a Shadow in a light beam requires an **opposed test** against its effective DEX — if it is outside a host, use the creatures own DEX as shown above; if inside a host, use the host's DEX. The attacker opposes this with either their own DEX (if directing a light source like a torch or laser) or a weapon skill (if shooting a light-based gun). If inside a host, a Shadow regenerates WP at same rate as its host; if outside a host it does not regenerate WP.

SAN Loss: No loss to see a Shadow, either in its native form or inside a person. Being possessed by a Shadow causes a loss of 1D3/1D8. Seeing someone possessed causes a loss of 1/1D4 SAN, or 1/1D6 if the person was a close friend or colleague.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — TENDERS

Into a world where there are gates and the 'wise' will inherently be drawn to find ways to exploit them, have stepped the Tenders.

At first blush, the Tenders appear like any gate opened by a sorcerer or otherworldly being. The only difference is that the Tender's portal only leads to a Tender's stomach.

The problem with Tenders is that they're impatient. If a potential victim dithers on entering the gate, the Tender will reach out with slime covered tentacles to try to entangle the victim and drag them in.

Even though the opening appears as a gate, it is physical and can be interacted with like any other physical object. However, once a Tender realizes it's been recognized, it withdraws its 'mouth' back to the region of space/time in which it rests.

STR 23 **CON** 19 **DEX** 17 **INT** 10 **POW** 10
HP 22 **WP** 10

Armor: 3 points of thick, rubbery hide.

Skills: Alertness 50%, Stealth (Appear like other gates) 50%.

Combat:

Bite 55%, damage 1D8, Armor Piercing 3.

Grapple 55%, pulls the target into its maw.

TENTACULAR FUN: If a tentacle takes 5 damage it will drop anything it's grabbed.

SAN Loss: 1D4/1D6 to realize a gate is a tender.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE DARK CACHE

When someone's chasing you, and you know they'll inevitably catch you, but you have to leave a message for someone, anyone, what do you do? Joshua Buczek scribbled down everything he needed to get out, ripped it into thirteen pieces and hid them around the world as geocaches and uploaded their coordinates to a popular caching site.

The writings are that of a madman, because that's exactly what Buczek was. He'd seen too much, too many shadows haunted his waking days. He wrote down everything he knew about the nexus points, intermingled with conspiracy theories ranging from Velikovsky to Hoagland.

The writings are a complete mess to untangle, but they do contain kernels of truth. Each section is not self-contained, to further confound those on his tail, he interspersed pages among each of the thirteen ammo cans. It's necessary to find all thirteen cans and put the pages in the correct order to learn what Buczek knew.

In English. Study Time: weeks (not counting collecting the pages). Navigate +1D4%, Post Apocalypse Lore (Sentient Shadow) +2D4%, Unnatural +2%. SAN Loss 1/1D4.

Suggested Ritual: The Drawing (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — THE DRAWING

Simple Ritual. Study Time: days; SAN 1D4.

Activation: Minutes; WP 2; SAN 1D4

Across great distances, it's sometimes possible to draw someone to you.

The practitioner must have a photo, memento, or other physical belonging of the person being sought. With the object tacked up line-of-sight in front of them, the caster must focus on the item for several minutes.

As the caster focuses, an image of the target appears in the air. An **opposed POW vs POW** test is then made, the caster versus the target. If the caster succeeds, the target is compelled to come to the caster, regardless of the distance involved. If the caster fails, the victim is none the wiser. If the caster *fumbles*, the target is aware of who the caster is and what they intended.

Even though the ritual is magic, a victim drawn to the caster uses whatever means is at their disposal to reach the caster. It can take weeks or longer for the person to arrive if they're far away.

APOCALYPSE 6: SHAKE THE DISEASE

Global society as we know it ended in 2023 when humanity was decimated by the release of a bioengineered bacteriological agent from a government laboratory in Maryland. The disease was much more virulent than expected, and it mutated rapidly. All planned safeguards failed.

The disease was originally part of a classified program to develop controllable bacteriological and viral pathogen strains. These were designed to have timed lifecycles and counteragents, allowing them to do their deadly work and then be suppressed. This research was slow and lacking in results until one of the chief scientists, Dr. Anna Ozmandi, had a breakthrough. Ozmandi had a far-ranging mind, and this included studying medieval Islamic medicine. Plumbing the depths of ancient medical literature, she learned of certain 'Great Old Ones' who were said to be the spiritual embodiment of disease. She also learned the promising formulas related to them. She disregarded the mythical trappings surrounding this ancient lore as allegory but incorporated the formulas into her experiments. The results were incredible, allowing for faster growth and remarkable developments.

But the Great Old Ones were far more real that Ozmandi imagined — and once the super-pathogen was created, these powerful extra-dimensional entities arranged silently for the disease to be 'accidentally' released by a careless lab assistant. The pandemic ravaged vast swathes of the population, indiscriminately taking the high and the low of society. Those infected became dehydrated, and their skin became increasingly gray. Then they broke out in painful, oozing buboes. Some of the sick died quickly, while others lingered for weeks. The disease, dubbed the "Gray Plague", was highly communicable, infecting others through bodily fluids, insect bites, food and drink.

Eventually the disease burned itself out — after claiming the lives of everyone but the 'lucky' 0.01% of the population who were naturally

immune. Now, five decades later, the survivors have rebuilt a primitive society of sorts amid the vastly depopulated world. There are even travelling bands of carnival entertainers that roam from settlement to settlement dispensing entertainment.

But the threat of mutated versions of the plague are ever-present, so communities are very cautious of strangers ... and everyone is greeted with the now-traditional "are you well?"

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Normal(ish).**

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** The outbreak of the bacterial plague occurred in 2023.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** The 'accidental' release of the super-pathogen associated with the Great Old Ones.
- **What Changed?** Some 99.9% of the global population was, over time, wiped out by the plague. All the trappings of modern civilization — long-distance communication, electrical and gas distribution, and even the money-based economy — all fell quickly as there remained no-one to operate them. Cities became cesspits of dead bodies, forcing survivors out into more rural locations. Basic agriculture and the raising of animals now sustain the human population.
- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting is five decades after the pandemic.
- **What is the World Like?** Few people die of the plague these days, but everyone remains wary of the possibility of a flare-up of some variant strain. Humanity came to the brink of extinction the first time around; another super-bug could easily finish the job. There are plenty of intact buildings and vehicles, and many technological items as well. Things that rely on consumables like gas, or which need electricity are generally not workable, though.
- **What Communities Exist?** There remain numerous communities of survivors scattered around. Most take shelter in structures that afford them some physical protection from the less-savory bands of scavengers. There are many people alive now that were born after the Gray Plague and do not really believe the stories the elders tell about life beforehand.
- **What Mythos Entities?** The Diseases of the Great Old Ones are still extant in the countryside, mutating all the time. Some of the rarer strains do a lot more than kill their hosts; rather they warp and re-form them into beings that meet the cruel intentions of the Great Old Ones (whatever those intentions may be). The people afflicted with those crueler diseases cease being human at some point and become supernatural creatures of horrible appearance.
- **Is There Any Hope?** Unlike most Post-Apocalypse settings, life is not unpleasant ... but humanity remains on a knife-edge, vulnerable to future strains of the virulent extra-dimensional disease. To truly 'save' this world, someone would need to eradicate or neutralize all such strains.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 6

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Post-Pandemic Earth and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 314).

- Food and Water is present at the *same level of scarcity* shown in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline.
- Livestock and Animal-Based Transport is *one level less scarce* than the baseline.
- Medicines are *three levels scarcer* than in the baseline.
- Technological Items are all **Very Hard to Get.**

- Navigation Aids are *two levels scarcer* than in the baseline.
- Books from before the Apocalypse are **Very Hard to Get;** those written since the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get.**

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — FLUKUM

All sorts of oddities and misfits find their way to traveling carnivals. The Flukum is no exception. None of the carnies are sure when it first arrived, but it's been helpful ever since. This amorphous, iridescent black mass covered in popping sores was only the size of an orange when Big Sam found it. Now, it takes up half a Nautch Joint on the Left-Hand Side.

The Flukum is the central node of what is essentially a large, ever-reproducing psychic neural network. Big Sam was the first, on a dare, of course, to sample the various excretions, droppings, and effluvia that constantly slough from it. He soon fell under its control and now feeds parts of the Flukum to his fellows. Now, the carnies drop it into various foods and drinks. Once consumed, the new Flukum migrates through the body toward the brainstem, attempting to take control of the consumer. Once consumed, the victim is sensitive to the psychic communications and whims of the Flukum.

A horrid site to behold, its body can absorb most physical attacks against it. Its viscous nature does mean it is sensitive to electricity.

STR 22 **CON** 24 **DEX** 09 **INT** 13 **POW** 24
HP 23 **WP** 24

Armor: 3 points of mucous and ichor.

Skills: Alertness 40%.

Combat:

Pseudopod Slap 55%, damage 1D4.

Grapple 55%, pins the target under its bulk.

EAT ME: When at least 4 oz. of the Flukum is consumed, it can try to exert its control. A victim must make an **opposed Test of their POW** against the Flukum's.

SAN Loss: 1D4/1D8 to see the Flukum.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE BALLY

Out in the vast swathes of the Great Plains is a desolate spot where only scrub grass can grow, and animals avoid. It's a rumor that an "outside talker" (the carny who talks up the crowd) was killed on this very spot by a group of onlookers when he unsuccessfully tried to "freeze the tip" (get the onlookers enthralled enough to pay entry). Something set the crowd off and the outside talker was ripped to shreds. The mob moved through the whole lot, killing whomever they could catch.

Now, when the spot is approached from the Right-Hand Side, a susurration of voices can be heard coming from all directions. They slowly coalesce into a single, ringing voice. Oddly, though, once someone moves more than 10 feet from the spot, the voice can't be heard.

The voice is the remnant of the outside talker. Since his untimely demise, he's learned much and passes what he knows on to those who gather through a bally. His spiel is a smattering of everything he's learned over the years and might contain useful information, if listeners are willing to make a goodwill offering – perhaps a finger, an eye, or a piece of their very sanity.

In English. Study Time: Hours. +1% Occult, +1% Reassure, +1% Unnatural. SAN loss 0/1.

Suggested Ritual: Raree Show (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — RAREE SHOW

Simple Ritual. Study Time: days; SAN 1D4.

Activation: Minutes; WP 2; SAN 1D4

This ritual requires a specially made box. It must be constructed of wood and painted garishly. A crank handle is placed on one side and a peephole drilled in the front. When the handle is cranked and the viewer looks through the peephole, they see black and white images go through a two-minute loop depicting nearby future events that will occur within the next two hours. No matter how fast the handle is cranked the image moves at the same speed. On a fumble, the viewer sees a horrendous scene and loses SAN appropriate to the vision (GM's discretion).

APOCALYPSE 7: THIS SILENT WORLD

Throughout history, Mythos sorcerers have tried to bring sons or daughters of the inter-dimensional god Yog-Sothoth into our world. Occasionally such hybridization attempts have been successful (such as in the case of 'The Dunwich Horror'). But few have dared to dream of mass-producing such unnatural monstrosities on an industrial scale — and yet that was exactly the goal of the 1990s reproductive technology startup Fertil-Corp. This global megacorporation was formed from the merger of several existing IVF clinics and fertility drug manufacturers. Nobody knew much about the publicity-shy billionaire who bankrolled the company; almost nobody was aware that he was himself a child created through the admixture of human DNA and Yog-Sothoth's protoplasm.

From 1995 to 1997, Fertil-Corp established itself as one of the largest companies of its type in the developed world. Once that goal had been achieved, the order came from the shadowy CEO to begin the introduction of extra-dimensional matter into every in vitro fertilization. Nine months later, thousands of disgusting Children of Yog-Sothoth were unleashed upon the world: some born naturally, and others bursting forth violently from the womb. These mass-produced spawns were not as sophisticated as those Yog-Sothoth offspring created the "old fashioned way" since the Fertil-Corp technology was still limited. The new hybrids were completely blind, altogether lacking eyes in their betentacled and monstrous bodies. Despite this they have a savage, insatiable hunger to consume human flesh. They are also immune to most conventional forms of physical damage.

The thousands of first-generation hybrids caused havoc as they rampaged through major cities in the US, UK, Europe, and Australia. This was, however, just the beginning — in the months to follow, more of the Fertil-Corp pregnancies came to term, despite the company itself having long since filed for bankruptcy. Tens of thousands of the terrors were brought into the world in this fashion. Then the hybrids began to multiply among themselves. Before anyone knew what was happening there were millions of the disgusting things, everywhere. It was an infestation that spread inexorably to every corner of the planet.

Nobody knows exactly how many people were killed and devoured by the Spawns of Yog-Sothoth in the first years. Communications between different parts of the world were quick to fall, closely followed by electricity and print

media. People were suddenly on their own in isolated communities.

Those struggling to survive their ravages quickly learned the one weakness possessed by the mass-produced horrors — they cannot see. This one deficiency is, however, more than made up for by a preternaturally sensitive sense of hearing. The communities that have endured the marauding packs of Spawns are those that have learned to remain absolutely quiet ... no matter what.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Very Harsh.**

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** This apocalypse takes place in the late 1990s.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** The horror was created by the introduction of Yog-Sothoth reproductive matter into tens of thousands of IVF treatments.
- **What Changed?** When the resulting fertilizations were fully grown, they emerged not as human beings but as blind hybrid creatures with an overwhelming instinct to devour. Thousands of them were unleashed around the world. In time, the carnage they unleashed forced people to flee in terror — only to become the prey of packs of sightless horrors.
- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting is a couple of years after civilization finally fell to the unstoppable packs of spawns.
- **What is the World Like?** Large cities are surprisingly intact although totally devoid of humans — former populations have been entirely culled and eaten by the monstrosities. Nobody is foolish enough to wander into territories so infested with the Yog-Sothoth offspring. Things are better in rural locations, although packs of marauding spawn frequently scour most locales in search of something to meet their insatiable appetites.
- **What Communities Exist?** Numerous communities exist in remote areas, all of them hidden in places which afford some protection from discovery by the devouring packs. Even inside a sturdy building, however, survivors must still remain almost silent — any noise, no matter how slight, runs the risk of drawing attention (and almost certain death).
- **What Mythos Entities?** The Yog-Sothoth spawn are the greatest threat blighting the countryside. There are, however, other (even weirder) Mythos monstrosities that have begun to emerge now that spawns are inter-mingling with others of their kind as well as various types of animal life. This is creating an entire ecosystem of Yog-Sothoth-tainted creatures.
- **Is There Any Hope?** If humanity were to discover reliable ways to damage the nearly indestructible flesh of the Yog-Sothoth spawn, perhaps they could eventually resume their place at the top of the food-chain. Such a weakness would be difficult to isolate — after all, all the nukes and biological weapons tried by the military before society collapsed seemed to have little effect (other than to kill more humans as collateral damage).

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 7

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Silent Earth and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 315).

- All non-consumable resources except books and livestock are present at the *same level of scarcity* shown for the Pre-Apocalypse baseline (although obtaining them may prove quite perilous, especially if it involves noisily activating machinery or starting engines).
- All consumable resources are *one level scarcer* than shown in the baseline.
- Domesticated Animals are **Impossible to Find** (they have mostly been eaten); Animal-Based Transport technology is **Uncommon** but of limited use without animals to pull it.

- Books written since the Apocalypse are **Uncommon**, as are those from before the Apocalypse.

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — SCHADENKINDER

It's dangerous out in the world. And one of the few things that would make people let down their guard and admit a stranger or go venturing beyond sanctuary, is another person in trouble. Especially if that person is a child.

Schadenkinder play on humanity's urge to protect progeny. They appear as human children, between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. Their skin is covered in patches of dirt, their hair tousled, and tearstains streak their faces. They speak haltingly, as if holding back sobs.

What they're really holding back is a putrid slime that can stick a full-grown adult to the ground. Once they've isolated a suitable meal, they expectorate the ooze to hold the food in place. Then, their forearms transform into long, sharp-toothed snouts so that they can feed.

STR 15 **CON** 15 **DEX** 17 **INT** 13 **POW** 12
HP 15 **WP** 12

Armor: None.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Athletics 50%, Play the Victim 55%, Stealth 45%.

Combat:

Teeth-like appendages 55%, damage 1D8, Armor Piercing 3.

Spit 55%, pins the target.

GOO: A Schadenkind's sticky ichor is considered STR 14 for purposes of an **opposed test** to escape being pinned.

SAN Loss: No SAN lost to see a Schadenkind as a child. 1/1D4 to see it once it's revealed its true form.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE CAGE

Absalom Richter was one of the first to realize what the Yog-Sothoth spawn were, and how to survive against them. Blind, deaf, and mute from birth, he surrounded himself with knowledge. Braille was his window on the world.

It's still unclear how Richter learned about the creatures that stalk the darkness — but learn he did. And he knew he had to pass on this information. Stories are told that Richter codified his knowledge before he was torn asunder. What none realize is that he etched it in Braille on his own ribcage. That way, if the creatures bifurcated him, his work would live on.

In Braille. Study time weeks. +1% Post Apocalypse Lore (Yog-Sothoth's offspring). +1D3% Survival. +2% Unnatural. SAN loss 1D3/1D6.

Suggested Ritual: To Pierce the Night (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — TO PIERCE THE NIGHT

Elaborate ritual. Study time: 1D8 days; 1D8 SAN.

Activation: 5 minutes; 10 WP, 1 SAN per 10 minutes.

With most human cities empty and the blind-spawn of Yog-Sothoth wandering everywhere, resources are scarce. Gathering enough food and other supplies to survive can be a dangerous proposition. Some casters have found a way to mitigate the dangers.

The caster must sit cross-legged, surrounded by exactly 42 burning candles. The candles must remain lit for the duration of the ritual. The caster concentrates on opening a door to a place with a specific type of resources (e.g., fresh food, truck parts, antibiotics). The caster needed not know the place beforehand, the spell does the work of finding the target location.

When the first five minutes of the ritual is over, a door appears in a wall near the caster. To open the door the caster must attempt a POW test. If successful, the door opens. If the POW test fails, the door will not budge, but instead slowly fades away. If the POW test is a fumble, the door opens unto a one of the spheres of Yog-Sothoth, which bathes the area in an obscene light that causes all within 15 yards to lose 1D8/1D10 SAN.

As long as the caster concentrates, the door remains there. Should the caster lose focus or one or more of the candles go out, the door closes. The caster can keep the door open as long as they are willing to expend sanity.

APOCALYPSE 8: THIS FECUND PLANET

Most Post-Apocalyptic worlds are defined by the scarcity of life — a consequence to some horrific extinction event. This particular world is not like that — it is a horror brought about through an excess of life. A terrifying fertility.

Cults devoted to Shub-Niggurath have existed since the dawn of human thought, most seeking to invoke their awful god's powers of corrupted fertility. But in the 1970s one cult achieved what no other had been able to do — bring about a global manifestation of Shub-Niggurath's 'blessing'. Masquerading as a New Age movement dedicated to the protection of "Mother Earth", the cult duped hundreds of innocent Britons to participate in 'fertility rituals' held in an isolated Scottish castle owned by a popular musician. The weeks of gyrating dances and liturgical chanting seemed like harmless fun to most of the participants. None noticed the subtle changes brought into existence through Shub-Niggurath's 'blessing'.

In the weeks that followed the ceremonies, many accounts were reported world-wide of odd floss-like matter blowing on the wind. Wherever this white fibrous material fell to earth, common plants grew rapidly — even in the most unlikely of places. Scientists took samples of the miraculous floss but could not explain its origins nor its amazing powers as a fertilizer. Then the day came when the floss-streams got higher into the atmosphere and seeded themselves into clouds. Wherever rain fell, it contained tiny dissolved particles of the floss. And in every square foot of earth touched by this rain, things grew faster and bigger than normal.

At first the scientific community and the world-at-large embraced this miracle, even if nobody knew from where it had come. Parts of the world where food is perpetually scarce suddenly found themselves with bumper crops. Normally lush-and-green places found their harvests topping all-time records, so much so that business was soon booming and there was enough food that overabundance became more of a problem than scarcity. The cost of feeding the planet halved overnight.

However, what nobody knew — except perhaps for the shadowy Shub-Niggurath cult that had set events in motion with their orgiastic rites — was that food grown by such fertilizer is infused with something otherworldly. Something that is part of Shub-Niggurath. This enigmatic element causes the plants, fruit, and

vegetables to grow rapidly ... but they do not stop growing when they are harvested, nor does the miracle ingredient stop growing even after it is eaten. Instead, the mysterious substance accumulates inside those who consume it ... and when it accumulates to the right level, it sends forth its "shoots" to find the soil, right through flesh and bone if needed. And once those steel-hard shoots are in fertile ground, they are almost impossible to remove.

After just four years, the normal order of civilization had crumbled. Vast numbers of people were torn apart by thick verdant tendrils bursting from their chests or stomachs; just as many were pinned to the ground to die a slow death of starvation. Too late the message went out to abandon eating produce grown in the soil, but by then the element was already in the flesh of livestock — and so an all-meat diet offered no protection.

The Harshness descriptor for this Post-Apocalyptic world is **Harsh**.

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** The events unfolded in the late 1970s.
- **What Event was the Trigger?** The ceremony at the Scottish castle.
- **What Changed?** The creation of a super-fertilizing floss, which is carried on the wind, spread right around the globe. It eventually also dissolved into clouds. Everything it touches — directly or indirectly – grows fecund and tainted with Shub-Niggurath's element.
- **How Long Afterwards?** The game setting takes place four or five years after the monstrous fertility caused the fall of civilization (i.e., the early 1980s).
- **What is the World Like?** The world is greener and lusher than ever before, with abundance of foliage covering even the most densely-populated cities. Scattered amid the foliage are the corpses of people torn apart or pinned down by greenery bursting forth from their internal organs.
- **What Communities Exist?** Some people have sought out those places around the globe which are most inimical to life — rocky islets with no topsoil, harsh deserts, and the like. These people survive off stockpiles of tinned food from before the coming of the floss. But such scarce resources are rapidly running out.
- **What Mythos Entities?** As regions of the planet have become depopulated to humanity, creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos have slithered from hiding to take up residence. Also, Shub-Niggurath's many and diverse 'children' have been drawn to the bountiful harvest infected with her seed.
- **Is There Any Hope?** It may be possible to find a way of neutralizing the effects of Shub-Niggurath's fecund floss, however doing so will mostly stabilize the situation rather than reverse it.

Resource Scarcity in Apocalypse 8

These are the differences between resource scarcity in the Fecund Earth and the Pre-Apocalypse world. For a detailed table showing each resource and its scarcity rating consult the Appendix (page 316).

- Food and Water (of the contaminated variety) is **Abundant**; Medicine is present at *two levels scarcer* than shown in the Pre-Apocalypse baseline. Food and Water that pre-dates the arrival of the floss is **Very Hard to Get**.
- Animal-Based Transport is **Hard to Get.** Domesticated Animals touched by the taint of the floss (through their diet) are **Hard to Get;** those unaffected by the floss are **Very Hard to Get.**
- Technological Items and Navigational Aids are present at *one level scarcer* than the baseline.
- Books from before the Apocalypse are **Uncommon**; those written since the Apocalypse are **Hard to Get.**

AN EXAMPLE MONSTROSITY — GORE CROWS

In this fecund world, everything eats and with unwilling scarecrows all over the place, there has to be something to roost on them. Gore crows appear as normal crows with their flesh and feathers hanging off their muscular-skeletal system in rough patches.

A gore crow likes nothing better than to roost on a newly transfixed victim and slowly pick at the flesh. Connoisseurs, gore crows will only eat the flesh of the living. Once the creature has died, the flesh loses its tastiness.

STR 04 **CON** 10 **DEX** 24 **INT** 16 **POW** 12
HP 7 **WP** 12

Armor: None

Skills: Alertness 70%, Athletics 60%, Dodge on Ground 20%, Dodge in Flight 50%, Fly 50%.

Combat: Bite and Claw 55%, damage 1D4, Armor Piercing 1.

SAN Loss: 0/1 to see a Gore Crow.

AN EXAMPLE "TOME" — THE BIBLE OF SOUTHCROSS FIELDS

Rumors say that there's an unwilling scarecrow deep in the 400 acres that comprise Southcross field that will tell you all about a new god.

Thomas Jacobson was a farmhand working Southcross field when he was transfixed. Stuck where he stood, Jacobson was visited by a migrant with a beard down to his knees and wearing dusty traveling robes. The stranger began to pass on wisdom to the pinned farmhand. Not by speaking it to him ... but by carving it into his still-living flesh.

The ritual practiced by the man keeps Thomas alive so that there is always fresh blood to keep the words bright. However, the ritual does nothing to dull the pain. The script is tiny, and Thomas' body contains thousands of words of this wanderer's screed. To compound matters, the wanderer writes in the language he hears in his head — Akkadian.

Thomas' body is filling up, though, and a new scarecrow, Heather Bunham, has just appeared not too far away.

In Akkadian. Study Time months. +1 Anthropology, +1D3% Occult, +4% Unnatural. SAN loss 1D6/1D8.

Suggested Ritual: Blood on the Plow (see below).

AN EXAMPLE RITUAL — BLOOD ON THE PLOW

Elaborate ritual. Study time: weeks; +1 Unnatural, 1D10 SAN.
Activation: 10 days; 9 WP and 1 SAN per day.

To use this ritual the caster must collect 10 lbs. of farm produce, 50% plant-based and 50% animal-based. Neither the plants nor animals need be alive when the material is collected. The ingredients most be ground together slowly over the course of 10 days into a slurry, until a viscous fluid not unlike molasses is produced. The necessary chanting and tonal singing each day make this an all-day process. This will produce 2D6 usable doses. If the process is interrupted, the batch is ruined.

Once the slurry is complete it can be used to provide the consumer with 1D6 Hit Points at the cost of 1D4 SAN.

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON'S
THE NIGHT LAND
A Dark, Horrific Post-Apocalyptic Future for Roleplaying Games
By Kevin Ross, M.I.T.*
(*Monstruwacan-in-Training)

INTRODUCTION

Millions of years in the future, the sun has burned out, the stars have vanished, and the Earth is shrouded in an eternal darkness lit only by weird phantasmal glows and numerous volcanic firepits scattered across an eerie, lifeless landscape. The few remaining millions of humanity live in the Great Redoubt, a huge pyramidal structure nearly eight miles high and extending many more miles underground. The pyramid is surrounded and protected by a low barrier conducting the sacred Earth Current, emitting another meager light against the darkness. That barrier is the only protection against the myriad horrors of The Night Land: five titanic Watchers, each the size of a mountain, surround the Great Redoubt, waiting for the Earth Current to fade so they can consume the souls of the last vestiges of mankind; a host of other strange humanoid beings also stalk the dead land, from the subhuman beast-men to the deadly shrouded Silent Ones; other horrors inhabit the darkness, including enormous insect-like creatures and the dreaded Night Hounds, wolf-like beasts the size of horses.

This is **The Night Land,** William Hope Hodgson's amazing nightmare world of mankind's distant future.

The Night Land is a dark fantasy world, perhaps the darkest such setting ever imagined. The powers of Evil rule this world, from the least living creature to the Great Old One-like Watchers, to the perhaps even more potent residents of The House of Silence and the glowing vaporous pit of The Shine. Here are entities to rival or even surpass the potency of Great Cthulhu himself, entities so terrible their mere presence causes men to go mad or rush into their monstrously alien grasp.

All of this makes The Night Land a superb setting for roleplaying adventures. With its brooding atmosphere, its harsh environment, and its host of different horrific creatures, The Night Land as written is like somebody's dark fantasy roleplaying campaign: a cross between Tolkien's Mordor, Fantasy Flight Games' Midnight setting for D&D, and the trenches of the first World War. Stocked with hordes of nightmarish Lovecraftian creatures.

What's in this Sourcebook

This sourcebook sets out everything an ***APOCTHULHU*** Game Moderator needs to know to run a scenario or campaign set in The Night Land. This includes a brief synopsis of the novel itself, a description of the Great Redoubt and its residents, and information on characters, skills, technology, and variant rules for Sanity/Willpower tailored specifically for the setting. Next comes a lengthy gazetteer of the three main regions of The Night Land, its geography, landmarks, and the terrible inhabitants likely to be found in each region. The later sections include a discussion of the powers of Evil and Good in the setting and a bestiary of the many creatures to be encountered therein. The final section includes ideas for running campaigns and adventures in The Night Land.

We hope you'll enjoy this ultimate Post-Apocalyptic Lovecraftian setting. Prepare yourself for the darkest future yet. Grab your diskos and get ready to venture into The Night Land.

More Night Land?

*This chapter describes everything you need to play an **APOCTHULHU** campaign set in The Night Land. However, if it whets your appetite for more exciting adventure in this unique Post-Apocalyptic world, a standaone book **"William Hope Hodgson's Night Land"** (also from Cthulhu Reborn) reprints this entire chapter along with expanded sourcebook notes and three fully-detailed scenarios written by Kevin Ross.*

From an exploration of the eerie abandoned Dark Palace, through to a mysterious mission to an apparently abandoned ancient city, these scenarios provide a diverse set of adventures to different corners of The Night Land. Who knows, if the Survivors prove especially capable and dependable they might even be trusted by the Monstruwacans with a most important task — a journey to the bizarre Green Mist, beyond which ancient rumors hint might lie a place of true safety. As well as being playable as standalone adventures, the scenarios also link together into a loose campaign.

PUBLISHING HISTORY OF *THE NIGHT LAND*, AND ITS SUCCESSORS

William Hope Hodgson wrote and published his grand, sweeping, and densely written novel *The Night Land* in 1912. It evokes an archaic style in which its unnamed narrator describes events in a Post-Apocalyptic world, from his point of view, without dialogue. This version of *The Night Land* is available as a free ebook via Project Gutenberg, and a free, good-quality Librivox audiobook.

In 1912 Hodgson also self-published a heavily abridged version of his novel under an alternative title, "The Dream of X", as part of a chapbook produced for the US market. This version takes the 200,000 words of the original and edits them down to 20,000 words — so obviously omits a lot of detail. It was published mostly to establish copyright for the novel in the US, which at the time was not possible until a version of the work had been published in America.

The novel was largely forgotten in the years following its author's death (in World War I). Despite receiving a very favorable mention in H.P. Lovecraft's seminal essay "Supernatural Horror in Fiction" and favorable words from Clark Ashton Smith, *The Night Land* remained out of print for decades. It was re-discovered in the 1940s, thanks largely to the work of an enthusiast named H.C. Koenig who championed Hodgson's novel and eventually convinced August Derleth to reprint it, along with other novels by Hodgson in an omnibus hardback issued in 1946 by Arkham House. That book was titled *The House on the Borderland and Other Novels,* which eventually also went out of print and became a collector's item. The broader modern fame of *The Night Land* truly stems from its reprint in paperback form as two volumes in the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series in 1972.

The highly-condensed (novella-length) "The Dream of X" was re-published as a standalone book in 1977 by Donald M. Grant; this version adds some great illustrations.

The style of Hodgson's original writing has been seen by many modern readers as 'tough-going' (reminiscent of the style of language in the King James Bible). Hence, a couple of efforts have been made to edit or modernize the novel for readability while keeping the basic story unchanged:

- An edition of *The Night Land* published by Purple Mouth Press in 1995 severely condenses the novel (to a little under 70 pages) and adds some maps. Revision and map-making were undertaken by Dave Hall.
- *The Night Land: A Story Retold* (published in 2011) represents a more radical rewriting, credited to James Stoddard and William Hope Hodgson. In this version the narrator is given a name, the language is modernized, and dialogue has been added.

There have also been several volumes of short stories written by modern writers but set in Hodgson's Night Land setting:

- *William Hope Hodgson's Night Lands: Eternal Love* (2003), edited by Andy W. Robertson.
- *William Hope Hodgson's Night Lands: Nightmares of the Fall* (2007), edited by Andy W. Robertson.
- *William Hope Hodgson's Night Lands: The Days of Darkening* (written, but unpublished due to Robertson's Death in 2014).
- *Awake in the Night Land* (2014), a collection of stories all written by John C. Wright.

Furthermore a novel, *The House of Silence* by Avalon Brantley was published in 2017, drawing influences from both *The Night Land* and Hodgson's classic *House on the Borderland.* This is thematically linked to Hodgson's novel rather than directly linked to its setting but does provide an interesting origin story for one of The Night Land's weirder locations.

Suggestions for Reading *The Night Land*

I [Kevin] have to confess, I've tried to get through WHH's original version several times, but the archaically stilted prose is hard to penetrate, and I've ultimately given up every time. Instead, I've read the very short, decently-mapped version by Hall and the slightly longer and fantastically illustrated version from Donald M. Grant several times. The Stoddard version is a little over half the length of the original and tells the story without the painfully antiquated voice adopted by WHH. This version adds dialogue, among other things, and its modern prose makes it the most accessible version of the novel I've seen. My advice for potential readers: read the Stoddard version while consulting the map in this sourcebook or the one available online (at https://nightland.website/), and peruse the corresponding Stephen Fabian illustrations (also available online) to really get a feel for The Night Land. Then if you really enjoy the material, tackle the original text to get the undiluted Hodgson.

(As an aside: some of the descriptions in this sourcebook of the Watchers and the House of Silence are inspired by the Fabian illustrations — they're really that good. The maps are based on those by Dave Hall, whose originals are also available at the aforementioned Night Land website.)

The Night Land as a Roleplaying Setting

Although numerous people have noted that The Night Land has significant potential as a gaming setting, to date there have been no games or sourcebooks which attempt to capture the full breadth of Hodgson's creation. Several good essays and partial RPG elements do exist, however, and these may all be found linked at the website mentioned above.

The Night Land site was founded in 2001 by Andy Robertson; despite his death in 2014 it remains online (at the time of writing, March 2020). There you can find information on Hodgson and the novel, along with articles, new stories set in The Night Land, maps, and image galleries — including the aforementioned Fabian illustrations. There's also an excellent article on gaming in The Night Land, written by Sandy Petersen, which is highly recommended — as is the whole site.

A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE NOVEL

Sometime during the 17th century, the unnamed narrator of the novel loves a woman named **Mirdath**, but she dies in childbirth, leaving him to grieve inconsolably ...

Millions of years later, a nameless narrator resides in an eight-mile-high pyramid called the **Last Redoubt** (also called the **Great Redoubt**), along with the last few million humans left alive. The sun is dead, the stars have mysteriously disappeared, and the Earth outside the Redoubt is drowned in darkness. A circular barrier, powered by the mystical **Earth Current,** protects the Great Redoubt from a horde of monstrous creatures seeking to destroy the last of humanity. The most prominent of these horrors are the **Watchers**: five enormous, mountain-sized alien beings who have taken root in the ground far outside the Earth Current, where they have watched for eons. Another prominent landmark is the gigantic **House of Silence,** filled with light but no sound, and the source of a powerful aura of evil. A paved road — the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk — snakes around the Redoubt and disappears into the darkness in the north. The entire region is fraught with terrors, some seen and some unseen: eerie lights, nameless ruins, firepits where giants lurk, a great voice that laughs in the dark, another titanic creature (another Watcher?) whose distinguishing trait is its occasionally-nodding head, alien mists, and more.

The narrator is tasked with observing the various creatures and "listening" across the ether, for he has a psychic gift called **Night Hearing**. This allows him to hear and communicate across leagues — provided he can separate the human thoughts from the

intrusive alien thoughts of the Evil Forces. One night he hears a stirring in the ether — a human voice from somewhere out in The Night Land! The voice belongs to a young woman who calls herself **Naani** — but also Mirdath! She calls the narrator by his name of old, and he recalls his earlier incarnation now millions of years gone. The two lovers continue to communicate, but Naani's home is a Lesser Redoubt whose own Earth Current protection is failing. When it seems that the **Lesser Redoubt** is about to fall, a foolhardy force of five hundred young men recklessly leave the Great Redoubt to attempt to rescue them. They barely survive an attack by a force of giants, and when a force of ten thousand men set out to rescue the young men, they are beset by a pack of horse-sized **Night Hounds** and forced to turn back. The surviving youths continue northward, until an unseen force compels them to enter the much-feared House of Silence, from which none return.

The narrator now decides to undertake his own rescue mission — alone. Armed with his **diskos** (a weapon with a whirling electric blade), wearing his armor, and carrying only a pack of condensed rations of food and water, he sets out into the dark.

The lone hero travels north through the horrors of The Night Land, sleeping by the many firepits dotting the landscape, battling creatures as varied as a large insect-mound-thing and various bestial human mutants, and avoiding larger or more dangerous enemies such as the 40-foot tall mist-men, bestial giants, and the dreaded **Silent Ones.** The first leg of his journey is watched by the residents of the Great Redoubt through their spyglasses.

The narrator soon descends a steep slope into pitch-darkness where the southern region of The Night Land ends, and the central begins. Here there are no firepits, and he is forced to use his sparking diskos to occasionally light his way through the relentless darkness. Soon he enters a landscape of volcanoes, forests, more strange humanoids and other creatures, and a vast sea. Circumventing the sea, he enters another dark gorge, this one crawling with enormous slugs.

At last he comes out of the dark gorge into a new area, a vast plain lit by firepits, volcanoes, and strange lights and glows. He dodges many more strange creatures, including more giants. One of the strange lights proves to be a massive glowing chasm where mysterious shapes seem to peer out of the shining mist. The narrator wisely avoids this area and soon discovers a vast dead seabed, which he crosses, frequently hearing the sounds of running feet and screams. Despairing of finding Naani's Redoubt, he climbs a hill far to the north and finally spies it in the distance.

Hurrying to the pyramidal structure, he finds it has been breached, dark and lifeless. He reaches out with his Night Hearing but gets only a faint response. Rushing toward the source of the reply, he finds his precious Naani cowering beside a firepit. The lovers finally meet, their ancient incarnations reunited after millions of years. Naani says the Earth Current circle protecting her Redoubt failed and the horrors of the night came for her people. The couple begin the long journey south to return to the narrator's Redoubt.

The journey is fraught with new terror, as the narrator seeks to protect his newfound/ancient love. They watch helplessly as survivors from her Redoubt are hunted and brutally killed by giants. They themselves are attacked by several bands of mutant humans. At one point the couple are threatened by a gigantic "spinning tree" (a tornado?) which traps them in a canyon. When it looks as if they will be killed, a mysterious "Holy Circle" appears above them, protecting them and driving off the roaring, spinning Force of Evil. Later they are hunted in the dark gorge by a tenacious slug, which they manage to kill. In the central region, another assault by a horde of mutants leaves the narrator seriously injured, and Naani transports him to a desolate island to recover, taking many days.

They finally resume their journey and enter the southern region of The Night Land. But as the lovers near The House of Silence, Naani is struck by a psychic attack that incapacitates her. The narrator takes her in his arms and rushes toward the distant Great Redoubt, battling beast-men as he runs. The inhabitants of the Redoubt watch as he rushes toward them, and soon the distant baying of the Night Hounds strikes terror into the hero. He desperately fights through more beast-men as the Hounds close in, and the people of the Redoubt aid him by blasting the Hounds with ancient distance-weapons. Swarmed by beast-men, with giants and **Black Humps** and other horrors closing in, the narrator is saved from death by another of the strange "Holy Circles" that briefly protects him and his dying lover Naani. He finally staggers across the Earth Current circle and into safety.

But his injuries are serious, and worse yet, Naani is dead. The hero clings to life only until he can attend her funeral. But as she passes into the Earth Current that will eventually disintegrate her body, she miraculously revives. The narrator, now with a reason to live, survives and rejoins his ancient love.

THE LAST REDOUBT

The Last Redoubt is the refuge of the last few million human inhabitants of the Earth in the far-flung, sunless future of Hodgson's *The Night Land.* The Last Redoubt, also called the Great Redoubt, was built millions of years ago, as the sun began to dim. The Redoubt is a gigantic pyramid built of grey metal, nearly eight miles high and five and a quarter-mile on each of its four sides. It consists of 1320 levels aboveground, each of which comprises its own city, each with different specializations and products. Each of the four sides of the Redoubt has 300,000 embrasures (windows).

The Great Redoubt is situated on a low hill near the center of the southernmost region of The Night Land. A Great Circle encloses the Redoubt at a distance of one mile. This circle is an electric barrier set into the ground, powered by the Earth Current to prevent the Forces of Evil from approaching the pyramid. The Great Circle is attuned to affect the minds of Outside creatures, but not humans. If — when — the Earth Current fails, the Great Circle will flicker out, and mankind will fall, consumed by the Evil Forces of The Night Land.

How The World Ended

The novel's narrator is primarily focused on describing the world as it exists at the time of his grand quest to rescue Naani. These events take place at a time many millions of years after the Apocalyptic events which ravaged the world and shattered all the familiar elements of civilization as we, the reader, would recognize them. He does, however, give some brief clues to the way in which those cataclysmic events unfolded, gathered from certain books — Histories of the Ancient World — that he found in the libraries of The Great Redoubt.

According to those accounts, the Apocalypse began as a vast and impossibly destructive earthquake which forced the ground upwards for a thousand miles around its center. It left a great chasm that was so deep no bottom could be seen. Oceans were sucked into this great wound in the Earth's crust causing a secondary explosion and earthquake "that did shake all the cities of the world." Afterwards, a great mist settled around the globe and a deluge of rain. Confusion reigned everywhere around the planet.

Much later, the crack in the Earth resolved itself into a mighty valley stretching from the west towards the south-east before turning northwards. This valley was a thousand miles wide, and its walls were a hundred miles tall. The sun could only occasionally be seen at the bottom, and then only as a dim red glow. Because by that time, the Sun had already begun to fade – slowly dying (as part of its natural stellar lifecycle?). Within the valley there were great seas and forests, and many weird creatures roamed — possibly mutations of earlier natural lifeforms. Alongside these were remaining scars of vulcanism — lava pits, sulfurous clouds, and poisonous steam.

With the slowly dying sun's heat steadily fading, the warmth of the lava-litten valley became the only place capable of supporting life. Mankind had, by this time suffered great losses due to the natural calamities but still possessed a "softness of Heart and Spirit." The blistering cold changed that, killing many and forcing the rest down into the western part of the great chasm-valley. This was not a safe environment, but survivors tried to tame it as best they could building a network of roads, battling the monstrous creatures of the valley, and eventually building cities. The desperate survivors tried to continue their expansion to the eastern and northern parts of the valley but were rebuffed by the Evil Things found there. In an effort to battle these horrors, the people of these cities began to experiment with "Forces which are Distasteful and Harmful unto Life." This seems to have been a mistake, as their experiments with terrible forces seem to have opened the way for even greater terrors to enter the devastated world. The ancient histories suggest that such "olden sciences" were responsible for "Outward Powers" being allowed to pass the "Barrier of Life" and enter into The Night Land: this is the source of most of the horrors currently in the world (perhaps including the massive Watchers).

Meanwhile the sun grew weaker and weaker in the sky, and the people in the cities became wilder and stranger, lawless and degenerate — sometimes even consorting with terrifying beasts. Some cities fell to monstrosities. It was "Pandemonium." Yet out of this darkness, a great (yet unnamed) World Leader of mankind arose who inspired all whose hearts hadn't been corrupted to band together in a great Battle against Evil. This forced the monstrosities to scatter. In the wake of this temporary victory, the World Leader proposed that a Mighty Refuge be built. The first attempt at such a thing was a failure: a "Great House" was constructed, but it was "not Proper." The leader led everyone on a pilgrimage away from that place to a second location where the pyramid now known as The Great Redoubt was built.

The Redoubt also extends far below the Earth's surface, to a depth of 100 miles, all of it shielded with the grey metal and supported by pillars. The lowest level is 100 miles square, and each of the 306 levels above that one is increasingly smaller, until the uppermost level belowground is a mere four miles square; these underground levels are known as the **Underground Country** or the **Underground Fields.** These levels are given over to agriculture to feed the people of the Redoubt, and many residents are employed in these levels. Not only are there food crops, but arbors of trees and parks also exist belowground. These levels have their own air vents and artificially generated winds. Air is drawn into the Redoubt through various vents above and below ground, and water is pumped in from deep beneath the earth.

The lowest of the underground levels is a vast cemetery called the **Garden of Silenc**e or the **Country of Quiet,** with millions of monuments and statues for those who have lived and died in the Redoubt's long history. There are many special sections given over to specific categories of the deceased, such as the Hills of the Babes, where infants are memorialized. This level also includes a large dome into which a conveyor belt (the Great Lift) carries the dead up into a mist formed by the Earth Current that flows below the dome; this is the **Great Gate,** into which the dead pass and are incinerated by the Earth Current below.

Another feature of the lowest level of the Redoubt is the **Great Crack,** apparently located deep beneath the Great Dome. This is a huge chasm into which the excavated earth was deposited when the lower levels were dug. The Earth Current is exposed within this great chasm, and it is there that the bodies of the dead fall when they pass through the Great Gate.

Some Everyday Features

First of all, it's worth pointing out that the people of the Last Redoubt are apparently all vegetarians, since crops and agriculture are mentioned but nothing is said of livestock. In fact, there may not be any animals at all in the Great Redoubt, since no reference is made to any in Hodgson's descriptions. There might be pets or vermin or zoos or other places where animals might be found, but none are mentioned in the novel.

Though there is no night and day, due to the sun's absence, the people of the Great Redoubt adhere to a 24-hour cycle, with a specific period called the Sleeping Time given over to rest.

There are schools and universities and libraries, with histories dating back to near-mythical times when the sun was just dimming, not yet dead. Some of these libraries have accounts of those who have ventured into The Night Land, whether or not they returned.

Travel between levels is made via lifts (elevators), and on the larger levels lateral movement is made via "migrators" (like the moving walkways in our airports). Again, no mention is made of vehicles, so it's possible all travel is by foot (the narrator certainly suffers no ill effects from his months-long foot-journey throughout The Night Land).

News is conveyed throughout all levels of the Redoubt via "hour-slips", which appear to be short newspaper-like readouts.

Citizens are encouraged to spend over three years of their life traveling among the 1320 levels/cities of the Redoubt, spending a day in each in order to experience the different customs and cultures of the Redoubt.

Instruments and Defenses

The Redoubt is outfitted with many devices and instruments designed to monitor the movements of creatures and features out in The Night Land. These include long-distance "spy-glasses" which appear to be cameras that transmit images to screens for viewing. Some of these are said to be large enough for thousands of persons to view at the same time, like the huge TV screens in stadiums. Others are called "viewing tables". The most powerful of these is called the Great Spy-Glass, found in the Tower of Observation.

The Redoubt also possesses a set of large bright lights at its peak. These can be used to flash Morse code-like messages to travelers

out in The Night Land. There is also a loud siren or audible signal of some kind which is used to alert travelers of danger; this device, called the Home-Signal, is only used in emergencies, for fear its use will alert the creatures in the darkness to the possible presence of humans outside the Great Circle of the Earth Current.

The Great Redoubt has few actual weapons to use in in its defense, though one of these is immensely powerful. This is a method by which the Earth Current can be unleashed from the base of the pyramid to flow out from it in a wave of fiery destruction (perhaps like a laser?). This is done near the end of the novel in a desperate attempt to save the narrator from a huge pack of Night Hounds closing in on him; the narrator is spared, apparently by lying low, as the waves of destruction pass over him to wipe out the Hounds.

A second defense is also used in the final section of the book, when ancient, long-unused artillery weapons are brought into action, apparently via embrasures, and fired into the hordes of darkness gathering to pursue the narrator. It's unclear whether these fire explosive shells or bursts of energy, but they are effective, regardless.

The Monstruwacans

The Tower of Observation projects above the highest point of the Redoubt. This is the domain of the **Monstruwacans**, scholars who watch the creatures and features of The Night Land night and day. These wardens and watchmen stand an eternal vigil, using their instruments to monitor the movements of The Watchers, and of any other creatures in the region. These movements are recorded for posterity and are studied carefully when unfamiliar readings are observed. The Monstruwacans also possess instruments that measure changes in "the ether", which appear to detect changes in the psychic vibrations of The Watchers, the House of Silence, and other significant creatures and landmarks.

The **Master Monstruwacan** commands many lesser watchmen-scholars, and a regular schedule is kept so that several people are on duty monitoring The Night Land at all times. The Monstruwacans are particularly eager to have persons with the rare Night Hearing (see page 165) among them, as this powerful psychic power can detect stirrings in the physical and psychic realms of The Night Land at great distances. A Survivor with the Night Hearing is certain to be at least assigned to the Monstruwacans, if not a full-fledged member of that group. This group is obviously one of the most important and respected among the people of the Great Redoubt.

SURVIVORS IN THE NIGHT LAND

In general, Survivors for games set in The Night Land setting are created using the normal ***APOCTHULHU*** method, bearing in mind that the setting is considered **Harsh** which means:

- Survivors gain +1 to either STR or CON (player's choice)
- Survivors gain 2 picks of +20% each which can be used in any of the following skills: Post-Apocalypse Lore, Scavenge, Survival, or Unnatural.
- If the Survivor's CHA is less than 7, he or she loses 1D4 points from two Bonds (player's choice which)

The most significant difference in Survivor generation is that Sanity Points, Breaking Point, and related elements of the Sanity rules do not apply in The Night Land setting (see page 166) — so there is no need to calculate those secondary attributes.

Archetypes for Night Land Survivors should be chosen from the list of **POST-APOCALYPSE BORN ARCHETYPES,** starting on page 29.

A Note on Languages(s)

The two Redoubts of Hodgson's novel are said to have been out of contact for millions of years, and it is likely that each would have developed entirely different cultures in that

time. It's safe to assume that any other human enclaves existing elsewhere in The Night Land would also have developed independently, each with its own culture. It stands to reason that each community would also have developed its own language. This will make direct communication between members of different communities difficult unless someone with the Night Hearing (see page 165) is present. (We can assume that even though they are from different Redoubts, the main characters of the novel can communicate without such difficulties since both have the Night Hearing, and they are reincarnated lovers as well.)

Weapons and Armor

The novel doesn't go into enough detail about the people of the Great Redoubt to determine what types of weapons — if any — were known to the last of humanity. Only the diskos (see nearby box) is used and described with any regularity; no firearms or projectile weapons or any type of ranged weapons are mentioned or seen, other than the large "artillery" weapons or energy cannons used late in the novel — and even these are said to have been unused for centuries or millennia. Given that the last few million humans live together in a single Redoubt, there probably haven't been wars in millennia, at least, so there's virtually no need for weapons.

What little we do know is that the novel's narrator is very athletic, which suggests good physical training; he mentions wrestling moves at one point, and is a good hand-to-hand brawler, so that suggests a variety of different martial arts. We also know that many others in the Great Redoubt — hundreds of thousands, at least — have been trained in the use of the diskos, so there may be some need for military training (which the Muscle and/or Protector Archetype can cover). At the novel's end the "soldiers" of the Redoubt come up with the idea of throwing their diskoi, which at the time is unheard of.

Extrapolating from the minimal references in the novel, we might also assume that simple weapons like knives and clubs are used by the

people of the Redoubt; Naani, for instance, is armed with a knife when the narrator finds her. Might their athletic training have included throwing spears and archery? It seems possible.

The hero of the novel also wears a full suit of lightweight metal armor, including a full helmet, gloves, and boots. In game terms, this armor has an Armor rating of 7. Wearing such armor for long periods should be moderately tiring and perhaps cause a small penalty (e.g., -10%) to physical skills. Armor that has been specially made for an individual will only fit persons of approximately the same size. It takes about 7 turns to put on or take of the armor.

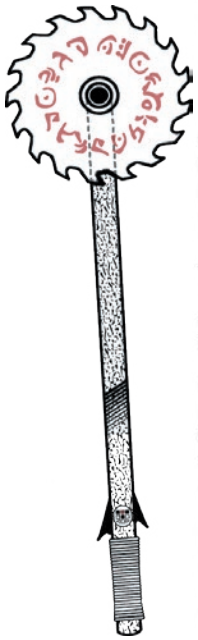
Technology

Some of the technological devices available to the inhabitants of the Great Redoubt have been discussed above. As for personal items, in addition to his diskos and his armor, the narrator carries a pack filled with several months' worth of food pills, of which apparently three per day make up a regular diet. He also carries a tube containing a truly wondrous powder which, when poured into his metal cup, instantly transmutes into drinkable water. The narrator also wears a chronometer (a basic watch?), and carries a compass, though the latter device doesn't work within the Redoubt, or within The Night Land, until he reaches the northern region. He also has a healing ointment in his pack. Finally, a suicide capsule has been inserted under the skin of his forearm, in case his situation in The Night Land becomes hopeless and he fears not just for his life, but for his soul; if necessary, the capsule must be bitten out of the flesh and bitten open and swallowed.

These are the only items the hero carries on his harrowing journey through The Night Land, so this suggests that things like ranged weapons, at least, were not available. On the other hand, it seems like poor planning not to have given him a length of rope or cord of some kind (in the novel he tears the strap on his pack into thin strips for binding various objects), and a spyglass or binoculars would have helped as well.

The Diskos

The diskos is a strange weapon that works something like a long-handled chainsaw or circular saw. It consists of a large whirling circular blade set on a handle that can be extended for use with both hands. When triggered, the blade whirls and emits a bright array of sparks; in this respect, it can be used as a light source. The diskos draws its energy from the Earth Current, and the narrator uses his for several months in crossing The Night Land, so it appears the power source is virtually limitless.



The device takes a lot of wear and tear in his travels as well, suggesting it's hard to damage, let alone break. It's also pointed out that handling a diskos is dangerous for anyone but its original owner, to whom it would seem to be somehow specifically attuned. When a person dies, his/her diskos is placed with his body to be cremated and returned to the Earth Current (as described in the Last Redoubt section). If someone other than a diskos's owner attempts to wield it, each turn that person must make a POW×5 test; if the roll fails the device unleashes an electrical discharge at that person, causing a loss of 2D8 points of damage (armor doesn't protect against this). In addition, once such a discharge has occurred the diskos goes completely inert and won't work at all for anyone other than its owner.

WEAPON INFORMATION: *Uses Melee Weapon Skill, damage 2D8, can reach 1–2 meters. Individuals with STR lower than 11 or DEX lower than 10 have a -20% penalty when using a diskos.*

An Option: Psychic Powers

Both the narrator and his love Naani possess the powerful psychic power known as Night Hearing, which allows them to communicate across hundreds of miles of the dreaded Night Land. It's said that very few possess this "skill", and even fewer have ever had as powerful a gift as the narrator. Night Hearing seems to be an exceptionally powerful version of telepathy.

It also includes a degree of empathy, both from allies in the Great Redoubt as well as the monstrous forces of The Night Land.

If the Game Moderator wishes to allow Survivors a chance of possessing psychic powers such as the Night Hearing, there are two options:

- **Option 1 — Blind Chance:** during the "Determine Statistics" step of normal ***APOCTHULHU*** process for Survivor generation, allow each player to roll a percentile die – if the roll is 00, the Survivor has some form of psychic power (whether wanted or not);
- **Option 2 — Sacrificing Skill Picks:** if a player actively wants his or her Survivor to have a psychic power, the sacrifice of 4 Bonus Skill Picks (i.e., 80 total skill point increases) will purchase such a power. The player should work with the Game Moderator to describe and quantify the power.

The Night Hearing is the only psychic power mentioned in The Night Land, and it is supposed to be very rare. Its powers are described in a nearby box. Nevertheless, if one such power is present there may be others. If the Game Moderator wants to allow a wider range of psychic skills and powers, it's recommended that such powers be converted from descriptions of 'Psionic' or 'Psychic' abilities found in other D100 games. Many of the pulpier iterations of the percentile system feature long lists of such powers, which cover abilities such as: Clairvoyance, Supernatural Awareness of Danger, Psychometry. It is not recommended to borrow Telepathy-style abilities, since that power is covered by Night Hearing.

All use of Psychic Powers requires the spend of Willpower Points, which refresh as per the rules on page 61. Note that Willpower Points will only refresh up to the level of the Survivor's current POW — as will be seen below, in The Night Land it is possible this is a lower number that the Survivor's regular POW.

Psychic powers are treated like a normal skill, with a percentage chance of success. The normal starting percentage for a power depends on how the power was selected: if the player purchased a

The Night Hearing

Night Hearing is an extremely powerful form of telepathy which can transmit for hundreds or thousands of miles. In Hodgson's novel, the Night Hearing goes beyond mere telepathy, combining other powers bordering on enhanced intuition, sensitivity to unseen things and dangers, an ability to empathize with others, and even to mentally shield oneself from harm.

If Night Hearing is the only Psychic power the Game Moderator is using in his or her Night Land game, then all these additional elements might be worth rolling into Night Hearing (with telepathy still being the biggest part). However, if other Psychic powers — borrowed from other games — are being allowed, keep Night Hearing as purely telepathy and assume those other mental abilities are elements of other imported powers.

Night Hearing is usually used to communicate with willing persons, so opposed skill tests are not usually required. The psychic must expend at least 1 Willpower Point to initiate contact, depending on distance;

1 WP allows communication with another person within 1 mile;
2 WP extend the range to 10 miles,
3 WP to 100 miles,
4 WP to 1000 miles, and
5 WP to 10,000 miles.

Each expenditure of Willpower Points allows telepathic communication between the two principals for a duration equal to the psychic's POW×1 in minutes.

To read the mind of an unwilling person, the psychic must make an **opposed test of POW vs the target's POW.** *If the psychic wins the test, he or she must then expend 1 Willpower Point per 3 points of the target's POW to read the person's thoughts. In this case, communication lasts for a number of turns equal to the psychic's POW×1. Note that this use of Night Hearing will allow a psychic to use his/her normal Psychic Power (Night Hearing) skill level to break a compulsion placed on the victim by one of the Forces of Evil (as described in the Geography of The Night Land section).*

power the Survivor's starting percentage is POW×1%; if the psychic power was determined randomly, the starting percentage is POW×3%. It is possible to devote Bonus Skill Picks to increase the skill percentage for a Psychic power in the same way as a normal skill — allocating a skill pick results in 20 percentiles being added.

EXAMPLE: *Jo is creating a Survivor for a game set in The Night Land; the Game Moderator has decided that players are allowed to 'purchase' Psychic Powers (Option 2 above). Jo starts the normal APOCTHULHU Survivor generation process, creating statistics, derived abilities, picking an Archetype, and figuring out Resources and Bonds. After all that, she has 10 Bonus Skill Picks she can apply to any skill. For her Survivor to have a Psychic Power (Jo really wants him to have Night Hearing), she will need to sacrifice 4 of those 10 picks straight away. That is going to leave her a whole lot fewer points to spend on other skills, but she figures it's worth it.*

That spend of 4 Bonus Skill Picks gives her Survivor the Psychic Power (Night Hearing) "skill" at a rating of POW×1%. Earlier on, Jo determined his POW to be 15, so that's a starting rating of 15%. She wants him to be better at Night Hearing than that. She still has 6 of her original allocation of Bonus Skill Point Pick, so she burns another one of them to bump up that percentage — it goes from 15% to 35% (a 20 percentile increase, the same amount the Pick would have added to a skill). That looks better… but now Jo only has 5 of the original 10 Bonus Skill Picks left. She really better go start using those on other skills, lest her Survivor be a super Psychic but weak at everything else …

Sanity and Power

The Night Land differs from most ***APOCTHULHU*** settings in the way in approaches Sanity and mental disorders. Humanity has lived for millions of years without sunlight, with gigantic monstrous Watchers in plain sight from the Last Redoubt. They have viewed the Watchers and other horrors of the region on a daily basis, studying them and charting their every movement. Under these circumstances, Sanity obviously takes on a different role in the lives of inhabitants of this time and place.

For these reasons, the normal ***APOCTHULHU*** Sanity rules are not used. Instead, a character's POW is used as a measure of his or her mental stability. Think of POW as a measure of how strong a character's spirit or essence is; continued exposure to the horrors of The Night Land can and will chip away at such things. Certain creatures in The Night Land are capable of eroding POW, whether it's by psychic attack or merely by their dreadful alien presence. These 'attacks' can reduce a character's POW (usually temporarily) just as physical attacks reduce Hit Points, though lost POW points "heal" faster than Hit Points.

There are two main causes of POW loss in The Night Land. The first, and most common, is due to a direct psychic attack by a Night Land creature such as the Silent Ones. In most cases an opposed test between the creature and its target is used to determine whether or not the victim loses POW. In other cases, the loss is automatic if the creature scores a successful attack roll. POW-loss Regeneration times are listed for each creature; sometimes POW is restored within hours, in other cases, it takes days.

The second way POW is lost in The Night Land is by simply viewing or otherwise experiencing the presence of particularly potent entities. The Watchers are the most obvious example of this 'indirect' type of loss. In cases such as these, the character is allowed an opposed test to see how much or how little POW is lost due to the encounter (much like a normal Sanity test). Again, POW-loss Regeneration times are usually listed for each specific case; if none is listed, assume POW-loss is 'healed' at a rate of 1 point per hour.

POW REDUCED TO ZERO (OR LESS)

Reduction of POW can be extremely dangerous in The Night Land. For one thing, losing POW makes further POW losses more likely. This also affects Willpower Points — these can never be higher than the Survivor's current POW. If POW is lost, WP may need to also be reduced so this remains the case. More significantly, however, WPs can only refresh back to the level of current POW.

Unlike normal ***APOCTHULHU*** settings, in The Night Land the reduction of POW to 0 does not cause death or unconsciousness, merely an increasingly dangerous loss of will and ability (and in particular, psychic abilities). POW can be further reduced to negative values.

Survivors who have their POW reduced to zero or below suffer effects in terms of game mechanics. Firstly, for **each point** of POW below 0, a character suffers a -10 penalty to all skills ratings. Thus, for example, a Survivor whose POW has reached -3 also has a -30% penalty to all skill ratings.

In addition, some of the more potent entities in the great dark can mentally affect persons who are at 0 POW or less, often compelling those unfortunates to rush toward them (usually to certain destruction).

POW loss can't continue into negative numbers indefinitely. If a character is reduced to **-10 POW,** he or she dies, either succumbing to shock or surrendering him- or her-self to the entity which caused the final loss of POW.

Clearly, POW loss is a more fluid measure of mental stability than Sanity Points. It is also arguably more dire than normal ***APOCTHULHU*** Sanity rules, since The Night Land is so rife with strange horrible creatures that losing POW is more common, and thus more dangerous, given the unpleasant consequences of encountering the more potent entities therein.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE NIGHT LAND

The fantastic dark setting of The Night Land is made up of three main regions. The **southernmost region** is where the Last Redoubt is found; this is the area known to most of the remaining humans left on Earth. At the time the novel is set, no one has ventured out of this region for millions of years, so for most of what remains of mankind, the entire extent of their world encompasses only a few hundred miles in each direction. When the hero of the novel sets out, his travels lead him northward, eventually bringing him to a new area, the **central region,** warmer and brighter than his homeland, well-lit by fireholes and volcanoes. As the narrator's journey continues, he discovers the final region shown in the novel — the once again cold and dark **northernmost region,** where the Lesser Redoubt lies.

(Note that these are the regions described in the novel itself. It's possible and even very likely that other areas exist beyond what are shown in *The Night Land.* One example would be the unknown western lands in the southernmost region, where the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk disappears into a Green Mist — and beyond

The Rites of Preparation

When the narrator of The Night Land decides to venture out of the Great Redoubt and into that nightmare world, he first undergoes Three Days of Preparation. In the novel it is this lack of Preparation which in part led to the destruction of the 500 youths who rashly set out to rescue the people of the Lesser Redoubt.

The Rites of Preparation involve a spiritual cleansing of the subject, and the careful study of information about The Night Land and its terrible denizens that is unavailable to most citizens of the Redoubt. After Three Days of Preparation, the narrator is given his armor, diskos, and supplies. No one is allowed to touch him, however, as this is part of the Preparation Rite.

In game terms, the Rites of Preparation give a character a bonus to all his or her skills and characteristic tests as follows:

- **Skill ratings:** *bonus equal to the character's starting POW (not current POW)*
- **Statistics (STR, POW, INT, etc.) tests** — *regular or opposed: for the test roll, increase the character's stat value by one-fifth their starting POW (not current POW), rounded up.*

These bonuses last until the first time the character's current POW has been reduced to half starting POW or below — by any means. At this point, all advantages are lost and cannot be regained without returning to the Redoubt and retaking the Rites.

***EXAMPLE:** A Night Land Survivor with a starting POW of 13 has undergone the Rites of Preparation. Her normal skill rating in Athletics is 55%, but while the effects of the rite last, she has an effective Athletics skill rating of 68%. This applies when considering whether success is possible without rolling or when making rolls to perform a skill test. For the same period, any tests relating to the Survivor's STR, normally 10, should be performed as if her STR was actually 13 (10 + one-fifth of 13, rounded up). That means that for a STRx5 test, any roll of 65 or less is a success; it also means than any opposed test involving the Survivor's STR should count it as if it were 13 not 10. This increase of stat value also applies to POW; in this case the normal POW of 13 would be raised to 16 while the rite remains effective.*

If the Survivor suffers a terrifying encounter and has her current POW reduced by 4 (from 13 to 9) none of the bonuses to Athletics or STR would be recalculated, since they are based on her starting POW not her new, lower, current POW. She will still get a bonus to POW-based stat rolls equal to one-fifth starting POW (or +3) — meaning that while her current POW is 9, any regular or opposed test made based on POW should treat it as if it were 12 (9+3). Willpower Points can still only refresh back to 9, however.

If later, she suffers another terrible experience and loses a further 3 points from current POW — bringing it from 9 down to 6 — all benefits from the Rite of Preparation will be lost entirely, since now her current POW is less than half the starting POW.

it a legendary "place of safety". Likewise, what or who inhabits the Silent City far to the east of the Great Redoubt? The book also specifically refers to "Unknown Lands" south and northeast of the landmarks and areas shown in the southernmost region of the novel. The Game Moderator can easily create new regions beyond those shown in the book and this section.)

The following sections give an overview of the atmosphere, basic geography, flora, and fauna of each region, followed by a gazetteer of specific locations for each. Note that most of the maps that have been created for The Night Land have no scales included. The narrator seldom mentions concrete distances beyond very specific travel times, and even those are of limited help in determining actual miles, for he is making his way, in the dark, in rough terrain, often attempting to move under cover. In game terms, it's suggested that it takes 1D3 or more days of stealthy movement between any landmarks shown on the map; in some cases this may be shorter (maybe a few hours) or significantly longer (it should take several days to navigate

SEA OF DULL FIRE
THE SHINE
PLACE OF GAS
THE LESSER REDOUBT
GREAT RED FIRE PIT
THE OLD SEA BED
PLACE OF WOLF-MEN
GREAT VALLEY
GORGE
FIREHILLS
N
W
E
S
BLACK RIVER
WESTERN SHORE
THE GREAT SEA
GEYSER OF THE ROCK
CRASHED FLYING MACHINE
THE ISLAND
WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON'S
THE NIGHT LAND
BOILING SPRINGS
THE MOUNTAIN OF VOLCANOES
THE RIVER
FOREST
SEAS
BLUE DANCING FLAME
THE GORGE
THE GREAT SLOPE
SILENT TOWER
THE BLACK MIST
HOUSE OF SILENCE
SMOKING RIVER
THE BLACK HILLS
PLACE WHERE THE SILENT ONES NEVER ARE
PLAIN OF BLUE FIRE
THE GIANTS' SEA
THE QUIET CITY
DOORWAYS IN THE NIGHT
THE GREEN MIST
PLACE WHERE THE SILENT ONES KILL
VALE OF RED FIRE
THE WATCHER OF THE NORTHEAST
HOLLOW OF THE GIANTS
THE WATCHER OF THE NORTHWEST
GIANTS' KILNS
VALLEY OF THE HOUNDS
PLACE OF THE AB-HUMANS
THE ROAD WHERE THE SILENT ONES WALK
THE PIT OF RED SMOKE
THE GREAT REDOUBT
GIANTS' PIT
THE HEADLAND FROM WHICH STRANGE THINGS PEER
THE COUNTRY FROM WHENCE COMES THE GREAT LAUGHTER
MILE-HIGH TOWERS
THE GREY DUNES
THE DARK PALACE
THE THING THAT NODS
THE WATCHER OF THE SOUTHWEST
THE COUNTRY OF THE WAILING
THE WATCHER OF THE SOUTHEAST
SILVER FIREHOLES
THE WATCHER OF THE SOUTH
THE ROAD WHERE THE SILENT ONES WALK
MOUNTAIN OF THE VOICE

the pitch-darkness of the Downward Slope and the Upward Gorge). With no day or night to help measure time, travel time can become a blur as well. Don't sweat it too much.

The Southern Night Land

The southern region of The Night Land is where the Great/Last Redoubt is located. Here the world is cold and dark, lit only by a variety of weird luminescence and many firepits (places where flammable gases burn in small craters or pits). The land here is also marked by many pools or springs of water, often warm or even boiling due to their proximity to firepits. Some of this water may be potable, but much of it has a sulfurous smell or taste. There is at least one river in this region, flowing past the base of the hill on which the House of Silence stands; this river is boiling hot in some places, and warm in others. There may be other water sources in the region as well: the Giants' Sea, to the far east, is one such larger body. There are many low scrubby moss-bushes throughout this region, often prevalent enough to provide cover for multiple persons, if necessary. There don't seem to be any trees here, however.

This part of The Night Land is home to many terrible creatures, including Beast-Men, Gray Men, Night Hounds, Yellow Things, Black Mounds/Humps, the dreaded Silent Ones, giants, and of course the monolithic Watchers. This region is also marked by a number of bizarre unexplained phenomena, such as the Seven Lights, the Country From Whence Comes the Great Laughter, the Green Mist, and the Mountain of the Voice.

(Specific sites in this, and other, gazetteer lists are marked to show the general direction where they can be found in each region; C for Central, N for north, NW for northwest, etc.)

The Black Hills (NW)

Past the Plain of Blue Fire a series of low volcanoes light the lower reaches of the Black Hills just beyond. Within those Hills, Seven Lights have shone mysteriously, without blinking, for millions of years. The Black Hills mark the border between the southern and central regions of The Night Land.

The Black Mist (ENE)

Far to the east, beyond the Quiet City, beyond even the distant Valley of the Hounds, is a horizon of endless Black Mist. The Mist cannot be seen through, and it's unknown what — if anything — lies within or beyond it.

The Country from Whence Comes the Great Laughter (E)

No one has actually seen this place, as it is somewhere far to the lightless east, farther even than the Valley of the Hounds. All that is known is that occasionally a great laughter is suddenly heard from this direction, sometimes so loud it sounds like thunder. Could there be another Watcher or other Force of Evil far out there in the dark?

The Country of the Wailing (S)

Beyond the Grey Dunes, south of the Redoubt, strange wailing sounds are sometimes heard. The sorrowful cries seem to issue from the area where the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk passes in front of the Southern Watcher. No one has ever seen whoever or whatever is responsible for the wailing ...

The Dark Palace (SE)

This large strange castle-like structure is located north of the Southeast Watcher and east of the Southern Watcher. Little is known of it, save that it is large and dark, and dangerously close to the aforementioned Watchers and the Thing That Nods — nightmare territory indeed.

Doorways in the Night (NW)

Far to the northwest, beyond the Northwest Watcher, is an eerily quiet area where a weird and improper humming noise can sometimes be heard. This is the place of the Doorways in the Night, where strange unseen doors open onto unknown alien dimensions and sometimes draw the unwary into their depths or admit strange (invisible?) creatures into this world. The doorways open and close at random, often above or behind travelers. It is rarely visited by denizens of The Night Land.

The Giants' Pit and Kilns (C, E)

Not terribly far from the Great Redoubt lies

a great shadowy pit inhabited by giant brutish men. Nearby is another dark pit, this one lit by eerie red firelight, and filled with the shadowy comings and goings of the giant brutes.

The Giants' Sea (ENE)

This large body of water is located west of the Quiet City (The Road By The Quiet City passes along its southern shore). Northwest of the Giants' Sea is the plain called the Place Where the Silent Ones Never Are. Though its name is unexplained, it can be assumed that this area may be home to more brutish giants, probably on the northern shore.

The Great Redoubt (C)

The Last Redoubt is detailed on page 159.

The Great Slope (N)

The Road Where the Silent Ones Walk disappears over a hill far, far, to the north of this part of The Night Land. Here the way becomes pitch-black, and the Road itself quickly runs out onto rocky terrain that descends for miles upon miles. There are no firepits in this part of the Slope, and cliff walls gradually rise up on either side, forming a deep canyon or gorge sloping ever downward into complete darkness. Many miles later, this Gorge enters the central region of The Night Land.

The Green Mist (W)

The Road Where the Silent Ones Walk vanishes into this eerie western feature in the far west. Old legends say that beyond the Green Mist lies a "place of safety" — though definitely not a redoubt. Could this be true — or is it just another horrible lie created to lure the unwary into the clutches of Evil?

The Grey Dunes (C, S)

This is a vast lifeless desert of grey sand south of the Great Redoubt. Beyond it lies the Country of the Wailing, somewhere in the vicinity of the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk.

The Headland From Which Strange Things Peer (E)

This rocky crag is adjacent to the Giants' Kilns. The light thrown by the giants' flickering fires dimly illuminates the strange shadowy figures at the top of the crag, apparently watching the comings and goings of the giants. The peering things are probably one of the many varieties of 'ab-humans' that inhabit The Night Land.

The Hollow of the Giants (NW)

Just west of the Northwest Watcher is a large hollow or bowl-like pit with a large firepit at its center. The walls are pitted with great holes, and these holes are the resting places of many filthy giants. Travelers would do well to avoid this site or risk drawing the attention of perhaps a score or more of the giant brutes.

The House of Silence (N)

With the Watchers and the Last Redoubt itself, this is the most notable location in the southern Night Land. The House is huge, a nightmarish quasi-Victorian mansion with proportions suited more for giants than men; it has many storeys, some culminating in narrow spire-like towers. The House is situated on a low hill, and it has many windows, and those windows are always — always — filled with many bright lights. But the instruments of the

The Presence of the House of Silence

Anyone who approaches within 2 miles of the House of Silence must make a **POW×5** *test or they will be compelled to run into the nearest doorway of the House. Survivors who have undergone the Rites of Preparation (see page 168) are more resistant; they may instead roll a* **POW×10** *test or less to avoid this fate. Note that Survivors must use their* current *POW for this roll. However, regardless of their POW level, or the roll needed, any roll less than or equal to* **starting POW×1** *should be considered successful. Successful resistance still costs the character 1 point of POW (recovers after 1 hour). Unaffected characters can try to stop a stricken companion from rushing to their doom, but they'll need to succeed on an* **Insight** *or* **Reassure** *test, either made at -20%, to break the House's deadly compulsion. If a companion has Night Hearing, he or she can make a test against* **Psychic Power (Night Hearing)** *to achieve the same result.*

Needless to say, any character that enters the House is utterly, utterly destroyed.

Great Redoubt have never detected any sound or movement within the House of Silence. The Silent Ones often enter or leave the House. Many unwitting humans have fallen under the deadly influence of this terrible edifice and been compelled to enter its well-lit open doorways — never to be seen or heard from again. This is the most feared location in all of The Night Land — which is saying something.

The Mountain of the Voice (SE)

This dark mountain is located beyond the Watcher of the Southeast. Though it is called the Mountain of the Voice, that voice is very rarely heard. It is said to sound like the shrill voice of a gigantic woman suffering from a strange hunger, speaking harsh, unknown words.

The Pit of Red Smoke (SW)

This mile-wide pit is found in the Deep Valley, itself a 4-mile deep chasm beside the Southwest Watcher. Red smoke constantly issues from the pit, but the smoke strangely never rises above valley walls. This allows sight across the pit, on whose far side stand several mile-high grey towers that shimmer slightly from some unknown light source.

The Place of the Ab-humans (W)

Far to the west of the Great Redoubt, the Road runs into this region, where all manner of mutant humans are seen. Their "territory" lies just before the Road enters the Green Mist.

The Place Where the Silent Ones Kill (W)

Located west of the Great Redoubt, this place gained its name thousands of years ago, when some brave or foolish men ventured off the Road there and were destroyed. One man survived just long enough to tell the tale of how he and his companions ran into a group of the Silent Ones. The area is utterly bare, a rocky plain with no bushes or other cover.

The Place Where the Silent Ones Never Are (NE)

Beyond the Northeast Watcher, past the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk, northwest of the Giants' Sea, lies this area, so-named because even though it lies near the Road, and not far from the House of Silence, the enigmatic Silent Ones have never, in millions of years, been seen here.

The Plain of Blue Fire (NW)

This weird region is drowned in a cold opaque blue light which prevents anyone from seeing what lurks within it. Visibility is extremely limited, and thus this area is usually avoided if possible. Beyond it to the north are volcanoes and the Black Hills that mark the border between the southern and central regions of The Night Land.

The Quiet City (ENE)

This strange city is located on the shore of the Giants' Sea, near an ancient road (not the one used by Silent Ones). The Quiet City is always well lit, but for millions of years the residents of the Great Redoubt have never seen any movement within it.

The Road Where the Silent Ones Walk (throughout, WSW to N?)

The Road snakes its way through this region, having its beginning apparently in some unknown region far to the west of the Great Redoubt, at a place where it vanishes into the Green Mist. From the west it snakes east-southeast, in front of the Southwestern and Southern Watchers, but behind the Southeastern Watcher. The Road then turns north, enclosing the Watcher of the Northeast and the dread House of Silence before running out of sight over the great hill far to the north of this region. It is so named because the Silent Ones frequently glide along its length, engaged in unknowable tasks.

The Silent Towers (NNE, others?)

The Towers of Silence are said to be outposts of the House of Silence, scattered throughout this region of The Night Land. They are tall, grey and dim, and are believed to hold "strange watchers", though who or what these might be is unknown – perhaps Silent Ones? It's also unknown whether or not these towers can be entered, but those who do enter had best be prepared to face the worst nightmares this world has to offer. Better to avoid such a place altogether.

The Presence of The Towers

Any time a character comes within 2 miles of one of the Towers, have a random character present attempt a **Luck** *roll; if it succeeds the Tower is "unattended" and they can pass without incident. If the roll fails all Survivors present are struck with a psychic attack of POW 2D6+3. They must resist this attack via an* **opposed test of POW vs POW** *or be knocked unconscious, suffering a loss of 1D6 POW as well. Unconscious characters remain so and continue to lose 1D3 points of POW per day until a successful* **Medicine** *or* **First Aid** *test (the latter at -20%) is made on him or her, or their POW reaches -10 and they die. Note that the opposed test uses the character's current POW level. Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour (once consciousness regained).*

The Presence of The Thing That Nods

Anyone approaching within a mile of this huge thing must make an opposed test of **opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the Thing's POW is 12). Again, use the Survivor's* current *POW level for this roll. Anyone who fails to resist suffers a loss of 1 POW and is paralyzed — except for the slow involuntary nodding of their head. This weird paralysis is permanent unless a* **Medicine** *test at -20% is made for the victim. Lost POW recovers after an hour outside the radius of the Thing's influence.*

The Smoking River (N)

Just west of the House of Silence runs this river, which in places is hot enough to scald, but in others is merely warm. A hot fountain or geyser bursts forth at one point.

The Thing That Nods (SE)

This is another gigantic creature, similar to one of the Watchers but not believed to be one of them. It is a great dark bulk whose misshapen head occasionally dips as if nodding. The Thing That Nods is located beyond the Southeast

Watcher, past the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk. Between it and the Road there are three huge silver fireholes burning.

The Vale of Red Fire (NW)

This narrow valley cuts across The Night Land beside and behind the Northwest Watcher. Its long sinuous length is lit by the many eerie red firepits situated within its depths.

Valley of the Hounds (E)

The Valley of the Hounds lies far to the east, beyond the distant Quiet City. When the Night Hounds are roused, their baying is heard from the valley, and afterward the Hounds themselves come forth into The Night Land. The Hounds may be summoned forth from the Valley if any of the Watchers or the House of Silence are alerted by having their Powers activated by unwary travelers (see boxed text throughout this section); unless the Game Moderator deems otherwise, the Night Hounds will only come forth if the party fails a Luck test.

The Watcher of the Northeast (NE)

This Watcher is sometimes called the crowned watcher, as a blue luminous ring or halo hangs above its head. The eerie light shines over its wrinkled brow but leaves its lower face in shadow. An enormous ear rises out of the back of its neck, and this ear is pointed toward the Great Redoubt, as if listening to every single movement of each and every inhabitant. The ear is said to occasionally quiver, and there has been much speculation about whether this has actually happened, and if so, what it might possibly mean. This titanic horror looks something like a stooped, wizened old man, with a large wrinkled brow and spindly arms dangling at its sides.

The Watcher of the Northwest (NW)

This thing is also known as "that which hath Watched from the Beginning, and until the opening of the Gateway of Eternity". It squats over the Red Pit, from whence a great scarlet fire shines upward under its chin. The firelight leaves most of its upper face and body in brooding shadow. Its hill-like body is mostly black but lit by the flickering flame, and its hide is pimpled with great boulders. One report depicts

The Presence of The Northeast Watcher

If someone comes within 2 miles of this Watcher, he or she must make an **opposed test of opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the entity's POW is 18). The Survivor must use his or her* current *POW level for the test. If the Survivor succeeds, he or she still loses 1 point of POW but there is no further effect. If the test fails, however, the hapless victim loses 1D10 POW and is drawn into the air to hurtle toward the Watcher. Unless somehow stopped the victim floats into the luminous ring below the "halo" over the Watcher's head; the character is disintegrated and worse yet, there is a chance equal to his or her original POW×1% that the glowing halo/crown will be permanently dispelled! This will free the Northeast Watcher, though precisely what effect this has is left to the Game Moderator to determine. A new adventure might revolve around an attempt to restore the crown or otherwise "re-bind" the entity again.*

Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Watcher's influence.

The Presence of The Northwest Watcher

If someone comes within 2 miles of this Watcher, he or she must make an **opposed test of opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the entity's POW is 18). The Survivor must use his or her current POW level for the test. If the Survivor succeeds, he or she still loses 1 point of POW but there is no further effect. If the test fails, the victim loses 1D10 POW and is compelled to run and jump into the Red Pit. Unaffected companions can try to stop him/her from self-immolation, but to break the compulsion an* **Insight** *or* **Reassure** *test is needed, either made at -20%. If a companion has Night Hearing, he or she can make a test against* **Psychic Power (Night Hearing)** *to achieve the same result.*

Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Watcher's influence. Any character who jumps into the Pit is destroyed.

The Presence of The Southern Watcher

If someone comes within 2 miles of this Watcher, he or she must make an opposed test of **opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the entity's POW is 20). The Survivor must use his or her current POW level for the test. If the Survivor succeeds, he or she still loses 1D3 points of POW but there is no further effect. If the test fails, however, the victim loses 2D6 POW and is compelled to run and dive onto the Glowing Dome. Unaffected companions can try to stop him/her from this suicidal act, but to break the compulsion an* **Insight** *or* **Reassure** *test is needed, either made at -20%. If a companion has Night Hearing, he or she can make a test against* **Psychic Power (Night Hearing)** *to achieve the same result.*

Unless somehow stopped the victim dives onto the Glowing Dome and is disintegrated. To make matters worse, there is a chance equal to the dead character's original POW×1% that the Glowing Dome will be permanently dispelled! This will free the Southern Watcher, though precisely what effect this has is left to the Game Moderator to determine. A new adventure might revolve around an attempt to restore the Dome or otherwise "re-bind" the entity again.

Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Watcher's influence.

The Presence of The Southeast Watcher

Anyone who comes within 2 miles of this entity must make an opposed test of **opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the entity's POW is 15). The Survivor must use his or her current POW level for the test. If the Survivor succeeds, he or she still loses 1 point of POW but there is no further effect. If the test fails, however, the victim loses 1D10 POW, and is overcome with a berserk rage that compels him or her to attack anyone present, attempting to kill them and fighting to the death to do so.*

Any companions can restrain him/her, but to break the compulsion an **Insight** *or* **Reassure** *test is needed, either made at -40%. If a companion has Night Hearing, he or she can make a test against* **Psychic Power (Night Hearing)** *to achieve the same result.*

Note that if the affected Survivor kills all his companions, he or she appears to regain composure, and returns to the Great Redoubt; there the individual secretly attempts to subvert the defenses of the Redoubt — perhaps fodder for another adventure?

Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Watcher's influence.

the Northwest Watcher as a sort of simian-faced creature squatting like a toad over the Red Pit.

Watcher of the South (S)

Described as a living hill of watchfulness, odd, vast, squat and tremendous, this is the largest creature of The Night Land. Legends say that for millions of years it was seen moving slowly, imperceptibly closer from the south, until a great Glowing Dome slowly emerged from the ground in front of it, halting its progress toward the Last Redoubt. Since then it has sat brooding, glaring across the Glowing Dome at the Great Redoubt, its slack mouth gaping like an enormous cavern. The Dome is believed to be a manifestation of the Powers of Good that strive to protect mankind from the horrors of The Night Land (see page 182).

The Watcher of the Southeast (SE)

This squat monster sits just inside the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk, never sleeping, its single baleful eye eternally trained on the Last Redoubt. Its neckless head slopes forward, ending in a set of pincer-like jaws each the size of a large house. A half mile to either side of its vast bulk are great "Torches", huge fires which light its sides while still leaving much of its appearance in shadow.

Watcher of the Southwest (SW)

The titan bulk of the Southwest Watcher squats before a hole in the ground from whence a strange beam of grey light — the Eye-Beam — shines directly into the Watcher's right eye. The Eye-Beam is believed to be another manifestation of the Powers of Good (see page 182), and its purpose is supposedly to blind and/or stop the Watcher from approaching or otherwise affecting the Great Redoubt. The behemoth's cliff-like face has an expression almost as if it were stunned by the light striking its eye.

The Presence of The Southwest Watcher

If someone comes within 2 miles of this Watcher, he or she must make an **opposed test of opposed test of POW vs POW** *(the entity's POW is 12). The Survivor must use his or her current POW level for the test. If the Survivor succeeds, there is no effect. If the test fails, however, the victim loses 1D8 POW and is compelled to move to place his body between the Eye-Beam and the eye of the Watcher. Unaffected companions can try to prevent this, but to break the compulsion an* **Insight** *or* **Reassure** *test is needed. If a companion has Night Hearing, he or she can make a test against* **Psychic Power (Night Hearing)** *to achieve the same result.*

Unless somehow stopped the victim blocks the Eye-Beam with his or her body, which bursts into flame resulting in instant death. To make matters worse, there is a chance equal to the dead character's original POW×1% that the Eye-Beam is permanently extinguished! This will free the Southwest Watcher, though precisely what effect this has is left to the Game Moderator to determine. A new adventure might revolve around an attempt to restore the Eye-Beam or otherwise "re-bind" the Watcher.

Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Watcher's influence.

Nevertheless, some residents of the pyramid believe the Watcher can still see the Redoubt with both eyes, and it knows when it is being scrutinized.

The Central Night Land

The central part of The Night Land is markedly different from its neighboring regions. It is a red-shining land of water and fire, a country lit by countless volcanoes of varying sizes, alive with forests and large seas in which more volcanoes steam and smoke and blaze. Gone is the oppressive darkness of the other regions, and the presence of trees and light and water makes this area almost pleasant.

This region contains many hot springs, pools, fountains, and geysers, in addition to the vast central sea. The sea is bordered in the south and west by dense forests, with some trees towering over a hundred feet high. The eastern and northern shores of the sea are not visited in the novel, but they may very well be bordered by high mountains and more volcanoes. There is a frequent rumbling, as of distant thunder, heard throughout this region: these are the nearly constant grumblings of the fire-hills/volcanoes.

Among the inhabitants of the central region are hordes of savage Humped Men, the strange many-legged part-lizard part-insect creatures they hunt, and voracious winged pterodactyl-like creatures. More — and more dire — creatures inhabit the Upward Gorge that leads from this region into the northern part of The Night Land.

The Black River (NNW)

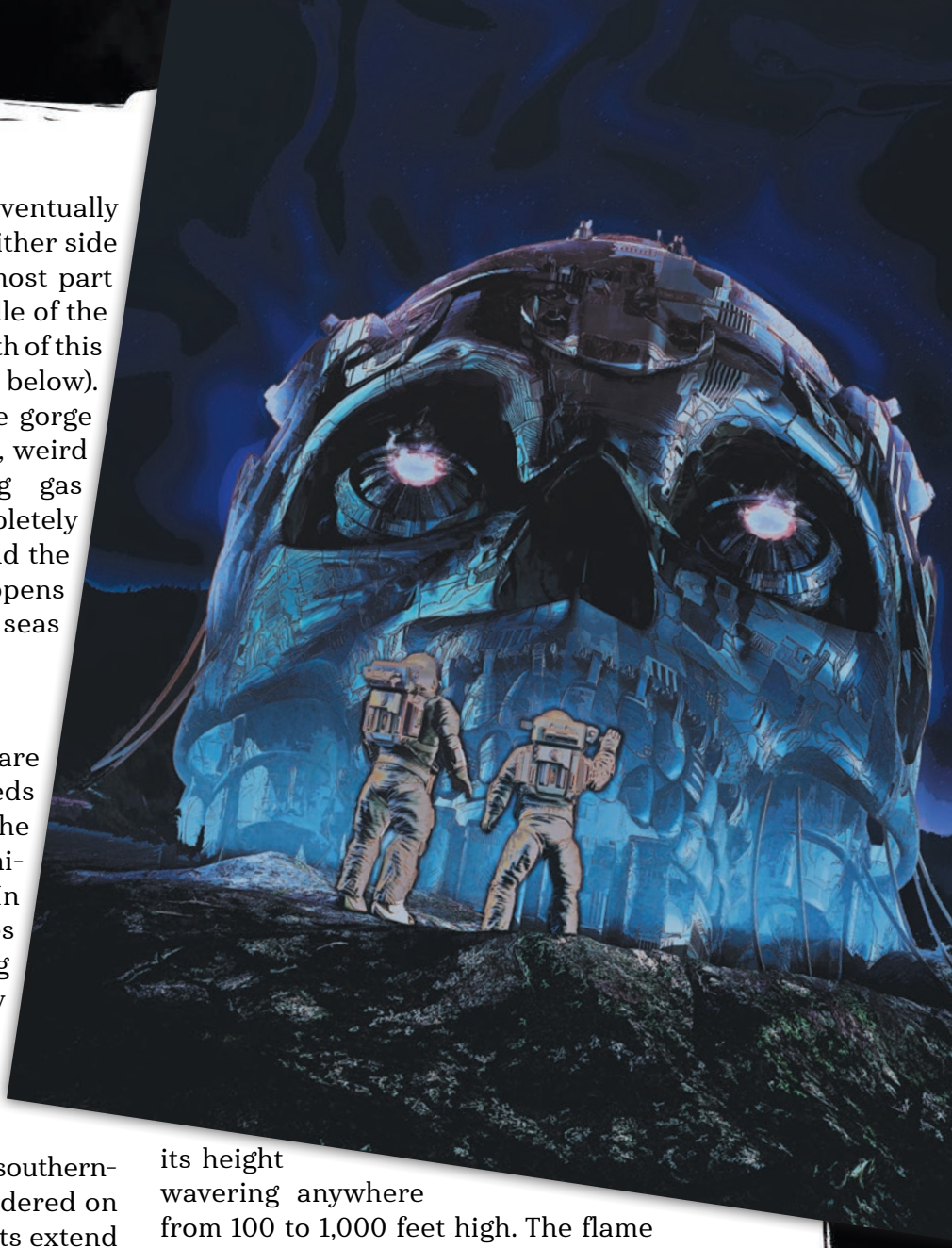
On the northwest shore of the great sea, east of the Upward Gorge, a Black River runs along the base of the mountains. This feature is more than a mile wide, and less a river than a vast field of boiling mudflats, bursting and bubbling as far as the eye can see to the east.

Boiling Springs (C)

On the southern and western shores of the great sea the narrator passes dozens of hot springs. They bubble and hiss and some give off steam.

The Crashed Flying Machine (W)

On the western shore of the sea there is a tall rock spire a hundred feet high, and atop it a large odd-looking outcropping or object. If one approaches closely enough to investigate (and perhaps makes a successful **Search** test), the strange outcropping proves to be a large metal cylinder. If the spire is climbed the cylinder turns out to be an ancient flying machine, perhaps hundreds of thousands of years old. The vehicle appears to have crashed on this rock. If the Game Moderator wishes, there may be ancient devices or clues or other interesting finds to be made within the wreckage. The flying machine might also be precariously balanced on the ledge and topple off the spire if its examiners aren't careful. (An intriguing adventure seed might have the Survivors discovering records or information about where the airship came from — perhaps a hitherto unknown human outpost somewhere in The Night Land!)



The Downward Gorge (S,C)

The Great Slope from the south eventually comes to a point where the walls on either side nearly meet overhead. The southernmost part of the gorge is dark, but near the middle of the gorge there are a few fireholes and north of this an enormous blue flame dances (see below). From this point north, travelers in the gorge may encounter harmful unseen gases, weird ghost-lights, and moaning/whistling gas fissures. The gorge seems to be completely barren of life. Toward the northern end the gorge zigzags back and forth until it opens into the central region, the country of seas and forests.

Firehills (all)

Throughout this region there are dozens of larger volcanoes and hundreds of thousands of smaller ones, which the narrator dubs "firehills". These mini-volcanoes may also include geysers. In some areas fires from the volcanoes have burned down the neighboring forests, and in others the air may be thick with their smoke and ash, affecting breathing and vision.

The Forest (C,SW)

A great forest extends along the southern-most border of the central region, bordered on the north by the great sea. These forests extend around the western shore of the sea.

The Geyser of the Rock (WNW)

Here, on the western shore of the great sea, is a bizarre landmark. A great booming sound alerts travelers to the sight: a towering geyser of boiling water, reaching heights of 100 to 300 feet high. More interesting, however, is the fact that the booming sound is made by a gigantic boulder, as large as a house, that is borne upward on the tower of steaming water and occasionally crashes into the basin when the geyser momentarily dies down.

The Great Blue Dancing Flame (S,C)

This huge blue pillar of fire is near the middle of the Downward Gorge. It flickers and dances, its height wavering anywhere from 100 to 1,000 feet high. The flame is accompanied by a strange whistling — the sound of burning gas issuing from a cleft in the rock to form the mighty pillar.

The Great Slope (S,C)

The Road Where the Silent Ones Walk crests a hill at the edge of the southern Night Land before plunging downward into utter blackness — the beginning of the central region. At its southern end this slope is utterly lightless, and careless travelers run the risk of stumbling into pits or plunging off unseen cliffs in the dark. The slope eventually descends into the Downward Gorge.

The Island (SW)

On the southern shore of the great sea, a river empties into the sea. At the mouth of that

river is an island where the narrator and later his love Naani travel with a raft to escape the pursuit of the Humped Men, who cannot swim or otherwise cross the water.

The Mountain of Volcanoes (S)

Just west of the mouth of the gorge, an enormous mountain rises 15 to 20 miles high. This towering feature would be notable enough for its height, but its sides are also studded with volcanoes growing out of it. One of these juts out at a height of 5 miles, a second 10 miles above that, and finally a pair of fiery cones surmount this massive mountain.

The River (SW)

This river empties into the great sea on its southern shore. A second river flows into this one from the south or southeast, and since these waterways block the narrator's westward progress, he builds a raft to get across. At the mouth of the main river is an island, where the narrator finds refuge from the Humped Men pursuing him.

The Seas (C)

This region is marked by three small seas (perhaps better termed lakes) in the south, and a much larger one extending nearly the breadth of the land here. There are many islands and volcanoes in the larger sea, and several rivers empty into it. The larger sea seems to be bordered all along its northern and eastern shores by very tall mountains and volcanoes, though the novel's narrator doesn't visit these areas, so who knows what might be found there. Or on any of the islands/volcanoes within it, for that matter.

The Upward Gorge (NNW)

Where the western shore of the great sea meets a forbidding mountain range, this gorge climbs upward into shadows. The gorge is very dark, dotted throughout with only a few red fireholes, and crawling with a variety of lesser horrors — oversized rats, snakes, scorpions, and spiders. The dully-burning firepits exude a strong sulfurous stench, but a far worse reek is produced by a new horror of The Night Land: enormous ship-sized slugs that crawl on walls of the gorge. Most of these awful things put out a disgusting stench that alerts travelers to their presence in the darkness of the gorge; although, apparently, a small percentage of these ghastly things do not have this tell-tale reek. There are many side-tunnels and caverns along the length of the dark gorge, places where creatures and travelers alike can find shelter or cover (though these are just as likely to conceal slugs or other creatures). Farther north the gorge gets lighter, and there are a few more firepits and hot springs. The gorge finally opens out onto the gloomy plain that is the southernmost part of the northern region of The Night Land.

The Western Shore (W)

West of the great sea the forest ends, giving way to lands of boiling springs, and geysers and fountains of hot water and steam. Here the air is filled with steam and hot mist, and occasionally warm fog off the sea itself. Farther north the seashore meets the northern mountains, where the Black River and the Upward Gorge are found.

The Northern Night Land

Where the dark Upward Gorge from the central Night Land lets out onto this region, the land returns to a dark, dreary, bitter cold reminiscent of the Southern Night Land. Here the landscape closely resembles the narrator's homeland far to the south: dark and yet marked throughout with firepits, and with weirder luminescence such as the Great Red Fire Pit and the valley of The Shine. The vast rocky plains studded with moss-bushes return, along with a vast seabed, dry and dead for millennia at least.

The region is bordered on the west by the mysterious valley known as The Shine, a glowing pit that may very well be the home of colossal Watcher-like beings akin to those in the south. Far to the north is a sea of dull fire bordered by mountains — apparently a gigantic volcanic crater. To the east are more high mountains, becoming a range of low volcanoes in the southeast. Much of the central part of the region is taken up by the dry seabed, on whose northern shores the Lesser Redoubt may be found.

The Night Land: System Details

*In terms of **APOCTHULHU's** rating system for setting harshness, The Night Land are rated as* **Harsh.**

The scarcity of resources in this far distant future are summarized below.

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Abundant inside the Great Redoubt; Hard to Get outside — see note 1 below
Medicine 🔥	see note 2 below
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Abundant inside the Great Redoubt (lifts, walkways); N/A outside
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Flying machines may exist, but are so rare they should be story elements instead of resources
Fuel 🔥 for vehicles	N/A (all powered devices driven by Earth Current)
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Hard to Get (diskos) inside the Great Redoubt; N/A outside
Ammo for Weapons 🔥	N/A (all powered devices driven by Earth Current)
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Very Hard to Get inside the Great Redoubt — see note 2 below
Protective Equipment	Hard to Get inside the Great Redoubt — see note 2 below
Communication Equipment	N/A (personal remote communication is usually via Night Hearing)

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology & Recording Equipment	Abundant inside the Great Redoubt (view screens, hour-slips); N/A outside
Construction & Demolitions — tools & explosives	Uncommon inside the Great Redoubt; N/A outside
Subterfuge Equipment	Hard to Get inside the Great Redoubt; N/A outside
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Uncommon inside the Great Redoubt; N/A outside
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Very Hard to Get inside the Great Redoubt; N/A outside
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	see note 2 below
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	see note 3 below
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	N/A as the Apocalypse occurred millions of years ago
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	see note 2 below
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals and Animal-Based Transport	N/A

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

1: While there seems to be plenty of food, water, medicine and so forth in the Last Redoubt, outside... it's hard to say. There are bushes, at least, and many small animals, but it's unclear whether they're safe to eat. There are lots of pools, and while some of them may be potable, there's a lot of sulfuric ones as well.

In the central region of The Night Land there may be more to eat and drink, given the forests, rivers, and seas. It'd probably make a resident of the Redoubt sick getting used to this food, and since they're all vegetarians they would probably avoid the meat and fish, so might be better off. The northern region is back to being pretty barren, but Survivors may (just) be able to scrape together enough to keep alive, if not healthy.

2: Medicine, weapons, armor, navigation charts & equipment, and books of Night Land observations are certainly all readily available inside the Last Redoubt. However, in the wider Night Land the only way someone might scavenge such items is by finding a cache that has been discarded or abandoned by other travelers from the Great Redoubt (or another smaller redoubt perhaps). Finding such items should be treated as an element in a story or mission rather than something casually available via a lucky skill or **Resources** test.

3: Normal types of navigation equipment are of limited use in The Night Land. In particular, while magnetic compasses exist (and should be considered Uncommon items), their needles swing wildly in many outside areas owing to the fluctuating Earth Current.

While there are no Watchers outwardly visible in this region, similar entities are likely to be found in the luminous valley of The Shine. Giants haunt the entire region, especially around the Great Red Fire Pit. Lesser creatures such as spider-crabs roam the seabed and the neighboring plains, and while they're not actually encountered in the novel, bands of wolf-men reportedly inhabit the area near the low volcanoes in the southeast. Other weird horrors include a solitary vampiric Yellow Man (though where there's one, there may be more) and a new Force of Evil in the form of a bizarre Spinning Tree. Since this is also the home of the Lesser Redoubt, there may be refugees of its fall still trying to survive in this region of The Night Land.

Distant Mountains (E)

A range of high mountains apparently forms the eastern border of this region, though the narrator never approaches them. Other new territories and mysteries may be found within or beyond these mountains, if the Game Moderator wishes.

The Gorge (S)

This is the Upward Gorge from the central region, though entering it from this region would find it to be a Downward Gorge, of course. Coming out of the gorge and looking north, the narrator sees a strange light shining to the west, and beyond it a range of black mountains. To the east are a string of low volcanoes.

The Great Red Fire Pit (C,WSW)

Near the southwestern shore of the dead sea a huge red flame shows, burning within a great bowl-like pit. Anyone approaching the Red Fire hears the harsh grating voices of giants, as the Pit is their home (similar to the **GIANTS' KILN** in the southern region, see page 170). There may be a score or even more of the brutes in this area.

The Great Valley (SW)

Not far from the Gorge is a long dark valley. While the northern reaches are dark and forbidding, without fireholes, there are areas where luminescent blue gas glows dimly. In the southern end, there are pools and fireholes and the way becomes lighter. Unfortunately, this part of the Valley is where the weird Yellow Man strikes the narrator and Naani. The Great Valley is also where the dreadful Spinning Tree bears down on the lovers, though they are saved by a mysterious Holy Circle.

The Lesser Redoubt (N)

On the far side of the dead sea is the Lesser Redoubt: a mile high, with three sides each three-quarters of a mile long. Fewer than ten thousand people lived there when it fell, as the narrator made his journey toward it. The Lesser Redoubt had been built by a group who left the Great Redoubt countless eons before, who remembered the original pyramidal structure and so named their abode accordingly. The Lesser Redoubt was basically an entirely separate culture from the Greater Redoubt, since they were separated and had no contact throughout measurable history. Given that, it's likely the people of the Lesser Redoubt developed different technologies than their southern counterparts. What exactly these might be is open to speculation. We do know, however, that

the Lesser Redoubt fell when its link to the Earth Current died, and its defenses fell. Then, the pyramidal refuge was overrun by the horrors of The Night Land, probably led by savage giants. The people of the Lesser Redoubt fled into the dark, where they were still being hunted when the narrator found Naani and began their long journey back to the Great Redoubt. There are probably still other survivors scattered in the northern region, trying desperately to survive, find food and shelter, and perhaps find a new home; this would be excellent fodder for a Night Land adventure or campaign.

Low Volcanoes (SE)

As the narrator departs the gorge to enter the northern Night Land, he sights a range of low volcanoes to the east. Naani later tells him that the area is inhabited by bands of wolf-human hybrids.

The Old Sea Bed (C)

Much of the northern region (at least as described in the novel) is taken up by a vast dry seabed. This sea has been dead for millennia, perhaps even millions of years. It is surrounded on all sides by sloping "shores" and in a few places, steep cliffsides. The narrator finds the shells (fossils?) of long-dead sea creatures during his crossing of the dead sea. The Game Moderator might wish to create ruins or interesting finds in this vast "desert", perhaps remains of its former inhabitants, or of a civilization that existed within it or upon it. The Lesser Redoubt is located on the northern shore of the dead sea.

The Place of Gas (NW)

West and slightly south of the Lesser Redoubt is a region of fireholes that glow an eerie greenish hue. This is an area of poisonous gases, marked by greenish fires, as opposed to the normal reddish and yellowish ones found elsewhere throughout The Night Land. Travelers who venture into this area will encounter a deadly gas similar to mustard gas (Lethality 15%, damage inflicted over 2D6 hours), that burns the eyes first, then chokes with its reeking fumes, and finally clogs the victims' lungs until they asphyxiate.

The Place of the Wolf-Men (SE)

Though they are not encountered in the novel, bands of wolf-human hybrids supposedly live in the low volcanic region in the far southeastern part of this region. Little is known about these creatures (including whether or not they're actually evil), but it's safe to assume they are primitive and belligerent.

The Sea of Dull Fire (N)

Far to the north of the dead seabed is a vast crater filled with dully glowing red smoke and fire. Oddly enough, since no other atmospheric effects are reported throughout The Night Land, dark clouds hang over this "sea". Great mountainous headlands project out into sea, and green spurts of fire are thrown up when the "sea" strikes those rocky crags. The narrator believes the "sea" is actually the crater of an enormous volcano, and the "water" is actually an ocean of simmering lava.

The Shine (W)

This is one of the first things the narrator sees when he comes out of the gorge into this region of The Night Land: a long deep valley with a mysterious light glowing from within its depths. The valley emits a weird shining smoke that only partly conceals some of the terrible creatures that lurk within it. Among the sights to be seen within The Shine are a Monstrous Face and a group of "Fixed Giants".

It's very likely that these entities are no less than Watchers, or at least akin to the titan monstrosities that actually sit in plain sight in the southern Night Land.

This place is believed to be the source of evil in this region: it's probably not a coincidence that The Shine is located not far from the Great Valley where the lovers are pursued by the most terrible of all the creatures we see active in this region: the Force of Evil that is the Spinning Tree. Did that cyclonic THING come from The Shine? What ELSE might emerge from those shimmering depths to pursue unwary travelers?

The Baleful Influence of The Shine

If any character comes within 2 miles of the valley of the Shine, he or she attracts the attention of the Monstrous Face, which directs a psychic probe toward him or her. The "probe" has a POW of 2D6+3, which is used in an **opposed test of POW vs POW.** *If the Survivor wins the test, they still lose 1 point of POW but there is no further effect. If the victim fails to resist, he or she loses 1D6 POW points, as the Sentinel spies the intruder. Lost POW recovers at 1 point per hour once outside the radius of the Shine's influence.*

A Survivor failing the test must now make a further test of their **current POWx5.** *Success means there is no further effect but if the roll fails, SOMETHING is sent forth from The Shine or elsewhere in The Night Land to find and destroy the trespasser. Exactly what this might be is left to the Game Moderator's discretion, but suggestions include: giants, Yellow Men, Beast-Men, hordes of spider-crabs, or, as occurred in the novel, the Spinning Tree. Alternatively the GM can invent or choose something similarly large and potent (such as a Black Mound).*

FORCES OF EVIL—AND OF GOOD

As the previous section should have made clear (and the subsequent one will affirm), The Night Land is a world of frighteningly potent evil forces; it's been said that the novel depicts what our world might look like if (or when?!) Lovecraft's Great Old Ones were to awaken and assert control over the Earth. That's actually a pretty good analogy.

The terrifically powerful Watchers were described in some detail in the previous section. They are the most visible of the Forces of Evil at work in The Night Land, but they are dormant, apparently immobilized by unknown forces. There are other dark forces active and at large, however. One example are the Black Mounds or Humps that are seen in the southern region; another, more terrible one is the Spinning Tree that pursues the narrator and Naani in the northern region. This latter entity almost seems to have been sent after the lovers, since it appears soon after they have passed by The Shine, where gargantuan THINGS are seen in the glowing mist. The Shine is said to be a fount of Evil, which we can infer means that it may be the source of entities such as the Spinning Tree, perhaps even a place where more Watchers lie waiting to be roused or loosed.

In game terms, the Game Moderator can unleash all manner of horrors upon Survivors exploring The Night Land. Using Lovecraftian entities as our guide, this may be anything from creatures as powerful as Cthulhu-spawn or Shoggoths to such lesser beasts as Mi-go or Moonbeasts. The Game Moderator can use monsters such as these, or alter them as desired to create new horrors for The Night Land. These encounters should be tailored to match the capabilities of the Survivors, perhaps adjusted by their movements and activities (such as approaching a Watcher or some important outpost of Evil). Only in the direst of circumstances should a major Force of Evil such as the Spinning Tree or a Cthulhu-spawn-level monstrosity be loosed on the Survivors.

Prospective Game Moderators are again encouraged to consult the bestiaries of their favorite games to select the most monstrous, evil, or horrific creatures to bring into their Night Land campaigns.

Powers of Good

Despite the physical presence of Great Old One-esque horrors and hordes of lesser monsters, there are also Powers of Good at work in The Night Land. The most obvious would appear to be the various obstacles keeping some of the Watchers of the southernmost region in check: the glowing crown or halo of the Northeast Watcher, the Glowing Dome that emerged from the ground in front of the Southern Watcher, and the Eye-Beam that arrests the gaze of the Southwest Watcher. These phenomena seem to have come into being as the Watchers approached the Last Redoubt. (It's unclear whether or not the Northeast Watcher's Red Pit or the Southeast Watcher's Torches came

into being before or after those titans reached their current locations.) These manifestations suggest that just as there are Forces of Evil at work in The Night Land determined to destroy mankind, there are Forces of Good as well, else the Last Redoubt would have fallen to one of the Watchers long ago.

But just as there are greater Forces of Good at work, there are several examples of lesser Forces acting on behalf of the people of The Night Land. These beneficial Forces manifest at various points in the novel:

- Early in the novel, several hundred foolish young people rush out of the Redoubt, beyond the protection of the Great Circle, without benefit of the Rites or Preparation. Among the many Evil Forces roused to destroy them is at least one of the Black Mounds. As that entity approaches the hapless youths and the thousands of men sent to rescue them, an eerie arc of light rises from the ground between them and the Black Mound, repelling the dark Force.

- Shortly afterward, as the remainder of the youths pass the House of Silence, that dreadful edifice sends out a siren call that draws the young people to rush toward its hallowed doors. This time, however, a luminous mist of cold white flame rises up between the youths and the House, rousing them from their stupor and halting their headlong rush to doom. (Unfortunately, this effect is only temporary, and the young fools end up blundering into the House of Silence anyway.)

- Much later, as the narrator and his love Naani are traveling through the Great Valley in the northern region, the terrible Spinning Tree bears down on them and they prepare to kill themselves rather than suffer whatever it intends for them. But an eerie halo of "holy light" appears over the pair, and the great Force of Evil recedes back into the dark.

- Finally, as the narrator carries his comatose love back to the Great Redoubt, battling hordes of Beast-Men at every step, just when it seems he will fall another halo of "holy light" forms above him, again protecting him from the forces of The Night Land. This one doesn't last long, just long enough for him to reach the safety of the Great Circle.

While the "Forces of Good" in The Night Land are at odds with an uncaring Lovecraftian world, there may be some underlying logic in Hodgson's novel. In all but one of the cases described above, the "Force of Good" manifested in view of the Great Redoubt, where millions of its inhabitants watched in horror as their fellow men were threatened by the dread powers of The Night Land. (The exceptional case is the lovers' brush with the Spinning Tree.) Could the "Forces of Good" be manifestations of human will, unconsciously brought into being and powered by the Earth Current?

For the sake of argument, let's assume that this might be the case. How might this be translated into game terms? (This angle can easily be ignored if the Game Moderator wants to maintain a darker, less hopeful setting.)

In situations where characters are in mortal danger, the Game Moderator may allow a chance that one of the Forces of Good will manifest to protect those in peril. This chance should be equal to the POW×1% of the character with the lowest POW present; note this uses the character's regular POW level, not his current level, and he or she may not necessarily be one of those in danger, so long as he/she can see the potential threat. This allows witnesses to be able to trigger the creation of the Force of Good at a great distance. If the roll fails the threatened characters are left to their fate, whatever it may be.

If a Force of Good does arise, it may take any of the forms described above, from a shimmering curtain of pale fire to a circle of "holy light" appearing above the targets, or an arc of light forming between them and their attacker. Roll a D10 to see how long the effect lasts:

1–2 = the triggering character's POWx1 combat turns,
3–6 = the triggering character's POWx1 minutes,
7–10 = the triggering character's POWx1 hours.

Unless the Game Moderator wishes otherwise, any greater Force of Evil present will retreat from a Force of Good; this doesn't include lesser creatures such as ab-humans or Night Hounds, though attacks made against the protected ones should be at half normal chance of success as long as the "Holy Light" is in effect.

Note that no "good" creatures or entities are encountered in the novel, further suggesting that the "Forces of Good" may in fact be summoned forth by the wishes of humankind.

The Master-Word

There is another, less potent and obvious protection available to mankind, particularly useful to those with the Night Hearing. This is the Master-Word, a kind of shibboleth which psychics use to confirm that the person they are communicating with is actually human, and not some clever Force of Evil. Users of the Night Hearing send forth the Master-Word to whomever they are contacting, and if that "person" fails to respond in kind, it's clear they are not human. The Forces of Evil are known to telepathically attempt communication with the people of the Last Redoubt to corrupt them or lure them out into The Night Land.

The Game Moderator might expand the use of the Master-Word to a spoken version that human explorers in The Night Land can use to make sure others they meet are actually human, and not allied with the Forces of Evil. People from other Redoubts or other human communities, even though they may not speak, the same language, will probably all have knowledge of the Master-Word and its use.

A NIGHT LAND BESTIARY

This section details many of the creatures encountered throughout the narrator's journey through The Night Land. Note that due to their extreme potency The Watchers are not described in this section, though the game effects of their malign influence are discussed in boxes scattered through the gazetteer (see **GEOGRAPHY OF THE NIGHT LAND**, starting page 167).

As mentioned in **ADVENTURES IN THE NIGHT LAND** (see page 192), virtually any horrific creature from any roleplaying game could theoretically be used in a Night Land campaign. (Two major exceptions would be flying creatures and undead, since neither are found in The Night Land.) Perhaps Deep-One-like humanoids dwell in the seas of the central region? Or Mi-Go-like crustacean-things haunt the deserts of the northern region? Stoorworm-things might slither through the mountains and forests. Disfigured Goat-Men be found in the central forests. Giant mutant lizards. Tentacled tree-monsters. Living fungi. As long as it's something that can be made weird and/or horrifying, there's no reason it can't be found here.

BEAST-MEN

Horrible Beast-Men can be found throughout The Night Land, though they are particularly numerous in the northern and southern regions (the central region seems to be inhabited exclusively by the Humped Men, see page 188).

Beast-Men are on the average slightly smaller than a normal man; they are hairy, brutish creatures with tusks jutting from their mouths. They normally use their fists and claws to attack, but some may wield crude clubs. (Idle speculation: are Beast-Men the physical forms of slain humans that have been resurrected and imbued with the essence of Evil and unleashed back into The Night Land?)

	roll	average		average
STR	2D6+6	13	**HP**	12
CON	3D6	10–11	**WP**	9
DEX	2D6+6	13	**DB**	+1
INT	1D6+6	9–10		
POW	2D8	9		

Armor: None

Skills: Alertness 35%, Dodge 30%, Search 25%, Stealth 35%.

Combat:

Grapple 30%, damage 1D6+1
Brawl 40%, damage 1D4+1
Club 30%, damage 1D6+1

BLACK MOUNDS

Black Mounds or Black Humps are enormous, almost hill-sized creatures of black misty darkness. They are found in the southern Night Land, though where exactly they reside is unknown — they may appear when summoned by the Forces of Evil, or they may conceal themselves or simply slumber in dark remote places. Black Mounds are amorphous creatures, like great hill-like blobs of blackness, and are among the most feared entities of The Night Land.

	roll	average		average
STR	16D6	56	**HP**	46
CON	10D6	35	**WP**	10–11
DEX	1D6	3–4	**DB**	N/A
INT	2D6	7		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: All physical attacks do half damage to the amorphous Black Mounds.

Skills: Alertness 50%.

Combat:

Tendrils (×1D3) 25%, damage target is **PINNED** (see page 64).
Absorption 100%, damage Lethality 20%
Black Will opposed POW vs. POW, damage 1D6 POW [regenerates @ 1 point/hour]

Notes: A Black Mound attacks with 1D3 tendrils each turn. If an attack succeeds, it attempts to drag the victim into itself to be absorbed. A victim can break free by winning an opposed test of STR vs STR; note that if more than one victim is grasped divide the beast's STR between them. If a character fails to break free from the tendril he or she is absorbed the following turn, and suffers Lethality 20% each turn thereafter. The creature's Black Will attack is made once against any person who sees it. If the Black Mound's Black Will attack succeeds the victim loses 1D6 POW; lost POW points are regained at a rate of 1 per hour. If a character sees several Black Mounds/Humps at the same time, he or she must resist one attack for each monster.

GHOSTS OF THE DAMNED*

These are the spirits of those destroyed by the Silent Ones or the House of Silence, apparitions sent by the Forces of Evil to try and draw the residents of the Great Redoubt out into The Night Land. The ghosts are the slaves of darkness. They suffer and yet must send their psychic calls to their former friends and families to come to them, beyond the Great Circle. Any character slain by the Silent Ones or the House of Silence can return as one of the Damned, a puppet of the Forces of Darkness sent to torment his or her former friends.

	roll	average		average
STR	N/A	N/A	**HP**	N/A
CON	N/A	N/A	**WP**	7
DEX	N/A	N/A	**DB**	N/A
INT	2D6+6	13		
POW	2D6	7		

Armor: The Ghosts of the Damned are incorporeal and can only be destroyed by having their POW reduced to 0 through failed psychic attacks or other means.

Combat:

Psychic plea POW×5%, damage 1D3 POW loss
[regenerates @ 1 point/hour]

Notes: The Ghosts of the Damned are fairly weak, their souls having been absorbed by the Silent Ones. If their psychic attack fails, they lose 1D3 POW, but they continue to attack until their (diminishing) POW is reduced to 0, when they are utterly destroyed. Victims who lose POW to the Damned regain lost POW at a rate of 1 point per hour.

[*The Ghosts of the Damned do not appear in Hodgson's original novel, but feature in a scene added in James Stoddard's revision: early in this version, when the hapless youths depart the Redoubt and are lured into The House of Silence, Stoddard has their tormented spirits appear outside the Great Circle to try and lure the residents of the Redoubt to their doom — or at least torture them with the sight of the slain young people.]

GIANTS

Giants live throughout The Night Land, from the Giants' Kilns and the hollow near the Vale of Red Fire, to the dry seabed near the Lesser Redoubt. In these places they may be found in bands of a half-dozen or more, while in other places solitary huge manlike beings are found. These creatures are all brutish, naked, covered with thick hair or bristles, and often oozing with open sores. They carry no weapons, preferring to use their bare hands to tear their victims apart, to be eaten raw or cooked. Statistics are given for 4- and 6-meter tall giants; the latter are usually the type encountered singly.

Giants attack with either 1 grapple or 1 brawl or 1 stomp/kick each turn.

Smaller (4-meter) Giants

	roll	average		average
STR	6D6+12	33	**HP**	30
CON	4D6+12	26	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6	7	**DB**	N/A
INT	1D6+6	9–10		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: A giant's thick muscles provide 5 points of protection from damage.

Skills: Alertness 25%, Dodge 20%, Search 40%, Follow Tracks 35%.

Combat:

Grapple 35%, damage 1D6+PINNED
Brawl 30%, damage Lethality 10%
Stomp/Kick 35%, Lethality 12%

Larger (6-meter) Giants

	roll	average		average
STR	9D6+18	49–50	**HP**	44–45
CON	6D6+18	26	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6	7	**DB**	N/A
INT	1D6+6	9–10		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: A giant's thick muscles provide 5 points of protection from damage.

Skills: Alertness 25%, Dodge 20%, Search 40%, Follow Tracks 35%.

Combat:

Grapple 35%, damage 1D6+PINNED
Brawl 30%, damage Lethality 15%
Stomp/Kick 35%, Lethality 17%

Lesser Horrors of The Night Land

The following entries should be used to create any of the many small but dangerous creatures that haunt The Night Land, including venomous serpents, scorpions and spiders the size of a man's head or up to a yard long, dog-sized rats, and spider-crabs. Most of these "pests" won't be a serious threat to the typical Night Land Survivors, but they should serve as small dangers to remind the players of the weirdness of the setting.

These lesser threats are divided into three basic types, each describing a very general form of creature. These "pests" don't require a full statistic block, so only the important characteristics are listed. Special abilities are optional. The Game Moderator should feel free to invent other types, descriptions, and special abilities as needed.

Bug (spider, scorpion, spider-crab, crab, beetle, trilobite, centipede, etc.)

STR 4 **CON** 10 **DEX** 12 **POW** 5 **HP** 7 **WP** 5

Armor: Varies from 1–3, by type.

Combat:

Bite, Stinger, or Claw 35%, Damage 1D3 or 1D4

Possible Special Abilities (see below): A, B, D

Reptile (snake, large lizard, horned toad, fish or eel, etc.)

STR 5 **CON** 11 **DEX** 9 **POW** 4 **HP** 8 **WP** 4

Armor: Varies from 1–3, by type.

Combat:

Claw, or Bite 35%, Damage 1D3 (claw) or 1D4 (bite)

Possible Special Abilities (see below): A, B, D

Mammal (giant rat, badger, monkey, weasel, etc.)

STR 5 **CON** 7 **DEX** 12 **POW** 7 **HP** 6 **WP** 7

Armor: Varies from 1–3, by type.

Combat:

Claw 35%, Damage 1D4, or
Bite 40%, Damage 1D6

Possible Special Abilities (see below): B, C, D

Special Abilities

A. POISON: *successful attack that penetrates armor also injects venom with an onset of 1D6 hours and Lethality percentage equal to the creature's CON. If the victim makes a CONx5 test damage is halved, if that test was a critical success damage is reduced to 1 HP. A Fumbled CON test doubles the damage. Some venoms may have other effects, as desired—nausea, blindness, dizziness, vomiting, etc. Alternately, rather than poison this creature's bite may cause disease (see* **DISEASES**, *page 74).*

B. SURPRISE: *the creature initially attacks with surprise (+20% on first attack roll, any success is a critical hit delivering double damage) unless an Alertness test is made by the target.*

C. EVASION: *the creature moves so quickly and/or erratically that attacks made against it are at half normal skill level.*

D. TENACITY: *once this creature scores a successful attack it hangs on and does its regular damage every turn until removed or killed.*

THE GRAY MAN (MEN?)

The Gray Man is a large humanoid creature, twice the height of a man, perhaps a subspecies of giant. It behaves somewhat like a reptile, often crawling on all fours and sticking out its head and wagging it back and forth to detect its prey. It is entirely gray: skin, eyes, hair. Though only one is encountered in the novel, it's unclear whether this was a singular beast or a race of beings.

	roll	average		average
STR	4D6+6	20	**HP**	18–19
CON	3D6+6	16–17	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6	7	**DB**	N/A
INT	1D6+6	9–10		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: None

Skills: Alertness 35%, Search 35%, Stealth 45%.

Combat:

Grapple 35%, damage 1D8+PINNED
Bite 30%, damage 1D6

HUMPED MEN

The Humped Men are found in the central region of The Night Land. Their name derives not from an actual humped back, but from the unnatural bull-like thickness of their necks and shoulders. They are strong and fast, with hairy bodies, tusked mouths, and eerie gold-colored eyes. Though similar to Beast-Men, Humped Men are more primitive, often relying on their keener sense of smell to detect prey.

	roll	average		average
STR	3D6+6	16–17	**HP**	16
CON	2D6+6	13	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6+6	13	**DB**	+1 or 2
INT	2D6	7		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: 1-point tough muscle.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Dodge 30%, Search 25%, Stealth 35%.

Combat:

Grapple 40%, damage 1D3+1 and PINNED
Brawl 45%, damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Stone Bludgeon 30%, damage 1D6 + Damage Bonus

MIST MEN

Mist Men are enigmatic vaporous entities, apparently made of pale mist. They may be up to 40 feet tall and move very rapidly despite not moving their misty legs. They are insubstantial, almost two-dimensional creatures, like paintings drifting across the landscape. Mist Men pay no heed to their surroundings, but their passing has the effect of bringing melancholy thoughts to those who see them.

	roll	average		average
STR	N/A	N/A	**HP**	N/A
CON	3D6	10–11	**WP**	14
DEX	N/A	N/A	**DB**	N/A
INT	3D6	10–11		
POW	4D6	14		

Armor: Insubstantial — Mist Men can only be harmed with psychic attacks. They do not intentionally retaliate against such attacks, though each such attack brings another Wave of Melancholy effect/opposed test.

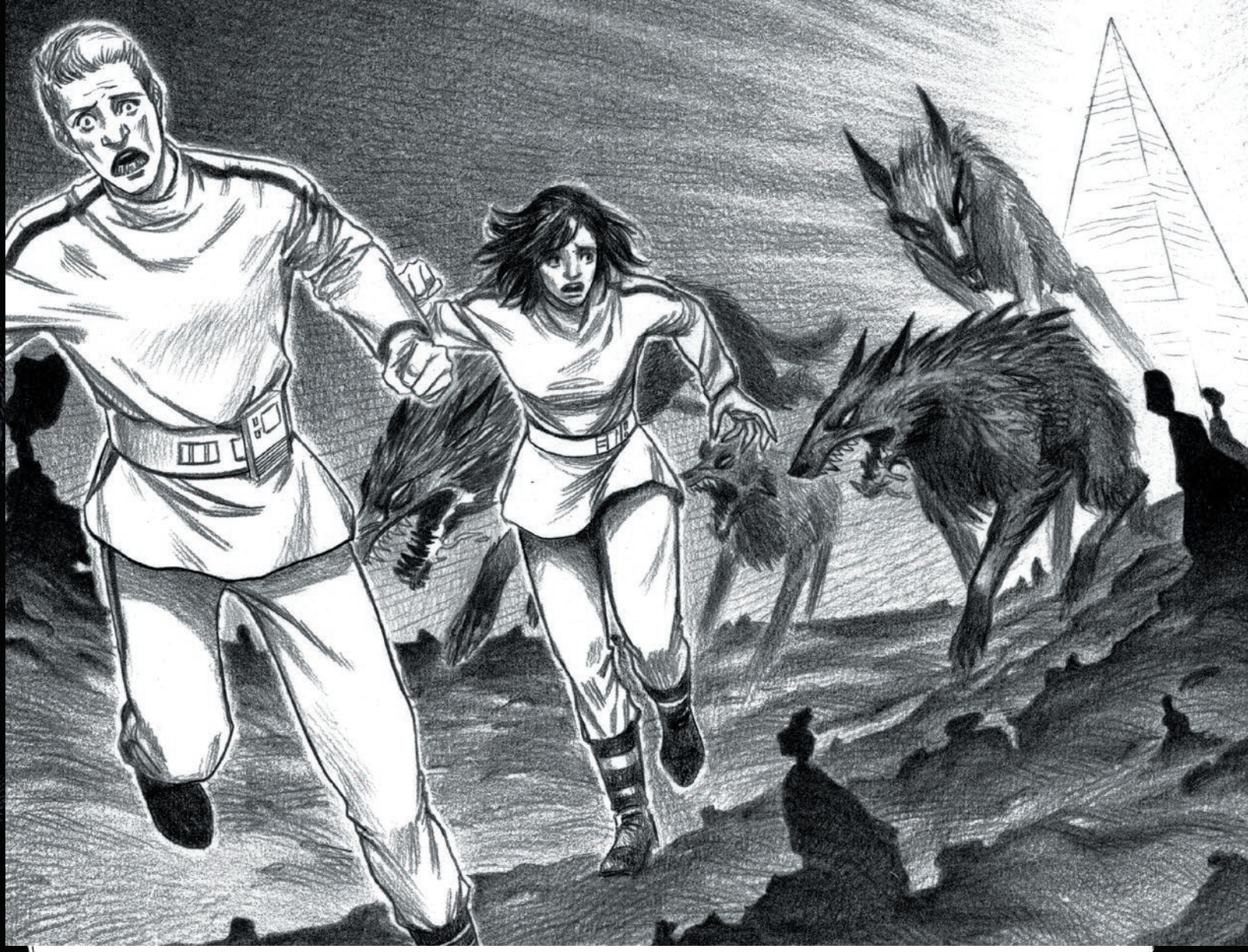
Combat:

Wave of Melancholy POW vs. POW, damage 1D6 POW loss [regenerates @ 1 point/hour]

Notes: Anyone who sees the Mist Men must resist the creature's POW or suffer a loss of 1D6 points of POW. This has no physical effect but can make the viewer vulnerable to the attacks of other residents of The Night Land. Only one Melancholy Wave attack is made against each character, though if more than one Mist Man is present, each entity "attacks" all characters in sight. Lost POW points are restored at a rate of 1 point per hour.

NIGHT HOUNDS

Night Hounds are another of the most feared creatures of The Night Land. Their alien howling brings dread to travelers, and they are often relentless in their pursuit of prey. Night Hounds are huge wolf-like creatures the size of horses, with heads like a Great Dane's, but with taller pointed ears and larger and more terrible fanged jaws. They have thick grey shaggy coats, and glowing yellow eyes.



	roll	average		average
STR	4D6+15	29	**HP**	21–22
CON	3D6+3	13–14	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6+9	16	**DB**	N/A
INT	5	5		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: 3 points of muscle and fur.

Skills: Alertness 45%, Dodge 35%, Search 35%, Follow Tracks 50%.

Combat:

Bite 45%, damage 1D8+1D6

Baying POW vs. POW, damage 1D3 POW loss [regenerates @ 1 point/hour]

Notes: The baying of the Night Hounds triggers an opposed test in all who can hear it. Anyone who fails to resist loses 1D3 POW; this POW is regenerated at a rate of 1 point per hour if the Hounds have been driven off or have left on their own — so long as they aren't still hunting and baying. Characters need only make one opposed test per hour against the Hounds' baying "attack".

SILENT ONES

The Silent Ones — mysterious shrouded entities ten feet tall — are among the most dreaded inhabitants of The Night Land. They float a few inches above the ground in their tattered robes, with only hollow spaces where their faces should be, and no limbs visible in their weird wraps. They float along on the Road Where the Silent Ones Walk, drawing their victims to them so they can drain their life force. Silent Ones are only found within sight of the House of Silence, from which they seem to issue and enter on unguessable errands. Some histories say that the Silent Ones pay no heed

to humans unless they stray too close to the mysterious shrouded figures, so as long as one stays out of their "sight" one might be safe.

	roll	average		average
STR	3D6	10–11	**HP**	12
CON	2D6+6	13	**WP**	17–18
DEX	2D8	9	**DB**	N/A
INT	3D6+6	16–17		
POW	5D6	17–18		

Armor: Silent Ones are partially insubstantial and take only minimum damage from all physical attacks. They suffer normal damage from psychic attacks.

Combat:

Hypnotic gaze POW vs. POW, damage mental control

"Grasp" POW×5%, damage 1D6 POW loss [regenerates @ 1 point/day]

Notes: A Silent One attacks by attempting to hypnotize its target and then, if successful, mentally controlling that person and having them move into contact with the Silent One. If the victim comes into contact with the Silent One, it then attempts to "grasp" him or her; if this attack succeeds the victim loses 1D6 points of POW. Each turn the target can attempt to break the Silent One's control by rolling POW+INT or less on D100. If the victim survives a Silent One's attack, lost POW points are restored at a rate of 1 per day.

SLUGS, GIANT

These gargantuan beasts are found in the dark gorge at the border between the northern and central regions of The Night Land. They grow up to 40 feet long or more, and feed on anything they can find, be it plant, animal, carrion, or refuse. Giant slugs exude a strong musky odor and leave behind a large track of disturbed ground, usually smeared with the stinking slime they excrete to lubricate their movement. Their rubbery bodies can squirm into smaller openings. Giant slugs see with eyes at the tips of their two thick eyestalks, and they can grasp prey in tight spaces with their long rubbery tongues.

	roll	average		average
STR	6D6+18	39	**HP**	42
CON	6D6+24	45	**WP**	7
DEX	2D4	5	**DB**	N/A
INT	4	4		
POW	2D6	7		

Armor: 6 points of slimy hide.

Skills: Search 45%.

Combat:

Bite/Swallow 25%, damage either 3D6 (for larger than man-sized targets) or SWALLOWED (man-sized and smaller, see below)

"Trample", damage Lethality 30%

Tongue-grasp 30%, damage 1D8 and PINNED

SWALLOWED: Swallowed creatures lose 1D6 HP per turn from the creature's stomach acid, and also must test against **SUFFOCATION** (see page 75). Swallowed victims can try to cut their way out of the slug's gut at half their normal attack chance but ignoring the creature's armor; if they manage to do half the beast's HP in damage, they can crawl out safely. Otherwise unswallowed allies can cut into the thing's guts within 1D3 turns after the slug's death to rescue a comrade.

Notes: A victim grasped by the slug's tongue is dragged to the mouth and bitten or swallowed on the following turn (depending on size). A victim can break free of the tongue by succeeding in an **opposed test comparing the victim's STR vs half the slug's STR**; alternatively the victim can be freed by cutting off the slug's tongue (its HP equals 10% of the slug's total Hit Points, and its armor protects as normal — the tongue is rubbery and slimy).

THE SPINNING TREE

The Spinning Tree is one of the few actual Forces of Evil seen taking direct action in the novel. It appears to be a huge pale spinning tree, eerily luminous, with its limbs and branches flailing about it; in many respects it resembles a tornado or waterspout.

STR 60 **CON** 60 **DEX** 13 **INT** 15 **POW** 30
HP 60 **WP** 30

Armor: Physical weapons do minimum damage; fire and psychic attacks affect it normally.

Skills: Sense Life 60%.

Combat:

Branch 35%, damage Lethality 14%.

Crushing Will 45%, damage 2D6 POW loss [regenerates @ 1 point/day]

Absorption 100%, instant annihilation

Notes: The Spinning Tree's Crushing Will attack is made as soon as someone sees this enormous Evil Force, and this attack is only made once per character, the first time he or she sees the entity. Anyone whose POW is at 0 is compelled to walk into the Tree's grasp to be absorbed; such characters are sucked into the Tree and utterly destroyed. A victim who survives the Spinning Tree's Will attack regains lost POW points at a rate of 1 per day.

THE THING THE HUMPED MEN HUNT

The Thing the Humped Men Hunt is a huge half-lizard, half-insect-like creature over 30 feet long. It has 14 legs, a segmented body like a caterpillar's, and a row of horns or spines running down its back. The beast is slow and clumsy, but dangerous nonetheless. Its belly drags the ground when it moves. The Humped Men hunt this Thing by climbing into trees, luring it beneath them, and then leaping onto its back to attack between its body segments; the beast attempts to repel them by rolling onto its back to dislodge the attackers.

	roll	average		average
STR	15D6	52–53	**HP**	40–41
CON	8D6	28	**WP**	7
DEX	1D6	3–4	**DB**	N/A
INT	4	4		
POW	2D6	7		

Armor: 6 points of chitin.

Skills: Alertness 25%.

Combat:

Bite 20%, damage Lethality 10%

Roll 25%, damage Lethality 25%

Notes: The Hunted Thing can only make a Roll attack to targets on its back. Those targets can evade a successful Roll attack with a **Dodge** test of their own.

WINGED THINGS

These creatures resemble smallish version of prehistoric pterosaurs, yet still with a wingspan of 12–15 feet. They are mostly flightless, normally capable only of gliding for short distances (10–20 yards), though if they leap from a higher elevation they might be able to soar for a few hundred yards.

	roll	average		average
STR	2D6+3	10	**HP**	10
CON	2D6+3	10	**WP**	7
DEX	2D6+6	13	**DB**	N/A
INT	3	3		
POW	2D6	7		

Armor: 4 points of leathery hide.

Skills: Search 50%.

Combat:

Bite 30%, damage 1D6

Claw 20%, damage 1D4

Notes: Winged Thing can make one attack with either bite or claw each turn.

WOLF-MEN

Little is known about the Wolf-Men, other than past Records of the Lesser Redoubt stated that a tribe of them supposedly dwelled among the low volcanoes in the northern region of The Night Land.

	roll	average		average
STR	5D6	17–18	**HP**	15–16
CON	2D6+6	13	**WP**	10–11
DEX	3D6	10–11	**DB**	N/A
INT	2D8	9		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: 2 points of fur and muscle.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Dodge 35%, Search 30%, Stealth 40%.

Combat:

Claws (×2) 35%, damage 1D6+2

Bite 25%, damage 1D6+1

Notes: Wolf-men attack with either 2 claws or 1 bite each turn.

YELLOW MAN

It's unclear whether the Yellow Man is a bestial single creature or a race of them, as only one is encountered in the novel. It is a tall, hefty human-like creature with four arms, a hairy body, and a small mouth. The Yellow Man (or Men) are very stealthy, often allowing them to ambush victims.

	roll	average		average
STR	4D6+6	20	**HP**	18
CON	2D6+9	16	**WP**	9
DEX	3D6+3	13–14	**DB**	N/A
INT	1D6+6	9–10		
POW	2D8	9		

Armor: 1-point tough skin and muscle.

Skills: Alertness 35%, Dodge 30%, Search 25%, Stealth 35%.

Combat:

Grapple 40%, damage 1D6 and PINNED

Bite 30%, damage 1D3 or 1D6 blood drain (see Notes)

Notes: The Yellow Man normally attacks by grappling its prey and then attempting to bite and drain the victim's blood. If a Yellow Man makes a successful Grapple attack it immediately, on the same turn, gets a Bite attack at 60%. Once it scores a Bite attack it then drains 1D6 HP of blood from the victim each turn thereafter until the victim dies or breaks free with a successful STR vs. STR opposed test. If the Yellow Man has Grappled one opponent, it can still hold onto him or her and make Bite attacks at others at its normal skill level, but only for 1D3 damage with no blood drain.

THE YELLOW BEAST

The Yellow Beast is a huge ant-spider thing with a three-segmented body covered with spines that ooze poison. Its face is vaguely horse-like, but tusked. Dozens of clawed tentacles project from its blocky thorax. The Beast often buries itself in the loose earth near a firepit, waiting for unwitting prey to wander into its hunting ground.

	roll	average		average
STR	6D6+6	27	**HP**	22
CON	2D6+9	16	**WP**	10–11
DEX	2D6+3	10	**DB**	N/A
INT	1D6+3	6–7		
POW	3D6	10–11		

Armor: 4 points of chitin.

Skills: Athletics 35%, Dodge 35%, Search 40%, Stealth 50%.

Combat:

Tentacles (x1D8) 35%, damage 1D6 each

Bite 25%, damage 2D6 + poison [Lethality Rating = its CON, as a percent]

Spines (special, see notes), damage 1D6 + poison [Lethality Rating = half its CON, as a percent]

Notes: A Yellow Beast attacks with either 1D8 tentacles or 1 bite each turn. If a tentacle/claw hits it tries to drag the victim toward its mouth to bite on the following turn: each tentacle has a STR of 9, which is used in an **opposed test of STR vs the victim's STR;** if more than one tentacle grips a victim, combine the STR of all tentacles to find the Thing's effective STR total. If a victim is dragged into position, the Yellow Beast's bite attack chance is doubled (50%). Each tentacle has 6 HP which do not count toward the creature's main HP. Any target gripped by a tentacle must also succeed in a **Dodge** test each turn to avoid being dragged into contact with its poisonous spines.

ADVENTURES IN THE NIGHT LAND

This sourcebook has attempted to translate The Night Land into a setting for ***APOCTHULHU.*** One of the beauties of The Night Land as a game setting is that the inhabitants represent such a

wide range of creatures that virtually anything suitably horrific or bizarre can be brought in from other roleplaying games or settings. This makes monsters from other D100 games — whether horror or fantasy — easy to bring in, though of course things like unicorns, horses, elephants, griffins, elves, dragons, and similar natural animals or high fantasy creatures won't fit without somehow making them seriously scary or weird. For some guidelines on translating game statistics from other systems, see page 291.

Likewise, the far-future setting may allow for advanced technologies beyond what was available in the 1920s or the modern day.

Though the weapons available to the residents of the Great Redoubt seem limited (a knife, the diskos, the energy "cannons", and the Earth Current are the only ones mentioned in the novel), the residents of the Lesser Redoubt may have different ones: Naani's people, for instance, had no knowledge of the diskos, so who knows what weapons or tools they might have developed in its stead: projectile/energy weapons, or different melee weapons, some of which might make use of the Earth Current in new ways. Given that the Lesser Redoubt was basically an entirely different civilization, there's no telling what other marvels they may have invented: vehicles, communication devices, hologram projectors, and so on.

Adventure Seeds

The possibilities for adventures in The Night Land may seem limited, given the deadliness of the inhabitants. Remember that until the events of the novel, the residents of the Last Redoubt hadn't ventured far from the great pyramid for millions of years. It was only the discovery of a second redoubt that led them to set out into the dark territories. That said, The Night Land is very much like any literary fantasy quest, with the hero (or heroes) setting out into a perilous environment to complete a desperate task. There may be many reasons for the residents of the Great Redoubt to embark on new expeditions into the nightmare landscape. A few ideas follow.

Fall of the Lesser Redoubt

The most obvious choice for a great Night Land adventure is, of course, the fall of the Lesser Redoubt. When the Earth Current finally faded and their Great Circle failed, the lesser pyramid was overrun by the monstrous inhabitants of The Night Land: giants, beast-men, and who knows what else. The few thousand remaining in the Lesser Redoubt were mostly slaughtered, but many others escaped into the northern region of The Night Land. In such an adventure, the Survivors would be among those forced to flee into the darkness and must now struggle to survive.

A NEW EXPEDITION

Another adventure idea might see the formation of a new expedition to The Lesser Redoubt to salvage important information or technology from the ruins, or perhaps rescue its scattered inhabitants. The new/different weapons of the lost redoubt might yet be used on a greater scale to protect the Great Redoubt. Or maybe the scientists of the Great Redoubt learn that some crucial information or device within the ruined redoubt might fall into the clutches of the Forces of Evil, information which could be used to drain or destroy the Earth Current and leave the Great Redoubt helpless.

PLUMBING THE MYSTERIES

The reader should have noted more than a few "little mysteries" in the gazetteer entries in the description of the Geography of The Night Land. What might be found in the Quiet City? Or the Dark Palace? Where do those Doorways in the Night lead? Is there really a "place of safety" far to the west, beyond the Green Mist? Where did the crashed flying machine come from? Where do those caves and side-tunnels in the Upward Gorge lead? Who or what are the Wolf-Men? Any of these might be fodder for scenarios, perhaps triggered by a cryptic reference found in an obscure volume in the libraries of the Last Redoubt.

THE CRASHED FLYER

The people of the Last Redoubt may see a strange light flashing across the black sky — something never seen before! The Monstruwacans' instruments determine that this is a flying machine, but it crashes somewhere out in The Night Land. This extraordinary event rouses the people of the Redoubt to send an expedition to investigate. Who was flying the machine? Where did they come from? Did anyone survive the crash, and if so, where are they? Obviously, the Forces of Evil will also be roused to seek out the airship and its occupants. Could this have been an expedition from another hitherto unknown human community somewhere in The Night Land? Or is it from another world?

A NEW LIGHT, OR A NEW DARKNESS

A great light appears somewhere in the distance. As the days pass, it grows brighter, almost as if a new sun was rising on the other side of the world. Is this reason for hope? Or a lure to draw out the residents of the Great Redoubt?

Alternatively, perhaps a titanic silhouette appears on the horizon — can this be a new Watcher? Whatever it is it moves slowly but inexorably toward the Redoubt. Can it be stopped?

ACROSS THE ETHERVERSE

Signals and cries from the ether are always possible ways of drawing heroes into The Night Land. Or perhaps The Tower of Observation detects furtive movement out in the shadows that proves to be normal humans (confirmed through the use of Night Hearing and the Master-Word). Who are these people? Where did they come from? Do they need help?

Or, a call echoes out across the ether, picked up by those with the Night Hearing: it is a cry from another heretofore unknown Redoubt, perhaps somewhere to the west or east. Is the call genuine? Or is this another trick by the Evil Forces to draw the heroes of the Greater Redoubt out into The Night Land to die? If and when they get there, do they find it inhabited or long dead — another ruse to destroy the morale of the remaining humans?

A DARKNESS WITHIN?

What happens if someone within the Great Redoubt falls prey to the influence of one of the Evil Forces? This person may be tricked into betraying the Redoubt, perhaps by weakening or letting down its physical defenses, or sending scouts out into The Night Land on a fruitless quest, or perhaps preaching a new "religion" in favor of some unknown entity living beyond the Circle of the Earth Current. The entity in The Night Land might even claim to be one of the Forces of Good that have always protected the Redoubt and its people. If the movement gains traction there may be division within the people

of the Redoubt, as some praise the new god while others are suspicious of it and its followers. Could this be the beginning of the schism which finally brings about the fall of Man?

THE END

And what happens when that dark day approaches? One day the Earth Current will begin to fluctuate, signaling that its end is coming, and with it the doom of the Last Redoubt. There may be years, decades, or even centuries between that first fluctuation and the day it dies forever. The people of the Redoubt will want to seek out ways to repair the Earth Current, but they would also be wise to send out expeditions to find refuge for the remaining millions of humanity. These desperate expeditions will seek places of safety throughout The Night Land. The central region is one obvious place to settle, but what about others, like the rumored "place of safety" somewhere past the Green Mist to the west? The Quiet City lies uncomfortably close to The Valley of the Hounds and The House of Silence, but could there be some shelter there? This could lead to a campaign of many quests in search of a safe haven, or one chronicling the establishment of a new settlement in the central region of The Night Land. The fall of the Last Redoubt might yet bring about a new age for mankind.

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND

Finally, the Game Moderator may want to create an adventure wherein the Survivors are characters drawn from a Pre-Apocalypse era, such as one of the many existing settings for Lovecraftian games. In this case, the individuals find their minds have traveled millions of years into the future, into the bodies of residents of the Great Redoubt. There they must undertake a quest or solve a mystery within the Redoubt or out in The Night Land. Perhaps this million-year mind-quest holds the answer to a problem they face in their modern-day incarnations? Maybe if they can solve their problem the Earth won't ever suffer the fate they have seen in The Night Land!

SCENARIO: KICK THE CAN

BY JEFF MOELLER

INTRODUCTION

Kick the Can is an ***APOCTHULHU*** scenario set in a Post-Apocalyptic version of the United States, beginning one year after the world's fiery, near-total destruction. The scenario starts at whatever bunker the Survivors sheltered in while the world burned, incorporates a dangerous journey across the ash-strewn countryside, before ending in Washington, D.C. Amid the burned-out husk of the nation's former capital plans are unfolding for a terrible ritual; if successful it will make the previous devastation of the planet seem mild by comparison.

HOW THE WORLD "ENDED" (IN FLAMES)

The world today is a burned-out husk. A year ago, the world completely caught fire. Nearly everything on land has burnt to the ground, died either from the flames or from the smoke, or frozen or starved to death under the still-lingering smoke haze.

A fraction of a percentage of the global population survived. The Player Character Survivors are among that select group. The situation which led to the sudden immolation of the world is something that even they are not precisely sure about, although they have some idea.

Handouts #1 and **#2** (at the end of the scenario, starting page 236) provide a player-facing summary of the events leading up to the 'end of the world'. A GM summary of the information is provided below.

In the months leading up to the last normal day, a high-profile crackpot 'religion' emerged — the so-called Church of Melqart, Lord of the City. Two things set them apart from the usual set of crazies that populate the Internet and other media. The first was the stunning amount of advertising — print, TV, radio, Internet — that they bought. The second was their message, rejoicing that the day of the Prophecy was upon us! The world, the ads insisted, would soon be cleansed in preparation for Melqart's arrival, ushered in by the Coming of his messiah. The purification of the world would be via an all-consuming fire. The date of that destruction was not some vague or far-off date — it was a specific day, boldly proclaimed in their advertising. A day not too far off.

That Crazy Internet

No matter how crazy something might sound, there are always a few lonely, depressed, socially isolated, or eccentric enough individuals out there who — eager for a heightened sense of identity — will latch onto the most absurd sounding credo. So it was with the Church of Melqart: while most people laughed at their foolishness, a handful wondered if perhaps there was something more to it.

The Survivors were all among that select minority. Unlike everyone else they listened to the bizarre exhortations of the 'Priests of Melqart' (or whoever they were) to prepare for the End. Against all common sense (and admonishments from family or spouses) they spent the $999.99 "faith pledge" to get the pre-packaged "Devotion Kit" from the website (**churchofmelqart.com** — also available on Amazon). And they actually went through with performing the (mostly) harmless "Purification Rite" that, according to the Church literature, would ensure their survival. This involved a bonfire and the spilling of human blood — though a donation liberated from a blood bank sufficed.

Nothing seemed to happen at the time they performed that curious 'ceremony,' but these actions marked them as the faithful of Melqart and ultimately saved their life.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world — and in particular social media and TV current affairs shows — openly mocked the dour seriousness of the Church of Melqart's predictions. Paparazzi from an independent media service called the Global News Service (GNS) hounded their High Priest mercilessly. Online, memes poked fun at them constantly and without mercy.

Warning: *This scenario touches on some grotesque and graphic topics, in particular violence against pregnant women and babies. Read the scenario through before presenting it to your group and decide whether any of its imagery or depictions may make your players uncomfortable. Consider either toning down or replacing problematic themes, and/or using a mechanism like the 'X' Card (see page 243).*

Bunker Mentality

The Church had the last laugh, though. On the exact night predicted in the Church of Melqart saturation marketing, the world did indeed burn. This surprised everyone (including those who ran the advertisements, see page 213).

On the night in question 'faithful' purchasers of the Devotion Kit — most of them taking the whole thing less than seriously — gathered together for official "End of the World" parties. These were events sponsored by the Church in various cities in the United States and elsewhere around the world. Exactly as predicted, the world was destroyed by fire that night, in a massive shower of burning, falling stars. The sentient points of fire leapt from person to person, reducing each to a pile of ashes.

Amid the chaos, many of the faithful — including the Survivors — were able to make it to specially-prepared shelters which had been provisioned to allow them to "wait out" the devastation for a full year. The Church's instruction booklet was clear: when the world had been purged of its sins, a "summons" would be sent via the manual-crank CB Radio installed within each shelter.

The group of Survivors — the full complement of one such shelter — have done nothing for the past twelve months other than to periodically stick their heads up out of their underground refuge to see what little remains of their city. The devastation from the fires, and the lasting palls of smoke, have not enticed them to leave their (still-provisioned) haven. They've also maintained the daily devotion to cranking the CB.

In the confined space of the Church shelter the Survivors have weathered a year of further psychological damage due to bunker isolation. But just as the food and water is beginning to dwindle, there has recently been a development. Today, for the first time since the Night of Fire, there has been something other than static on the CB radio – a transmission of sorts. A weird, repeating signal.

The scenario begins as the Survivors gather to discuss what this all means.

Setting Details

This scenario takes place in one of the sample Post-Apocalypse settings described in this book — 'The Firelands of Melqart'. For a general description, see the setting summary on page 136; a detailed breakdown of resource scarcity in The Firelands may be found in the Appendix (page 312).

SETTING UP THE SCENARIO

Like most ***APOCTHULHU*** scenarios, this one has a few special requirements when it comes to creating Survivors and defining the world in which they find themselves. The broad details of the 'Firelands' settings are captured in the setting description material mentioned above — however, when bringing it to life at the game table it is worthwhile gathering all the players together and agreeing on some specifics to personalize it for your own group.

THE SURVIVORS

The scenario includes a set of six pre-generated Survivors. If using these characters, it is strongly suggested that at least one of the two 'friends of Saoirse' (Seth and Esther) be included among the group. Beyond that, players should feel free to pick whichever Survivors most appeal to them. It is assumed that aside from the two Survivors mentioned, everybody else did not know one another until they met on the night of the Apocalypse as they stumbled into the shelter prepared by the Church of Melqart.

Note that Saoirse herself is not among the list of people present in the shelter — she disappeared during the chaotic attack, after a peculiar incident. Her fate is a mystery which Survivors may learn during the course of their journey.

If the group decides not to use pre-generated Survivors, create some new characters using the rules in the ***APOCTHULHU*** character generation chapter, noting that the Firelands setting is rated as a **Very Harsh** one. Also:

- In addition to the statistic modifiers noted in the main rules for Survivor creation, apply -2 to both **CON** and **CHA** (each Survivor's health is failing from being cooped up inside for a year without sunlight; each is crusted in dirt and filth and has not showered in a year).
- The Survivors each gain a +5 percentile free bonus to **Occult**, from poring over the Melqart Cult's literature in the bunker (there isn't much else to read).
- No Survivor may begin with any rating in a **Post-Apocalypse Lore** skill, since they have yet to experience life outside the bunker.
- Regardless of any Hardening check marks indicated by the Harshness, each Survivor begins with at least 2 checks in Helplessness.
- Each Survivor begins play with a Group Bond "Bunker Mates" obtained through the past year of shared adversity.
- If any Survivor starts with a disorder, it will be PTSD (and, in particular, Hypervigilance symptoms from PTSD).

It is strongly suggested that at least one of the new generated characters had a close association with Saoirse and was with her on the night that the fires fell from the heavens. Such Survivors should begin with an Individual Bond to 'Saoirse Sullivan'. On that night, each associated character was separated from Saoirse after she received a message on her phone. When providing players with **Handout #2** (which describes events on the fiery night) provide such players the Version A handout rather than the more generic Version B.

WHAT MONTH/YEAR DID THE FIRESTORM STRIKE?

The GM and players should decide together what year the scenario should be set in. It is assumed to take place in the near-future, but exactly when the Apocalypse occurred can be a group decision. Is the world destined to come to an 'end' in flames on the very night when the players are gathered around the gaming table (in which case the scenario begins exactly one year in the future)? Or does the Apocalypse come five years from now? Alternatively, the game world might have fallen to the End Times a few years ago. The decision won't have any significant impact on the core scenario, but it is a detail that will help players relate to the setting.

WHAT CITY WERE THE SURVIVOR'S IN WHEN THE FLAMES STRUCK?

Similarly, the group should collectively decide which continental U.S. city they were all in on the night of the rain of fire. The city that's selected by the players and GM should be a reasonable distance from Washington D.C. — the scenario's finale — to ensure a substantial and dangerous trek to reach the goal. But aside from that, any medium-to-large city would work. Were the Survivors all residents of a Midwest college town? Or were they slumming it in Los Angeles? Or local Vermonters? Does the story begin in whichever city the players themselves call home? Again, the specifics won't affect the scenario much — except to define how many miles the Survivors must travel — but the choice adds depth to the setting.

HOW DO THE SURVIVORS FEEL ABOUT ONE ANOTHER?

Twelve months is a long time to be locked in a confined space with the same small group of people. The players should take some time to decide among themselves how the Survivors relate to one another, and how realistic they want the tone of the inter-personal dynamics to be. After all, the kind of trauma created by witnessing the 'end of the world', plus isolation without privacy, will have predictable interpersonal consequences. Pecking orders and role assignments will have formed within the Survivor group. People will have paired off sexually and suppressed rivalries will have formed. If the affected players are willing, some Survivors may have formed romantic bonds with one another.

ARE ANY OF THE FEMALE SURVIVORS PREGNANT?

As described in **THE UNBORN MESSIAH** (page 202), an important plot point in this scenario is the unborn messiah of Melqart, which is currently being carried by *someone* on the Earth.

If there is a player in the group who wants to take on a significant — and probably quite emotionally-taxing — roleplaying challenge, he or she could play a Survivor who is pregnant at the beginning of the scenario. Do not, of course, impose this role on anyone – but if you think a player might enjoy or excel at such a role, work with them and explain exactly what they are volunteering for.

Note that *nobody* knows for sure — except you as the GM — who among the hundreds (thousands?) of pregnant women who survived the Apocalypse truly carries the Messiah. The pregnant Survivor may just be carrying a perfectly normal baby. You should leave this as a matter in a state of suspense for the players, but an established fact in your mind.

If you wish the Survivor to seem a potential candidate for Melqart's chosen vessel, she will have fallen pregnant right around the End of the World party. She may have stumbled, hit her head, and had to be hauled to safety, but in any event will be missing some time. During that missing time, she may have been impregnated by one of the Children of Melqart. The fact that her pregnancy has stretched over a year will be seen as weird, but nobody can say for sure how the unique stresses and deprivation of the Post-Apocalyptic world might affect the normal gestation period of a fetus.

GAME MODERATOR INTRODUCTION

Though horrific and devastating in the extreme, the events that have transpired to date are only the opening act for something far more Apocalyptic: the arrival of Melqart himself on Earth. While Melqart is indeed a deity of all-consuming-fire that was worshiped in ancient Phoenicia, he is far, far older. Older than mankind, older than the Earth. Perhaps older than our Universe. He is a god of the Cthulhu Mythos.

The prophecies of thousands of years ago were quite specific and have unfolded exactly as written. The fiery rain from the heavens was the beginning of the foretold year in which the world would be cleansed by flame. It also marked the date when Melqart's messiah would be conceived in the womb of a human woman. These two events are essential preparations — for when the earth has been fully purified, the messiah shall be born. Thus will Melqart himself enter into the world to take his rightful dominion.

As the scenario begins, the days are counting down to this grand moment of fiery manifestation. Most of the world's population — and most of the structures built by mortal hands — are no more, rendered ashes by the living fire of Melqart's million children. Pockets of humanity survive. Most of them are like the Survivors: men and women who lived out the year of purging in one of the Church of Melqart bomb shelters.

A few other scattered groups also survived — those who were at sea when the night of fire descended, or who were deep below the earth in caves, or otherwise isolated from the carnage.

But most of humanity's remnants are legitimate, pyromaniac cultists of Melqart. They are living in a state of religious fervor and ecstasy, though they are aware that their god still demands much from them. The priesthood must still locate the messiah of Melqart and bring the woman carrying the child to the site where the final ritual will be performed.

A Call to the Wise

The cult has no way of knowing who carries their lord's messiah, but they reason that there is a high probability that she is someone in one of the Church shelters. Thus a significant part of their preparation for the Grand Ritual has involved constructing a massive radio transmitter to send out a message calling all faithful to assemble at the site in Washington, D.C.

Unfortunately, the massive disruptions to the fabric of reality wrought by the nearing manifestation of Melqart, have played havoc with laws of space and time. Hence the transmitted radio messages are not quite normal — occasionally they are accompanied by phantom signals from the past; other times echoes from the future. This makes the signals both eerie and confusing.

The radio message received by the Survivors in their bunker is exactly this mix of elements. Once the Survivors have decoded the signal, they will learn that it is a summons. All survivors of the Apocalypse are being called to one place — the "Radio Station" (the cult's name for the Washington Monument) — to "rebuild the Earth." The unnamed sender of the message promises that they have sustainable food, clean water, electricity and security at the Radio Station. In actuality, the Survivors, and the world's other survivors, are being lured to complete the final ritual which will allow Melqart itself to make its way to Earth and finish off humanity for good.

Scenario Structure

The scenario revolves around the Survivors answering the summons contained in the mysterious transmission, and the arduous trek they must make across the devastated

Twisted Time

At some point in the year-long purging fire, the fabric of space and time began to break due to Melqart's growing influence over our planet. High above Washington, D.C. — the place chosen as his place of manifestation — a hole in reality began to form. Through this, Melqart's otherworldly fire seeps into our universe. Once the Survivors leave the safety of their shelter, they will see this breach as a shining (if unnatural) star in the night sky guiding their way to the appointed place.

The shattering of dimensions has had other effects as well. The most obvious of these is that the normal flow of time and causality is sometimes slightly warped. This effect is most strongly manifested in the electromagnetic spectrum — causing radio signals to sometimes emerge mysteriously from the past, and sometimes also spontaneously travel back from the future (or, at least, a possible future).

This last factor is an important plot point in the scenario. It was one such text-message from the future that shaped the Survivors' destiny on the Night of Flame. Also, several of the groups that the Survivors will encounter along their journey have been instructed to act through mysterious radio signals (or cell phone messages) deliberately sent to them by somebody (apparently) with foreknowledge of the future. By such means the Survivors will meet people who have resources that can help them thwart the goals of the Melqart cult. Exactly who from the future is 'pulling the strings' behind the scenes should remain a complete mystery. If players begin to suspect that it is actually future versions of themselves ... they may just be right.

As a GM running a scenario featuring weird non-linear time, you will have the flexibility to create some exceptionally strange effects. But you also have an obligation to ensure that there is a plausible causality that links events that seem to be pre-ordained with effects that have already been observed.

Your key weapon in keeping players engaged is to leave enough vagueness and 'wiggle room' that they still feel as though they are the ones calling the shots for their Survivors, even if events seem to suggest that some particular action must guide them in the future. Leaving the final 'truth' behind these mysteries somewhat fuzzy allows you to deal with player actions which don't meet their apparent pre-destination: if they didn't send those messages, obviously someone else did (but who?). Or maybe it was really them from a different version of the future that will never come to pass?

wasteland of America to reach the appointed destination. On their way to D.C., the Survivors will have opportunities to converse with other survivors and gain intelligence; and to discover some clues as to what happened in the past. They will find that there are (a very few) people other than themselves still alive. Some are survivors who have also been monitoring the official Church of Melqart channel. Others are old-world priests who are doubting their faith. And there are more than a few crazed cultists who have grim plans for the planet.

Ultimately the Survivors will be confronted with evidence that someone from their near future — possibly even themselves — has sent messages to the past from somewhere in Washington, D.C. These seem designed to help the Survivors prevent Melqart from finishing humanity off. Amid the rising frenzy of the last phases of the long ritual, perhaps – just perhaps — they can find some way to derail this mass annihilation.

Moods and Themes

As GM, you may wish to read up on some Biblical stories before running this scenario, as the themes in several of them will be used.

- The first is the challenge of Elijah to the prophets of Ba'al *(1 Kings: 18-19).* To summarize: Elijah (prophet of Yahweh) challenges 450 prophets of Ba'al and 400 priestesses of Ashtoreth (Ba'al's consort) to a fire summoning contest. Ba'al forsakes his followers and sends them nothing, as the faith of the multitude wavers, even after the priests spill their own blood. Elijah then easily calls forth fire from heaven and ignites the altar.
- The second is the story of Jezebel, Queen of Israel and princess of Tyre, who "unforgivably" brought her own religion (Ba'al worship) with her to court in Israel when she married its king, Ahab. Elijah prophesied that she would be cast from on high and eaten by dogs for this, which according to *2 Kings: 9* literally came to pass during a palace coup.

The Unborn Messiah

Before play begins, the GM should definitively decide whether one of the female Survivors is the chosen one who carries Melqart's messiah. In addition to the normal challenges of undertaking a strenuous outdoor trek while heavily pregnant, there are other important ways in which a Survivor's life will be affected if she bears the messiah.

The first has to do with the way that the Children of Melqart — the sentient fireballs which still lurk everywhere as the god's eyes and ears — treat them. Although the Children do not know who Melqart's Chosen Vessel is, they are under strict orders not to take any chances with pregnant women. At all. This means that when the Survivors encounter Children of Melqart the extradimensional horrors will noticeably treat such women differently. Not only will they avoid causing damage to the women — but will act to protect them from physical harm (within their limited capacity of burning things).

The second difference that may be noticed relates to the way that any dogs encountered by the Survivors react to whoever carries the unborn messiah. All canines will be hopelessly hostile to that individual, as they can smell something 'wrong' with such a woman. It is for this reason that cultists of Melqart have instructions to slay any surviving dogs without exception. If the Survivors learn of it later in the scenario, they may be able to use the canine ability to sniff-out the messiah to their advantage … assuming they can find a dog not yet put down by the cult (and can keep it alive long enough).

The themes in these two Biblical stories are prophecy, apostasy and judgment, and these themes will recur herein.

- A third related theme, of course, is a reflection of the story of the Nativity, with the faithful (including the pregnant Mary) being called in for a census, and finding no room at the inn.

STARTING THE SCENARIO

The Survivors begin the scenario in the Church of Melqart bomb shelter that has been their home for the past twelve months. It is a single-room with concrete walls, buried a dozen yards below rocky ground. There is a tunnel and ladder connecting it to the surface. Inside the shelter, the Survivors have set up flimsy curtains and temporary screens to try to divide the large impersonal space into smaller 'rooms'.

Since they have lived in this place for a long time, the Survivors all know what supplies and resources the bunker contains. The full list is shown in a nearby sidebar.

Flash Back, Warm Night

The players will likely have many questions about the unique setting for the scenario. The Game Moderator should leave ample time for them to understand just what the Survivors have experienced up to now and what they might believe the world to be like now.

The easiest way to achieve this is to use the handouts provided. **Handout #1** (on page 236) gives a summary of the months leading up to the "end of the world," including the basic facts about the Church of Melqart. **Handout #2** (on page 238 and page 239) describes what went down on the night that Melqart's divine fire (or more accurately his millions of fiery Children) descended upon the Earth. There are two versions of this latter handout – Version A is for Survivors who knew Saoirse Sullivan; Version B is for everyone else.

Some GMs and players do not like monolithic 'infodump' handouts that halt play. If the opportunity exists to provide the handout before the session, that can alleviate disruptions. However, if you want to altogether avoid the requirement for players to read blocks of text, you can intersperse the information contained in the handouts through the early stages of play. You can either narrate them as flashbacks, or find an excuse to spotlight one Survivor and ask his or her player to read a section from the handout text as a recollection from their character's point of view.

Bunker Equipment

The following items are available in the bunker:

- *Potable water and prepackaged "nutrition cookies" — initially there were pallets of these, but now there is perhaps enough for a week or two remaining.*
- *One cot, blanket and pillow for each Survivor*
- *A bicycle hooked to a generator, which powers a laptop computer (without working outside access, of course, but with video games and e-books).*
- *The bicycle generator is also connected to a CB radio.*
- *A chemical toilet with no provision for privacy. There is no shower, no laundry facilities and no changes of clothes. Fortunately, the Survivors have all become nose-blind to the stench and have used the scissors in the field medic kit to keep their hair somewhat under control.*
- *A field medic kit with painkillers, minor surgery supplies, and water purification tablets.*
- *Copies of the Church of Melqart Official Guide for each Survivor.*
- *Half-a-dozen trail bicycles in good repair.*
- *A variety of board games.*
- *A safe that is on a time lock – which the Survivors have not been able to open.*
- *An inspirational poster of a kitten clinging to a curtain rod, with the message: "Hang In There, Baby"!*
- *The following text on a second poster, in a variety of languages: "When The Year Of Fire Ends, The Day Of Melqart's Arrival Is At Hand! Rejoice, For When The Messiah Is Born Of Mortal Woman And The Blood Of The Innocent Is Spilled Between His Pillars, He And All His Children Shall Inherit The Earth."*

Recent Developments

Two recent events have disturbed the monotonous flow of life in the Survivor's bunker. The first was the unlocking of the safe. The second was the signal picked up on the CB Radio. Both happened in the last day or two.

THE SAFE

Without warning, one day the time-locked safe just unlocked itself. Inside it, the Survivors found six .38 caliber revolvers, each with 18 rounds of ammunition. It also contained a half-dozen KBAR style survival knives (each fitted with a compass). The sturdy safe also contained a fire-starter and fishing line, hooks and tackle for each bunker occupant. There was also a set of six walkie-talkies with several spare batteries.

Assuming the players wish to take the items, the GM should ask each to make a test of either **Insight** or **Military Science.** Success suggests that the gear has been pre-selected for mobility and ease of amateur use, not long-term survival or maximizing self-defense, and carries little offensive capacity. The walkie-talkies likely have a range of about ½ mile. A second Insight roll realizes, on a success, that the whole arrangement of the bomb shelter is needlessly uncomfortable and structured to make people eager to get out. In short, it seems pre-arranged to herd them out and send them somewhere at a predetermined time.

THE SIGNAL

Although the Survivors have followed the instructions to crank the bicycle-powered CB radio daily since the world burned, up until today there has been nothing but static. This morning, the CB was alive with activity. Sports talk radio programs from five years ago on one frequency, a classical music broadcast from two years ago and half a world away on another — a chaotic and unpredictable electromagnetic maelstrom of shifting noise and chaos.

One signal, though, seems to be current, clear, and on several different frequencies simultaneously. It is a five-minute stream of dots and dashes — Morse code — followed by an old recording of the Christmas carol Adeste Fideles *("O Come All Ye Faithful").*

Weapon Statistics

.38 caliber revolver: *1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity.*

KBAR fighting knife: *1D6+1 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.*

Survivors will naturally want to decode the lengthy Morse-coded message: success with a **Military Science** or **Pilot** test quickly decodes the stream of dashes and dots. Alternatively, an **INT×2** test will do the trick. If anybody thinks to check the Church of Melqart Official Guide they will find a table with the Morse alphabet in an appendix; using it is a slower process but will unerringly reveal the message.

The message reads: *"This is a bulletin from the True Church of Melqart, Ba'al, Lord of the City. If you can hear this, obviously things spun out of control. We know that some of you undertook the Ritual of Purification, so you may have survived, and your food and water must be running short. Please come now to the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. It is now our beacon, our Radio Station. Things are better here, the air is good here, we have food and water and electricity, and we want to start rebuilding society with your help. O Come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant."*

Hearing this should give the Survivors pause for thought — if they have forgotten, an **INT×5** test will remind them that the original instructions in the Devotion Kit stated that the Church of Melqart would issue an 'all clear' after the year of fire had purged the earth. That signal would tell them what they should do. This message seems to be plain enough – but do the Survivors want to answer the summons?

In The Bleak Midwinter (Or, Venturing Outside)

It is assumed that the Survivors will (eventually) decide they must leave the bomb shelter. If they don't then the same 'summons to the faithful' will be received on the CB each day, while the supplies of food and water dwindle to nothing. After a week or so, the Survivors will begin to suffer effects from starvation and dehydration. If they still steadfastly stay put, they will die within a few days.

On the other hand, venturing out into the bleak landscape left behind by the Apocalypse is no picnic either.

A year of time has begun to improve the air quality situation; anyone who may have stuck their head out the hatch periodically got a lung full of smoke for their trouble but may have noticed steady improvement. At present, the air quality in most places is bad but breathable. A heavy plume of smoke still hangs in the air across much of the globe, including most of the continental U.S. Assuming that the Survivors's home city was inland somewhere, there are no birds, insects or visible plant life. Just ash and ruin and cold and utter silence; any sound carries a long way.

Regardless of the time of the year that you begin, temperatures (day or night) hover around zero degrees Fahrenheit (-17°C). It ranges from a dimly lit noon with the weakest of suns peering through the perpetual haze, to pitch black at night, and it has not rained or snowed inland since the burning.

Getting Around

One thing that is in fairly good shape, however, are major roads. Bridges are more uncertain, unless they were of stone construction. But for the most part, if the Survivors start bicycling down a decent road, they should be able to keep on pedaling.

While the roads are fairly good, the traveling conditions are not. The Survivors should be able to bicycle 20 miles per day without too much trouble, but the cold and smoke inflict 1 Hit Point of damage per day (which cannot be regained without rest in a warm environment with decent air and adequate water). On a **group CON** test (made against the lowest CON in the party, assuming that they try to stay together), 40 miles/day can be made subject to the imposition of the 1 HP/day of damage. Otherwise, people begin to cough, shiver, and flag before they get that far.

If the Survivors make for a coastline and follow coastal roads on their journey, things are better. Here, the air has begun to clear more reliably, and although the ecology has been severely, globally disrupted, the oceans persist. It rains along the coast unpredictably, although the smoke later rolls back in. It is also considerably warmer, 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4°C) on average.

There are fish in the ocean, and if any character makes a **Survival** check or has the Survival skill at 40% or better, he or she can make an evaporation still and generate some fresh water near the coast. People and terrestrial animals are still generally nowhere to be found, but insects might be found underneath the earth very close to shore. An occasional shore bird might also appear, and shoreside plants are making a comeback in sporadic places. The Survivors, if following a coast, can make 20 miles a day without taking damage, and only take a point of damage if they push 40 miles per day and fail **individual CON** checks. When they first arrive at a seacoast, award **+1D3 SAN** as they appreciate that, perhaps, the Earth can heal itself with time.

What Do They Take With Them? (Hint: Their CB Radio)

The Survivors do not have a functional automobile, nor will they be able to find one easily. Any car that they may have driven to the location of the bomb shelter was incinerated a year ago. At least initially, they will have to rely on the provided bicycles. The foregoing travel rates assume that the Survivors are traveling as lightly as possible — little other than survival gear and as much food and water as they can carry.

Water should be a huge challenge and you should not hand-wave the issue. Riding a bicycle through a frozen wasteland is taxing, but doing so without adequate water poses further difficulties. Water weighs 1 kilogram/liter. Some 2-3 liters per day is (the World Health Organization tells us) the survival minimum in an emergency. The 1 Hit Point per day rule assumes this level of water consumption. If the Survivors short themselves on water, increase the loss to 2 points per day.

As a result, **Scavenge** checks to find water where there is none apparent are going to be critical, as will be reloading water containers when anything potable is found. Don't forget the setting's Scarcity rating for Food and Water is **Very Hard to Get** — this means success in both a **Luck** test *and* a **Scavenge** test at –20 is needed to locate a source of water or food.

Finding highways that follow rivers or streams is important, and the hardest part of the journey will be finding these. Of course, they will be frozen over and need to be thawed, then filtered. Anyone with a Survival or Scavenge skill of 40% or better can handle this task without a roll; otherwise, a **Survival** or **Scavenge** test is needed.

One thing to consider is whether the Survivors take the CB radio and bicycle powered generator from their bomb shelter with them. These things weigh 50 pounds and (assuming they smartly share the burden of hauling these around) impose a -1 penalty to the daily group CON check. However, it was always the Church's plan that they do so – and the Official Guide is unambiguous on the matter.

If the Survivors seem disinclined to follow this direction, they may receive a visit from a Child of Melqart immediately after they exit the bunker (see "Cold Feet, Or, Angels Have We Heard On High", nearby). The fiery creature will block their path and threaten violence unless they comply with the directive — of course the Child has no way of communicating this instruction, so may just appear hostile.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Once the Survivors have made the decision to leave the shelter they could, in theory, go anywhere. They could decide to answer the call to go to Washington, D.C., or they could decide to take a trip down to Florida to pursue a personal goal. For the scenario to play out as written they will need to (eventually) take the road towards the cult's big ceremony in D.C., but the GM is free to let the players pick other objectives. Melqart has ways of 'incentivizing' them to answer the call – some of them quite violent. See the box "Cold Feet" nearby.

Cold Feet, Or, Angels Have We Heard On High

Melqart (and his agents on Earth) really want as many faithful gathered at the mass ceremony in Washington. To achieve that goal, there are carrots and sticks that can make their 'faithful' choose that course.

Carrot: *The star in the night sky. On the first night outside the Survivors will notice there is a curious new star in the sky that nobody remembers from the days before the Apocalypse. It hangs perpetually at the same height above the horizon in the same location in the sky. This star is there to guide them at night. Visible even through the worst of the haze, it is a red-shifted, flickering light hanging directly over Washington, D.C. It corresponds to no known star in any reference book, and is too bright to be one, anyway, as a successful* **Science (Astronomy)** *roll, or 20%+ skill, realizes. In fact, it is a rift in space and time through which massive amounts of light and radiation are flowing, waiting to be rended fully open when Melqart itself arrives. The star appears brighter and brighter the closer the Survivors get to their goal, and as long as they follow it they will always be able to find their way to D.C.*

Carrot: *The radio signals. If Survivors have brought the CB Radio with them, they will doubtless crank it up from time to time. It will always pick up a selection of weird signals of many different styles and languages. By shifting the Radio's aerial, they can get a rough idea of which direction is most strongly associated with signal strength. Wherever they are, the strongest signal will be coming from the direction of Washington, D.C. Whispered messages in the signals might also promise dire outcomes to anyone who is actively ignoring Melqart's summoning.*

Stick: *Their 'guardian angel' of flame. Although it will not be obvious at the beginning, as soon as the Survivors leave the bomb shelter, they will be discreetly followed by a Child of Melqart. The cult allocated a Child to each of its shelters, giving the sentient ball of flame instructions to wait in hiding and observe any faithful who emerge — this includes shadowing them from a distance after they have left the sanctuary. During the day, it is extremely difficult to spot this tail; the Children of Melqart are, after all, little balls of plasma and keep their distance. At night, when the Survivors presumably are not trying to bicycle through a ruin field, the Child goes to ground and stays out of sight. If any Survivors suspects they are being tailed each can make an* **opposed test** *pitting their* **Search** *skill against the Child's* **Stealth** *(90% in daylight, 10% at night).*

The Child, for the most part, will only monitor the Survivors — as long as they are making reasonable efforts to move toward D.C. (It can see but not hear). This détente will change if the Survivors decide to go in a completely different direction instead, or seem reluctant to move. Then the Child (alone or in connection with summoned others of its kind) will try to 'shepherd' the Survivors back on the right track, blocking their path as necessary. If the recalcitrant humans continue to resist, the extradimensional guardian angels may injure or kill one or more of them, starting with any NPCs in tow (and especially any dogs).

Later in the scenario if the Survivors team up with NPCs who bring a dog (such as Jeanette and Muffin, see **THE QUICKIE MART**, *page 215**), the stealthy pursuit by the Child will get more difficult. The dog will bark at it periodically when it gets too close. The Survivors may hide and lure it closer, using their canine ally to alert them to its approach. If they spot it and manage to ambush the Child and kill it, they effectively go 'off the grid' as far as the other Children are concerned. The Survivors may gain some measure of surprise on the assemblage in D.C., as long as they do not hook up with another band that is also being tailed.*

ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE ROAD

Depending on where the Survivors' shelter is located relative to Washington, the length of journey to investigate or answer the radio summons will be somewhat variable. The intent is for it to be challenging and exhausting, but not lethal.

You should impress on the Survivors that staying in their bunker amounts to eventual death by starvation. Being out bicycling is nasty, unpleasant and eventually dangerous. Wise Survivors will understand (**Survival** skill of 20% or better on a successful check) that they need to "island-hop" from resource reload to resource reload, and that several days of travel away from resources is a calculated risk.

As Game Moderator it is your job to make the journey varied and exciting enough to:

- keep the players' interest,
- offer potential for them to learn a bit about the Cult of Melqart and what really happened at the Apocalypse, and
- include some moments of genuine threat to reinforce the perils of the setting.

The key is to listen to what your players want to achieve at different stages of the trek and offer some encounters which have a chance of delivering those outcomes, and a chance of putting them in danger. Ideally both. If things ever get boring or same-ish, you can fast-forward over some optional bits of the trip to satisfy the players' need to feel as though they are progressing towards their goal.

What follows is a mixture of specific encounters that deliver some mixture of these elements and a few general 'vignettes' which can be customized, reused, and slotted into the trip whenever seems appropriate.

How Still We See Thee Lie (Or, Towns and Major Cities)

Survivors will probably find themselves passing through larger towns and cities as they follow the Interstates (or at least paved roads) towards their ultimate destination. This will require you to describe the horrific sites that may be found in larger settlements. Don't hold back; there should be plenty of scenes of confronting imagery.

In general, the bigger the city, the more likely it is that the Survivors will be able to find useful shelter or supplies. The same scene plays out, however, again and again. Stone buildings are fire-gutted shells, mostly collapsed but still somewhat standing. Everything else, brick or modern construction, is absolutely leveled, and toxic dust covers everything. Without a breathing apparatus, no one can go into a city without quickly asphyxiating on toxic dust. (Later they will find that parts of D.C. around the Washington Monument, with their open spaces, marble construction and coastal location, and the space/time rift above it, are the exception to this rule.)

At the periphery of a major city — one big enough to have an underground parking garage at its outer edge, perhaps at a very large shopping mall — you might allow a **Scavenge** check at –20 to find a potential resource trove. If the test succeeds, the Survivors manage to find an entrance to a section of the garage with a comparatively light amount of collapsed rubble on top of it — something within their ability to clear. Getting into a collapsed garage, or the basement level of a shopping mall, or the like, is where the Survivors might be able to effectively scrounge something really useful. (This may potentially allow them to increase their Resources rating by +1D4, see **INCREASING THE RESOURCES RATING DURING PLAY**, page 39).

Such troves might include significant amounts of food, water, gasoline, or even a motor vehicle. (The motor vehicle's battery will be dead after a year of sitting unused, and its tires flat, but a Craft (Mechanic) test can get it running). There will be numerous dead and decomposing bodies in such a trove location — people who died trapped here.

If the Survivors manage to find and power up a laptop or tablet device in one of these places, see **YOUR BRAIN IS FULL OF SPIDERS** on page 211, for what they might learn from its browser cache.

Encounter 1: Jingle Bells (Or, Crank Calls From The Future)

The first day out, or the first time that the Survivors switch on the CB radio outside the bunker, the radio picks up a signal, as clear as a bell. It is a young girl's voice. The Survivors cannot get a message back to her, but what she has to say should prove unsettling. It should focus them on the radio and the idea of prophecies apparently being fulfilled. The message does not repeat, but is summarized in **Handout #3**, nearby.

Vignette — Searching For Answers: Scavenger Wisdom

As the Survivors travel along the road, their main priorities will be surviving in the harsh, cold, environment and fending off any violent aggressors they encounter along the way. As they do this, however, you should also look for ways to help them learn something about what really happened to the world, and what the Melqart Cult still has planned. This serves two purposes — first, it greatly enriches the depth of the Post-Apocalypse setting for the players. Second, it may furnish the players with some important hints which will assist in planning opposition to the Cult at the end of the scenario.

Some Survivor groups might actively seek out such information, for example hunting down libraries and other possible information sources — to play out vignettes of that sort, refer to the next section. Even if the Survivors aren't engaged in such quests, that doesn't mean that they won't stumble upon useful information as a side-effect of scavenging for resources. Every time they rummage through a trove of some (probably dead) person's precious items the Survivors might find scrawled notebooks containing

Handout #3: Voicemail From The Future?

"Um, hi. This is Jeanette. If you're receiving this, you haven't met me yet, and when you do, I won't remember this, because it won't have happened yet. Um, you guys told me to tell you exactly what you remembered that I said, because that was important, which was that these guys have a Radio Tower and it can sometimes send messages back in time because of um, some science stuff, and you should pay attention because that's how prophecies work, self-ful-fill-ment.

Also, you told me to remind you that the lady with the funny name drives a red car. I think you called it a 'terzel' or something.

I guess this is where I get cut off...."

(Message abruptly ends).

that individual's observations of the Apocalypse, or a battered USB stick that is still functional (if they brought their laptop from the shelter), or a video camera with just enough battery to replay a final video segment.

By such means you as GM can provide information — the boxes nearby suggest two of the most likely sources the Survivors might casually encounter. You should, however, feel free to invent any others as rewards for clever player suggestions. Just pick details from the two boxes (or if the source contains more scholarly information take pieces from the boxes **CONCERNING THE ANCIENT CULT OF MELQART**, page 212 or **CONCERNING THE MODERN CHURCH OF MELQART**, page 213).

Using The Official Guide As A Research Source

Copies of the Church of Melqart's Official Guide are scattered everywhere. Hundreds of copies of this book were stored away in the cult's bomb shelters, and many of the people who have ventured forth from those sanctuaries brought copies along with them. The Survivors themselves may have done just this — and when questions arise about the nature of Melqart the Official Guide might be the first place they look for answers.

Anyone with an **Occult** *skill of 30% or more, or who makes a successful Occult check, can use the Official Guide to answer commonplace questions about the cult of Melqart or its Children. These include reminders of the basics of their messianic prophecy (summarized nearby); the pre-eminence of the Abunassars as the cult's historical leaders; the general nature of the Children (including their limited senses and vulnerability to water); and the fact that they believe a messiah will be born to them, under the watchful eye of Ba'al himself. Melqart is clearly identified in the Guide as another name for the Biblical Ba'al of Tyre.*

The Cable TV Interview

The most common public information about Melqart's worship prior to the Apocalypse is what was broadcast in the ambush 'interview' of Sharam Abunassar which aired on Cable TV show *Tonight With Sung-Kuiper.* Survivors might be able to recall such details themselves with an **INT×5** test, or they may locate a video recording of the interview somewhere on their travels. The GM should ideally find a way to convey this information to the players before the Survivors reach their destination in Washington, D.C.

Here's what happened when High Priest Sharam Abunassar made his one-and-only appearance on national TV to explain the Church of Melqart.

Abunassar said that Melqart was an ancient deity, once worshiped in Phoenicia as the god of Tyre — a city that used to be important for its manufacture of purple dye thousands of years ago. Now it is just some port town in Lebanon.

At this point the on-screen expert commentators jumped in with lambasting comments — why, they asked, should anyone want to worship some nearly-forgotten god that went out of style with the Old Testament? Why would anyone these days venerate some ancient, lame fire god who some Biblical authorities said accepted blood and burnt offerings as sacrifices? On altars set between a pillar of gold and a pillar of emerald, no less. And why would anyone follow a religion that, according to some ancient accounts, used to sacrifice babies — dashing them to death on the ceremonial pillars before burning their corpses. Did that sound like the kind of faith that modern-day Americans wanted to embrace?

The scholars then dug in and buried both Abunassar and Melqart. Wasn't it true that the ancient deity had to be "woken" every year? Guess it's been a long time since he checked his alarm clock. Wasn't it true that many scholars thought Melqart was just another name for the Biblical Ba'al, whose worship was introduced into Israel by Queen Jezebel and whose priests were shown up by the prophet Elijah? Back then Melqart's worshipers were said to beat and cut themselves to try and summon fire. Is that something Abunassar still practiced? And was he still waiting, as the ancient texts stated, for Melqart's messiah — who would be birthed by a mortal woman after a "year of fire" and allow him to personally reign over his faithful on Earth. Couple of thousand years late on that one, Melqart. Hilarious!

Vignette — Your Brain Is Full Of Spiders (Or, Searching For Answers At The Library)

Forward-looking Survivors who have the notion of destroying the Cult of Melqart (somehow) will probably wish to find out as much as they can about who and what they are up against. The best sources of such information are the (scant few) libraries that were not totally destroyed in the year of fire.

In general, libraries fared poorly in the Apocalypse. Most that the Survivors will locate in towns and cities are simply burnt to the ground. However, it is possible (with a successful **Search** test at -40, in a place with a fire-protected library building) that the Survivors find a manageable way into a preserved, underground area. The Library of Congress in D.C. is one such place, deliberately built (like many places in D.C.) to survive a disaster.

Finding anything in a ruined library will require a **Research** test. Although you can make whatever books you like available to them, the primary thing of value that the Survivors might find is an intact computer terminal. If they can power it up (say, with their bicycle generator), and make a **Technology Use** test they can look through cached webpages from the day of the Apocalypse. This reveals a lot of odd news reports in the hour or two leading up to the fires (at which point, everything goes down abruptly). The news sites report rampant, widespread "hoaxes" or "fake news" involving "messages from the future" that the world is about to end, from social media posts to 911 calls to "hoax" text messages.

There are two types of information that will be of greatest practical use to Survivors:

- **Details about the history of Melqart's worship:** such may potentially give clues about what prophesied events the ancients foretold, as well as hints about the nature of Melqart.
- **Details about the modern Church/Cult of Melqart:** such may prepare them for encountering that crazed group when they reach D.C.

When Survivors go looking for one or the other, and succeed in Research tests, pick some details from one of the "Cult Info" boxes (page 212 and page 213) to reward their success. It's unlikely that any library searching will uncover anything about the cult's activities after the Night of Fire (i.e., anything Sharam Abunassar and his cronies have been up to since the Children of Melqart streamed from the heavens).

Each successful search gives all Survivors +2D4 percentiles in **Post-Apocalypse Lore (Cult of Melqart)**.

Encounter 2: Other Pilgrims/The Crazy, Or, Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire

This encounter should be run early in the Survivors' journey, and is useful in providing some insight into what to expect in D.C., as any number of lunatics along these lines will be encamped there. Variations in the sort and number of fire-obsessed cultists encountered should follow, and will become more likely as the Survivors near D.C.

One evening as the Survivors are encamped for the night and have their fire going (remember, it is really cold, so a fire is a must), a man shambles into the camp. He does not stop for warnings or engage in any pretense of stealth. When within earshot, he calls out "hey, fellow pilgrims, can I join you?"

This guy is alone and is a disorganized wreck; his stench (rotting flesh from well-advanced frostbite) precedes him by at least 10 yards. He is dressed in rags, with rags for shoes, and his feet are so frozen that they look, and smell, burnt. He seems to be digging the pain, though; he inhales and smiles with each painful step. SAN loss is 0/1 for seeing this pathetic wreckage of a man.

He gives his name, truthfully, as Ron Walker, and seems to be a young man in his early 20s. He has not shaved, bathed or received medical attention for numerous obvious burns in over a year. He seems ecstatic and assumes that the Survivors are fellow cultists of Melqart — after all, they would not be alive otherwise. (Use the

Cult Info: Concerning The Ancient Cult of Melqart

The Survivors might learn details about the ancient origins of Melqart's worship and its survival into the present day from either library research or coercing it from Melqart cultists they encounter along the road. For the benefit of the Game Moderator, the full history is spelled out below with some notes on details that Survivors might already know.

Survivors have likely read the 'Official Guide' published by the Church. As described in the box on page 210, it treats Melqart as the Biblical Ba'al of Tyre, and the Children as his "angels" or "divine messengers." There is no overt Mythos discussion in it at all.

Melqart was, indeed, worshipped in ancient Tyre as a god of fire, renewal and civilization. In those ancient Phoenician days, the high priest of Melqart was always someone from the Abunassar family – this tradition persisted through the centuries (even to the present day). Central to the beliefs of Church was the prophecy of a fiery cleansing of the Earth by the "angels" or "messengers" (or sometimes "Children") of Melqart.

Rites of Melqart

The devotions of Melqart, though not mentioned in the Official Guide, were documented in Mythos tomes and some historical texts. The priests of Melqart called upon their deity at night, at specially consecrated altars sitting between a pillar of gold and a pillar of emerald. The only appropriate offering, apart from the blood of the priest himself, was to dash a newborn baby against each pillar. The more such victims, the happier Melqart would be. His own Children — fire spirits — would be summoned forth to guard and attend such sacrifices. Members of the priesthood would be ritually purified by smaller blood sacrifices in advance, and only the ritually purified were permitted to attend the annual summoning of Melqart.

The Purge

In the Roman era, the cult of Melqart was dealt a major blow by a Mythos-savvy hero circa 30 A.D., and the remaining fragments of the cult were then driven deep underground by more honest segments of Roman society. The high priest of Melqart's Church, an Abunassar, survived. The group then went from active cult to secret cabal, less interested in active worship and more interested in using their status and ability to work some minor magicks to cement their social position. Several early Mythos commentators mention how the motivation of the Abunassar clan seems to be social rather than actual Mythos worship: it kept them on top of their circle of society in Lebanon, a tiny but coherent minority religion with mystical aspirations.

While able to (with luck) summon up a Child of Melqart to eliminate an enemy or burn out a heretic, for millennia there have been no ritual blood sacrifices, no attempts to summon up Melqart or fulfill any prophesies, and very little effort at even trying. Some Mythos tomes from the early 20th century forward began to call them "poseurs."

The priesthood of Melqart became a hereditary rather than real, leadership being passed down from generation to generation of male Abunassars, with the senior-most female always tapped as the High Queen. The prophesies stated that the Queen would be the one to issue the messiah of Melqart from her holy womb, one year after his other Children clear the Earth for the faithful.

sample "crazed cultist" statistics at the end of the scenario for Ron.) He takes frequent swigs out of bottle of scotch and has several more bottles on his person — they double as self-medication and incendiary devices. The rags that he wears do not conceal several of the body parts that he has burned off, including his genitals.

PROMISE OF THE COMING GOLDEN AGE

Ron quickly gets fascinated by the campfire, dropping off abruptly in mid-sentence and staring at it intently. If handled correctly (i.e., if the Survivors play along) you might allow a Reassure or Art (Acting) test to get some useful information out of him.

Cult Info: Concerning The Modern Church of Melqart

The Church of Melqart has been in a torpor for so long, few truthfully believed the prophecy would ever come to pass. Such was the sorry state just prior to the beginning of 'The End'. There was a family of increasingly sane and urbane priests, who had gotten to the point where they did not really believe in Melqart any longer and had lost all fear of their ancient god. They could do a few magickal parlor tricks involving fire, which they had begun to rationalize as some flavor of esoteric sorcery. They paid lip service to the idea of Melqart as religion, much in the same way that a Catholic priest or Presbyterian minister does. They used the story of Elijah's humiliation of the priests of Ba'al as a rallying cry against monotheists who oppressed them.

Most had left Lebanon for other countries, either openly seeking political asylum or arranging for other forms of lawful immigration. The High Priest and his family had settled in New York City, where they had been living for five generations, leveraging the priesthood into a sort of community leadership position, playing the oppressed minority religion victim card with skill and aplomb. A century of living in the United States had taught the Abunassars more than a little about capitalism and crass commercialism, and it was this knowledge that inspired Sharam Abunassar — the current High Priest — to approach wealthy corporations seeking (tax-deductible) "donations" to his diversity-friendly highly-inclusive charitable institution. The millions poured in and Sharam turned all of it into advertising with the goal of attracting even bigger donors. It was the ultimate religious Ponzi scheme. For Abunassar it was all about making money; he had no thoughts that any of the 'end of the world' message he was mass-marketing might actually be true.

When Sharam Abunassar was ambushed by paparazzi on the street one day while enjoying some chicken nuggets, the ensuing notoriety was neither expected nor wanted. He was so lax in his faith that he assumed his harassment and humiliation was an entirely human prank. It did not even cross his mind that he was being tested and punished for his apostasy. Then when some random company in Las Vegas jumped on the bandwagon, selling knock-off Melqart Devotion Kits for $999.99 he was fuming — how dare someone else try to edge in on bilking money from the sad and lonely. He called in his lawyers.

Before any of the lawsuits could transpire, the night of destruction came.

"I can't wait," he volunteers, "for that Final Ritual in D.C. — dozens of babies will be sacrificed to Melqart, the messiah of Melqart will be born of mortal woman onto this Earth. And that child shall open the way for Melqart himself to come down and rule over a Golden Age for those like us who appreciate fire.

"Only the faithful will survive and sit at Melqart's left hand, and the false god and his worshipers will finally be defeated as fire rains down from the sky. Yep, I can't wait to get to D.C. and see my old friends from prison days. And those from the mental institution, too! Can you believe that the holy fires they set back then were 'crimes' under the reign of the false god? It's a sick joke, if you ask me."

If the Survivors try to ask the scruffy man who will give the birth to "their" messiah, it will quickly become apparent that they have made a mistake. He eyes them suspiciously, saying "Everyone knows that only Melqart can tell that — him and maybe the dogs." Shortly afterwards he figures out that he has been tricked and tries to murder the Survivors.

Eventually, and regardless of how the group treat him, the vagrant will try to burn the Survivors' tent or sacrifice someone to Melqart, and they will probably have to kill him.

Encounter 3: Other Pilgrims/A Different Kind of Crazy, or, We Three Kings

This encounter is mandatory and should happen early in the journey. A successful Alertness check (made at +20 if looking for signs of active fires in the area) notices something smoldering ahead in the landscape. As the Survivors get closer, they can hear three different men screaming, denouncing Melqart as Ba'al, the false idol, and praising the "one true God". There is a lot of angry epithets shouted about "Jezebel".

Once the Survivors get into sight, they see six crazed cultists of Melqart (similar in description, behavior and statistics to Ron Walker, above). The group have built a large fire pit and have put a makeshift, human-sized barbecue grill over it, which they are preparing to use on their three shrieking, cursing, bound captives. This trio are older, emaciated and filthy men in ecclesiastical attire. The prisoners exude the general appearance of having somehow barely survived, comparatively unsheltered, for the past year. Hovering over the entire affair is a single Child of Melqart — a fiery ball of animated flame bouncing and oscillating oddly (actually, in gleeful anticipation).

The three captives are fire-and-brimstone (but otherwise conventional) clergy from the Pre-Apocalypse world. They are named Peter Lawrence, Paul Lawrence (his brother) and John Conley. The preachers are from a Baptist church just outside of Birmingham, Alabama. How they came to be in this location (probably far from Alabama) should initially be a bit of a mystery. The clergymen have each been severely burned and tortured with hot irons and have had most of their tendons cut. They are a grisly sight to behold. They are not long for this world, and incapable of further travel (on foot or bicycle) or even assisting in any way with their own defense.

The Melqart cultists and the Child are not paying attention to anything but their ongoing torture efforts, and the Survivors may easily set themselves up for a turn of surprise attacks. The cultists value their lives so little that they fight to the death; the Child will flee if it feels threatened, which it does not initially.

AN UNEXPECTED SERMON

The three men, if saved and freed by the Survivors, are in terrible shape. They are each mortally wounded and would require heroic medical intervention to survive for long. But they are still lucid. They profusely thank the Survivors on their figurative deathbeds and are overtly religious in doing so. Each believes that these are not the real Biblical End Times, but that God's ancient enemy, Melqart a.k.a. the Ba'al of Tyre, has somehow been loosed upon the Earth, and it is now the duty of all humanity to stop him.

Survivors are likely to have their interest piqued by the suggestion that these men might know something about the origins of Melqart. They are happy to share what they know — **Handout #4** (page 216)**,** "All About Jezebel", summarizes everything that can be potentially learned from these three wise men about Melqart/Ba'al and related prophecies.

After they have given their 'sermon' they will say, "When we saw the balls of living flame laying waste to everything in sight, we realized that all the Internet chatter was not just kids playing silly games — the priests of Ba'al were trying to reestablish his worship here on Earth. Jezebel would, as prophesied in the Bible, bring forth the doom of God's kingdom, unless she was cast down from the high tower and devoured by dogs. We have got to make that happen! Our prophecies are stronger than theirs, and only one prophecy can stop another!"

They will continue, "Not knowing what else to do, we headed out to do what we could. We brought dogs, too, but they did not last a day. Those fire spirits went right for the poor things, ignoring us but burning them to a crisp. They must know how our prophecy is fulfilled and are afraid of it; we have not seen a dog for the past year."

BEARING GIFTS WE TRAVEL SO FAR

The three Baptist ministers are, of course, bearing gifts for the messiah — and once rescued the Survivors are welcome to take them. As the men themselves say they will soon be joining their Lord in Heaven and these items will do them no good. The three "gifts" are:

- a full fire extinguisher;
- a portable, single-shot rocket launcher (see nearby box for statistics); and
- a vial of blessed holy water. (This last item is completely ineffectual against Melqart's Children, but the preachers do not know that).

The Survivors should find it more than a little odd that three men of the cloth would be traveling the backroads of America with a fire extinguisher and a rocket launcher. Why those items particularly? Because of the prophecy, of course. As they explain it, right when Ba'al's fire demons were raining down on them, the three men each got a text message instructing them to come to this very spot (with GPS coordinates) and bring any explosives and fire extinguishers that they could get quickly. Once there they should wait for God's agents to come, no matter what.

And look, here the Survivors are; the prophecy has been fulfilled! The priests assume that the Survivors are the ones that they were waiting for. And if the Survivors truthfully give their names, the text message turns out to have been from them. If the Survivors can hook the phone up to their bicycle generator, they can power the phone on and see the text message for themselves — complete with their names and Social Security numbers (see **Handout #5,** page 217).

At some point in the discussion with the preachers, the three old men should each proffer up their business card – kept in their wallets. This card has their cell phone number. If asked why they are doing this they will simply smile and say, "it's all part of the prophecy child — all part of God's divine plan."

Preventing the three reverends from being roasted upon the grill in the name of Melqart gains each player an immediate reward of +1D6 SAN. Abandoning them to their fate costs –1D6 SAN.

Weapon Statistics

One shot portable rocket launcher: **Heavy Weapons** *skill, base range: 50 yards; lethality: 30%, kill radius: 10 yards.*

Encounter 4: The Quickie Mart and a Miraculous Survivor, Or, Bring a Torch

This encounter is mandatory, and you should stage it somewhere along a highway, in a fairly remote and otherwise inhospitable area. It should be on the last section of the Survivors' journey to D.C. If the Survivors have gotten

themselves onto (the remains of) a toll road or turnpike, a former rest stop would be an ideal venue. Otherwise, a shoreside bait shop isolated from other buildings or trees would work. Either way, a substantial portion of the structure must be made of been stone, enough to leave a burned-out shell.

An Alertness or Search success as the Survivors approach the building will note that a shimmer of heat is coming off it. Several incinerated cars, burnt down to the tires, are in the adjacent parking lot. One of the ruined cars is a Red Tercel (this unremarkable fact will only be significant if someone recalls the text message from the future that they received much earlier, see **Handout #3,** page 209). If the Survivors look in this vehicle — either before or after they explore the building — refer to **SAOIRSE'S FINAL FATE**, page 219, for a description what they find.

Investigating the building itself more closely, what sounds like a small dog can clearly be heard barking from inside. It sounds like the barking is coming from behind a door. A large midden heap of food, trash, and feces has been formed outside of a facing stone wall. In a separate pile are the charred, skeletal remains of a dozen adults and children.

Inside the former store, nearly all the edible and potable foodstuffs have been taken from the shelves and consumed, although the Strawberry Pop-Tarts are still on the floor where shelves have burned, as are the energy drinks. The yapping seems to come from somewhere beneath the store.

If the Survivors locate the stairs to the basement, they can follow them downwards to an underground area. As they descend, they will see that things down here have survived relatively unscathed — this highlights how, even though structures might have been heavily burned they may still have buried or covered-up subterranean structures that have survived intact. The area under the store contains the building's boiler machinery and storerooms. Hiding in the largest of the storerooms, they will find a pair of survivors — one human, one canine — miraculously clinging to life.

Handout #4: All About Jezebel

The three Baptist preachers know the following information about Melqart and its relationship with Elijah and "Jezebel" as related in the Old Testament:

"Melqart is an alternate name for the old Phoenician god called the Ba'al of Tyre mentioned in the Old Testament. The heart of the story of Ba'al in the Bible is the story of Elijah and Jezebel. Jezebel, most Biblical scholars agree, was likely a real person, but that was likely not her real name. Jezebel means "Where is the Prince?" in Phoenician, and this was the cry that worshipers of the Ba'al of Tyre, Melqart, would use to try to summon his fire.

"The woman that the Bible calls Jezebel was a princess of Tyre who married Ahab, the King of the northern kingdom of Israel. This offended the prophet Elijah, because she did not worship the God of Israel, but rather Melqart and Melqart's female consort, Ashtoreth. Worse, the Queen brought the worship of the two gods to Ahab's court, and carried on Melqart's idolatry openly. It was not unusual in that era for religions to migrate in this way, and for incumbent religions to resist, but for some reason that the Bible does not delve into, Jezebel especially infuriated Elijah. Elijah set out to destroy both her and Melqart, both physically and by reputation.

"The priests of Ba'al were initially humiliated by Elijah when, despite sacrificing their own blood, they could not call down fire, while he easily did. That public humiliation ordinarily would have been enough to drive the worship of Melqart from Israel, but God was not satisfied. Jezebel was the Queen and had tried to set up Melqart as the state religion. Moreover, as Queen, she was also High Priestess of Ashtoreth, Melqart's consort.

"Elijah would have been expected to denounce Jezebel and call upon her to repent, but his prophecies about her castigated her as impure, and unflinchingly called out the means of her death: cast down from a high tower and devoured by dogs in the street. According to the Bible, that is exactly how she died, in the wake of a palace coup following Ahab's death."

A GIRL AND HER DOG

Although the boiler is fuel-fired and not working, a wood/trash fire has been started inside of the burn box to make use of the flue, and the door to the boiler room is closed to keep in heat. Inside, getting low on everything from food to sanity, are a filthy, unshorn, impetigo-covered nine-year old girl and a matted, filthy little Maltese puffball dog. The dog shuts up as soon as she catches sight of an unfamiliar human and comes excitedly running out, pees on the floor and presents herself for a belly rub while whimpering. The girl grabs a hold of any female (or the least scary-looking male) and sobs uncontrollably.

The girl's name is Jeanette James. If the Survivors can remember the "message from the future" they received shortly after leaving the bunker (Handout #3), they can easily tell that Jeanette's voice matches the one that delivered the message. If nobody picks up on this point, call for an **INT×5** roll for one Survivor to remember. If they speak to her about the message, she does not know what they are talking about. In fact, she has not dictated the message yet (it is a future version of herself that will do so).

Jeanette says she was at the store here with her mother, stopping for gas, when the "stars came down and burned everybody". Her mother told her to run for the freezer and lock herself in, which she did. The "stars" chased her, but she got away. After everything went quiet, she came out and found everything and everyone burned up, including her mom. She was a Girl Scout, though, and started a fire in the basement to keep warm and collected as much food and supplies as she could.

The girl has named the dog Muffin, but she is not her dog. She does not remember seeing a dog when everything burned, but Muffin just kind of turned up there two days later. Jeanette heard her crying upstairs and came out of her hiding place to get her. Muffin barks a lot at night, always up into the flue, but Jeanette doesn't see anything when she looks.

Handout #5: A Text From The Future?

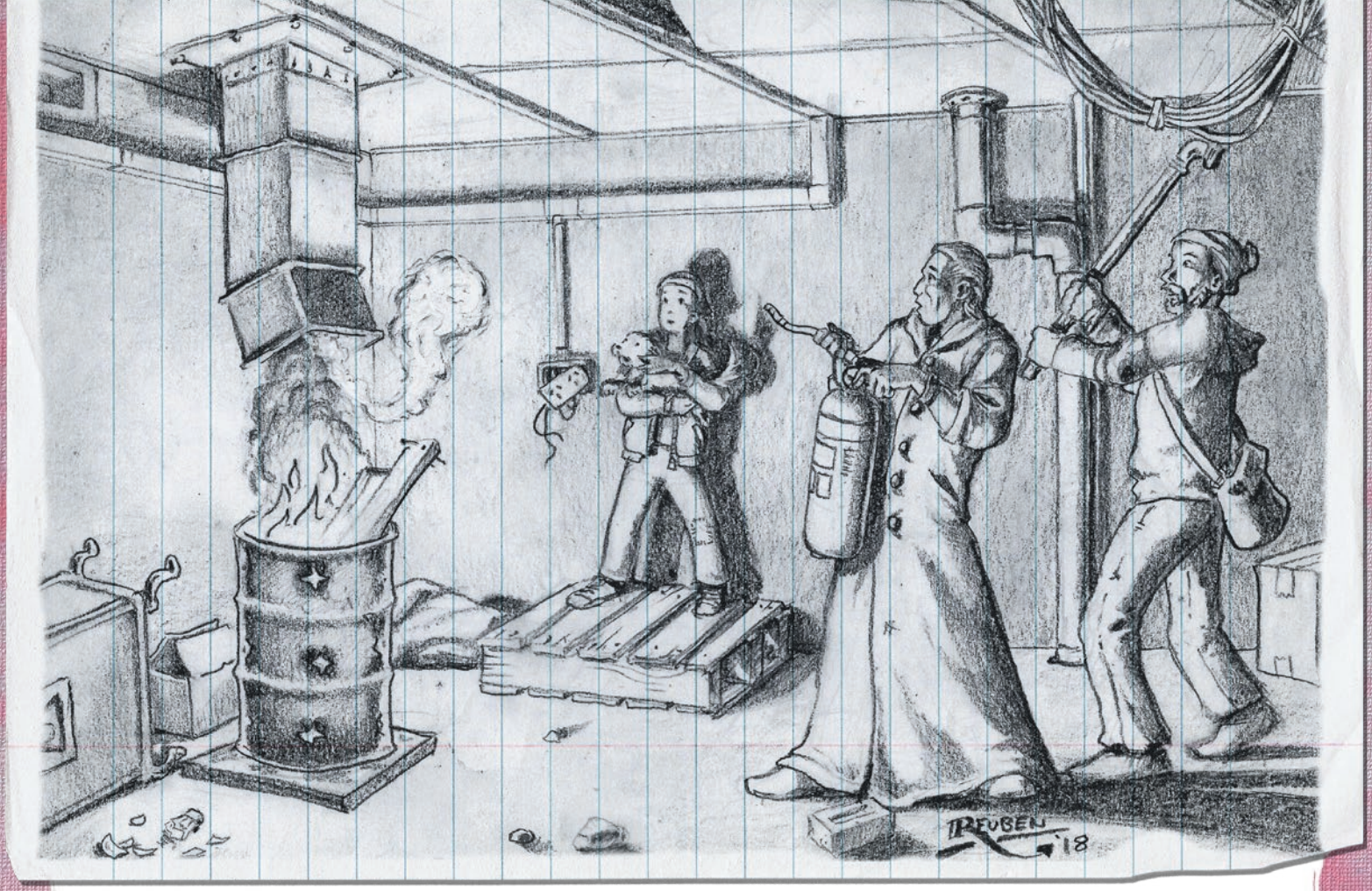
Revs. Peter, Paul and John. We know you believe in prophecies, so here's one. Melqart, the Ba'al of Tyre, has been loosed upon the world, and those fireballs burning everything are his angels. They're planning for a messiah to be born in Washington, D.C., and we have to stop them. Hopefully we can cast Jezebel down from the high tower to be devoured by dogs, like you'll tell us when we meet. Meet us in one year at the following location and bring as many rocket launchers and fire extinguishers as you can. Oh, and save this, because otherwise we'll think you're crazy. And bring your business cards, because we'll need your cell phone numbers.

(The text goes on to give the full names and Social Security numbers of the Survivors, and a precise GPS location to go and wait, coinciding with where the three clerics were found).

After the initial surprise of meeting Jeanette and Muffin, ask any Survivor that knew Saoirse to make an **INT×5** test. If they succeed, they have a sudden moment of *déjà vu* when looking at the dog — though its hair is terribly matted and caked with grime, it looks strikingly like a Maltese puppy that Saoirse owned, called Marshmallow. Weirdly if someone picks up the dog and looks around its neck, a collar-tag can be found engraved "Marshmallow". In fact, this dog is Saoirse's dog (guided here by the Survivors' actions in the future) and might even seem oddly friendly to those who knew Saoirse from before the Apocalypse.

JEANETTE AND MUFFIN

Jeanette's improvised basement 'camp' serves as a good place for the Survivors to rest for a while. It has sufficient sources of food and water. Survivors can use the stop to allow healing and to replenish supplies.



Jeanette is fearful and talks quickly in blurts. She assumes that the adults are going to take her and Muffin with them — grown-ups always protect little kids, don't they? The girl is aware that a year has passed, but she is severely traumatized. She hoards useless things for comfort and will resort to violence to defend herself against perceived threats. A **Reassure** check can get her to calm down, but abandoning her and/or Muffin, or even discussing the idea in her earshot, has her come swinging in with her "whacking stick" — a 2×4 with a nail in it (treat as a Melee Weapon with a base chance of 30% and damage of 1D8-2 inclusive of Jeanette's Damage Bonus of –2).

Jeanette has a **SAN** of 20, **Unnatural** skill of 10%, **Alertness** of 30%, **Scavenge** of 30% and an **INT** of 13.

Jeanette can also tell (if she's asked) about the "star" that she fended off not long after she first came down here. One day after Muffin arrived on the scene, one of the "stars from the sky" tried to come down the chimney flue. It went right at Muffin, but she shot it with a fire extinguisher. It popped like a balloon, and ever since then, Muffin watches the flue and growls at it sometimes.

Assuming that they take both Jeanette and Muffin with them, impose a –1 to the Survivor group's daily **CON** check for travel (cumulative with any modifiers). She is emaciated and does not weigh much, but someone must double up if they are still traveling on bikes.

Muffin is invaluable, and if the Survivors seem oblivious to that fact, allow an **Insight** or **Survival** roll to realize it. Or have Muffin warn them of a surprise attack from a Child right then and there.

A friendly but yappy dog, Muffin is the only canine that the Survivors encounter close-up, outside of D.C. No matter how hard they try. There is a reason for this — the Children of Melqart have systematically exterminated the rest. Muffin has an **Alertness** of 50% for most things, but 99% for Children of Melqart. One of the fireballs has been hovering over the Quickie Mart (or whatever charred store Jeanette has been sheltering below) for almost a year, looking to get inside, and Muffin knows it. Muffin will be alert to, and bark at, any Child of Melqart within 100 yards, unless muzzled.

Finally, Jeanette has two working fire extinguishers, one with enough for three shots and one with enough for six. One shot from a fire extinguisher does 2D6 damage to a Child of Melqart, with a cone-shaped range of 15 feet.

Abandoning either Jeanette or Muffin costs all culpable parties **–1D6 SAN,** and probably dooms the world. Bringing them both along results in an immediate **+1D6 SAN** award.

SAOIRSE'S FINAL FATE?

If the Survivors scout the building's carpark thoroughly, they will notice that one of the several burned-out cars in the carpark is an ancient red Toyota Tercel. Those who knew Saoirse know (without needing a roll) that she drove exactly the same model car — and indeed this one has all the same collection of dents and scrapes caused by their former friend's 'distracted' mode of driving. If the Survivors have also made the connection between "Muffin" and Saoirse's dog Marshmallow, all this evidence will point strongly to the conclusion that this is her car.

Inside the vehicle, behind blackened and partially cracked windows, the Survivors can see a burned skeleton surrounded by a pile of the New Age baubles that Saoirse typically wore. For those who knew her this is a shock worth **1/1D4+2 SAN.**

If someone opens the car door, it is possible to see that resting on the passenger seat is a large and filthy square object – a stone tablet. It is featureless thanks to a thick coating of black ash. Survivors who wipe away some of this grime quickly realize that the stone bears deep hand-chiseled marks, front and back – lettering. If they clean the whole thing, they can read Saoirse's final poignant message to her friends (**Handout** #6, nearby).

Handout #6: Saoirse's Carved Message

WHEN U SENT ME TXT FROM FUTURE MY HEART JUMPED

KINDA WEIRD SINCE I KNEW THE U FROM THEN HAD NOTHING 2 DO WITH IT

A CHANCE 2 SAVE WORLD U SAID

GODDESS YES AND ALL I NEEDED 2 DO WAS OUTRUN FIREBALLS AND BRING MARSHMALLOW 2 CONVENIENCE STOP IN MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

DEFINITELY SOUNDED CRAZY STILL SOUNDS CRAZY BUT ALL THE GREAT TIMES WE SHARED WERE A BIT CRAZY WEREN'T THEY

I CARVED THIS LIKE U SAID I DID OR WOULD DO — KINDA CONFUSING

NOT SURE WHAT HAPPENS AFTER CONVENIENCE STORE YOU NEVER SAID

KICK THE CAN U SAID 2 SHOW U THAT I UNDERSTOOD UR MESSAGE WELL I KICKED IT PRETTY GOOD NOW ITS TIME FOR U TO DO UR OWN KICKING

ITS BEEN AN AMAZING LIFE PEACE FRIENDS SEE U IN THE NEXT KALPA

TOWARDS A SWAMPY BETHLEHEM

Eventually the Survivors — perhaps with angry Children of Melqart on their tail — will approach Washington, D.C., the planned site of Melqart's great ritual of becoming. As they get closer and closer, the lurid and unclean red glow from the 'guiding star' gets more and more obvious. Similarly, its weird effects also magnify.

I Love Christmas On My Radio?

If the Survivors have brought their CB radio with them, then the closer the Survivors get to Washington, the weirder things get. The repeating signal is always strong, but otherwise, the Earth's torched electromagnetic field results in all kinds of random and uncontrollable messages. This tends to confirm the possibility that temporal shenanigans are afoot.

Every hour of pedaling and monitoring close to D.C. should result in a **POW** test. Success

The Cult of Melqart's Preparations

While no library sources will clue the Survivors in to the activities of the Cult after the Night of Fire, coercing or torturing captured cultists might deliver some information. To allow the GM to drip-feed details, a summary is provided here.

The Coming of the Children of Melqart

Prior to the night of destruction, Sharam Abunassar had only ever seen a Child of Melqart once, when he assumed the priesthood from his father. When they rained from the sky he was shocked as anyone. They torched everything and everyone in sight, except for his adherents and the true believers — the Cult of Melqart.

That night was noteworthy for one other thing, also. Abunassar was frenetically trolling the Internet for the latest derogatory mention of his family or the Church (so that he could do the next round of takedown notices) when his Twitter feed, email and phone all blew up. He was electronically besieged by a series of warnings, all purportedly from the future. Most urged him to kill his daughters and thereby save what was left of the world. Others urged him to kill himself now, before it was too late. One odd message that he picked up begged someone named "Saoirse" to come with them, and not run off.

Since that day, the Children have kept a close eye on him, now telling him what Melqart wishes him to do at every turn. The prophecy would be fulfilled, they said. But he would not be told who bore the messiah, lest he try to thwart the prophecy in his faithlessness. He and all of his cult would toe the line, or they would not receive a third chance. Abunassar has tried to comply with Melqart's wishes, as communicated by the Children: rebuild his temple (formerly the Washington Monument); gather supplies and make that area habitable on a sustainable basis; and summon all survivors for the birth of the messiah. The last to be accompanied by mass sacrifices in the old way and followed by the arrival of the Lord of the City himself.

Preparing the Way

The current organized Church of Melqart has complied with the instructions conveyed by Sharam, more out of fear than actual desire.

It has troubled Abunassar greatly that all three of his daughters — Maria, Martha and Magda — apparently became pregnant shortly after the Night of Fire, and none have yet to give birth. Each report lost time when the Children of Melqart rained from the sky, and all deny having had intercourse with anyone.

The Washington Monument (one of the largest stone edifices to survive the fire) has been turned into a massive Radio Tower, transmitting Melqart's census call across the globe. The call has been answered by a strange host of pilgrims, all waiting as a brilliant star, visible even through the haze, hangs over the Radio Tower. An unusual number are pregnant or come with babes in arms—almost as if Melqart had planned it.

results in receiving the type of message listed last in the summary below. In each instance, it should be obvious to those hearing the message that the other party is expecting some kind of response but is only hearing static back.

The first one in the list is particularly important to the plot and should be the initial one successfully received. It should give the Survivors the idea that they shall do something in D.C. that sets the positioning of Muffin/ Marshmallow in motion.

- (From the past): The Survivor listening to the radio signals recognizes Saoirse's voice, with sounds of screaming and chaos in the background: *"Hello, [name of a Survivor who was a friend of Saoirse], you're cutting in and out, can you send a text? Things are mad around here, I can't find you ... bring my dog? And kick the can? I don't understand ...."*
- (From the past): "911, what's your emergency? We know *about the fires and all available responders are out on calls. What's your address? Hello? Sir, I can't quite make out what you're saying".*
- (From the past): *"Hey, butt-face, quit drunk dialing me. This is the third time already. Creeper."*

- (From the past): *"You're on WYAK, sports talk radio. Please, no more about the shooting stars, we're here to talk about the Browns' latest quarterback woes. Hello?"*
- (From the present): *"Can you hear me? Hello? Did anyone else survive? I'm Kimmy and the message says to head for D.C. Are things O.K. there?"*
- (From the future, or at least a possible one): a repeating droning message, advising listeners that they should *"All hail Melqart, once Ba'al of Tyre, now Ba'al of All the Earth! Resistance will be met with a more painful death than is necessary. Surrender to the flames and your death will be swift."*
- (From the future, or at least a possible one): *"This Radio Free Columbia, celebrating the fifth anniversary of the defeat of Melqart with a gala celebration on the Mall and a bluegrass concert. There will also be an appearance by Jeanette James and heroes of the Republic, the revered* [insert names of the Survivors]."

Five Golden Rings (And Other Seemingly Endless Loops)

As the Survivors near D.C., you might wish to introduce some additional signs that time and space are being warped by the rift hanging in the sky, and that opportunities may exist to take advantage of this situation. Some suggestions follow:

- A Survivor gets an earwig (*aka* earworm, ear bug) of a repetitive song in the round (such as The Twelve Days of Christmas) that they cannot get rid of. The loop keeps going around and around in their head. It is worse when they are looking in the direction of the rift.
- A Survivor thinks they hear a dog barking right in front of them, but nothing is there. Minutes or hours later, they see a dog run away from them into hills, seeming to bark but making no sound. (A Child of Melqart, regretfully, swoops in to eliminate said dog).
- A Survivor experiences moments of lost time, or *déjà vu.*

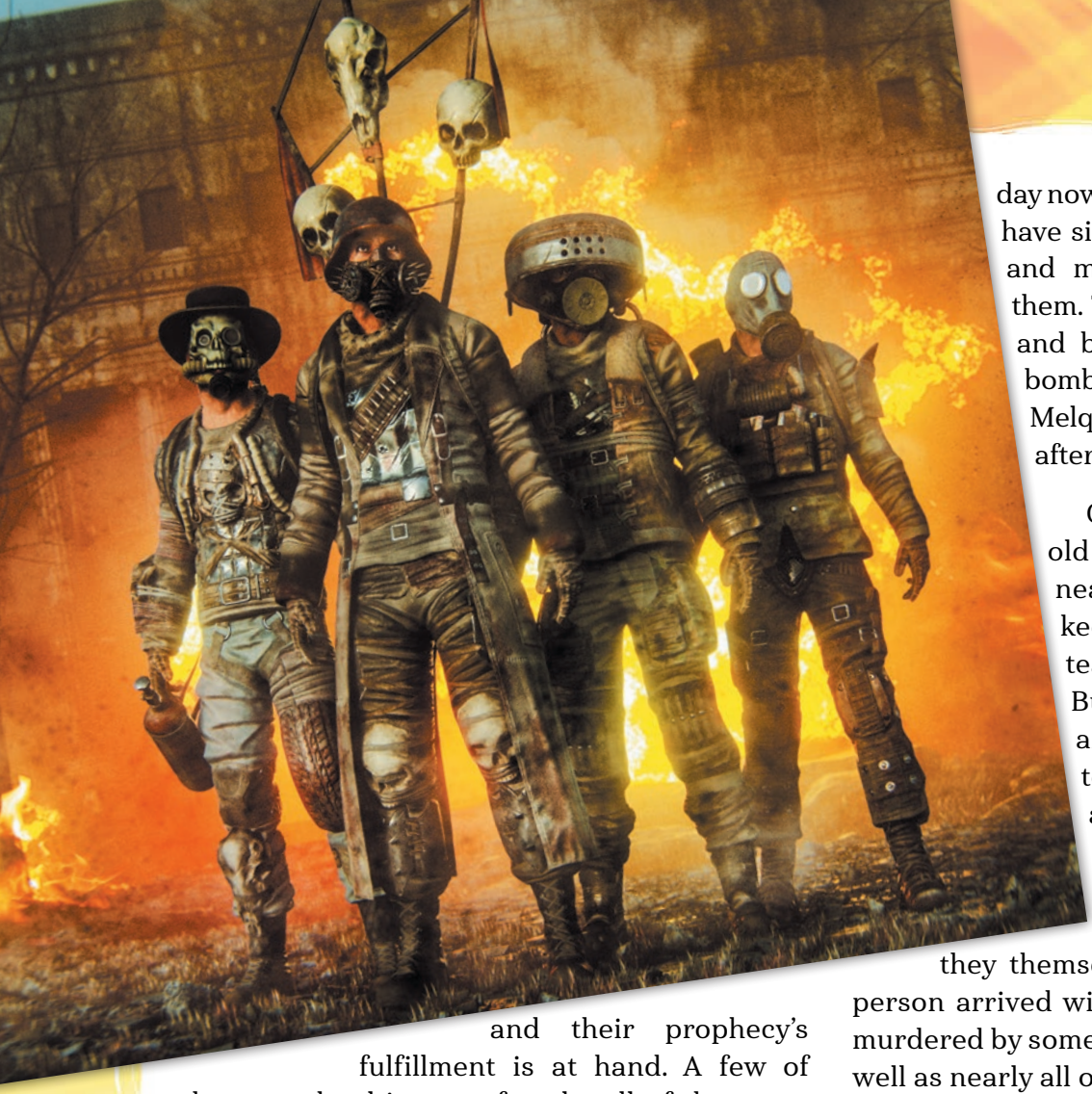
HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING! (OR, ARRIVING IN D.C.)

As the Survivors come out of the hills around D.C., they find themselves in a much warmer (40–50 degrees Fahrenheit; 4–10°C) climate, and the air is relatively clear. There is a prevailing wind blowing toward the Washington Monument from every direction, and the reason is plainly visible. What looks to be a huge, burning star hangs in the sky just over the Monument, and the smoke flows to and into it, as though it were a giant chimney flue leading to another place and time. Which, of course, is precisely what it is: a gash in reality, leading to Fomalhaut and the fiery Great Old One that lurks there. It just needs a little more size and juice to let Melqart through.

The Cultists' Camp

Adjacent to the Washington Monument, and covering a large swathe of what was once the grassy Mall, a large shanty town of tents has been erected. This is the Cult of Melqart's camp — the ramshackle place where the faithful are living as the final preparations are being made for the ritual. A few hundred survivors of the Apocalypse reside in the camp. The Player Character Survivors will go unmolested if they simply approach quietly and set up camp themselves. The only exception to this is if they act out violently, or if a Child of Melqart or an earnest cultist sees or hears a dog with them.

Most of the refugees are psychologically disorganized, crazed male cultists, calm only because they spend most of their time staring at the burning rift in space. They mumble to themselves that their messiah will soon be born,



and their prophecy's fulfillment is at hand. A few of the crazed cultists are female; all of these are obviously in the late stages of pregnancy. Every one of these half-baked psychos, if approached carefully, can be gotten to say that the stars are almost right and that tomorrow at nightfall, Melqart, the Ba'al of Tyre will arrive on Earth. Exciting, right? The cultists are not active sources of trouble, unless they catch sight of a dog. Then they become actively homicidal, erring on the side of random violence instead of raising an alarm. Of course, an outbreak of murderous violence, if noticed, is itself an alarm.

THE SANE MINORITY

A very few camp members, perhaps three dozen in all, are more like the Survivors themselves: small groups of people who engaged in the Rite of Purification more as a joke than out of long-standing devotion. Six of these are pregnant women, all of whom are either due any day now or late, by their estimation. All have similar stories to the Survivors, and most do not have dogs with them. Three tried to save their dogs and bring them with them to the bomb shelters, but the Children of Melqart unflinchingly went right after the dogs.

Only one refugee, a frightened old woman named Ivy Kent from nearby Baltimore, managed to keep her dog with her, a male teacup poodle named Buster. Buster has been kept muzzled and Ivy is afraid to leave her tent, but zips Buster up in a sleeping bag when she leaves for food or the call of nature. She will only trust the Survivors if she sees that they themselves have a dog. One other person arrived with a dog openly, and he was murdered by some of the crazies in the camp, as well as nearly all of the "will o' the wisps", as she calls them. Ivy is no hero, but she does love dogs.

CAMP SECURITY

Patrolling the skies, and constantly circulating above the camp, are dozens of Children of Melqart. They are the enforcers of Melqart's will. Remember that they can 'see' but cannot hear or smell, so incidental failures to keep a dog quiet are not necessarily going to draw their wrath. However, you should at least force the Survivors' hand once, making them silence a cultist who overhears something canine and tries to get the Children's attention.

The Children's focus is on making sure that the ritual proceeds as planned, which means that they do not want any pregnant women harmed — prematurely. Threats to pregnant women draw their attention, and this can be exploited by clever Survivors to create a distraction.

WHO CARRIES THE MESSIAH?

It is from this point onward in the scenario when the decision you made at the beginning about who bears the messiah of Melqart will begin to seriously affect things. One of the numerous pregnant women present in the camp is the mother of the messiah. If you and a player have agreed at the beginning of the scenario that his or her Survivor will be the 'lucky' one, then she is the one everyone seeks. Otherwise, the mother could be:

- one of the more organized refugees;
- one of the less organized (crazy) cultists; or
- one of the three daughters of Sharam Abunassar, Melqart's High Priest.

Whoever it is, she may or may not have another explanation for her pregnancy; if not, she is scared and traumatized (or perhaps ecstatic at her selection). Of course, scared and traumatized describes every non-insane person at the camp to some extent.

Whoever is carrying the messiah, any dog will growl, point, struggle fiercely, and do its best to kill her if she is within scent range. This is distinct from canine reactions to those who are merely conventionally pregnant.

Wassail, Wassail!

Close by the Washington Monument, a large mess tent has been erected and latrines have been dug. The Abunassar family (use crazed cultist statistics, although they are all relatively mentally stable), consisting of Sharam, his three daughters, and about ten hangers-on, are running the mess tent. There is ample food and they cook three meals a day for the camp.

Shortly after the Survivors arrive, one of these cultists-proper will come over, welcome them, collect their names, tick them off a (functioning) electronic tablet device, and assign them a time to come in for meals. The cultist acknowledge that the cult has gotten a generator running at the mess tent, and that yes, the Survivors have arrived just in time, since the messiah is scheduled to be born tomorrow night. Each of the cultists-proper is armed with the standard issue .38 revolver and KBAR fighting knife, just like the Survivors. So is anyone else who came from one of the other bomb shelters.

According to the cultist recording their details, the Survivors were all expected; this was all prophesied.

THE HIGH-PRIEST AND HIS CIRCLE

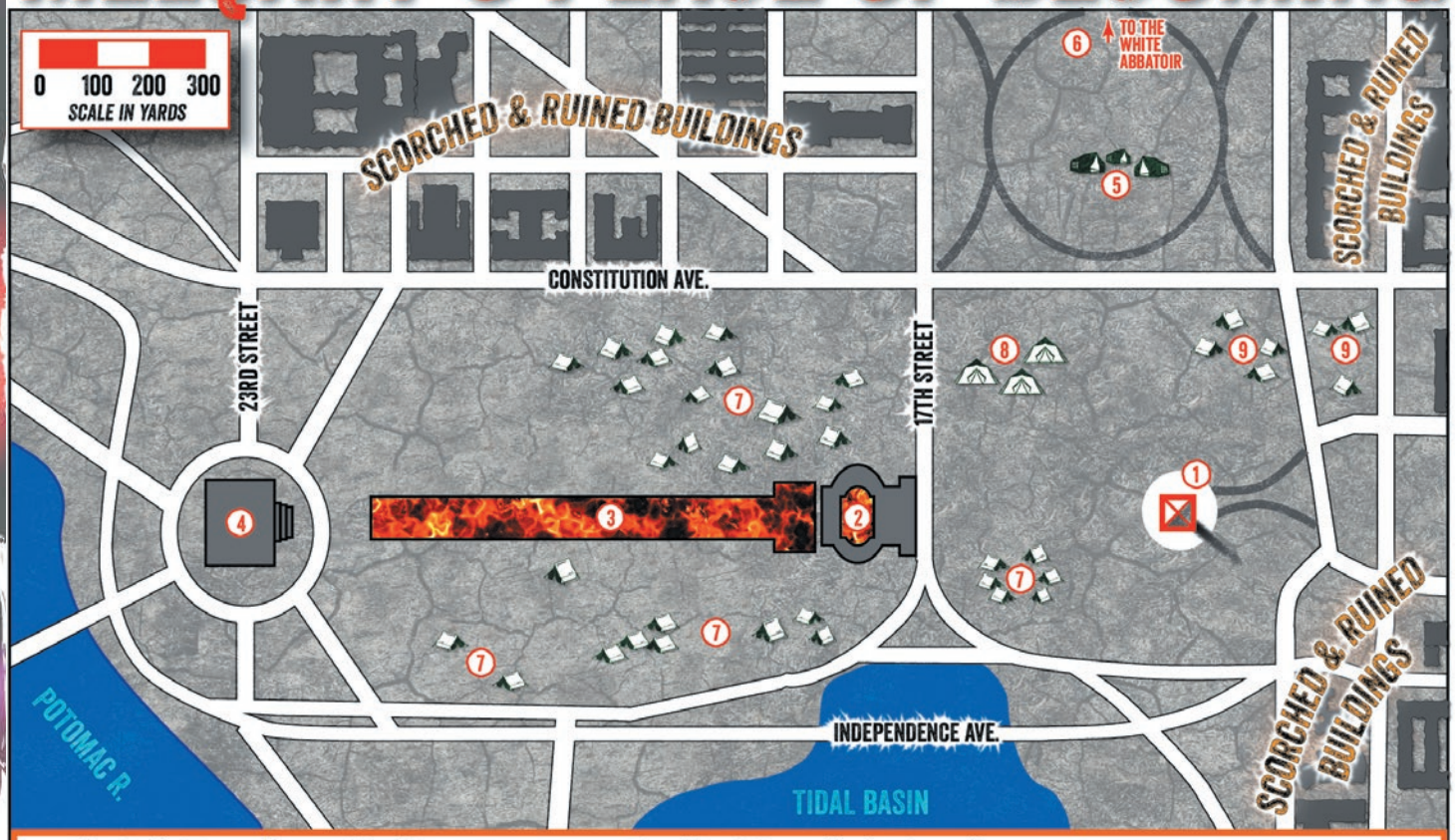
The Abunassars and their immediate adherents are somewhat sane (SAN 20) but in an awkward spot. Their god has turned out to be real, and his fiery 'angels' demand obedience on pain of slow, burning death. A couple of early efforts at banishing the Children and sealing the rift were severely punished, and there are only half as many bona fide Ba'al worshippers now as a result. They are acting out of fear, and they have their orders: proceed with the birthing of the messiah and accompanying sacrifices to Ba'al, or die horribly. They are reluctant to die and not heroic, but the GM should bear their reluctance in mind when adjudicating what they decide to do in any situation. It is possible that they will look the other way at Survivor-led sabotage efforts. The Abunassars in particular (father and daughters) realize that the unborn infants will either be sacrificed to Ba'al, or (if the messiah) shall kill its mother while being born.

Campfire Stories

Circulating through the camp and finding all of the pregnant women, or generally seeing who else is here, is harder than one might think. People, generally speaking, stay in their tents. They are crazy, scared or both, so movement around the camp is unusual and several Children of Melqart may buzz down to investigate. Exploring the camp can be done, but one must be very careful and seem to have an excuse to be out and about, rather than conducting a grid search.

Chatting people up in the lunch or latrine lines; going to worship at the Washington Monument/Pillars of Melqart; or acting crazy are plausible reasons for wandering the

MELQART'S PLACE OF BECOMING



camp. With care, the Survivors can map out where all pregnant refugees are. Note that the three Abunassar sisters sleep inside of the Washington Monument itself, where they have set up quarters on the ground floor.

To advance the plot and prod the Survivors in the right direction, there are a few vignettes that you can stage at the camp as the next evening draws near.

- One of the more disorganized cultists, who is covered from head-to-toe with burned-in tattoos of various Satanic and occult symbols, accosts one of the sane-but-pregnant survivors in the chow line. The Children of Melqart overreact, leaving their normal hovering posts and leaving the entrance to the Washington Monument briefly unguarded. They burn the offender to ashes, slowly. SAN loss is 1/1D6, but the Survivors see how a distraction might be created.
- While Ivy Kent is in the chow line, her dog Buster gets loose from her tent and makes a beeline in the direction of whoever is carrying the Ba'al's messiah, barking and snarling. The cultists and Children try to bring the dog to task. This is a huge, chaotic, long-lasting distraction that will give the Survivors an opportunity to do something unobserved, such as plant explosives or sneak into the Radio Tower.
- Another group of less-than-enthusiastic campers may seek the Survivors out and try to make joint plans to disrupt the festivities. This could be a real overture; an opportunity for the Survivors to scapegoat someone in furtherance of their own plans; or a trap directed by a suspicious Child of Melqart. Setting aside pregnant Survivors, anyone caught scheming is chained to the altar for later burnt offering.

The Radio Tower

The Washington Monument has been consecrated to Melqart/Ba'al. A stone altar has been set up in front of the main entrance, and inlay work has been done on either side, running high up the Monument itself: emerald and chalcedony on the left, and gold on the right. An **Unnatural** test focused on the intricate designs suggests that some sort of summoning aid or Gate is involved, whereas a **Technology Use** or **Science (Engineering)** test notes printed circuitry-like patterns associated with a very powerful antenna. Normally six Children of Melqart stand guard here, refusing anyone but the four Abunassars entrance.

The Survivors can easily observe that the Monument itself is the source of the radio transmissions, as they get clear incoming messages from the past, present and future near it. It is possible to infiltrate the Radio Tower if Survivors wait until the Abunassars are out and then 'kick the can' — draw off the Children of Melqart guarding the entrance by creating a distraction that they will prioritize. Effective distractions would include: threats to any pregnant woman; a big enough fight; or a dog being spotted. This is dangerous, since the Children will probably incinerate anyone whom they can identify as being the troublemaker.

Inside, on the ground floor, the Abunassars have set up their personal quarters. There is nothing of particular use here, but narrow stairs spiral up to the top of the Monument. The elevator is not working, and the obelisk is 500 feet tall, so it is a hard and time-consuming climb (requiring a **CON×5** test to reach the top).

THE RADIO ROOM

At the top of the Monument is a 55' high pyramid-shaped chamber with eight observation windows. It is normally unoccupied, although Children of Melqart (unless distracted) patrol outside past the observation windows.

A confusing and nightmarish, makeshift, madness-inspired transmitter has been erected here, in the glare of the burning rift. It is a jumble of obvious radio equipment, coils and wires, intertwined with Ba'al iconography, and what seems to be the corpses of infants with their heads bashed in. The result is a bizarre and disturbing mess. SAN loss for seeing The Radio is 1/1D6.

An obvious feature of the lash-up is a large analogue dial with a needle that slowly drifts between the lower third (whose background is shaded in brown), the central third (black), and the upper third (bright red). This meter measures something to do with the radiation coming from the rift high above.

The practical effect is that while the needle is in the brown, the messages sent by the radio go to sometime in the past and messages received and played in the room are also from the past. When the needle is in the central (black) zone the messages are sent and received without temporal drift. If the reading is in the upper red zone, messages broadcast are sent to the future (or, the current most likely one anyway), while signals received by the radio also come from such a future.

As GM you should go out of your way to describe the sounds of past and future signals that are played constantly over speakers in the Radio room, correlated with dial readings as described above.

It is important for players to make the connection, since any attempts by Survivors to send signals to key NPCs in the past can only succeed if the needle is in the brown zone when the message is sent. In a push, you can ask for Survivors who have spent more than a few minutes observing the terrifying Radio to make an **INT×3** test to understand the correlation.

USING THE RADIO

Anyone with 40% in **Technology Use** or **Science (Engineering)** can figure out The Radio enough to send out transmissions. Otherwise a roll is required using one of those skills. It can both send and receive, but receiving is extremely spotty and unpredictable, and messages may come from the past, present or future (see the note above). Likewise, messages can be attempted to the past, present and future, but only short messages can be predictably sent out.

The Radio is set to keep repeating the Morse code announcement, and any change to the message brings all cultists able to climb stairs to investigate, beginning in 1D3 minutes, followed by Children of Melqart once an alarm is raised. However, a Survivor with **Technology Use** or **Science (Engineering)** of 40% or more can, on a successful test, rig a 'scheduled' message change (one or several) to go out on a time delay after the Survivors have left the scene.

As described in the next section, the sending of signals that create (or sustain) the self-fulfilling prophecies already encountered along the road will greatly assist the Survivors in their mission to disrupt Melqart's summoning. In fact, this is likely the only way they can defeat the cult. Thus, the scene (or scenes) in the Radio Room should be dramatic and exciting, with an ever-present sense of peril.

Kicking the Can and Creating Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Many of the events that the Survivors experienced along the road — and even Saoirse's decision to part ways with them on the fateful night — happened because of signals that were sent back from the future. The Survivors gaining access to the Radio Tower is their opportunity to fulfill an obligation to causality. This scenario assumes a model of time 'travel' in which events in the Survivors' past can still change and have consequences on the current moment ... even though the Survivors will still remember events as they were first experienced.

Messages sent using The Radio can be either voice or text messages, but only brief transmissions are possible. ***Do not give the players a lot of time to experiment or fiddle around in the Tower, only what a relatively brief distraction might enable.*** You should bear in mind that transmissions from the Radio Tower are being monitored, so they might want to send a text message or use a cell phone frequency. Knowing how to do this requires either a **Technology Use** test or a **Science (Engineering)** test, or a 40% rating in one of those skills.

There are three main causality points in the scenario which might be altered by messages Survivors send back in time:

- Causing Jeanette to be rescued, and thus her being able to make it to the Radio Tower to send a message to the Survivors along the lines that they received (Handout #3);
- Sending a message to Saoirse instructing her to separate from the group fleeing the "End of the World" party and bring her dog Marshmallow to Jeanette's rest stop; and
- Sending a text message to the 'three wise men' instructing them where to meet and what to bring with them. Especially the rocket launcher.

Just doing these three things will position the Survivors to fulfill the prophecy of Jezebel falling from the high tower and being devoured by dogs, thereby saving the world. Jeanette's call will have told them what is generally going on. The message to Saoirse will lead her to Jeanette and indirectly give them Muffin/Marshmallow to use as an 'anti-Christ detector'. Getting the message to the three Reverends in Alabama gets the Survivors the particulars of the prophecy about the fall of Jezebel and the rocket launcher to make it happen.

A decent enough distraction and enough time in the Radio Tower can get these three messages out. Remember, the Survivors need to send these when the weird meter has its needle in the brown zone — doing it at any other time might still result in the message being sent, but not going backwards in time.

WHAT IF PLAYERS DON'T FULFILL CAUSAL REQUIREMENTS?

You will need to be prepared to adjudicate what happens if the Survivors either do not get into the Radio Tower or fail to get the three 'historical' messages out. Their carefully laid plans may collapse or change, as things they think they remember turn out not to have happened. The

touchstone for major changes should be whether a message was sent at all, rather than the precise details of wording and such.

Some general consequences of failing to satisfy the three main points of causality are outlined in the table below. Customize these as you see fit to ensure a dramatically satisfying finale to the scenario.

Don't sweat the finer points. Exactly what time the messages were sent is not set in stone, so it is possible that the Survivors will be scrambling along to fulfill the prophecy right up until Melqart pours through the rift. They may not even understand that they need to send the messages until they are heavily prompted by their rocket launcher disappearing, because they never sent the message to arrange for it. Such dramatic moments should be carefully timed for maximum impact — for example, an item should wink out of existence just before it becomes a crucial part of some plan or scheme. The Universe is ironic like that.

If the Survivors resolve not to access the Radio Tower at all, blow it up, disrupt it, or the like, you should prompt them by readjusting the present to reflect the likely course of such events. The past might alter for the time being, subject to later revision if they change their minds, resolve to access the Radio Tower, or rebuild things. Only change the past when the Survivors' actions, if uncorrected, will likely result in a different past. Let little things or temporary indecisiveness go.

PLAYING GAMES WITH TIME

The Survivors may well try to send *additional* messages off script, in an effort to alter the past to better their chances. That way lies madness, but following are some guidance on how to adjudicate such efforts.

If the Survivors never send a text message to Saoirse telling her to part ways with them, and instead travel to the Convenience Stop with her dog Marshmallow (aka Muffin)	Not sending the message to Saoirse, instructing her to bring Marshmallow to where Jeanette is staying, throws history into chaos. First, it means that Muffin/Marshmallow never got to Jeanette. The consequences of that likely snowball exponentially. Jeanette probably died a few weeks after the world burned in such a case, thus she winks out of existence here in D.C. Anyone who was warned by Muffin/Marshmallow and saved from a Child of Melqart attack is probably dead or at least severely burned.
If the Survivors never send a text message to the three Baptist ministers in Alabama, asking them to bring fire extinguishers and rocket launchers to a meeting spot (see **Handout #5)**	Not getting the message to the three wise men means that the Survivors never met them along the road to D.C. The Survivors still remember meeting them, but nothing tangible as a result of that meeting exists. In particular this means that they lose the rocket launcher, cannot find the preachers' business cards, and any injuries they sustained in the fight with the barbecuing cultists are gone. In fact, if one of the Survivors died in this encounter, then they are suddenly back with the group in D.C. SAN loss to experience events rewriting themselves in this way is 0/1D3. Of course, that rocket launcher is the key to striking a truly effective blow against Melqart's plans, and without it, the world might still be doomed.
If Jeanette never makes the radio broadcast telling the Survivors about temporally-displaced messages and the fate of Saoirse (see **Handout #3)**	Not bringing Jeanette to the Radio Tower to message the Survivors early on might not disrupt much of anything if they are able to piece things together in other ways. A similar message from one of the Survivors themselves might accomplish the same thing, albeit engendering some confusion. If anyone somehow ends up sending a voice message to be received by themselves in the past, a SAN loss of 0/1D3 will be incurred by the sender (as they recall the weird experience of earlier hearing themselves utter words they didn't at the time recall).

In general, Survivors should only get a few minutes in the Radio Tower and be forced to think on the fly. Using a real stopwatch and giving them five minutes is a good way for the GM to police unrealistic and excessive noodling time.

The Survivors should realize that given that they have only a short window, sending a message back in time (while the needle is in the brown) would best be aimed at someone who they have reason to believe received such a message, and then likely would have acted on it.

Sending messages to 911 operators on the night of the Apocalypse, when they were flooded with 'crank calls', is likely to do little good, and none of the Survivors remember getting any such messages themselves. Nor would sending a message to someone who would ignore it or be unable to act on it do much good. Adjudicate such efforts to have failed to accomplish anything.

Positioning extra resources (such as by asking the 'three wise men' to bring something different (explosives instead of or in addition to a rocket launcher) might be resolved with a **POW** roll, modified depending on plausibility of the request.

Or maybe it all turns out to be a zero-sum game — yes, they get their explosives, but at the cost of something else like the rocket launcher (since there was only so much the preachers could purloin or carry).

Trying to save Saoirse's life is perhaps the hardest thing to engineer. Yes, they can send messages keeping Saoirse on task and warning her to be careful in the parking lot of the rest stop, but in practice these don't do much. She actually was careful but was incinerated anyway — she was killed sacrificing herself in order to save Marshmallow from a Child of Melqart.

Warning her off from her task or changing it might actually result in her surviving, but Marshmallow/Muffin never getting to Jeanette, and hence to the Survivors. This creates problems, as described in the previous section.

Summoning of Melqart (or, Lullay, Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child)

Absent Survivor interference, the final destruction of the Earth begins as evening falls on the night after their arrival in the camp. Events will unfold as follows:

- First everyone in the camp is herded, with as much coercion as necessary, to the altar before the Washington Monument.

  The Survivors may notice that Sharam Abunassar, dressed in ceremonial robes, is likewise being forcefully herded by six Children of Melqart. Uncomfortably, he proclaims that the stars have again come right and that Melqart comes now. Most people in the camp go willingly, hypnotized in rapture.

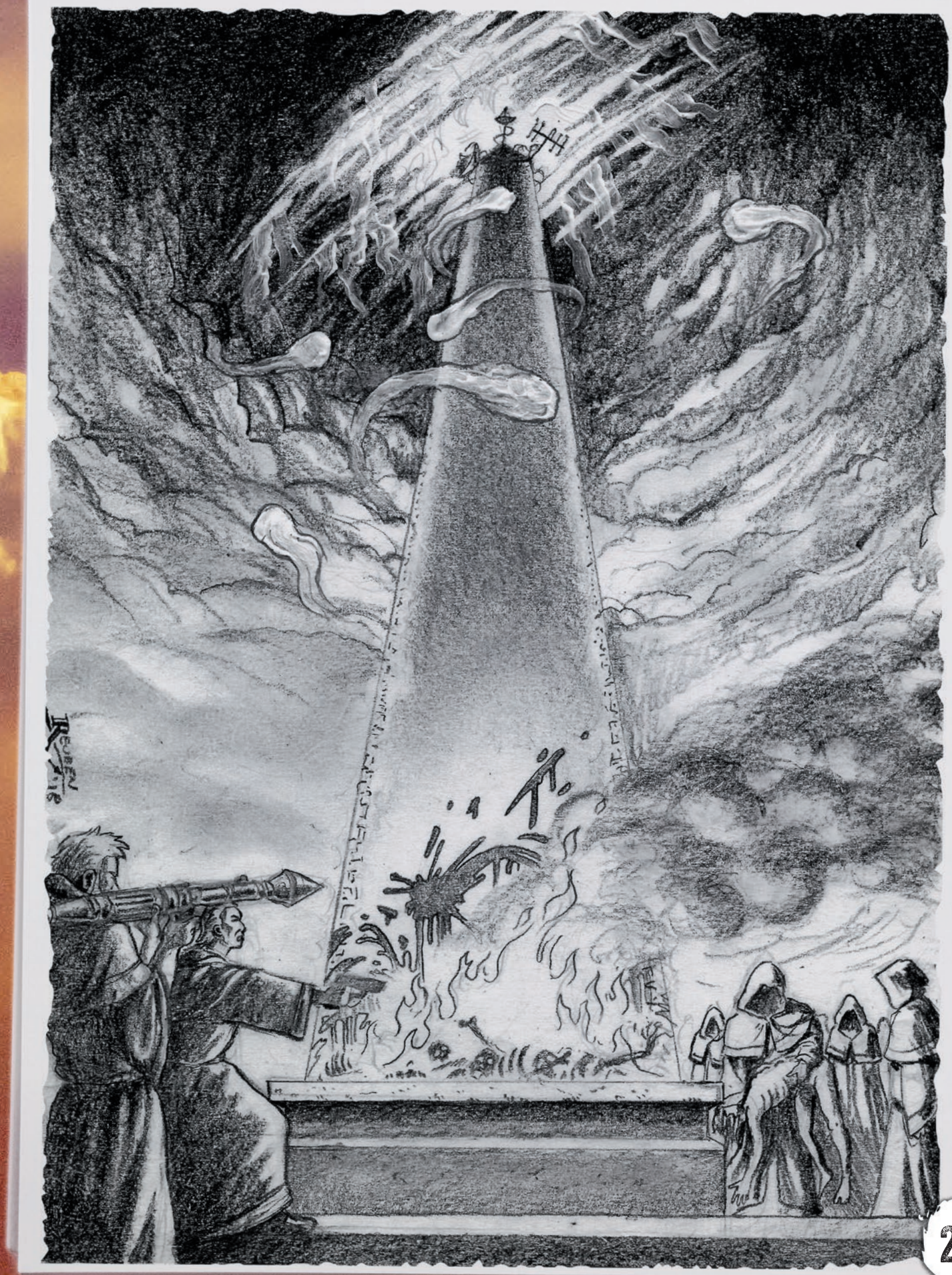
- Whoever is bearing the messiah falls into a trance and is escorted by six Children of Melqart up to the top of the Washington Monument, where an observation window is smashed out.

- All other pregnant women are hauled to the front of the assembled crowd, as dozens of Children of Melqart swarm and swirl, oscillating in anticipation.

- Each of the pregnant women except for the one carrying the messiah go into labor simultaneously and give birth in the space of a minute or two.

  Sharam Abunassar hesitantly begins a prayer to Melqart in ancient Phoenician. A successful **Unnatural** check, or familiarity with the spell from previous research, will inform the Survivors that Melqart itself is being Called to Earth.

- Once this process has started, only attacks with a Lethality rating can harm the messiah's chosen vessel.



Once things have reached this point, the rift above begins to churn, and great gouts of flame shoot out from it, immolating random attendees. SAN loss is 0/1D4.

The ceremony then turns bloody and extremely gruesome (gloss over any details you think may be triggering for your players):

- The psychologically disorganized portion of the cultists grab all babies (including those of any Abunassar daughters), taking them from their mothers or anyone else who tries to defend them. Children of Melqart attack in swarms to overcome anyone who resists. Several mothers and their friends are incinerated trying to save their offspring. SAN loss is 1/1D6.

- The crazed cultists then proceed to dash the infants against the pillars engraved on the Monument and throw the corpses on the altar, where a Child of Melqart lights them on fire.

- When his daughters' children's turn comes, Abunassar has had enough and futilely tries to stop them. This (much-belated) resistance is his last act — he is promptly stoned and beaten, brained against a pillar, then tossed on to the altar. SAN loss is 1/1D6. If the Survivors observe this, an **Alertness** test notes that some of the cultists seemed prepared for him to back out, as though it was planned all along. An **Occult** test reminds the Survivors that the priests of Ba'al were expected to harm themselves in the service of their god, and his failure to do so is blasphemy.

At this point, any dogs in the camp which are not physically restrained can now no longer contain themselves and make a move for the entrance to the Monument, where their fate is grisly absent Survivor action to save them. It turns out that a few dogs had been bravely lurking around the edges of camp, instinctively sensing that they needed to be there.

At the moment that Sharam Abunassar dies, the Children of Melqart fly up to the top of the Radio Tower, where the messiah is born in an explosion of reality rending, blood-colored fire, taking off the top of the Monument. The child — looking exactly like its mother, only nude and with fire for eyes and hair, screams in an inhumanly loud voice: "Jezebel!" (The Prince Is Coming)! The enraptured throng begins to chant along, survival instincts forgotten. SAN loss is 1/1D10.

Once things have reached this dire stage, the ritual has succeeded. The rift opens wider, Melqart pours through it, and the world is toast. SAN loss is 1D10/1D100 for anyone who miraculously survives for a short period of time.

Foiling the Summoning Ritual

Assuming that things have played out mostly according to script, the Survivors have two main options to disrupt the plans of Melqart.

ELIMINATING THE UNBORN MESSIAH

The Survivors can reconnoiter the camp with caution and pick out the heavily pregnant women. Any dogs will react with great alarm to the woman carrying Melqart's messiah. If they can identify her early, the Survivors can plan out an assassination attempt.

Note that the Children of Melqart react very quickly to threats against pregnant camp members, so a feint of some kind is useful to fix their attention. Of course, the 'Madonna' could be someone relatively innocent, prompting a moral debate about whether her murder is justified (not to mention SAN loss from inflicting violence, see page 79). And murdering her early does not prevent the Children of Melqart from still eradicating every human that they can reach, leaving little hope for humanity.

It does, however, stop the grand birth of the messiah thereby preventing the opening of the gate for Melqart to enter — so that's a partial win at least.

KILLING THE NEWBORN MESSIAH

If the Survivors can bear to stand by and watch the early parts of the ceremony – seeing numerous infants sacrificed against the Pillars of Melqart — they can attempt to destroy the messiah once it has manifest at the top of the Radio Tower. It is possible they have arranged to booby trap the top of the monument itself. Alternatively (depending on how they have handled messages to the past) they may still have a rocket launcher — a single rocket will make short work of the newborn messiah if it hits. By this point all the Children have ascended to dance around the messiah, so action at ground level will not be met with resistance.

Killing the messiah in this way strikes a huge blow against Melqart. As the messiah falls, dashed against the altar on one bounce on the way down, any remaining dogs rush forward to savage the smoldering remains. The bulk of the Children of Melqart flee into the rift, their plans foiled.

Preventing the arrival of Melqart (via whatever means) gains those Survivors who walk away alive **2D6 SAN.**

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN THE FIRELANDS?

If the Survivors succeed, the Earth will slowly begin to rebound thanks to the rift above the Washington Monument acting as a chimney to draw off the smoke of a burned world. Children and cultists of Melqart will continue to plot, and they will try to replay their messianic prophecy elsewhere, kidnapping women as needed and seeking to recapture the D.C. habitable zone to further their plans.

Someone may try to seal the rift permanently so that Melqart cannot be easily summoned through it. This will require a trek across the burned-out Earth to find and excavate a library that contains an appropriate Mythos tome.

Most dangerously, a well-intentioned person might get at, or recreate, the Radio Tower, thinking to prevent the destruction of the Earth in the first place, and not leave bad enough alone. Maybe someone will even mess with time to undo all the good work the Survivors have achieved ...

STATISTICS

The main threats Survivors are likely to face as they journey to D.C. are Children of Melqart and crazed cultists. If GMs wish to mix things up further, they can add in encounters with Scorchers (creatures unique to this setting described in **SAMPLE APOCALYPSE 4**, see page 138).

CHILDREN OF MELQART, LORD OF THE CITY

Glowing little balls of floating fire, shifting colors constantly, beautiful to look at, that move with obvious intelligence and purpose. They are completely alien and ruthless, but generally stick to following whatever instructions they are given. They are about as smart as a below-average human, and hence can be tricked or distracted.

About the size of a grapefruit, a Child of Melqart can fit through appropriately sized openings. They think nothing of burning down buildings to create sufficient openings.

They move as fast as a human, but they fly and do not tire. Eventually, one will run a fleeing human down unless he or she manages to break line of sight and escape with a successful Stealth check. They have no senses other than their equivalent of vision (including perfect sight in the dark) but they see in 360 degrees. They communicate with one another by fluctuating their colors.

STR N/A **CON** 07 **DEX** 16 **INT** 09 **POW** 13
HP 04 **WP** 13

Armor: The Children take no damage from most physical attacks (but see Weaknesses below). Enchanted weapons may have effect at your discretion.

Skills: Alertness 30%, Stealth in Daylight 90%, Stealth at Night 10%.

Combat: Combat 85% when attacking/40% when defending. Damage 2D6 (fiery touch, see below)

FIERY TOUCH: The touch of a Child of Melqart causes extreme burns, but a successful **CON** test halves the damage. They can set immobile, flammable targets alight by touch, and enjoy doing so to the clothing of unconscious humans who have crossed them.

WEAKNESS: A bucket of water, blast from a fire extinguisher, trapping them in an airless room, or similar things that might put out a blaze do 2D6 damage to a Child. Scale the damage up or down depending on the size of the 'weapon'; turning a fire hose on a group of them works wonders.

SAN Loss: 0/1D6 to see a Child of Melqart.

CRAZED CULTISTS OF MELQART, LORD OF THE CITY

The typical crazed cultist of Melqart is seriously deranged, although right now, they are mostly in their 'happy places'. They think that they have won and are eager for what comes next. They are arsonists and pyromaniacs, with a sideline in burning themselves to get closer to Melqart; the priests of Ba'al of old burned and slashed themselves to prove their devotion. They are usually covered with scars, cuts and burns, and have often just flat burned off one of more body parts.

This subset makes up the vast bulk of the cultists running around nowadays. They are loners and do not play well with others, and if given half a chance, they will sacrifice children by braining them on a pillar and burning them on an altar to Ba'al. They always have a way of starting a fire hidden on themselves, but beyond that, they are so discombobulated that they rely on biting, punching, kicking, strangling and maybe a makeshift club.

Also, they hate the Judeo-Christian godhead, and need little provocation to try and kill anyone demonstrating any faith in their enemy religion.

STR 12 **CON** 10 **DEX** 11 **INT** 10 **POW** 13 **CHA** 04
HP 11 **DB** 0 **WP** 13 **SAN** 0

Skills: Get Distracted by Fire 50%, Hate Monotheists 99%, Occult 10%, Start Fire Unexpectedly 50%, Survival 20%, Unnatural 1%.

Mental Disorders: Pyromania, Self-Mutilation Compulsion, Infanticidal Impulses.

PRE-GENERATED SURVIVORS

The following pre-generated Survivors are provided for use with this scenario. If you don't wish to use them, you can easily create new Survivors using the main ***APOCTHULHU*** rules and the specific notes included at the start of this scenario.

Note that it is quite important that ***at least one*** Survivor being played in the group has some prior relationship to Saoirse Sullivan. In the set listed below Seth and Esther fulfill that criterion — if none of the players picks such a character, find some way to add a connection (and an individual Bond) to one or two of the chosen/generated Survivors.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS, NERDY COLLEGE GRAD, AGED 22

A recent college graduate (barely) with a bachelor's degree in hotel management (because those are the classes that you got *Bs* in, instead of *Ds*), you are socially awkward and immature. Before the Apocalypse, you bumbled through life on your parents' money, drinking and wallowing in an extended adolescence. You had no enemies but no real friends, either, and were living in your parents' basement after graduation while interning at a local franchise motel. You spent a lot of time playing video games and on the Internet. The bunker was just your latest basement cave, in a way. You found the Melqart meme through a Facebook group and joined because it sounded like something fun.

STR 14 **CON** 11 **DEX** 11 **INT** 11 **POW** 11 **CHA** 10
HP 12 **DB** +1 **WP** 11 **SAN** 44 **BP** 33

Skills: Alertness 60%, Anthropology 40%, Craft (Cooking) 50%, History 50%, Insight 30%, Law (Pre-Apocalypse America) 40%, Melee Weapons 70%, Occult 45%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 40%, Reassure 50%, Research 50%, Scavenge 50%, Science (Engineering) 40%, Stealth 30%, Survival (Wasteland) 40%, Technology Use 60%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 7

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6+2 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 9*
- *Epsilon Rho Lambda fraternity (community) 1*
- *Chris R (individual, college fraternity brother) 10*
- *Sam (individual, romantic entanglement) 10*
- *Mom & Dad (individual) 10*

ELIJAH BRADDOCK, CONSPIRACY THEORIST, AGED 55

You were the second banana on a weekly conspiracy theory podcast with a modest following: a libertarian expounder of states' rights, the Second Amendment and the looming threat of every level of government. You believe in everything from Roswell aliens, to 9/11 being faked, to the Gnomes of Zurich. You were convinced that the Melqart meme was some kind of secret, Illuminated plan to prepare a chosen few for a Post-Apocalyptic world, so you decided to infiltrate it. You were right, but were not prepared for the fact that so many others were dupes as well. You have a driving need to know "why" about everything.

STR 12 **CON** 10 **DEX** 08 **INT** 14 **POW** 13 **CHA** 12
HP 11 **DB** 0 **WP** 13 **SAN** 52 **BP** 39

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Art (Voice Acting) 30%, Craft (Mechanic) 60%, Demolitions 20%, Dodge 50%, History 50%, Insight 50%, Occult 55%, Persuade 40%, Research 60%, Science (Engineering) 50%, Search 50%, Survival (Wasteland) 40%, Technology Use 60%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 5

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6+1 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 3*
- *Conspiracy Theorists Alliance (community) 10*
- *Zapruder (individual, former pet dog) 12*

NOAH FISHER, WAR VETERAN, AGED 65

You are a decrepit, broken-down Vietnam veteran. You were in bad shape before all of this Melqart business started, in and out of mental hospitals, chronically ill, on and off the streets. You saw things — horrible things that you have mostly blocked out — in 'Nam, and something about what was happening left you very agitated. You stole the money for the Devotion Kit from a liquor store, cleaned yourself up, and started going to meetings with the lonely kids and New Age weirdos. To you, this all seems like a giant set up; things are too pat, too convenient, and no one is to be trusted.

STR 08 **CON** 10 **DEX** 09 **INT** 10 **POW** 08 **CHA** 06
HP 09 **DB** −1 **WP** 08 **SAN** 32 **BP** 24

Skills: Athletics 50%, Demolitions 40%, Disguise 30%, Drive 40%, Firearms 60%, First Aid 40%, Heavy Weapons 40%, Insight 50%, Law (Pre-Apocalypse America) 30%, Occult 15%, Melee Weapons 50%, Military Science 80%, Navigate 50%, Persuade 40%, Scavenge 80%, Survival (Wasteland) 60%, Technology Use 40%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 4

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 9*
- *'Crazy' Sampson (individual, fellow vet and barhound) 6*
- *Delilah (individual, waitress at diner) 6*

SETH CRABTREE, JR., SAOIRSE'S (MAYBE) BOYFRIEND, AGED 20

For you, it was all about Saoirse, the pretty girl who kept turning up at your college hockey games. She was weird, with all of the New Age crystals and goddesses and 'witchcraft' and crap, but she was so sweet and so pretty. Even her stupid little dog Marshmallow liked you. You started dating her right around the time that the whole Melqart nonsense was getting started, and only went to the End of the World party with her because you two were really starting to get serious. You got separated from Saoirse on the way to the bomb shelter that she told you to head for, in case "something bad happened." For some reason she didn't answer your texts or calls; maybe they never got through. Who knows? You are determined to find out what happened to Saoirse, as well as your dad. Sitting around here is not going to get anything done.

STR 16 **CON** 14 **DEX** 16 **INT** 13 **POW** 13 **CHA** 14
HP 15 **DB** +1 **WP** 13 **SAN** 52 **BP** 39

Skills: Athletics 70%, Craft (Ice Hockey) 50%, Firearms 40%, Foreign Language (French) 40%, History 50%, Insight 50%, Occult 15%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 40%, Reassure 50%, Research 50%, Scavenge 50%, Science (Chemistry) 40%, Stealth 30%, Survival (Wasteland) 20%, Technology Use 60%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 7

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6+1 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 13*
- *French Club (community) 1*
- *College Hockey Team (community) 4*
- *Saoirse Sullivan (individual) 17*
- *Dad (individual) 11*

ESTHER "LITA" PRICE, SAOIRSE'S COLLEGE ROOMMATE, AGED 21

You were Saoirse's college roommate. You are quite smart but also quite combative. You don't like people in general, unless they belong to an 'under-privileged' social group, in which case, they — like you — are oppressed. You espouse the entire range of far-left views and ideologies and are quickly hostile and verbally abusive to anyone who disagrees with you. You worked part-time as a crisis center counselor and social organizer for left-wing causes. If anything, the stress of most of humanity being burned to a crisp has made you more hostile, not less. You got along reasonably well with Saoirse, whose interest in the polytheistic Melqart religion (where the goddess Ashtoreth was co-equal) appealed to you. As time went on, though, you grew to dislike the Melqart meme because, really, the goddess should have been pre-eminent.

STR 10 **CON** 12 **DEX** 13 **INT** 17 **POW** 12 **CHA** 07
HP 11 **DB** 0 **WP** 12 **SAN** 48 **BP** 36

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Craft (Organic Farming) 50%, Disguise 50%, First Aid 30%, History 50%, Insight 50%, Law (Pre-Apocalypse America) 40%, Melee Weapons 50%, Navigate 30%, Occult 45%, Persuade 60%, Research 50%, Reassure 50%, Scavenge 50%, Science (Cryptography) 40%, Stealth 30%, Survival (Wasteland) 20%, Technology Use 60%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 9

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6+1 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 5*
- *#TruthMatters Facebook group (community) 5*
- *Underground Environmental Radical group (community) 5*
- *Saoirse Sullivan (individual) 8*
- *Asher (individual, government inside informant and sometimes romantic interest) 6*

JUDITH DRAKE, GROWN-UP LARPER NERD, AGED 27

You worked as a bank teller, lived alone, and volunteered as an animal rights activist before the Apocalypse. The rest of your spare time — every weekend without fail – was spent in every sort of make-believe, from LARPing to furry conventions to SCA encampments. The worship of Melqart was just one more role-playing exercise for you. You are timid in real life but launch wholeheartedly into your many characters. You have lost a great deal of weight in the past year of being cooped up in a bomb shelter.

STR 10 **CON** 12 **DEX** 11 **INT** 12 **POW** 12 **CHA** 11
HP 11 **DB** 0 **WP** 12 **SAN** 48 **BP** 36

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Appraise 30%, Art (Acting) 50%, Art (Costuming) 30%, Disguise 50%, Dodge 50%, First Aid 30%, Foreign Language (Latin) 40%, History 50%, Insight 50%, Melee Weapons 70%, Occult 15%, Persuade 40%, Reassure 50%, Research 60%, Search 50%, Survival (Wasteland) 20%, Technology Use 60%, Unnatural 20%.

Permanent Resources: 10

Gear: *.38 caliber revolver: 1D8 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity, 18 rounds available.*

KBAR fighting knife: 1D6+1 damage, pierces 3 points of armor.

Trail bike, oddly appropriately sized

Mental Disorders: PTSD (Hypervigilance).

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 2 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Bunker Mates (community) 10*
- *Galadriel (individual, pet dog) 11*
- *Sanjeet (individual, head of local SCA guild) 11*

HANDOUTS

The following pages contain versions of the scenario handouts suitable for players. Game Moderator (text-only) versions of **Handout #3–6** may be found on page 209, page 216, page page 217, and page 219 respectively.

Handout #1: What Happened In The Last Months of Human History?

A year ago, the world burned. You know – you were there on the night that the living balls of flame descended from the sky to indiscriminately kill and destroy.

Everyone on that night seemed so shocked and surprised. But with hindsight, it's obvious now that the signs were there for months leading up to that terrible moment. It all had to do with that fringe religion — or maybe it'd be more accurately called a 'cult' — going by the name of the "Church of Melqart, Lord of the City."

Where the Church came from, nobody really knew. They just burst onto the world stage – starting with the Internet, but soon after on sensational TV media as well – a few months before the world burned. The Church seemed to have a lot of money behind it, at least judging from the amount of advertising — print, TV, radio, and TV — that they bought up. Their message was a hackneyed one used by many doomsday cults before them: "the end of the world is nigh — the wisdom of Melqart is your only chance of surviving the imminent day of purification by flame."

The Chicken Nuggets Incident

In the jaded Internet age, such messages of (literal) "fire and brimstone" were resoundingly ridiculed. Massive threads on social media and anonymous-inflammatory web forums soon emerged, parodying the Church of Melqart and poking fun at their Old-Testament sensibilities. Things really took off when a tabloid news organization — the Global News Service — tracked down the head of the Melqart 'religion', ambush interviewing him in the parking lot of a Washington, D.C., fast food chicken restaurant. Staring straight down the barrel, the "High Priest of Melqart" (one Sharam Abunassar) told the world "Melqart wants you to be saved, not deep fried like these nuggets!" This absurd sound-bite took off, launching more than a dozen mocking memes in the first day. They were tweeted, shared, and amplified around the world. All of them accompanied by parodies of one pathetic image: Abunassar fleeing down the street shielding his face with a fast food bag and spitting curses of fiery doom at the throng of paparazzi chasing him.

It was a circus and the High Priest of Melqart was its public face. This was how a lot of people first heard of the Church. For some reason, people thought that the Church of Melqart was funny. Some even started looking at their website and reading their messages and predictions. For a few lonely and eccentric people – including you – these messages offered a promise of belonging that was otherwise missing in their lives.

Tonight With Sung-Kuiper

After its trashing of the Church of Melqart — achieving record TV ratings — one of the cable networks that screened the GNS footage invited Sharam Abunassar in for a sit-down interview. It was with Sandra Sung-Kuiper, host of one of the network's prime time current affairs shows. It was, of course, a set-up but the acerbic host had the good grace to let Abunassar describe the tenets of his belief before roasting him with surprise theological experts and phone-in ignoramuses. It was from this 'interview' that most of the public knowledge about the Church of Melqart's beliefs entered common parlance.

You remember the interview well — in it Abunassar attempts to describe his group's veneration of the ancient Phoenician god Melqart, also called the Ba'al of Tyre. At the same time the on-screen experts relentless lambasted him. The latter group brought up ancient tales of human sacrifice, prophecies of a year of fiery purging, and the coming of a messiah. Abunassar sat there like a deer in the headlights. The TV audience lapped it up.

Church Merch

The sensationalist media attention led to even more Internet derision and, as is often the case, some contrarian behavior as well. Melqart (including stuffed and cartoon versions) began to show up everywhere. He even became featured as a particularly weak end-boss in a video game.

Then some gonzo outfit out of Las Vegas, R. Patel Productions, took the fad to the next level. Its "Official Guide to the Church of Melqart" portrayed Melqart as an ancient, legitimate faith centered around community, faith and fire as a cleansing force. For only $16.66, one could get this rather well-written guide to the practices of Melqart. It denied the human sacrifice claims as "a vicious rumor spread by early monotheists" but did not shy away from some other tenets of the faith, including the "year of fire" — starting very soon — and the birth of a messiah. Their

Handout #1 (cont'd)

tenets also included burnt offerings, the need for absolute devotion, the importance of its priests being willing to suffer physical abuse, and the "symbolism of fire as both destroyer and renewer, life and death." The Official Guide was available from the "unofficial official" website (churchofmelqart.com), and soon became available on Amazon.

For whatever reason you bought the Official Guide, even if you didn't completely believe its message that the world was literally about to be purged by fire. Like, in the coming months. Not only did you buy the book, but you forked out the $999.99 "faith pledge" to purchase the whole "Devotion Kit" complete with tickets to an official "End of the World" party and a guaranteed spot in one of the Church bomb shelters. Who knows why you bought into this much-ridiculed fad: maybe you were lonely, maybe you were trying to impress a romantic partner, maybe you were a New Age or occult dabbler?

The Purification Rite

The Devotion Kit included, along with a plushie Melqart (a ball of yellow fuzz with eyeballs all over it and a whimsical expression), a (mostly) harmless "Purification Rite." The booklet clearly warned that the Purification Rite needed to be performed by the Faithful of Melqart if they wished to be welcomed in the prophesied New World, once the Lord of the City "cleared The Earth With His Holy Fire" and blessed a mortal with carrying his messiah. (Even then, it cautioned that to survive, the faithful should secure themselves in a proper bomb shelter once the Great Clearing for the Year of Fire began). The Purification Rite called for an offering of human blood to a bonfire on a clear, starry night in the fall, when the star Aldebaran was high.

You performed the rite, maybe as a joke or maybe half-believing it might save you. It wasn't as bad as it sounded, since the rite allowed for blood 'liberated' from a blood bank rather than freshly spilled. When you carried out the ceremony, nothing much seemed to happen — so you pretty much forgot about it until the day when the Official Guide said the purging fire would descend.

[Continued on Handout #2]

Handout #4: All About Jezebel

The three Baptist preachers know the following information about Melqart and its relationship with Elijah and "Jezebel" as related in the Old Testament:

"Melqart is an alternate name for the old Phoenician god called the Ba'al of Tyre mentioned in the Old Testament. The heart of the story of Ba'al in the Bible is the story of Elijah and Jezebel. Jezebel, most Biblical scholars agree, was likely a real person, but that was likely not her real name. Jezebel means "Where is the Prince?" in Phoenician, and this was the cry that worshipers of the Ba'al of Tyre, Melqart, would use to try to summon his fire.

"The woman that the Bible calls Jezebel was a princess of Tyre who married Ahab, the King of the northern kingdom of Israel. This offended the prophet Elijah, because she did not worship the God of Israel, but rather Melqart and Melqart's female consort, Ashtoreth. Worse, the Queen brought the worship of the two gods to Ahab's court, and carried on Melqart's idolatry openly. It was not unusual in that era for religions to migrate in this way, and for incumbent religions to resist, but for some reason that the Bible does not delve into, Jezebel especially infuriated Elijah. Elijah set out to destroy both her and Melqart, both physically and by reputation.

"The priests of Ba'al were initially humiliated by Elijah when, despite sacrificing their own blood, they could not call down fire, while he easily did. That public humiliation ordinarily would have been enough to drive the worship of Melqart from Israel, but God was not satisfied. Jezebel was the Queen and had tried to set up Melqart as the state religion. Moreover, as Queen, she was also High Priestess of Ashtoreth, Melqart's consort.

"Elijah would have been expected to denounce Jezebel and call upon her to repent, but his prophecies about her castigated her as impure, and unflinchingly called out the means of her death: cast down from a high tower and devoured by dogs in the street. According to the Bible, that is exactly how she died, in the wake of a palace coup following Ahab's death."

Handout #2: The Night of Fire, Version A – Friends of Saoirse

On the night of the predicted firestorm, you were at one of the official "End of the World" parties. You were there with your good friend Saoirse Sullivan (Saoirse is pronounced a bit like Ser-sha, rhyming with inertia). Actually, it was her that got you into the whole Melqart thing in the first place. She was a 20-year-old exchange student from Ireland whom you had met when the whole Church of Melqart silliness began a few months earlier. Saoirse was into New Age and all the associated 'witchcraft' stuff, so of course she bought into the whole Melqart religious frenzy in a syncretic kind of way. In fact, it might well have been her enthusiasm that got you to consider performing the purification rite (or helping out while she performed it).

The "End of the World" party was all a bit underwhelming at first. But then, after dark the clouds cleared, and the stars came out. What you saw next is permanently etched on your mind. Everything — the whole sky — was on fire, everywhere, all at once. Millions of tiny, dancing stars, matching the description in the Church's 'Official Guide' of the "Children of Melqart" — the "Ba'al's angels and emissaries" — fell from the night sky in a dense, hour-long shower. They were beautiful, angelic balls of shifting light and color … until they started burning almost everyone and everything in sight. According to the tsunami of tweets and Facebook updates that quickly followed, the same miracle turned horror was being witnessed everywhere on Earth.

The sentient balls of flame swarmed into the "End of the World" party — some people they attacked, others they ignored. You were among the latter group; you'd like to think it was down to the 'Purification Rite' you performed but who really knows? Faced with imminent immolation you did the only sensible thing you could do … flee. Hardly anyone else made it out with you, but your friend Saoirse was among the lucky ones.

When you were out in the street, you could see that the same carnage was occurring there. What happened next is muddled and confused in your mind. You remember talking with a few others who had escaped the party — Saoirse mentioned the Church of Melqart bomb shelters. You realized suddenly that everything that had happened was just what they had predicted … and their 'Official Guide' had a list of the locations of pre-prepared survival shelters. Not only that, it clearly spelled out that the only people who would survive the "Great Cleansing" were those in the shelters. So, you decided to try to make it to one. Saoirse said she'd come with you.

That's when something weird happened. Just as you were all running down an alley on your way out of the city Saoirse, who was lagging behind the rest of the group, suddenly stopped and pulled out her cell phone. It was as though she had received a message or something. She looked up at you from 50 yards away, a look of sheer confusion on her face and nodded strangely. She ran off in a completely different direction, pausing only for a moment to kick a garbage can and look back at you knowingly. You tried to follow her, but the chaos of the crowd meant she was soon lost in the panicked mass of humanity. You tried to call and text her, but never got a response.

You never saw Saoirse again. You do not know what became of her, but it's safe to assume that when the Church of Melqart, Lord of the City said that even the faithful would need to take shelter when the Earth was cleared, they meant it. The sound of the trash can that Saoirse kicked as she fumbled with her phone in the chaos still gives you nightmares.

After being parted from your friend, the remainder of the trip through the burning ruins of the city was harrowing. Not everyone who was with you made it all the way — some succumbed to burns and smoke inhalation, others became victims of the fire-ball things. Eventually you managed to make it to the place described in the 'Official Guide' — an underground bomb shelter, five miles outside of the city. The 'Guide' told you how to access the shelter: inside you found that provisions had been prepared: food, water, and even a manually crank-powered CB Radio.

The shelter has been your home for the past year. The Devotion Kit told you what to do, how to seal the place up a couple of hours after the Apocalypse had started. It also told you to stay in the shelter at all costs, until the 'all-clear signal' was broadcast on the CB to tell everyone that it was safe to leave. If anyone died while you were in the shelter, it said, put them outside (but remember to tag them first for identification purposes).

Life has been pretty boring for the past twelve months, stuck in a single room with a half-dozen or so other folks who had likewise bought the Melqart Devotion Kit. There has been tension; there has been friction. But everyone has found a way to live together, despite the total lack of privacy. A few times brave or foolhardy people have suggested leaving the bunker, but such plans have evaporated quickly as soon as the door to the outside world was unlatched. In the first few months, flames still raged in the world beyond; then it was a wasteland of ashes; then a smoke-shrouded wilderland. None of the glimpses of the world-at-large made anyone want to leave the shelter's safety.

It seemed for a long time as though you would just die here in the shelter. Despite the CB Radio being cranked every day (as the 'Guide' instructed) there was never any signal, just static. Until today that is … perhaps today is the day when things fall into place

Handout #2: The Night of Fire, Version B – General Survivors

On the night of the predicted firestorm, you were at one of the official "End of the World" parties. The crowd was made up of a weird collection of oddballs, conspiracy theorists, and New Age wackos. You felt a bit out of place.

It was all a bit underwhelming at first. But then, after dark the clouds cleared, and the stars came out. What you saw next is permanently etched on your mind. Everything — the whole sky — was on fire, everywhere, all at once. Millions of tiny, dancing stars, matching the description in the Official Guide of the "Children of Melqart" — the Ba'al's angels and emissaries — fell from the night sky in a dense, hour-long shower. They were beautiful, angelic balls of shifting light and color … until they started burning almost everyone and everything in sight. According to the tsunami of tweets and Facebook updates that quickly followed, the same miracle turned horror was being witnessed everywhere on Earth.

The sentient balls of flame swarmed into the "End of the World" party — some people they attacked, others they ignored. You were among the latter group; you'd like to think it was down to the 'Purification Rite' you performed but who really knows? Faced with imminent immolation you did the only sensible thing you could do … flee.

When you were out in the street, you could see that the same carnage was occurring there. What happened next is muddled and confused in your mind. You remember talking with a few others who had escaped the party — someone mentioned the Church of Melqart bomb shelters. You realized suddenly that everything that had happened was just what they had predicted … and their 'Official Guide' had a list of the locations of pre-prepared survival shelters. Not only that, it clearly spelled out that the only people who would survive the "Great Cleansing" were those in the shelters. So, you decided to try to make it to one.

The trip through the burning ruins of the city, dodging people being burned to ashes by the flame balls, was harrowing. Not everyone who was with you made it all the way — some succumbed to burns and smoke inhalation, others became victims of the fire things. Eventually you managed to make it to the place described in the 'Official Guide' – an underground bomb shelter, five miles outside of the city. The 'Guide' told you how to access the shelter: inside you found that provisions had been prepared: food, water, and even a manually crank-powered CB Radio.

The shelter has been your home for the past year. The Devotion Kit told you what to do, how to seal the place up a couple of hours after the Apocalypse had started. It also told you to stay in the shelter at all costs, until the 'all-clear signal' was broadcast on the CB to tell everyone that it was safe to leave. If anyone died while you were in the shelter, it said, put them outside (but remember to tag them first for identification purposes).

Life has been pretty boring for the past twelve months, stuck in a single room with a half-dozen or so other folks who had likewise bought the Melqart Devotion Kit. There has been tension; there has been friction. But everyone has found a way to live together, despite the total lack of privacy. A few times brave or foolhardy people have suggested leaving the bunker, but such plans have evaporated quickly as soon as the door to the outside world was unlatched. In the first few months, flames still raged in the world beyond; then it was a wasteland of ashes; then a smoke-shrouded wilderland. None of the glimpses of the world-at-large made anyone want to leave the shelter's safety.

It seemed for a long time as though you would just die here in the shelter. Despite the CB Radio being cranked every day (as the 'Guide' instructed) there was never any signal, just static. Until today that is … perhaps today is the day when things fall into place.

Handout #3: Voicemail From The Future?

Um, hi. This is Jeanette. If you're receiving this, you haven't met me yet, and when you do, I won't remember this, because it won't have happened yet.

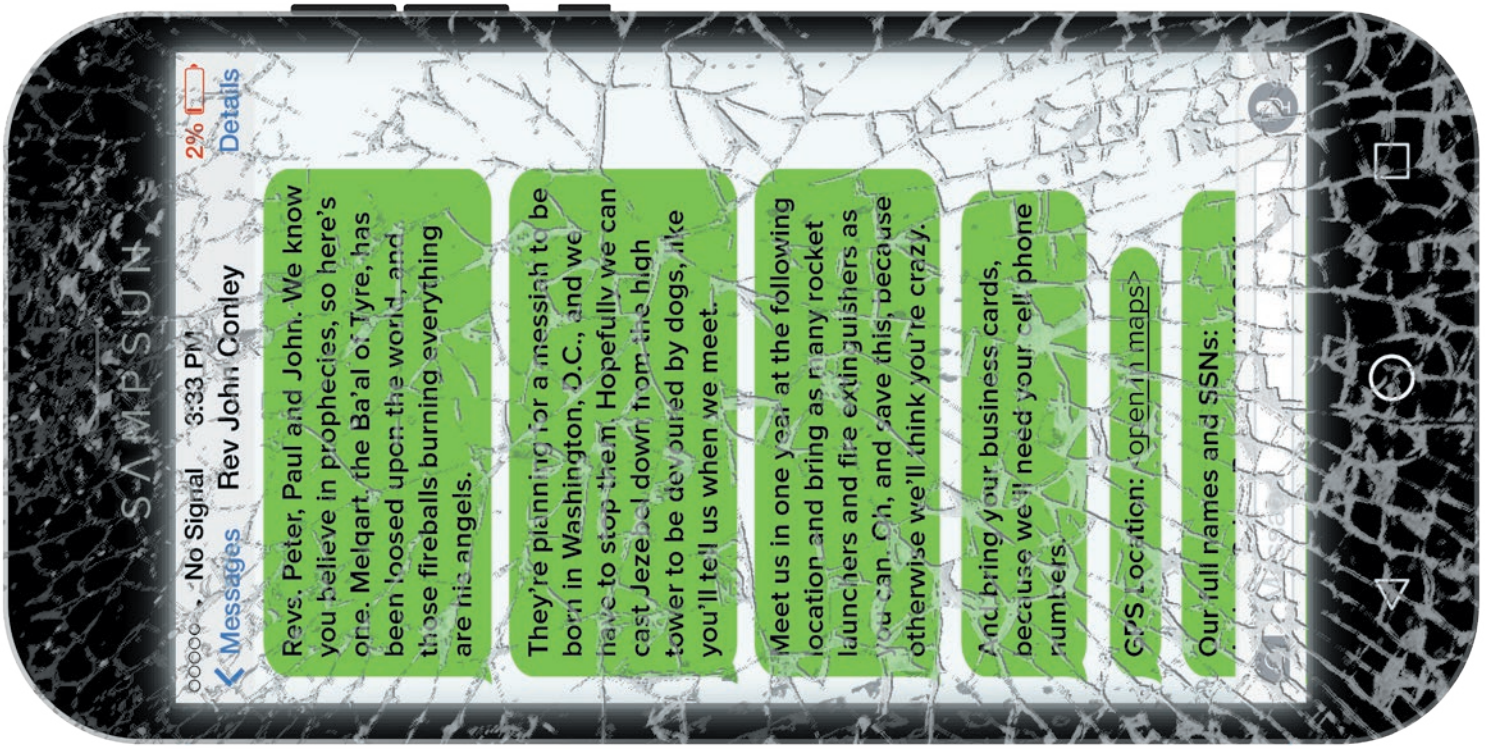
Um, you guys told me to tell you exactly what you remembered that I said, because that was important, which was that these guys have a Radio Tower and it can sometimes send messages back in time because of um, some science stuff, and you should pay attention because that's how prophecies work, self-fulfillment.

Also, you told me to remind you that the lady with the funny name drives a red car. I think you called it a 'terzel' or something.

I guess this is where I get cut off....

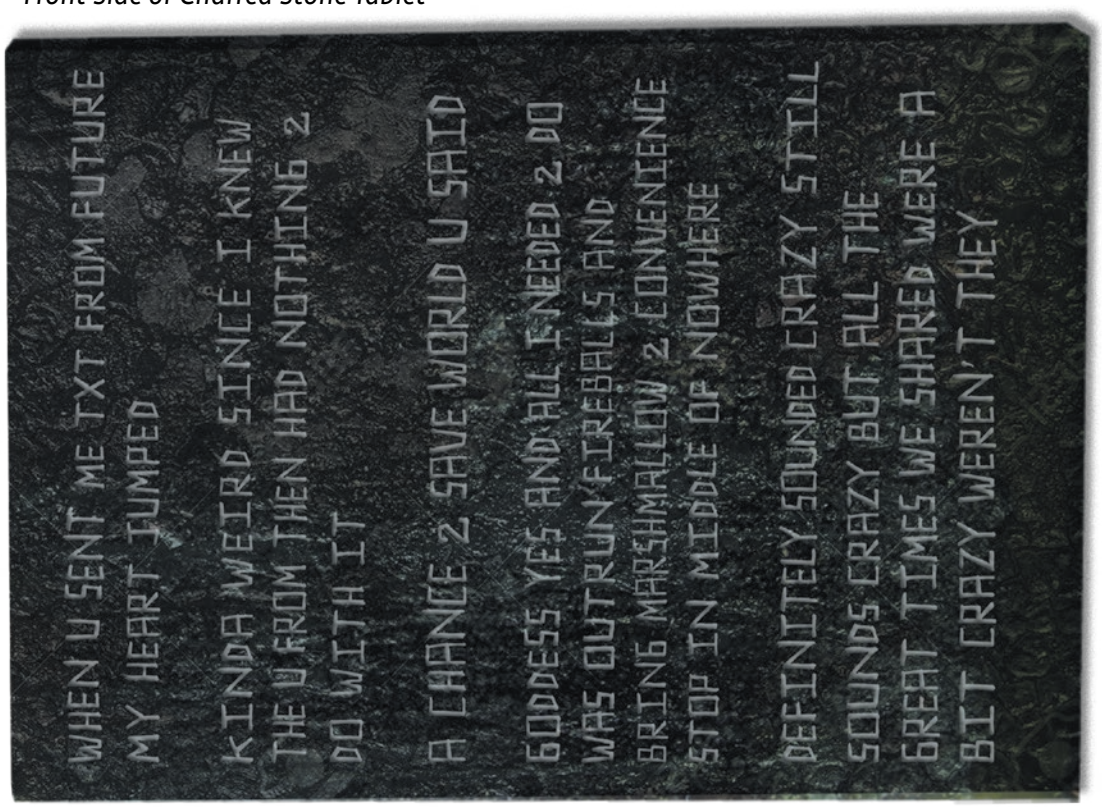
(Message abruptly ends).

Handout #5: A Text From The Future?

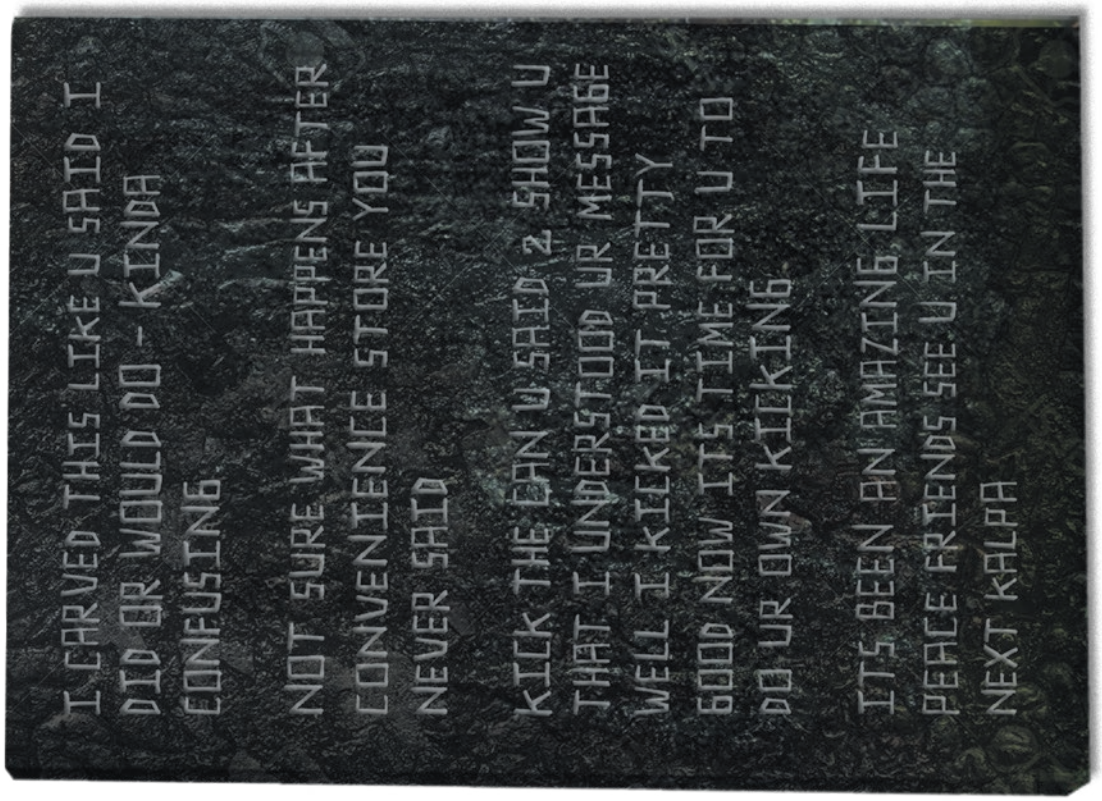


Handout #6: Saoirse's Carved Message

Front Side of Charred Stone Tablet



Reverse Side of Charred Stone Tablet



SCENARIO: A YELLOW AND UNPLEASANT LAND

BY JO KREIL (VIGNETTES & BOXED TEXT BY DEAN ENGELHARDT)

INTRODUCTION

A Yellow and Unpleasant Land is an ***APOCTHULHU*** scenario set in a Post-Apocalyptic version of 1890s England, in which the morally corrupting forces of the King in Yellow have overthrown the cultured and conservative Victorian Age. The scenario begins in London, the heart of the Libertine King's Britain and sets the Survivors on a quest that will take them to southwest England in search of an ancient force that may ... just may ... have the power to dethrone the otherworldly usurper and restore Britain.

HOW THE WORLD "ENDED" (IN DECADENCE)

The year is 1893, and the world — and Great Britain in particular — has suffered a terrible calamity. Not a disaster of physical destruction, but rather a 'moral Apocalypse', created by the arrival of the alien entity called The King in Yellow and his assumption to the throne. Queen Victoria, who had ruled for 53 years (and in our reality would rule another 8) is gone. So too is the moral conservatism that was the hallmark of her age. In its place is the mandated libertinism of the new and alien King.

The Apocalypse did not happen overnight, but once it was started it picked up momentum progressively and subsumed social institutions so fast that many did not recognize the changes for what they were. It all began with an art movement — Yellowism — that came to England from France, extolling a philosophy of hedonism, freedom, and nihilism. These messages resonated with several different classes — aesthetes, disaffected workers, and others. As an idea, Yellowism was both subversive and fast to spread.

The very identity of the new art movement and its philosophies were rooted in the color yellow. In common Victorian symbology, yellow was associated with corruption and decadence. Yellow banners, yellow scarves, and even yellow face masks became symbols of this new movement.

Perhaps the greatest single work of art to emerge from the school of Yellowism was a play called *The King in Yellow.* Performed first in Paris, it soon gained popularity in London, and eventually in the rest of Europe as well. In England the first performances were in the lowliest of venues, but quickly the popularity of the piece led to it being performed in large and highly esteemed theaters as well. The play had a curious effect on its audience, opening their minds to the ideas of Yellowism. Several countries attempted to ban performances of the play, but they were unsuccessful. The play spread

Trigger Warnings, Sensitivity, and the 'X' Card

This scenario presents a world in which mankind's different desires — both artistic and base — have been allowed free reign. The King in Yellow is the personification of any kind of sensate debauchery humanity has ever invented. When depicting a world under his influence, some of the details — in particular, actions of people against other people — may stray into sensitive areas. We strongly urge Game Moderators to have a conversation with the gaming group before play begins to set a general tone for how licentious, violent, or distasteful subjects should be described.

It's not about leaving objectionable topics out of the world — that would be to rob it of what makes it unique — but rather to set expectations about how luridly-detailed or sparingly-sketched such depictions should be. Agreeing this up front avoids the potential for uncomfortable situations later.

We also suggest using the 'X-Card' invented by John Stavropoulos (http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg shared under a Creative Common license) as a tool for ensuring that players can halt narrative depictions — or actual scenes in the game — that are veering into areas they find personally confronting. The 'X-Card' can be invoked by anyone at any time, with no explanation needed, and all players agree to stop whatever is being described/discussed and move the game onwards in a different direction.

like wildfire, bringing corruption in its wake. Those who saw it were touched by the King in Yellow and changed as they realized the futility of their lives, the importance of decadence, and the meaningless of society's rules.

More and more people began to drop their moral objections to the ideas expounded by Yellowism, and eventually to embrace them openly. Newspaper headlines were filled with outraged opinion pieces written by establishment figures who saw their grip on the moral fabric of the British people rapidly slipping away.

The Downfall of Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria, always a monarch in touch with her people, became curious about Yellowism and the play. Seeking to understand both she called for a Royal Command performance of *The King in Yellow* be staged in Buckingham Palace for her private viewing. A theater group known for being proponents of Yellowism came forward and offered their services in putting on a performance of the play "the like of which the Empire had never seen". They were right.

The afternoon performance was carried out within the privacy of the palace. None who were present have been seen since that day, so an exact account of what transpired does not exist. All anyone knows is that a strange and sickly yellow light could be seen emerging from within the building. Buckingham Palace seemed to morph and transform under this peculiar illumination. To the amazement of the watching crowds outside the gates, the building was remodeled into a large and grand-spired castle. A grand Gothic behemoth unlike anything that had ever stood on British soil. The palace had been converted into a symbol of decadence, with hideous gargoyles and lusty maidens carved into its sides and long, twisting and turning staircases.

A riot broke outside the palace gates. This was quickly quelled by a curious sound — the chiming of a vast and otherworldly clock tolling the hour from within — midnight. Suddenly it was night-time. The gates of the palace swung open and strange figures emerged. They were each masked, dressed in rags and veils so their identity and genders were hard to ascertain. Some of the masks were wooden, others were porcelain. Others still were of unknown or alien materials that sent a shudder down the spine of anyone who gazed into the mask. The strange figures glided outwards, the crowd parting before them. They did not move like normal people but danced and swirled with endless energy that seemed inhuman.

Who is The King in Yellow?

Originally created for a book of loosely-connected short stories by Robert W. Chambers (1865–1933), the morally-corrupting play **The King in Yellow** *has subsequently become an adjunct to the broader Mythos based on Lovecraft's fiction. The themes running through these Chambers stories — in particular, the corrosive morality of decadence —were topical points of debate in the late Victorian era between traditional schools of art and controversial new aesthetic art movements.*

The terrifying play centers upon a morally-jaded royal family in some far-off, probably alien, location. One of the chief characters in the play — confusingly called both "The Stranger" and "The King in Yellow" — is a masked figure whose arrival brings foreboding and impending decay. When challenged to remove his mask, this quizzical monarch says cryptically "I wear no mask," a revelation which creates terror and madness, and precipitates the collapse of the court.

If you have never read the strange and uncanny stories which define both the character and the play, we thoroughly suggest you track down and read Chambers' four King in Yellow short stories (all published in the anthology "The King in Yellow" first published in 1895). These are "The Repairer of Reputations", "The Mask", "The Yellow Sign", and "In the Court of The Dragon". All these stories are in the public domain and available for free on Project Gutenberg; however, it is also worth considering the excellent Kenneth Hite-annotated and beautifully illustrated hardback edition recently published by Arc Dream Publishing.

One by one these uncanny masked figures spread throughout London bringing a whispered message: "The Queen is dead. Long live the King. The King in Yellow." As they traveled around, they also asserted the will of the new King. Any who showed signs of dissent or resistance found themselves cornered by the figures who then produced a mask from their voluminous robes. They would fix the mask to the face of their prey. Afterwards the individual seemed *different* – sluggish and more obedient. Happy and loyal subjects of the Yellow King.

Looking For A New England

In no time at all the dancers spread throughout the whole of Great Britain. Resistance was almost non-existent, those who tried, soon found themselves wearing one of the Pallid Masks. After just a month, Britain was overtly under the sway of the King in Yellow, a silent monarch who few have seen as he rarely holds audiences.

Around this time many people began to notice another effect of having the alien King presiding over Britain — everyone's memories of time before his arrival began to feel vague and insubstantial. This phenomenon slowly grew until many people simply could not remember a time before the reign of the King in Yellow at all.

Parliament was allowed to continue under the King's 'benevolent rule', conditional on each sitting member agreeing to wear his mask. Most refused, but the few who agreed still uphold a mockery of its traditions in the mostly empty Houses of Parliament, now used mainly for indoor gladiatorial-style fights.

Many people who were already converts to Yellowist philosophy found it easy to become loyal subjects of this Libertine King. Others became converts to his tyrannical rule out of necessity. The British Army was one of the first major institutions to pledge allegiance to the monarch (even agreeing to replacing their traditional redcoat uniforms with a yellow equivalent). The police forces followed soon after. Independent of both of these, the King set up his own special force of loyal fighters, the Knights of Carcosa, who also serve as a kind of secret police.

With those institutions of power (both mundane and supernatural) the King's rule is unchallenged. Britain has become a land of decadence, a land where everyone is free to give in to their desires and wants, a far cry from the prudishness that was Victorian England. It is a new land of sin, vice and corruption.

Although it sounds like a contradiction in terms, British society is now an 'anarchic police state' — anarchic in that people are free to pursue their every whims no matter how destructive; a police state in that the forces of authority act to cruelly and violently crush any person or organization who stands in the way of someone else expressing that right.

There is no law, save the two tenets: obey the King in Yellow, and do what thou will.

SETTING UP THE SCENARIO

Before starting this scenario there are a few decisions that should be made; these will affect how the game plays out.

Nihilist or Hopeful?

The world in which the Survivors find themselves is one where the King in Yellow has gained a significant foothold on Earth, also having poisoned the minds of most of humanity. This is a dire circumstance, and one which is not easily remedied. In fact, the dominance of the King over our world and our race might already have progressed to the point where it is impossible to topple him and restore 'normality.'

The ultimate decision as to whether there is still hope for the planet or not, is up to you as the Game Moderator. If you are seeking to play a game with a strict purist interpretation of Lovecraft's philosophy, you may choose the **nihilist** point of view — namely that the King is already so powerful that nothing humanity can possibly do can challenge him. Yes, he might dangle a semblance of hope in front of humans, but such endeavors are cruel games that ultimately cannot ever cause him any permanent harm.

The Yellow Kingdom: Background

*In terms of **APOCTHULHU's** rating system for setting harshness, the King in Yellow's Britain is rated* **Normal(ish).** *The origins and characteristics of this unusual Post-Apocalyptic world are summarized below.*

Eight Questions:

- **When Did the Apocalypse Occur?** *The King in Yellow arrived in Britain in 1890, initially as a character in a play much-revered by the decadent 'Yellow Arts' Movement, but later as a more literal manifestation.*
- **What Event was the Trigger?** *Queen Victoria, curious at the many rumors about the play, summoned a theater troupe to stage a private performance at Buckingham Palace. This allowed the King in Yellow to break through the dimensional barriers and enter our world.*
- **What Changed?** *Physically not much has changed, but in terms of the social and moral order of Britain (and indeed the world) there has been radical changes. Gone are the conservative rules-oriented society of the Victorian Age, replaced by mandatory adherence to libertine principles. These are enforced by the draconian police and military forces under the sway of the King in Yellow.*
- **How Long Afterwards?** *The setting occurs some three years after the King assumed rulership of Britain.*
- **What is the World Like?** *Britain is a police state where moral conservatism is outlawed and punishable by death. The scourge of the King in Yellow's moral degeneracy has spread to America which now has a self-proclaimed King of its own who has dreams of empire, even as his kingdom embraces the new innovation of 'suicide booths' for jaded and weary souls.*
- **What Communities Exist?** *Many of the elements of the old social order still survive, although frequently in a perverted fashion. One exception is religious orders which have all been dissolved (or, at least forced underground) by the King's decree.*
- **What Mythos Entities?** *The King himself is a supernatural power loosely affiliated with the Mythos. When he arrived from beyond, he brought with him an army of supernatural servants called Pallid Revelers. The King also provides his loyal enforcers (both human and inhuman) with flying alien beasts for travel, the so-called 'star-steeds'.*
- **Is There Any Hope?** *As Game Moderator, you can decide. It may be true that somehow defeating the King might revert the world to its 'normal' state. Equally, it may be true that his corrosive influence has altered our world to the point that dethroning the King in Yellow simply leaves his position open for another immoral tyrant.*

The Yellow Kingdom: Resource Scarcity

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — others	**Hard to Get**, except psycho-active & recreational drugs, which are **Abundant**
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Steamships and steam trains are **Abundant**; no other forms of mechanized transport.
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	N/A
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Prototype airships are **Very Hard to Get**
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	**Abundant** (Coal & water)
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	N/A
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Abundant
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Uncommon
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Impossible to Get

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Cameras / Recording Equipment	N/A
Information Technology	N/A
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Abundant
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	**Uncommon** (may be censored)
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Uncommon
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Decadent Literature, including *The King in Yellow*	Abundant
Libertine Propaganda Books/ Recordings	Abundant
General Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	**Uncommon** (may be censored)
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Abundant
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Abundant
Animal-Based Transport	Abundant

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Conversely, if you think your gaming group would prefer to play in a world where there is still hope for humanity to overthrow its silent oppressor, go with the **hopeful** option.

In this scenario, most of the action will unfold the same way regardless of which option you pick, but key parts of the backstory and most importantly the endgame will be different.

The Survivors

The scenario includes a set of six pre-generated Survivors. If using these characters, there is no real restriction on which Survivors need to be picked by players. Note that two of the pre-gen Survivors have Bonds to one another, although neither remembers the full details.

One unusual feature of this scenario is that all Survivors begin the game with their memories clouded as a result of living in the Yellow King's realm. Early in the course of the scenario they will have their memories restored; the additional facts that they learn at this stage are covered in a box titled "The Fog Lifts" adjacent to each character description. When handing out details of the Survivors at the start of play do not give this information to the players.

Another special feature of the pre-gen Survivors is that each has some kind of connection to figures from Arthurian legend. Exactly what that link is will likely remain obscure — are they reincarnated souls of the original figures whose actions got recorded in legend? Who can say? Each character description has a small amount of information about the relevant Arthurian namesake. If players have questions about this, they should probably remain unanswered.

If the group decides not to use pre-generated Survivors, it is easy to create new characters using the rules in the ***APOCTHULHU*** character generation chapter. As with the pre-gen characters, you should split the Survivors' backgrounds into things that happened prior to the arrival of the King (which they won't initially recall) and things they know about their life under the King's rule. Whether or not you decide to link newly created characters to Arthurian characters is your choice — the scenario will work equally well either way.

GAME MODERATOR INTRODUCTION

This scenario is a quest of sorts. While the totalitarian regime of the King in Yellow holds Britain in an iron fist, there are still older forces in this ancient land that the King has not yet conquered. Forces that have lain dormant for centuries, waiting for the day when Britain is in its direst need. Folklore speaks of a nebulous 'Spirit of Britain' a *genius locus* protecting the very land.

Tales also tell of a more tangible protector in the form of the King Arthur, a kind and goodly king who sleeps in some distant hiding place only to awaken when England is in danger. Is it possible that forces such as these might be awakened to dispel the alien ruler who now sits on Britain's throne?

In this scenario the Survivors will uncover hints that this may be the case ... but to invoke the ancient protectors of the land is no small undertaking. Indeed, it requires embarking upon a mission to locate several of the artifacts to which the legends are tied. Complicating matters greatly is the vast surveillance and enforcement network which the Libertine King has constructed to monitor his subjects.

As the Survivors seek out the goals of their quest, the agents of Yellowism will be ever at their heels.

Whether success in their quest means victory for the Survivors will depend ultimately on whether you are playing the scenario in a Hopeful mode or a Nihilist mode:

- **Hopeful:** Under this option, the forces that engage the Survivors to track down King Arthur's artifacts really are what they seem to be — agents of the protective forces of Britain. Success in the quest will grant the Survivors Excalibur, one of the few weapons that has power enough to damage the physical form of the King in Yellow. Defeating the alien King in a fight may, however, still prove a challenge.

- **Nihilist:** Under this option, the forces that contact the Survivors and set them on a quest are not at all what they seem. Indeed, the 'spirit' that seeks them out is none other than a disguised form of the King in Yellow himself. He finds the notion that mortals might try to dethrone him quite amusing and their old wives' tales about King Arthur even more so. If the Survivors succeed in the quest, he will take great pleasure in revealing the full extent of his deception shortly before destroying them (which was always his goal from the beginning).

Life in the Profligate Empire of Free and Licentious Britain

Life continues somewhat as normal in Britain, albeit 'normal' has taken on a much stranger and unusual definition. The King in Yellow rules absolutely and everyone is encouraged to do whatever passion or pleasure strikes them in the moment. This has created widespread chaos and it is not uncommon to pass an orgy on one street corner and a violent gang murder on another.

Parts of London now have an almost carnival-like feel to them, even in the business districts. Dancing, laughter, music and screaming can all be heard. The typical Victorian prudish attitude has largely vanished altogether. People go see pornographic magic lantern shows, drink openly in the streets, bare their breasts or genitals outside the local pub. Anarchy is the true order of the day. All forms of art and culture have become overwhelmingly infiltrated by decadence and hedonism, with a strong sense of nihilism thrown in as well.

Not everyone is under the King's sway but those who are not are usually wise and/or smart enough to keep their heads low and hurry away from troublemakers. This is important because anyone who attempts to upset the King's rule may find themselves confronted by the King's Pallid Revelers. Those who draw their attention, for better or worse, find the ethereal entities descending upon them — subduing them permanently with the Pallid Mask (see **POWERS OF THE PALLID MASKS**, page 267).

On a few occasions there have been small groups which have attempted to stand up to the King in Yellow, and individuals who have loudly spoken out against his regime. Such conspiracies and lone dissenters tend to vanish in the night, sometimes even during the day, and are never seen again. Some claim that the King has set up political prison camps in England's moorland but this has not been fully verified as truth — mostly because people are afraid of talking about it, fearing that it will be taken as treasonous talk.

Moods and Themes

The Game Moderator can draw on many different themes in portraying the terrifying (but pleasure-filled) realm of the Libertine King. These include: Nihilism, Decadence, Authoritarianism, Hedonism, Virtue, Resistance, and even Hope.

Similarly, there are a lot of possible moods that you can borrow from other works. Obvious candidates are the faceless totalitarian states depicted in book form in George Orwell's *1984,* on film in Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*, and in comic form as *V For Vendetta.*

You could also mix in some of Kafka's sense of the absurd futility of fighting against a vast bureaucratic foe (e.g., *The Castle*), or the more surreal absurdity of *Alice in Wonderland.* Mixing some lighter (or at least, absurd and weird) elements will do much to reinforce the darker moods when they come around. For Arthurian elements and the associated sense of passion and virtue there are no end of sources.

Structure of the Scenario

The scenario begins with a few (optional) single-character vignettes that can help establish the unique nature of London under the Libertine King. Each of these brings the Survivor to a trip on the District Line (the Underground). On this journey, the Survivors – who are all assembled on the same carriage by 'chance' – have a rather unusual encounter. A figure, claiming to be Merlin, comes to assist them escape the attention of a pack of Pallid Revelers.

After saving their lives, the old man gives the Survivors a mission and a rather cryptic clue towards the salvation of the Empire and humanity. That clue points them towards several important landmarks tied to Arthurian lore. They can visit these landmarks in any order they please. At each, the Survivors find an artifact that is important to rousing the sleeping spirit of King Arthur. Once they have them all, they will have located the true Avalon and the dormant figure of Arthur.

He represents their one chance to save the Empire from the Yellow stain that has enveloped the world. But, of course, things aren't as easy as that ...

The Spirit of Britain

The Spirit of Britain has no real name, though if one was to be assigned to it then the most appropriate would be Woden. The chief god of the ancient Anglo-Saxon pantheon, Woden was similar in many ways to the Odin of Norse and Germanic mythology. In actuality, Woden is merely another avatar of the Spirit of Britain that has come up many times to lead England through dangerous times. It has appeared as various mythological and folkloric figures from England's history in an effort to guide an individual through a time of crisis, many of which exist in England's long history.

If the Game Moderator wants to tie the supernatural elements of the Spirit of Britain back to the writings of Lovecraft and others, he or she might decide to make a link with the weak "Gods of Earth" mentioned in "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath". Such an entity would have powers that only extend across the British Isles. It would have no real worshipers, though its individual avatars or masks may have their own followers. As a "God of the Earth", it is possible that it may manifest in the Dreamlands though it has no real power there. And if it does indeed manifest in the Dreamlands then that puts the deity under the protection of Nyarlathotep ... a frightening possibility indeed.

Avatars/Alternative Names: *Woden, Merlin, Herne, The Wild Huntsman, Britannia or Old Father Thames.*

STARTING THE SCENARIO

The Survivors are all citizens of London, subjects of the new King. Each has their own independent lives — they likely do not know each other. In order to provide the players fundamental information about the setting, allow everyone to read **Handout #1.** If your group doesn't like breaking up play with time spent reading handouts, consider sending this handout to players prior to the game session.

The main action of the scenario begins with a chance (?) situation which causes all of them to be together on an isolated carriage on the Underground. If you wish to skip straight to the action, simply tell the players that's where their Survivors are, and jump to **ENCOUNTER ON THE UNDERGROUND**, page 252.

Inserting 'A Yellow and Pleasant Land' Into a Campaign

While it is perfectly possible to run this scenario as a standalone one-shot adventure, it can equally well be used as a twist or end to an ongoing Gaslight-era campaign. If the players had previously played a Victorian era adventure featuring the King in Yellow or other similar foes, and failed to stop the threat, the Game Moderator can always simply determine that the characters were left in a coma ... and they wake up to find the world completely changed. Maybe they don't remember much of anything about their former lives except as a distant dream. They will fit right in, since nobody else remembers much about the time before the coming of the new King either.

The Survivors will find themselves in an unfamiliar version of their own world, suddenly needing to completely restart their lives. Maybe they will take up work in menial jobs or perhaps they will win themselves positions working as civil servants in a Ministry of Truth style job a la Orwell's 1984 *or Gilliam's* Brazil.

Later, it will be Merlin who snaps them out of their fugue state and points out the changes of reality that have taken place around them. The Survivors are given a rare second chance, to try and stop the King in Yellow one last time.

If instead you and your players would enjoy spending a little time establishing some of the details of London under the Libertine King, and exploring each Survivor's attitudes to the world around them, you may wish to run one or more of the optional *Introductory Vignettes* included below. Each of them is designed for 1–2 Survivors and features a colorful street scene encountered as they travel to the Underground station.

Introductory Vignettes

These mini-scenes are optional, and designed to help paint a vivid portrait of what life is like in this setting. Run as many (or as few) of them as your player group finds interesting. They are designed for 1 or 2 Survivors walking together to the Underground train station.

Vignette 1: "I Am The Yellow Fairy"

There is a commotion outside a familiar tavern. Evidently a group of ruffians has created a ruckus by breaking into the establishment and killing the owner. Seemingly his crime was 'charging too much for essential intoxercation'. As further retribution the group has pillaged the tavern's stores and is now handing out free shots of its most expensive alcohol — Carcosa-brand Absinthe, famed for its lustrous yellow color. A weathered alcoholic who has taken good advantage of this generous offer, stands unsteadily on an outside table reciting over and over "I am the Yellow Fairy."

Vignette 2: Poet in the Stocks

By the side of the road, a set of medieval-style stocks have been set up. A weedy young man is incarcerated therein; around his neck hangs the sign "I was once a Poet". Next to the apparatus there is a bucket containing spoiled food which passers-by pick up and throw at the man. Speaking with him, one can learn his sorry tale: until a week ago he was the Poet-Laureate to the Yellow King, but somehow his newer verses did not have the same 'wild abandon' which first won him the job. He craves the oblivion of being masked, but so far has been denied that 'privilege'.

Vignette 3: The Street Fight

A circle of sweaty people has formed at a crossroads, stopping all traffic in both directions. The group are gesticulating wildly and shouting in an animated fashion at the two men who are viciously fighting one another inside the circle. If asked, any of the spectators can tell them that the fight is training for the gladiatorial games in Westminster. They point to one of the fighters, who has a bloody gash in his head, and say "that's Cowboy No-one; he got top of the King's honours list in the Commons last weekend. Some say he's bound for the deathcage match in the House o'Lords."

Handout 1: London, The Great and Yellow City

You live in London, the greatest metropolis in the world. You know that it is the greatest city on the planet because it is the most permissive city to be found anywhere upon the face of the globe. The Libertine King — who some call the "Yellow King" on account of his luxuriant raiment — has his palace in London. It is from here that the great Empire is run. It is from here that the great Empire spreads out, borne on steamships, airships, and other mighty works of industry.

People in London are free. They are the most liberated people anywhere, even compared to the rest of the Profligate Empire of Free and Licentious Britain. Posters everywhere tell the King's loyal subjects about how free their lives are under his carefree and wanton rule. Some proclaim, "Art for Arts' Sake, By Mandated Appointment". Others say, "Do What Thou Will, By Royal Decree."

Yes, everyone is free in Free Britain. Free to love as they will. When, where, and with whom they will. Anyone who seeks to impose limits — moral or otherwise — upon any man, woman, or child, is subject to the most extreme sanctions. So too is anyone who dares say that there are pursuits to life more valid than the pursuit of beauty and pleasure. The King's yellow-garbed knights are the enforcers of this freedom from puritanism and restriction. As too are the Royal Army, known informally also as the "Yellowcoats". Then there are the strange pale-masked figures that are a common sight around London, silently gliding through crowds as though dancing to music only they can hear; according to rumour they too are agents of the King and sanction anyone overheard denouncing His generous permissiveness. Sometimes these agents of the king even ride the skies on the backs of great flying beasts with leathery wings.

All around the world, the Free and Licentious Empire of Britain is envied. In the Americas, you have heard that governments have fallen to a pale imitation of the Libertine King's benevolence, its own feeble King of America scraping to win over the Yellow King's dissolute favour.

It is presently the 3rd Year of the New King ("3 N.K."). Some unfashionable traditionalists still call it "1893", but nobody remembers what that number means. Everybody remembers how free life has been since the new King chose Britain as the seat of his empire, although most find it hard to remember what life was like before that. You have a few slight memories of a time before, where life was a maze of propriety and rules of meaningless decorum. But really those bad old days are lost in a fog ... outshone by the pure yellow brilliance of the New Freedom!

Despite everyone around London seeming to embrace the Libertine King's creed, you've had doubts from time-to-time about whether there is a negative side to this unprecedented level of freedom. It pays not to say anything like that out loud, even in jest, since the loyal subjects of the King are honour-bound to report such "prude speak" to the nearest authorities. You have heard stories about people disappearing after speaking out on such topics — nobody knows where such people go. So, it's generally better to keep questions to yourself and just get on with enjoying the freedoms the King has provided.

Vignette 4: A Traffic Incident

In the middle of a busy intersection, traffic has been brought to a standstill by a packed omnibus whose horse lies dead on the ground. The vehicle had been stopped awaiting a signal from the policeman working the intersection, when a well-dressed gentleman simply walked up to the horse, put a pistol to its head and shot it dead. As you pass the man is speaking with the policeman, saying "it's ok, none of you exist; it's just me and my imagination." Onboard the bus some passengers are shocked, but most are using this unexpected delay as an excuse for some vehicular fornication.

Vignette 5: The Punch & Masky Show

At the side of the street, a small stand has been set-up for performing a puppet show. The sign on the arch reads *"The Punch & Masky Show. By Appointment".* **A group of children sits staring up at the puppets in amazement. The story seems to mostly involve the insouciant Punch and puppet versions of the Pallid Masks, who nod silently whenever he suggests a hedonistic act and acts menacingly whenever he speaks of something demure.**

An Encounter on the Underground Railway

After running any introductory vignettes, the scenario-proper begins with the Survivors all riding in a train carriage on the District (Underground) Railway that runs under the whole of London. Like most of London, the Underground has been changed by the King in Yellow's corrosive influence on reality. No longer are the trains drab and functional conveyances — now they are fanciful and artistic, covered in elegant work depicting many different mythological creatures. Light is provided by gas lamps which hang all around the train. Plush velvet seats line the train, with the interior gas lamps attached to the walls by holders designed to look like clawed hands. It is both familiar and alien all at the same time, like much of the King in Yellow's Empire.

The Survivors are almost alone on the Underground carriage. As they embark the train, there is only one other passenger, an old man dressed in dirty clothing and hunched over in his seat. He seems to be homeless and asleep, not acknowledging the Survivors when they enter at all.

Whether the Survivors know each other or not will depend on whether the pre-generated Survivors are being used (a couple of which are related), or new ***APOCTHULHU*** characters created with original backgrounds. If the group does not know one another, now is the perfect time for each player to describe their Survivor.

THE KING'S AGENTS DEFEATED

The train rattles on and at the next station, it stops, and the doors are slid open from outside. Gliding and dancing into the carriage are several of the ragged and masked Pallid Revelers which the Survivors have seen in many places around London. Slowly the creepy alien things stand in place, dancing to a tune only they can hear. As they move, their dancing gets even more erratic. If a Survivor decides to attack them, the Dancers will lash out at him or her. It is either then or shortly before this that the homeless man acts.

Suddenly, the train carriage plunges into darkness except for flashes of light as the homeless man stands up, revealing himself to be of stronger stature yet somehow much older than the Survivors initially thought. With a loud word of power, that sets the Survivors' ears ringing, and a stench of ozone, the dancers seem to collapse in on themselves. Where the weird beings once stood, there are only piles of rags and masks broken in two.

Watching this destruction of agents of the King — something none of the Survivors has witnessed before — is shocking (Sanity Loss 0/1 for witnessing the supernatural display). But at the same time, it makes them feel something strange: a dulled emotion that they may have not even realized was lost. That emotion is hope.

A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION

The old man approaches the Survivors and for a second the train car is again plunged into darkness but when the light returns, they see the formerly homeless waif is now dressed as a groomed upper-class gentleman. His face remains the same, however. He approaches them, before taking a seat beside them. The Game Moderator should read or paraphrase the following speech as needed.

"I am glad I could be of assistance. I have been searching for you all. Each of you has something within you, a spark which is exceedingly rare in these troubled times. That spark is a memory of the Empire that was but now is no more. I can see from your faces that you've almost forgotten — but in quiet moments, when the Tyrant King's mental fog is at an ebb, you've felt the truth nibbling at the back of your thoughts. Am I not right?

"I'm here to tell you that those impressions you've felt — that things are not as they should be — are not mere nagging thoughts. They are true, and profoundly so. For the Tattered King who sits now upon the throne of Britain is a usurper of the worst kind, one who casts out the monarch decreed by Divine Right and employs ... foul trickery ... to make everyone in the realm, nay the world, forget his misdeeds.

"Despair not, for I am here to tell you that the rightful and just Britain can exist again. The ancient spirit of this country weeps for its people and wants the Tattered King dethroned. There are few who can cast down so mighty a tyrant — in fact there is but one who can. The ancient king of old, Arthur. The 'true king' of this land and he who vowed to return to protect it in its hour of greatest need. Surely now is that time.

"I can tell that you have doubts, suspicions maybe that King Arthur of old was naught but a legend. That is ironic because the reason that the spirit of the land has led you here today is exactly because you yourselves – in other skins – rode side-by-side Arthur. But do not believe the words of an old man, look for yourselves ... "

At the conclusion of his speech, the old man produces an ornately carved silver mirror from a breast pocket and holds it up to the Survivors.

THE SCALES FALL AWAY

Each Survivor who chooses to look in the mirror sees something different; all of them are visions from their own personal past. They are things that the Survivor has either forgotten or, in the case of the visions from the days of King Arthur, know through some mystical link to a former life.

Myrddin encourages each person gazing into the mirror to describe what they see, so that everyone else may share their insights. **Handout #2** nearby provides a series of narrated visions that players can read out as their Survivor takes his or her turn peering into the past. The narrations are labeled **A** to **F** and are intended to be read in order.

The act of looking into Myrddin's mirror also unlocks more personal memories of the past. The Game Moderator should allow Survivors to remember the details of their life before the coming of the King in Yellow. For the pre-generated Survivors, each character has an associated box titled "The Fog Lifts" which offers a more comprehensive background for the character. The Game Moderator should ensure that players now receive this additional information about their Survivors' past.

QUESTIONS FOR MERLIN

The Survivors will likely have many questions. The old man will answer as many of them as he can, but he explains there is little time for they must act quickly. If they ask his name, the man will say that it is Myrddin. Any Survivor succeeding in an **Occult** or **History** test will recognize it as the name of the man who would become known in later legends as "Merlin". A man from legend is standing in front of them.

Information that Myrddin can provide:

- I, Myrddin, am an agent of the Spirit of Britain, that weeps for the state of the country, now a yellow and unpleasant land.
- I am taking you somewhere that may contain a glimmer of hope. There is a house in an ancient part of this city which holds a book containing hints and clues

Handout 2: À la recherche du temps perdu

A *"I see a scene in an underground stone tomb. A radiant man adorned in a crown lies motionless on a bier. Is he dead? Next to him are an ornate gilded cup and a gleaming sword. A sad-faced crowd, many of them in old-fashioned armor, stand looking on. Many of their faces seem oddly ... familiar to me. Is my own face one of them?"*

B *"I see a dour woman in ornate raiment wearing a crown. She is a Queen; the Queen of England. Victoria is her name. She rules over the vast British Empire upon which it is said the sun never sets. Life under Victoria is a picture of conservative constraint. Decadent artists are treated as questionable, drunk, or immoral. The state of perfection is a well-ordered life of excellent manners and demeanor.*

"I remember the first time that most people heard of the Yellow Art Movement. It came out of France, and it preached a philosophy of surrealism and nihilism. It preached that the only true happiness in life could be found in decadence and art, everything else (especially religion) was a lie. A lie created and maintained by the so-called ruling class, false monarchs and clergy who only existed to keep the artists and dreamers under control."

C *"I remember crowds flocking to see a play promoted by the Yellow Art Movement as the solution to British society's unrest and inequalities. The play was called 'The King in Yellow' and different troupes in Paris, Berlin and London started performing it. At first on stages in tiny, grubby theatres but soon on some of the most prestigious. Each performance brought its own eccentricities to it, but they also brought their share of madness and violence. I remember hearing about one performance in London ended with the audience trying to tear itself to pieces, while another in Berlin had a prominent patron being taken out on a stretcher after a heart attack. Several countries attempted to ban performances of the play, but they were unsuccessful."*

D *"I remember hearing about how the Play had spread to the New World, with performances in America mimicking those happening in many cities around Britain. Riots started to break out across North America. The riots broke out into an all-out war, another civil war. But this time it was the haves versus the have nots. Reports reaching England were confused but some described America now as a changed land — one ruled by a new 'King of America.' The newspapers said he had ambitions to create an empire for himself spanning the continents of North and South America. In the new American Empire, suicide booths had started to be erected for the quick and painless exit of those overcome with the futility of existence."*

E *"The way I heard it told, Britain's own fall was less bloody, but just as total. It began with a summons from Queen Victoria — she had heard much about The Play and, being a strong and commanding ruler, ordered against her adviser's counsel that a Royal Command performance be held in Buckingham Palace itself. What happened inside the closed walls of the palace that day, nobody really can say. But I was standing outside that day, just beyond the railings and the Beefeaters and I can tell you that something unnatural occurred. At first there was a strange and sickly yellow light seen issuing from the building. Then I saw the whole palace bend and twist, changing form until it was left as a large and grand-spired castle. All over its every surface were now carved hideous gargoyles and lusty maidens. Mad staircases twisted and turned."*

F *"I remember I was in the crowd that day, too. No sooner had the assembled masses finished gasping at the transformations to the Palace, they were driven into a frenzy by a clock chiming midnight — in the middle of the day. But the sky suddenly was like midnight. The gates to Buckingham Palace flew open then and out poured strange masked figures. The same creatures that were just here on the train. They did not move like normal people but glided, danced and swirled with endless energy that seemed inhuman.*

"One by one they spread throughout London carrying a simple message — the Queen is Dead, Long Live The King. The King in Yellow. A few people challenged them but were quickly silenced as the strange figures pulled additional masks from their robes and clapped them onto the faces of dissenters. This silenced them immediately. I heard that these Masked creatures traveled the whole breadth of Britain similarly crushing anyone who refused to bow down to the new King."

that Britain's appointed champions — "that's you, by the way" — might use to chart their course towards returning hope and peace to England.

- The Spirit of Britain believes there may be a way to bring King Arthur back, and the book might be the key to determining how.

If any Survivors laugh or seem to openly disbelieve him, Myrddin whirls on them. *"Would you disbelieve it now when the world around you seems so wrong? Do you not notice that nothing seems natural? This is all the work of the monstrosity that now sits on the throne. You have a legend that in times of danger to the Empire, King Arthur will stride forth and save England. Now is that time, and you will be the instruments that make it happen."*

An **Insight** test can clearly see that the questions both anger and worry the old man. He seems to believe everything he is saying.

LEAVING THE RAILWAY STATION

Eventually the District Line train reaches the Blackfriar's Bridge station and the old man stands up, opens the doors and steps out onto the platform. He briefly checks to see if the Survivors follow him. If they do, he takes them through the station — empty except for a group of scruffy children who run for the stairs as soon as they spot the Survivors.

He leads them up another set of stairs and out into London proper. They emerge somewhere close to St. Paul's Cathedral, whose dome has been painted a sickly yellow and emblazoned with four eerie Yellow Sign sigils, one facing each of the cardinal points. The Survivors recognize that these markings proclaim the barracks for a regiment of Yellowcoats.

Walking through back streets, alleys and passageways, the group wanders past strange pubs that are almost unnaturally silent inside. After a few minutes Myrddin ushers the group into a narrow lane called Bolt Court and towards an old two-story building. "It is in here that you will find the information you seek," he says. "The book will contain everything you need to know. Find the book and you will be on your way. Good luck in your quest. *Dieu et mon droit.*"

With these last words, Myrddin starts to age rapidly in front of the Survivors' eyes. His body starts to grow wrinkles and crumble, until he starts falling apart. As the pieces of his body hit the ground, they explode into ancient dust. A Sanity test of 1/1D6 should be made by each Survivor.

THE HOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE

Entering the two-story house on Bolt Court, the Survivors find themselves in a filthy and dusty home. It is obvious this place has never seen a maid or even a dust rag. The house is not large, but every room is filled with books. The many bookshelves are overflowing, and stacks of books take up every available space.

Without knowing where to look, the task of finding one book — whose title they don't even know — among the thousands in this house may seem hopeless to the Survivors. **Research** or **Search** tests can be useful here: if the Survivors

The Blackfriars Irregulars

Although the Survivors are unlikely to learn it at the time, the children who spot them in the Blackfriars Bridge Station are all part of an informal local gang called the Blackfriars Bridge Irregulars. This rag-tag bunch of mudlarks are one of many such local groups who serve as eyes and ears for the King in Yellow's secret police. Being told to be on the lookout for someone with the unmistakable aura of Myrddin, these scruffy boys were quick to run back to St. Paul's to inform their bosses. As a result, the Survivors will receive a visit from a group of Yellowcoats soon after they arrive at the house in Bolt Court.

If, somehow, the Survivors recognize the threat posed by these ruffians and neutralize it, they may delay detection by the King's men. While this will buy them a little time, there are realistically so many other groups who might decide to inform on them, any respite will be brief.

attempt to sort through the books in a systematic way, they soon find they are loosely arranged by topic. Furthermore, one of the upstairs rooms is specifically dedicated exclusively to the subject of Arthurian lore, British folklore and Welsh history. Surely the book the Survivors seek must be in here somewhere. A second successful skill test (**Research** or **Search**) will lead them straight to it.

Failing the application of any skilled search, it will take 1D4 hours for the Survivors to exhaustively look through the place and find that which they seek.

The Book: *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps*

The object of the Survivors' search is, in fact, a volume that is currently serving as a coaster for a teapot and three teacups. It is a large book on sites important to Arthurian legend, detailing the history and lore of each one. The title, *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps*, is embossed in gold on the front.

The book is a hefty tome, written by one Theodore Franklin. It focuses on real-world historical and fictional landmarks believed important to the legend of King Arthur. The pages of the book are full of sheets of paper and photos crammed into the book. Every page is covered in writing containing the owner's annotations, notes, doodles. Some entire sections are crossed out with words like 'poppycock' handwritten across or next to the passages.

Certain of the sites mentioned in the book have been circled in red ink — these have been compiled in **Handout #3** on page 261. Beside the section on Avalon is scrawled the phrase 'This is the key. Salvation'. The book also contains a map of southwestern England; the three sites mentioned in the handout are circled in red ink (see page 263 for a reproduction).

YELLOWCOATS!

The Survivors will not have long to read through the book, however, before they hear a loud commotion outside. If they glance outside, they will see that alarmingly the house has been

surrounded by Yellowcoat soldiers. One of them, dressed in a toned-down version of the Knights of Carcosa uniform (minus the mask), steps forward to shout out his proclamation to the Survivors.

"Prithee give us no sass! I am Chief Libertine Crowley of the King's First Bohemian Grenadiers. You have been accused of consorting with prescribed puritanical scoundrels and found guilty in absentia. *If you will not come out then we will enter, and it shall go the worse for you. You have ten minutes to ponder your futures. But do not tarry!"* For more on Chief Libertine Crowley and his ongoing role in the scenario, see the box on page 260.

The Survivors will have little time to act. They are outnumbered (there are Yellowcoats surrounding the building equal in number to three times the number of Survivors). The Survivors will need to find a way out.

One option is to start a fire and try to flee in the chaos this causes as the Yellowcoats rush to safety or try to stop the fire from spreading. If employing this tactic, the Survivors should each make a **Stealth** test with a +10% bonus to slip out of the house and into the crowd of shocked onlookers. They will then need to make a **Disguise** check with a +10% to avoid detection by the busy Yellowcoats. Alternatively, the fleeing Survivors might throw a blanket or coat over themselves, thereby obviating the need for the Disguise test. Any failed rolls mean that they are spotted: 1D6 Yellow Coats will notice the Survivors and attempt to detain them. If the Survivors seek to fight them off, they have an uphill battle — every two turns an extra Yellowcoat soldier joins the fight, until Crowley's whole force is involved.

Another option that the Survivors can adopt is to try and flee through an upstairs window. This poses a different type of peril. Outside the upstairs windows, Survivors can see a nearby house, no more than 10 feet away. The window in their current building is locked and requires a turn of **Craft (Locksmithing)** or a **STR×5** test to break open the glass. Without proper precautions exiting through a broken window runs the risk of being cut on glass shards stuck in the frame — Survivors must make a **DEX×5** or **CON×5** test to avoid suffering 1D6 HP of damage.

Once through the window, an **Athletics** test will allow a Survivor to safely leap across the void and onto the next roof. Failure means a nasty fall onto the Yellowcoat soldier's below, occasioning 2D6 damage and requiring a **DEX×5** or **CON×5** test to avoid a broken bone. Survivors who make it across to the neighboring roof can easily find a way down to the street below, avoiding the grasp of the King in Yellow's agents. They can either climb into the neighboring building (it is not locked) or climb down the outside of the building (two **Athletics** tests; failure on the first yields 2D6 damage, failure on the second only 1D6).

RENEGADES

Once on the streets, the Survivors hear a commotion coming from the direction of the house they just left. Glancing around the

The Forces of the King in Yellow

There are several types of servants — some human, some alien — loyal to the King in Yellow. The Survivors will encounter all of them during the course of the scenario. They should be harassing the Survivors throughout England, chasing after them as they pursue their quest.

The Yellowcoats

Dressed like traditional 18th Century Redcoats, with the exception that their coats are garish yellow. These are the foot soldiers of the King in Yellow's armies. The Yellowcoats are made up of human sympathizers with some low-ranking cultists sprinkled amongst them. Some of the Yellowcoats are looking to just get by, while others have their sights on moving up to become Knights of Carcosa (see below) or even take a place in the King in Yellow's Court (a risky maneuver). The Yellowcoats are often used before the Pallid Revelers or the Knights are sent in, breaking up small gatherings or dealing with the day-to-day affairs of enforcing the law and rule of the new monarch.

The Pallid Revelers

The most common entities that are encountered throughout the kingdom. These otherworldly beings are masked, dressed in veils and rags of bright colors to hide their identities. In fact, most citizens don't even think they are human. The Pallid Revelers wear masks of many different types. The majority wear full-face masks. A few wear half-face masks; those have the rest of their faces covered by long flowing pieces of fabric.

Pallid Revelers move with a strange gliding and dancing motion, twisting and turning as they parade through the streets to silent festivities that only they can hear. Oftentimes they will find someone alone or seek out someone plotting to undermine the King in Yellow. When they find such an individual, the dancers surround the person. Then, suddenly, they will pounce. The victim will be restrained while a Pallid Mask (see the box on page 267) is placed on their faces. At this point, the victim's hopes of resistance are (usually) over. Forever.

The Knights of Carcosa

The Knights of Carcosa are both a military force and a secret police force, all in one. It is their job to enforce the direct will of the King in Yellow, seek out any resistance and ensure the King's law (as written in the yellow-bound 'Book of the Law') is followed.

The Knights of Carcosa are human, although they ape the supernatural pallid subjects of the King, almost as if they secretly want to become something more than human. They wear military uniforms, made up of bright yellows and decorated with various medals that don't seem to mean anything significant. Each of them wears a yellow silken mask which is tied around their face. It is generally believed that most of the Knights are men and women who were followers of Yellowism — and thus the cult devoted to the King in Yellow — before the Apocalypse. No one is really sure of the truth, though.

Knights of Carcosa are typically armed with sabers, pistols and supernatural items.

Star-Steeds

These large flying creatures are something alien to Earth, brought by the King in Yellow to serve as a means of travel for his forces. It is not uncommon to see them being ridden by Knights of Carcosa who need to quickly travel to distant regions of the Empire.

corner they see several men dressed in strange uniforms, all of them wearing yellow silk masks and carrying sabers. The Knights of Carcosa have arrived on the scene. The Survivors know that these are the elite and secret police of the King in Yellow. The Survivors should recognize that they are now fugitives — somehow the King in Yellow believes them to be a threat and has deployed his most terrible servants to catch them.

If the Survivors know what's good for them, they will decide to flee the city, and fast. If any Survivor is so foolish as to go home, they will find Pallid Revelers and Knights knocking at their doors. Anyone found in their house, guilty or not, will quickly find themselves under a Pallid Mask. Captured Survivors may even find themselves sent to one of the rural prison camps for 'the disappeared' — maybe even the one at **CADBURY CASTLE** (see page 272).

Chief Libertine Crowley of the King's First Bohemian Grenadiers

As the Survivors pursue their quest of locating the Arthurian relics, they will encounter opposition from many of the King in Yellow's agents. Most of these will, however, be faceless — either literally in the case of the Pallid Revelers, or figuratively in the case of unremarkable Yellowcoat soldiers. The one exception is Chief Libertine Crowley. He serves the important plot function of providing a recurring human face for the Survivors' antagonists — a kind of Javier or Moriarty figure.

Chief Crowley is something of a 'want-to-be'. As a high-up figure in the Yellowcoats, his main ambition is to be permitted to join the ranks of the Knights of Carcosa. He sees a chance for this promotion before him in the form of apprehending or defeating the Survivors. He figures that if he captures such high-profile dissidents, it will make his career. This desperation will keep him pursuing the Survivors all the way around England if that's what it takes (see the encounters at **DOZMARY POOL**, **CADBURY CASTLE**, *and* **GLASTONBURY** *as examples of his persistence; the Game Moderator is welcome to add more).*

The Game Moderator can provide some logical means as to how Crowley can track the Survivors during their travels. Perhaps the man keeps on their trail by simply asking around about the Survivors. Or perhaps he has access to the King in Yellow's impressive surveillance network, or even to supernatural means of monitoring what is happening in the Kingdom. In addition to encounters by which Crowley seeks to capture the Survivors, the GM should feel free to drop in smaller hints that someone has been asking around about them at locations they visit.

The goal is to paint the Chief Libertine as a cat-like predator who tirelessly follows the progress of the Survivors, mostly observing from a distance, but randomly turning up without warning with a sudden strike aimed at detaining them or killing them. Each time the Survivors encounter him face-to-face he will seem more and more angry and frustrated by his earlier failures. When they reach the final stage of their quest in Glastonbury, Crowley will go all-out in a final effort to kill them.

In addition to serving as a direct adversary to the Survivors, Crowley can also serve as a more subtle cause of worry for any Survivors who have a secret past as one of the King in Yellow's servants (such as the pre-generated Survivor Mortimer Oswin). To these characters, Crowley represents the threat of their dirty laundry becoming public knowledge — a fact that the Chief Libertine will well recognize and exploit in any way he can.

Escape from London

The Survivors must now flee London while being hunted by the Knights of Carcosa as declared enemies of the Kingdom. How the Survivors escape the city is ultimately up to them. Two examples have been included for methods which the Survivors could attempt, as well as a few potential complications the Game Moderator can throw in their way to make the journey more interesting.

Keep in mind that the Survivors are fugitives of this new government, and it has a formidable surveillance network (informants, spies, and supernatural observers) at its disposal. People — and things far worse than people — are looking for them. Reminders of the scale of the (mostly hidden) forces on their tail should motivate the Survivors to keep moving fast.

Players might propose other modes of escape from London – the GM should humor any reasonable plan but ensure there are still a few challenges to be overcome, and heart-pounding moments of near capture. Use the two examples as a template and improvise something fitting. Any escape plan that fails should result in the Survivors being captured and sent to the prison camp at Cadbury Castle.

If the Survivors decide not to flee but to stay in the city, make their lives increasingly difficult. Wandering patrols of Knights and Dancers are scouring the streets looking for them. Have their homes and places of business broken into. Have their families and loved ones threatened, killed, or mysteriously made to disappear. Make the Survivors afraid, anxious and worried. Their only hope is to search for the items mentioned in the book.

FLEEING ON THE THAMES

Survivors may try and find a boat to take them out of the city, perhaps a steamboat traveling down the Thames. None of the Survivors have access to such a boat so they will either have to steal one or find a boat willing to take them out of the city. Either option will mean the Survivors must visit London's Southwark area.

Stealing a boat involves a **Luck** test to find a suitable craft. If the Survivors (wisely) wait

Handout 3: Excerpts from *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps* by Theodore Franklin

Three of the more common legends of Arthurian lore are that of Excalibur, the quest for the Holy Grail and the location of Avalon where Arthur is said to live or lie in a dream like death-sleep. Each of the legends plays an important part in the lore, even more so than the Round Table, Guinevere and Mordred. Scholarly research and local legend have given us some likely real-world locations associated with each of these legends. Artifacts and clues sprinkled throughout history helps narrow this down as well.

Excalibur and the Dozmary Pool: *In Cornwall lies a small lake, barely a mile across. It is in this body of water that the Lady of the Lake is said to live. It was from the Lady of the Lake that Arthur received the sword Excalibur. This sword was a fearsome weapon, able to cut through virtually everything. It was said, too, that merely drawing the blade caused one's enemies to be filled with fear. Legend has it that Arthur rowed out onto the lake where the Lady of the Lake made herself known to him, offering the sword to Arthur to bring peace to England.*

Upon his death, Arthur asked that the sword be returned to the Lady of the Lake for it was hers and no mortal man could wield it for long. Arthur entrusted one of his knights, Griflet, to return the sword to the lake. Twice Griflet went to the lake but could not bring himself to discard such a magnificent weapon, coming instead back to his dying king falsely claiming that he had performed the deed. Each time Arthur saw through his deception and chastised the knight. On the third attempt, Griflet threw the sword back into the lake. It is said that the hand of a woman emerged from the lake, caught the sword and disappeared beneath the depths with the weapon.

Some say that the sword is still in the depths of the lake but whether anyone could retrieve it, or whether one would first need to be chosen by the Lady of the Lake is a matter for speculation.

Cadbury Castle, Camelot, and the Holy Grail: *The remains of this ancient hillfort can be found in Somerset. There are two different Arthurian legends connected with this place. According to old stories, this hillfort was truly the location of King Arthur's fortress, known as Camelot. It was here, they say, that the fabulous Round Table was installed where all who sat at the table were considered as equals. The chosen knights were those who Arthur trusted with the affairs of his kingdom and who could help bring peace to his lands.*

The stories of the deeds of the Round Table Knights are many but the most famous is their quest for the Holy Grail. In this, they sought the cup that once caught the blood of Christ when he hung on the cross and was pierced with a lance by a Roman legionnaire. Some say the Holy Grail has wonderous powers, able to heal people or even bring them back from the dead. The Grail was hidden away, only able to be found by those who were pure of heart and faith. Some stories state that the knights did indeed find the Holy Grail and brought it back to Camelot, where it still rests.

Other stories state that Arthur's knights themselves may still lay under the hill of Cadbury Castle in some sort of deathless sleep, a swoon similar that of Arthur himself. Like him, they are said to sleep until England needs them most.

Glastonbury Abbey, and the Legend of Avalon: *Glastonbury Abbey is a set of ruins which were once a large abbey in Somerset, near the small town of Glastonbury. The abbey was destroyed by a fire in 1184; before that date, some who worked there claimed that King Arthur's sleeping body was put to rest beneath the Abbey. This has led some to believe that the Abbey is in fact the site of Avalon, as mentioned in the original legend.*

until the evening, then only 1D4 sailors are lurking around the wharves. **Stealth** tests will be required to sneak aboard a boat without being spotted. If seen, the Survivors may have a fight on their hands. If they do not neutralize their attackers quickly, unwanted attention will be drawn to their attempted theft. Manning the boat will also prove a challenge. Someone is needed as the pilot and one, preferably two, must shovel coal into the furnace to make the steamship go fast enough.

If instead the Survivors decide to hire a boat, they will have to make **Persuade** tests as they ask around for anyone willing to pilot a small

The Legend of King Arthur

According to legend, Arthur was a King of Britain who fended off the Saxon armies when they invaded England. While the story itself has no definitive time period, some historians think Arthur might have been a chieftain or king of Roman-occupied England who fought off the invading Anglo-Saxon armies sometime in the 5th or 6th century. Some of the legends claim his kingdom expanded from England to cover Gaul, Iceland, Norway, Denmark and Ireland.

There are many versions of the legend but the most popular, and oldest, is that Arthur became king of all of England. In the earliest versions, he would travel around and kill various monsters that preyed on people — even leading ancient Celtic gods into battles against otherworldly fortresses. As the legend was retold and elaborated, Arthur would eventually be said to have built a city known as Camelot to unite all of England under one banner. In this he was aided by a powerful wizard known as Merlin, a mysterious and ancient figure who helped Arthur rise to power. At his side, Arthur also gathered the most powerful and bravest knights to assist in bringing law and order to England. Eventually, there was one who rose to challenge Arthur. In some versions of the tale, it is Arthur's son and in others a nephew. What is agreed on is the name of this traitor who turned on the benevolent king: Mordred.

When Arthur left England on an adventure (in some versions to go to war), Mordred supposedly seized the throne along with Arthur's wife, Guinevere. When Arthur returned, he found his kingdom in ruin and his queen a captive. Arthur did battle with Mordred and though the traitor was eventually killed, Mordred gave Arthur a grievous wound. As Arthur lay dying, some of his most faithful and valiant knights carried his body away and across a lake to a mysterious island known as Avalon. It is there that Arthur supposedly rests in a coma-like dream state. However, it is said that if England is ever in danger, he can be awoken to come to the aid of England. That time is now.

steamship out of the city. If the Survivors are not careful, such questions may draw unwanted attention to themselves. On any fumbled roll they will talk to the wrong person: either they will find themselves being jumped by a bunch of sailors looking for a potential reward, or a group of Knights will show up at the next location the Survivors visit. Otherwise, if successful, a man agrees to take them out of the city by the river for £100. They will also be expected to help with shoveling coal into the furnace.

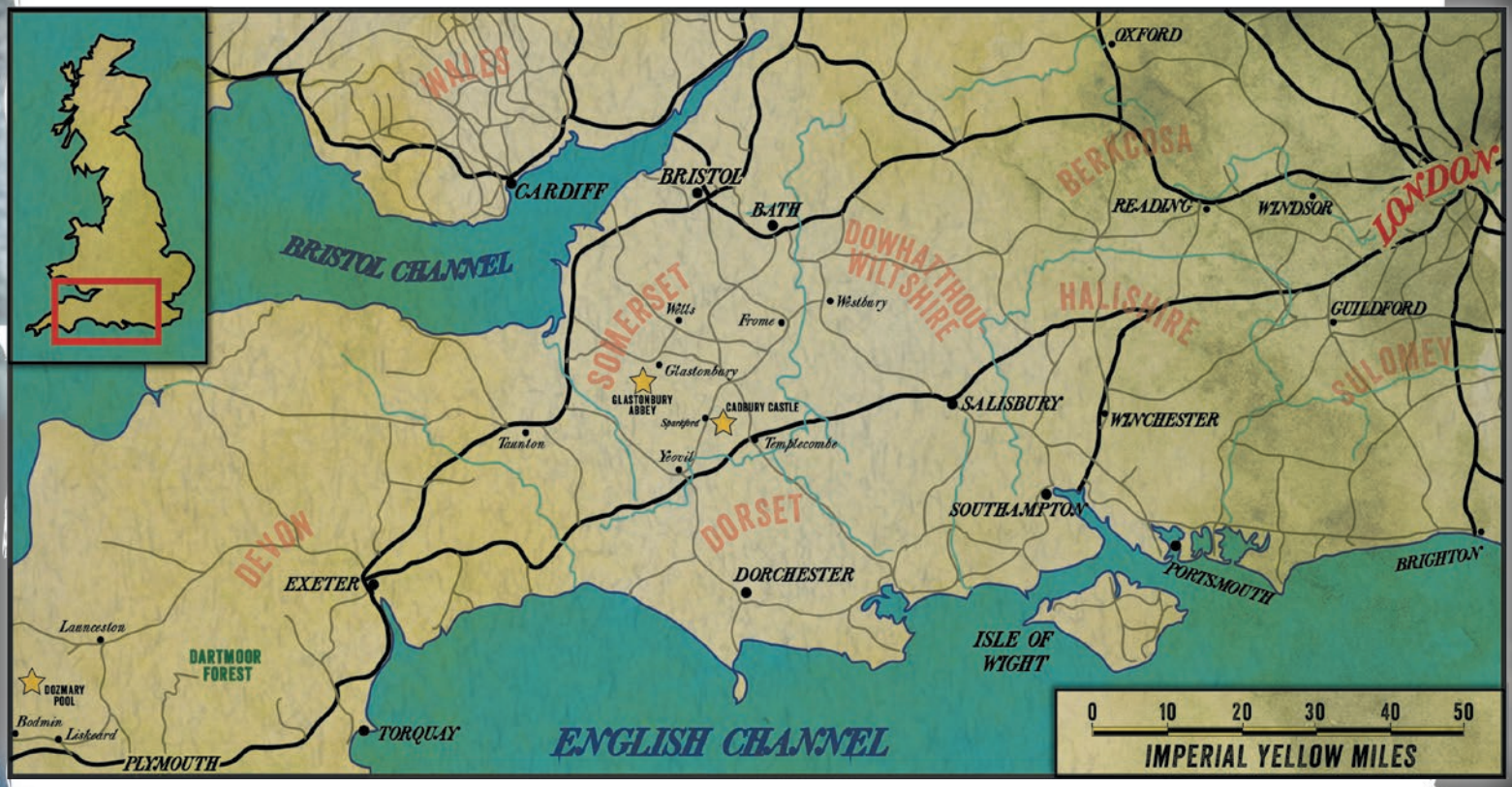
Complications: When the Survivors are on the Thames, likely at night, and speeding down the river, have anyone not busy with shoveling coal make an **Alertness** test. If successful, they spot a boat that is obviously following them. A light is thrown on them and the Survivors will see their pursuers. The boat contains two Knights of Carcosa as well as Chief Libertine Crowley. A fourth man pilots while a fifth shovels coal into the furnace. As the boat gets closer, the Knights will attack the Survivors and attempt to board their boat. Crowley can be heard viciously shouting to his minions to pile more coal, even as he takes pot shots with his gun. Survivors must either fight the pursuers off or somehow outrun them. The chase should be a tight one, with the Knights attempting to jump onto the Survivor's steamboat if they can get close enough to do so.

FLEEING THROUGH THE SEWERS

Survivors may attempt to escape London by going underneath the city and traveling through the sewers in search of a way out of the city. The biggest danger in such a plan is the dark and the labyrinthine nature of the sewer tunnels. **Navigate** tests may be called for to make sure the Survivors don't lose their way through the ancient stone tunnels. The safest route for them is to exit out onto the River Thames, along one of the many muddy banks. If the Survivors are forward-thinkers, they may arrange for a boat to meet them close to a sewer outlet. Failing that, Swim tests can be made to cross the Thames and escape.

Complications: Besides the dangers of drowning or losing themselves in the sewers, the two other biggest dangers are the sewer

The Libertine King's Southwestern England



rats and the groups of people who wander the sewers. When the King in Yellow ascended to the throne, there were a few who could not stomach living under the gaze of the Yellow Monarch and fled below ground to live in the sewers. The majority of these were religious fanatics who felt that the End Times had indeed come, and that the new King was Satan incarnate.

These groups have managed against all odds to survive down here, living on rats and whatever else they can get their hands on. The Survivors will find themselves waylaid by a small group of these fanatics, who call themselves 'The Sewer Angels' (for statistics, see the end of the scenario). Survivors may try to bargain for safe passage by sharing bible quotes with the fanatics; failing that they will find themselves relieved of any valuables that they carry, especially any items of food. If the Survivors react with violence, the Sewer Angels will fight back declaring them heretics and apostates. Survivors may have to fight their way out of the area or flee through sewer tunnels to escape the 'angels' (hopefully without losing track of where they need to be going).

As an additional (or alternate) complication, it is quite possible that Chief Libertine Crowley is also down in the Sewers with a small group of Yellowcoats, searching for the Survivors. Unlike his quarry, the Chief has excellent plans and schematics of the winding tunnels. He can use such superior knowledge to set a trap for his adversaries or to drive them further and further from their goal.

A JOURNEY TO SOUTH-WESTERN ENGLAND

Once the Survivors have successfully escaped from London, the Game Moderator should allow them a moment of respite — after all, they have managed to elude the assembled forces of the King in Yellow (or so they should believe).

Hopefully by this point this will also have had an opportunity to read the marked passages in *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps,* or at the very least brought the relevant pages so they can properly be studied now.

Free from the tight security of the capitol, the Survivors have some latitude in what they do next and, in particular, where they go. This scenario assumes that the players will eventually decide to pick up on the clues contained in the book and choose to track down the places with links to Arthurian Legend that have been circled. However, if players have other ideas about how their Survivors might choose to escape the ever-watchful eye of the Libertine King's surveillance, let them pursue them. Feel free to improvise encounters with loyalist forces, Pallid Revelers, and other threats — perhaps ramping these threats up in a way that makes players realize that, until they have either cleared their names or found a way to fight back, the forces of the King will continue coming for them.

Traveling Across the King in Yellow's England

If and when the Survivors decide to travel to the locations indicated in Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps, they will quickly figure out that all of these locations are within a relatively small region of southwestern England – in the countryside between Somerset and Cornwall. The three indicated locations, Glastonbury, Cadbury, and Dozmary Pool are approximately 115 miles, 120 miles, and 225 miles WSW from London, respectively. Traveling to these locations, while remaining undetected by the King's network, will prove a challenge. The sections below give some possible ways in which the Survivors may complete parts of this journey, and some of the challenges they might encounter on different modes of transport.

While the Survivors can take trains and even river boats across England to get to various destinations, their cross-country journey should be broken up by periods of excitement and strangeness. A few vignettes are included nearby. The Game Moderator does not need to use all of these but is encouraged to use as many of them as he or she believes helps the players understand the nuances of this perverted version of Britain.

TRAVEL BY TRAIN

The Yellow King's Profligate Empire still maintains an excellent network of steam-driven trains that crisscross the whole of Britain. Most relevant to travel from London towards southwestern England are the Great Western Line and the South Western Line. The former runs from London's Paddington Station through to Exeter and then on to Penzance, the larger towns along its route being (in order from London) Reading, Bath, Bristol, Taunton, (Exeter), Plymouth, and Truro.

The South Western Line leaves London at Waterloo Station, travels through Woking, Basingstoke, Salisbury, Templecombe, Yeovil, to Exeter.

For the three locations pertinent to this scenario:

- **Glastonbury:** *there is a minor rail line (the Somerset and Dorset Line) which has a station in Glastonbury; it meets the Great Western Line at Bath and again between Bristol and Taunton. This minor line also meets up with the South Western Line at Templecombe and Yeovil.*
- **Cadbury:** *the rural site of the castle is reasonably close to Yeovil; there is a minor line train heading NE from Yeovil (towards Frome and Westbury) that can get even closer — the station at Sparkford is about an hour's walk from the castle.*
- **Dozmary Pool:** *the pool is in the middle of a large forested region and is thus not especially close to any rail line. The Great Western Line passes close to Liskeard (about 9 miles from the pool; or 3 hours' walk) and also has a spur line which stops at Bodmin (11 miles; 3 hours). Alternatively, there is a local rail between Exeter and Plymouth via a northern route around Dartmoor Forest which connects to Launceston (14 miles from Dozmary; 4 hours walk).*

Survivors traveling on the trains of the King in Yellow's major lines will find them to be fantastic and ornately designed devices. Covered in gilt, lit with candle holders held by golden hand-shaped designs, fine plush seats and even erotic art covering the insides. Servants wander around carriages offering drinks to anyone who asks, sometimes other favors as well.

Painting Your Canvas Yellow and Unpleasant

Besides the encounters included in the main text, the Game Moderator can use the following short encounters or descriptions to highlight the strangeness that now lies over Britain. These thumbnails can be inserted into the adventure during any point as the Survivors travel to and across southwestern England. Some of these can easily be lengthened into longer encounters for the Survivors to deal with, it the Game Moderator so desires.

1.) *As the Survivors pass an industrial town, they see a factory that has been altered with the unnecessary and confusing addition of flying buttresses. A yellow smoke is belching from the smokestacks. Inhaling these vapors provides a hallucinatory effect. When the wind blows right the entire town is under the thrall of these hallucinations. Inhaling the smoke might involve a* **CON***-related test and, if failed, a Sanity Loss of 0/1 from the resulting hallucinations.*

2.) *A group of farmers working their field. From a distance the Survivors cannot see what they are farming but if they investigate closer, they see that the farmers are tending to what looks like a bunch of burlap sacks. Removing a burlap sack finds a person who has been buried up to their neck in the field. They are alive but in poor health, and even poorer spirits. If the Survivors speak with these buried prisoners, they can learn that their only crime was standing against the King in Yellow. Sanity Loss of 1/1D4 for this startling discovery.*

3.) *Survivors come across an American who has recently arrived in England via steamer. He or she is trying to sell the newest patented suicide booths that have become all the rage right across the Imperial American Empire. Any sort of negative talk about the Imperial American Empire sends the foreigner into a rage.*

4.) *The Survivors come upon a tent set up outside a small village. If they peek inside, they find a man has been strapped to a chair with a device forcing his eyes open. A pornographic magic lantern show is playing on infinite repeat. If they ask around, they are told the man is undergoing treatment after he refused to join in the debauched carnival-like atmosphere of the once quiet village.*

5.) *The Survivors arrive in a town to see the town's collection of books being hauled out of the library by the cartful. A clerk from the Department of New Truth is sitting at a table and going through each book with a quill and ink. Any passages that the clerk does not approve of (usually anything involving the Christian God or upholding a sense of modesty or decorum) is crossed out with the ink to make it unreadable.*

Complication: An Unexpected Stop

During a rail trip, while passing through an empty section of countryside, the train comes to a halt in the open wilderness. Survivors succeeding on an **Alertness** test hear the sounds of something landing on top of the train. A few moments later, three Pallid Revelers glide onto the train … and behind them is a Knight of Carcosa. Naturally, they are looking for the Survivors.

The cramped and crowded nature of the train carriage makes it a hard area for a fight, but an easy place for the Survivors to sneak out of. Stealth rolls should be called for if they attempt this; failure means they are either spotted by the Knight or another passenger sees them behaving suspiciously and turns them over to the searchers.

Survivors who decide to hide on the train in the hope of not being noticed may be alarmed to see the portly figure of Chief Libertine Crowley appear and confer with the Knight. The searchers then abandon the rest of the train and concentrate an ordered and thorough search of the carriage where the Survivors are concealed. Avoiding their prying eyes will be especially difficult (**Stealth** tests at –40%), however anyone who manages to remain hidden for 20 minutes will see the searchers give up and leave.

If and when the Survivors choose to (wisely) quit the train, they will soon begin to hear screams coming from within the carriage they recently quit. Crowley and his associates are torturing some passengers in retribution and clapping Pallid Masks on the rest (Sanity loss 0/1).

Outside the train, Survivors can see that two saddled star-steeds sit on top of the train. These are obviously mounts for Crowley and the Carcosan Knight. Adventurous-minded Survivors might decide to steal these and fly away. Each star-steed can only take a maximum of two humans. Without having binding rituals or other supernatural protections, even approaching these great bat-winged monstrosities is dangerous. The Game Moderator may call for **Luck** tests, with failure indicating that the star-steeds attack the Survivors.

Assuming the brave Survivors manage to successfully mount the beast, wrangling it into the air requires a **Ride** test at –20% plus a further **POW×5** test to assert the rider's will over the beast (if not bound). Failure on the POW test might mean that the steed ignores the rider and simply flies the Survivor straight upwards into the stratosphere where it knows humans cannot breathe.

Failing a Ride test at any time means that the Survivor falls from his mount, tumbling to the ground (see **FALLING** on page 75 to determine the damage from such a fall). A *fumbled* roll may lead to the Survivor being flown into space where they will suffocate without access to some form of protective enchantments.

If the Survivors ignore the steeds and simply flee the train on foot, each must make a **Stealth** roll to avoid the attention of searchers still on the train. If even one Survivor fails their test, it is likely a chase will ensue. If at least one star-steed remains atop the train carriage, Crowley will mount it to pursue his quarries by air.

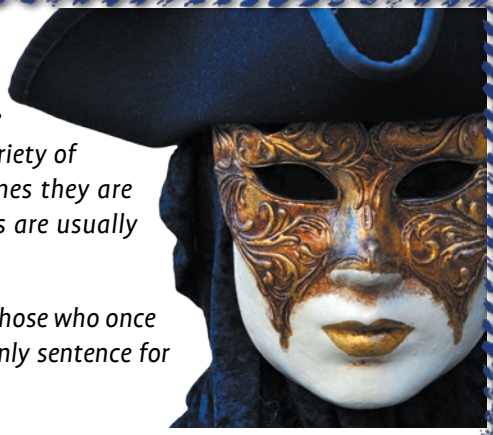
TRAVEL BY RIVER OR CANAL

Victorian England had a huge canal system which was slowly decaying, owing to the rising supremacy of trains. However, it was still common for the wealthy and some traders to use narrowboats to travel along England's canals and rivers. While there are not many navigable waterways in the area of Southwestern England where the principal quest sites are located, there are many such river and canal routes which Survivors could take for the early parts of the journey westward from London. By such means they can get far out of the city. Traveling by river boat is likely the safest option open to the Survivors as they are not likely to have to deal with the King in Yellow's agents. What they may have to deal with are the so-called 'River Rats', a group of river pirates who have begun living off England's rivers and canals in a desperate attempt to escape the King in Yellow's reign.

Complication: The River Rats

The River Rats live in small homes along several major and minor rivers. Their camps are populated by refugees who are attempting to escape the King in Yellow's watchful eye. The River Rats' typical mode of operation is this:

Powers of the Pallid Masks



The Pallid Masks are one of the most effective weapons employed by the forces of the King in Yellow. They look like normal masks made out of a variety of material. Some look to be made of cloth, others of porcelain and sometimes they are made out of stranger materials such as leather or even bone. These masks are usually full-faced though some only cover half of the face.

These masks can be seen on many of the citizens of the new Yellow Empire — those who once raised arms against the new King and needed to be 'pacified'. The one and only sentence for lawbreakers is to wear a Pallid Mask.

When a mask is put on an individual for the first time, they immediately freeze up. The victim must immediately make a **POW×2** *test. If he or she fails, then the mask takes control. The victim will then start moving in a jerky way, as if trying to dance. The effect is rather eerie, enough so that to see it for the first time is worth a Sanity loss of 0/1. Those wearing the mask may go about their normal lives, giving in to the decadence that is now a normal part of life under the King in Yellow. While the mask is on their face, the individual immediately responds to the whims or commands (mental or verbal) of any of the Knights of Carcosa. This means that in the wrong situation, a Survivor may find themselves fighting off a mob of angry masked individuals, all obeying an unseen will. Once the mask is on, that person is a slave to the King in Yellow.*

If by some rare chance, the victim makes the **POW** *test then the mask falls ineffectually to the ground. The mask is no longer a danger and somehow seems lesser when looked at. However, this is a rare occurrence. Those who do not succumb to the mask are often dealt with by authorities in other, sometimes crueler, ways (see* **CADBURY CASTLE** *on page 272).*

If a Survivor becomes masked during the course of the scenario, it may be the end of them. The Game Moderator may rule that Survivors which have a link to Arthurian figures are less susceptible (e.g., have a higher multiplier in the **POW** *test).*

they keep an eye out for any boats coming down the river. When they see a boat approaching, they launch their own boats. Typically, they use small rafts, narrowboats and rowboats. They try to get close to their target, so they can clamber up the sides of the boat they wish to board. Once onboard, they hold up the crew with guns and knives. After taking everything they possibly can, they leave and return to their riverside dens. It is only a matter of time before they are hunted to a bitter end but for now, they are free.

If the Survivors encounter the River Rats and attempt to appeal to their better natures, they find themselves laughed at. If they mention King Arthur or any such nonsense, the River Rats laugh even harder. These desperate and hardened men and women cannot be swayed to assist or even let the Survivors go by unmolested without some sort of definite proof. If the Survivors fight them and manage to kill half their numbers, the River Rats flee back to their hideouts with whatever loot they can grab while fleeing. Survivors can try and pursue the river pirates if they wish.

TRAVEL ON FOOT OR BY CARRIAGE

Traveling the roads of Britain on foot, horseback, or via carriage is not only risky but likely the hardest option for Survivors. They will also need to cover large distances between some locations.

While the King in Yellow technically rules all of Britain, his grasp on more outlying rural areas is less absolute. In such places, Survivors may still be able to hop a ride on the back of a local farmer's wagon. There is always a chance, however, that people encountered along the way are loyal to the new King and may become suspicious if Survivors let slip too much information about their quest. The GM may make secret **Luck** tests to determine any loyalty, leaving the players guessing as to the presence or absence of danger. If the Survivors drop too many clues (e.g., mentioning they are fleeing something, ask how the farmer feels about the new King), they may have to deal with a farmer attempting to turn them over to the new local 'Yellow Sheriff'.

Sticking to the roads provides other dangers as well, the biggest being bandits or roaming bands of Pallid Revelers from nearby villages. Game Moderators can arrange encounters with either as they desire, typically at any point where the action begins to ebb, or the Survivors start feeling safe.

Complication: Stand and Receive!

During a road trip, whether by foot, horse, or carriage, the Survivors pass through a small forest. As they travel, they are accosted by several men wearing antiquated outfits and carrying equally outdated flintlock pistols (both stolen from a museum). The bandits force the Survivors to stop with a cry of "Stand … and Receive the Truth."

If the group responds to these scruffy men in tricorn hats with violence, a desperate fight will result. However, if they wait to see what the men want, their leader will approach the group with an unorthodox offer. He and his group do not want to rob the Survivors of anything, rather they want to give them something … the memories that were stolen from them when the Libertine King assumed the throne. They fear that even out here far from the King's center of influence, people are beginning to fall under his spell and forget that the world used to be different. He has a book that he says can overturn this cruel amnesia – if only they will stay here for an hour to read the passages he has marked.

The book carried by the bandit leader is nothing special, just a detailed book describing life in 18th Century Britain. While recollections of times before the coming of the King in Yellow can, indeed, dispel the fogginess clouding people's minds, the Survivors have already had that lifted by Myrddin's mirror — so they will not remember anything further.

If, however, the Survivors spend more than half an hour with the bandits they run the risk of pursuers behind them on the road catching up. Game Moderators might even want to have this restful moment rudely interrupted by the arrival of Chief Libertine Crowley with a squad of Yellowcoats. Even without listening to their appeals, Crowley will have the bandits shot for treason against the Profligate Empire. Once those rebels are dispatched, he will turn his attentions to the Survivors … who should flee as quickly as they can. Fortunately, on this occasion, Crowley does not have his flying steed but rather rides a horse that he has pushed rather cruelly — thus escaping him may not be as difficult as it might be in other circumstances.

GLASTONBURY ABBEY

Of the three real-world locations with Arthurian connections marked in *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps,* Glastonbury in Somerset is the closest to London (approximately 115 miles away). This may make it the first site chosen by Survivors to visit, although the secrets under Glastonbury Abbey will not yield themselves fully until after the artifacts at the other two locations have been retrieved. This may mean that Survivors need to make a second visit to Glastonbury to complete their quest.

Glastonbury Abbey is a set of ruins that were once a large abbey, close to the small town of Glastonbury. Any Survivor who makes a **History** test knows that the original abbey was burned to the ground by a great fire in 1184. *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps* draws attention to claims that the Abbey was somehow the site of the mystical Avalon where Arthur's body was taken. This same information can be gleaned from an **Occult** test. While the site of Glastonbury Abbey is now in the middle of solid earth, in centuries past this area was a marsh and what is now called Glastonbury Tor (the rise on which the Abbey sits) was previously an island in that marsh, thus the connection with the mystical island of Avalon.

In truth, Glastonbury Abbey is indeed the place where Arthur's body lies, but finding his remains and bringing his long-dead spirit back into the world are things that are only possible if the Survivors have first found both Excalibur and the Holy Grail.

The Town of Glastonbury

The ruins are not far from the small town of Glastonbury, which has not fared well under the corrupting influence of the King in Yellow. When Survivors enter the town, they will immediately notice the town center is dominated by a tall maypole. Around this, masked townsfolk dance gaily indulging in not only the strange choreography of the Pallid Revelers but also in various debaucheries. The ribbons of the maypole are made of a strange tan colored fabric; if a Survivor gets close enough to examine one then they can determine that it is made of some sort of leather. Success on either a **Medicine** or **Science (Biology)** test identifies the leather as made from human skin (Sanity Loss 0/1D2). The same tests will also recognize that the pole itself is made from bone, probably also of human origin.

Most of Glastonbury's townsfolk now wear the Pallid Mask. The few who remain free from the mask are extremely distrustful of outsiders. If the Survivors push too hard while questioning the unmasked townsfolk, they will find that the locals push back just as hard. Townsfolk are rude and curt and might even outright ignore questions from the Survivors. If a Survivor makes an **Insight** test, he or she can determine that the locals are more than likely afraid that outsiders might bring even more trouble to Glastonbury.

If the Survivors find a local and buy a few drinks (or perhaps more than a few), a successful **Persuade** or **Reassure** test will gain their trust. In that case, the Glastonbury local will tell them a sorry tale. A month or so ago, according to the inebriated local, several townsfolk tried to set up an organized resistance protesting against the laws of the Yellow King and the actions of his Pallid Revelers. This was very quickly quashed when Knights of Carcosa showed up and laid siege to the town. The ringleaders of the 'rebellion' were rounded up in the town square and everyone was forced to watch as the rebels were flogged by the Knights.

Then the flensing started.

The skin of the rebels was removed from their bodies and cut to make into the maypole ribbons, their bones became the maypole itself. After the grisly sight of this dismemberment, the Knights brought out the Pallid Masks — which many of the townsfolk were forced to don. Some of the locals tried to run or hide but were dragged screaming from their houses by their former neighbors who now wore the Pallid Mask and mindlessly obeyed the will of the Libertine King. The (now very drunk) informant also states that the masked locals mostly keep to the maypole where they cavort all day. Now the town of Glastonbury lives in fear that any outsiders may bring further wrath of the King in Yellow. If the first retaliation was so brutal, what would a second be like? The remaining unmasked citizens of Glastonbury

are in no hurry to find out, thus the generally chill reception. Sanity Loss of 0/1 is appropriate for hearing this strange and horrifying tale.

If the Survivors spend significant time in Glastonbury (or if they pay a return visit), they may hear the fate of their informant. A day after speaking with them he or she is reported missing, and shortly afterwards a dead body will be found in an alley. The informant's belly has been torn open and he or she has been strangled with the removed intestines. If Survivors are present to witness their informant's unpleasant fate, Sanity Loss is 1/1D6+1. What might prove even more unsettling is that there is no indication of who killed the informant, so the Survivors have no way of determining if they will be next or not. Either way it is a clear sign that the townsfolk are not to talk to outsiders and the Survivors will find themselves outcasts even more than they were before.

At the Abbey — Without the Artifacts

If the Survivors arrive at the ruins of the abbey by daylight, they appear utterly unremarkable. No one is around, the entire area is covered in wildlife and the long-burned walls of the former abbey seem to have no secrets to reveal. Searching the grounds finds nothing of interest, no signs of hidden basements nor strange symbols carved into walls.

On the other hand, if the Survivors visit at night then it is another situation entirely. In that case, at some point soon after the group arrives, they will hear the sound of soft chanting of Latin prayer. Distant candlelight can be seen in the darkness, a line of candles. As the Survivors watch, a ghostly line of cloaked and hooded monks appears out of thin air chanting a soft prayer in Latin. The monks do not interact or acknowledge the Survivors at all. If a Survivor stands in their way, a chill runs up his or her spine as the spectral monks walk straight through him or her. Experiencing this is worth 0/1 Sanity points and requires the Survivor to make a **POW×5** test. Failure results in a draining sensation and a loss of 1D6 Willpower Points.

As the Survivors watch, they see that also in the procession are several knights in gleaming armor carrying the body of a man who is dressed like a bronze age king complete with a circlet of gold on his head. The man has what looks like a sword or spear wound, blood drenching his tunic and armor. The spectral knights are crying and mourning but eerily enough, no sounds can be heard from them. It is as if they are screaming silently in their anguish. Survivors who make a successful **Search** test while observing the ghostly knights might spot that the faces of several knights look eerily familiar — possibly similar to those of the Survivors themselves.

If the Survivors continue to watch, the monks come to what moments ago was a solid wall but in which a glowing spectral archway has now partially appeared (Sanity Loss 1/1D2). Through the half-visible archway, they can see a large stone staircase descending down into the earth. There is an inscription carved into the highest point of the spectral arch (see **Handout #4;** the inscription can be easily translated by anyone with a **Foreign Language (Latin)** skill of 30%+). The monks vanish one by one through the arch and down the stairs. As they take a few steps down, the ghosts vanish until they have all descended and disappeared from view.

If the Survivors attempt to follow the ghostly procession, their attempt will automatically fail if they do not already possess both Excalibur (see **DOZMARY POOL**, page 276) and The Holy Grail (see **CADBURY CASTLE**, page 272). Although they can see the archway, any attempt to walk through it results in them hitting the solid wall which they can also see occupying the same space. Running into the wall causes 1 HP of damage unless either an **Athletics** or **DEX×5** test is successful.

At the Abbey — With the Artifacts

If the Survivors arrive at Glastonbury Abbey carrying both Excalibur and The Holy Grail, things play out differently. When approaching the spectral archway, it is obvious that the solid wall will now yield to allow the Survivors through into a void beyond. However, other events will conspire to delay their entry into the subterranean resting place of Arthur.

Handout 4: The Inscription on the Spectral Arch

The Latin inscription translates as:

"Here lies Arthur Pendragon, King of all Britain. May he only rise again to new life when England needs him most.

"With Excalibur in hand, bathed in water from the Holy Grail that caught the Son of God's blood, only then can he return to save us all."

As soon as the first Survivor has set foot through the spectral arch, the rest of them will be startled by a tremendous screech coming from the heavens. Looking up they can see two star-steeds rapidly descending to the grassy turf between the ruined walls of the Abbey. Atop one bat-winged horror sits a Knight of Carcosa, while on the other the portly figure of Chief Libertine Crowley can be seen. The two will quickly dismount and race at full speed towards the Survivors. Crowley is in command, and he realizes that this is his last opportunity to foil the Survivors' quest to reach the sleeping spirit of King Arthur. Accordingly, he will give the command to the Knight that there is to be no quarter given – *"The enemies of the lawful monarch must die this eve, their blood seeping to drown this accursed ruin."*

The Game Moderator should run this as Crowley's last stand — both he and the Knight will fight to the death. If the Survivors flee through the archway into the supernatural realm beyond, Crowley and his sidekick Knight will pursue them into the space beyond (which is accessible to them thanks to the artifacts the Survivors have brought). The Chief Libertine does not care where he smites them, so long as they wind up dead.

"THEN I SEE YOU COMING / OUT OF NOWHERE ..."

Survivors passing through the spectral arch find themselves on a stairway descending down into the earth, twisting around until it opens into a hallway. Candles line the hallway, already lit to provide illumination in this earthen tunnel (although the Survivors can see no one who could have lit them). There is no sign of the ghostly apparitions of the parading monks and knights.

As the Survivors follow the tunnel, it eventually opens into a large cavern. The soft lapping of water can be heard faintly. Looking around, they can see that they are standing on a beach, the edge of a large lake that fills most of this vast chasm. The water is dark, apparently both deep and cold. In the distance, Survivors can see an island in the middle of the lake. What looks like a body or statue lies atop a kind of structure built on the island. No bridge or boat can be seen linking the island to the shore on any side; hence there is no obvious way to go across.

The only clue is a short Latin inscription carved onto a large rock at the edge of the water. The inscription can be translated by anyone with **Foreign Language (Latin)** skill at 20%+. It states: "Trust in the One True God: Matthew 14: 22—33." The clue is of course a reference to a Bible passage. A Survivor who makes an **INT×3** or **Post-Apocalypse Lore (Christianity)** test remembers this is the passage where Jesus was seen to have walked on water.

If a Survivor takes a step out onto the water starting from the marker stone, they at first feel like they are walking right into the water until their foot hits a stone platform concealed beneath the surface. This path continues over six stone platforms which takes the Survivor safety

to the island, albeit leaving them somewhat wet from the cold lake. So long as Survivors take their time, they can safely cross this hidden bridge. If they rush it (e.g., running to escape Crowley), **Athletics** tests may be called for to avoid slipping and falling into the water.

Alternatively, **Swim** tests can be made to get across the lake at a different point, but since the water is extremely cold **CON×5** tests are required to avoid the effects of hypothermia (1D4 HP damage). Even worse, something else lurks in the water. Survivors who attempt to swim across feel something brush against their ankles. The tentacles will attack, attempting to entangle a Survivor and pull them beneath the waves to drown them. A **STR×5** test can potentially let the Survivor break free, failing that they can attempt to cut through the tentacle (6 Hit Points) to make it let them go.

Anyone on the hidden bridge is not attacked — the tentacles seem to keep far away from it as if something is warding it off. If the Survivor can fight the lurking horror off, either by getting to the concealed bridge or by severing its tentacles, they can get to the island, probably a bit worse for wear.

ARISE ARTHUR, KING OF THE BRITONS

Arriving at the island, Survivors can approach the stone bier on which rests a withered corpse. The corpse is dressed in chainmail, a gold circlet on its head. A stone tablet lies in its hand, bearing a Latin inscription repeating the same message that was on the ghostly archway (see **Handout #4**). The corpse is rather desiccated and withered but otherwise seems in remarkably good condition considering how long it has been down here. An **Alertness** test with a + 10% bonus is enough for a Survivor to determine this is the figure which the ghosts were carrying in the spectral procession above.

While the tablet may confuse them, it is intended to provide instructions as to what is required to summon the spirit of Arthur back into his body. Since the Survivors already have Excalibur and the Grail, they are most of the way there. To bring Arthur back, Excalibur must be placed in his hands and water scooped up from the lake with the Grail. The water must be poured over the corpse. If these steps are followed, the Game Moderator should shift the action immediately to the scenario conclusion — see **WAKING ARTHUR** on page 279.

CADBURY CASTLE

The site of a former hillfort from sometime in the Bronze Age, Cadbury Castle is situated about 120 miles from London, and just 15 miles from Glastonbury (a five-hour walk). The castle is about 100 miles from Dozmary Pool. *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps* draws attention to Cadbury Castle because of tales which suggest it was once the location of Camelot and perhaps the location where The Holy Grail was hidden when Arthur was killed. The hill was used throughout England's history including by the Saxons and Romans, lending some credence to the notion that the fabled Round Table lay below in a hidden cavern.

Before the coming of the King in Yellow, Cadbury Castle was a lonely mound surrounded by trees with a few small villages surrounding it. Now it is becoming a fortress yet again, though one designed to keep people in, not out. Cadbury Castle, or "Cadbury Prison for the Modest" as it is now known, is one of several concentration-camp facilities that the Libertine King has ordered set up around Briton. These are mostly intended for "hard case moralists" who will not yield to the seductive lure of hedonism and have also resisted the power of the Pallid Mask. The King abhors anyone who outright rejects the decadence and excess he mandates. He also fears that such dissidents may try to return England to its previous conservative state, hence they need to be safely locked up in high security facilities.

Even though construction of The Prison for the Modest is not yet complete, it is already being used to house 30 prisoners. They live in a small shanty town at the foot of the hill, guarded by several Knights of Carcosa riding star-steeds who keep close watch over them. By day, the prisoners are taken up in chained work gangs to the top of the mound to build the jail they will one day inhabit. By night, they return down the hill to the shanty town. If they die, they die.

A few days ago, while working on top of the hill Sir Edward Vincent – the self-styled leader of the group of prisoners (who call themselves "The Pure") — made a significant discovery, which he has kept quiet from the jailers. While scratching around in dirt within the walls of the old castle, he unearthed a most remarkable teacup — of modern origin, but unbelievably without a single scratch, blemish, or chip taken out of it. Unknown to Sir Vincent, the teacup is in fact the Holy Grail: the ancient magical vessel has disguised itself by the same supernatural force that has engaged the Survivors to rescue Britain from the Libertine King's corruption. The form of the Grail was changed not only to reflect the innermost soul of England, but also to protect itself from the forces of the King in Yellow. Those forces would surely destroy it if they knew what it was. It is this modest-looking item that the Survivors must obtain if they wish to succeed in their quest.

Cadbury Prison Camp

The camp housing the forced labor prisoners is not fenced but is guarded by watchful sentinels. It represents the best opportunity for Survivors to interact with those who have been working in the Castle's ruins for months. Sneaking into the camp is, however, not easy. The camp is guarded by five Yellowcoats and three Knights of Carcosa. Each of the Knights is mounted on a star-steed. The Yellowcoats patrol the borders of the camp while the Knights fly above it. The Knights often take turns keeping watch on their star-steed while perching on an old ruined wall once belonging to a monastery.

A ring of trees and brush surrounds the hill itself providing ample hiding spots for the Survivors. Several ruins of ancient buildings also still dot the landscape. Many of these are in the process of being torn down to build the new prison but Survivors can also use these for cover. If they are careful and take their time, they may be able to avoid being spotted by the guards and even figure out the timing of the Yellowcoat patrol rounds. An **INT×5** test helps the Survivor realize that their clothing may also give them away, making them easier to spot out in the open. Changing into an outfit that can blend in better with the prisoners' ragged apparel will help not only in the approach but also once they are inside the camp itself.

If spotted approaching the camp, all three Knights swoop down and attack the Survivors.

Getting in and out of the camp is the hard part: once inside, the Survivors will have more latitude to move about without fear of harassment. Mingling with the prisoners is easy enough if the Survivors don't draw attention to themselves. The shanty town is full of people, some still wearing tattered finery from before the coming of the King in Yellow. The Survivors may even recognize a few famous people, including several high-ranking members of the abolished Church of England. The general atmosphere among the prisoners is one of depression and defeat. However, upon entering the camp, one of the first things the Survivors will note is the potent aroma of high-quality brewed tea wafting

throughout the camp. The second thing they will notice is the sounds of joviality coming from one of the bigger tents. This is, it must be said, an out of place sound in this dour prison camp.

Surprise Muster

If the Game Moderator wishes to throw an additional challenge into this section of the quest, he or she can arrange for Chief Libertine Crowley to arrive at the prison camp while the Survivors are searching it. The corrupt soldier is accompanied by three of his own Yellowcoats, and arrogantly asks to speak with the camp commander. Once this nervous young officer has been woken up, Crowley will rip shreds off him for a dozen failures — real or trumped up. The Chief Libertine doesn't care if there is any substance to his rage, so long as others bow down before him.

At the conclusion of the tongue-lashing, Crowley will order that the commander immediately call a full muster of all prisoners. This will involve guards hastily going from tent to tent forcing everyone out into an assembly area where they must line up and answer when their name is called. This sudden activity will make life difficult for Survivors who have infiltrated the camp — forcing them to choose between hiding from the guards (successful **Stealth** test needed) or pretending to be a prisoner whose details are somehow incorrectly recorded (successful **Disguise** and **Persuade** tests needed). Any Survivors who are detected as ring-ins or outside agents will immediately be marched to Chief Libertine Crowley for a determination of their fate. It will also result in an alarm being raised throughout the camp placing the camp guards on full alert. Survivors who fall into Crowley's hands are in for a dangerous ride.

Assuming they somehow weather this unexpected visit from the Chief Libertine, activity in the camp goes back to normal soon after he flies off on his star-steed. After that the intoxicating odor of quality tea will again be smelled wafting over the camp.

A Most Unusual Tea Party

Entering the tent which is the source of both the wonderful aroma and the sounds of merriment, Survivors will find that a tea party is in progress. In the center of the tent is a table laid out for tea. A dirty tablecloth has been thrown over the table which is covered in bits of unidentifiable meat, old biscuits and small pots of some sort of gruel-like slop. A chipped tea pot (decorated with a horrid purple and blue floral pattern) with several mismatched teacups and one tin cup are also on the table. At the head of the table is Sir Vincent, sipping tea from a beautiful looking china teacup. The smell of hot, delicious tea in this dismal surrounding may seem odd to the Survivors — Game Moderators can ask for an **INT×5** test to place the rather superb tea blend aroma coming from the steaming cup.

Sitting around the table are three other gentlemen. Survivors who have a Community Bond with an upper-class society that pre-dates the King in Yellow may attempt a roll against their **Bond value ×5** to recognize some of the former toffs. One is Robert Verona, a once-prominent banker who was dragged screaming from the Bank of England by the Knights. Another might be recognized as the pastor of a small village church, who was taken away in the middle of an Easter Mass along with several members of his parish. The final figure is unknown to the Survivor regardless of the roll. Furthermore, he is apparently dead. The rest of the tea party is talking and laughing at the corpse — they keep referring to him as "Oscar" — treating the body as if it is still alive. They are all mad here as an **Insight** test will show.

Upon seeing the Survivors standing at the tent flap, Sir Vincent will invite them to join the table for tea. If they accept, they can sit beside the rest of the group on a mixture of old cushions and logs. As they sit down, they will notice that what is being poured from the teapot is dark muddy water, certainly not a hot delicious cup of tea. Drinking it or eating any of the 'food' items on the table requires a **CON×5** test. Failure means the Survivor finds himself or herself rather nauseous from whatever they consumed. Depending on how they react, Survivors may run the risk of offending Sir Vincent, who does not take kindly to any display of rudeness.

AN EVEN MORE UNUSUAL TEACUP

An **Alertness** test will allow a Survivor to notice something remarkable — while the other tea party goers are drinking the same vile mud that they were offered, Sir Vincent is indeed drinking a hot cup of excellent English Earl Gray tea. If the Survivors watch closely, they notice that Sir Vincent pours his own drink from the same pot as everyone else but somehow when it hits his cup, it becomes transfigured into actual tea.

If the Survivors ask Sir Vincent how this is possible, he will shrug and laugh saying that any good Englishman knows how to make a cup of tea. He will not say any more on the subject without a successful **Persuade** test. If the Survivor succeeds, he will admit that he found this 'lucky cup' at the top of the Cadbury Castle hill a few days ago. Since then it has proven an exceptional charm, not to mention useful for a good cuppa now and again. It also doesn't seem to break easily, which he found out when he tripped on a rock and dropped it. Lucky indeed! Whether the Survivors recognize it as the Holy Grail that they are seeking, it is obvious there is something unusual about this teacup.

QUID PRO QUO

Getting their hands on Sir Vincent's discovery is no easy matter. He will not easily surrender his precious teacup, actively throwing a fit until it is returned. Each of the tea party participants are rather weak from lack of real food plus an abundance of hard labor, so the Survivors can likely take the cup by force if they wish. However, the commotion will surely bring every guard down on their heads, making the task of leaving the camp with their prize exceedingly difficult.

A better option is to try and strike a bargain with Sir Vincent. The best thing the Survivors can bargain with is the prisoners' freedom. If the Survivors can help 'The Pure' break out of their incarceration, Sir Vincent would gladly give them a hundred magical teacups if he could. However, carrying out such a prison break is no easy matter. The prisoners are all themselves malnourished and lack spirit.

Allow the players to formulate a plan to help the prisoners in some way that Sir Vincent would find valuable enough to part with his treasure. Here are a few options:

- The Survivors could take on the Knights of Carcosa in combat, attempting to fight them off.
- Alternatively, they could try sneaking the prisoners out of the camp somehow. This is the most dangerous option since sneaking a large group out from under the noses of vigilant guards is highly risky. They are more than likely going to be caught. Attempts at subterfuge like this will also draw down the wrath of the guards.
- A third option is for a Survivor to try and draw away the attention of the jailers by creating a commotion. Depending on the plan, they may potentially be able to draw the attention of all the guards, but such an effort might mean one Survivor's death or capture as the star-steeds descend upon the poor bait. If the distraction is not large enough, then one or two of the guards will be left behind to watch the prisoners.

Game Moderators should entertain any credible plan. Overcoming the prison camp security should not be impossible, just hard to pull off safely. Either way, the Survivors will hopefully gain the Holy Grail by hook or by crook.

If the Survivors are spotted by the Knights, they will be chased down by the star-steed mounted enforcers. Clever Survivors can use this to their advantage by adopting tactics such as entering an enclosed space which is too small for star-steeds to fly into, thereby forcing the Knights to approach on foot instead. Tactically minded Survivors could turn this fight to their advantage, overwhelming the King's forces who show little imagination.

Any Survivors who are captured by the Knights (or who fall into the hands of the loathsome Crowley) will be whisked back to London to appear before the King himself. They should be retired from play – for now, at least. The Game Moderator can decide whether the captive characters are encountered again later when the Survivors confront the King in Yellow at the climax of the scenario. Survivors that reappear after having been brought to the King's court will almost certainly have suffered some kind of impairment — physical or mental, or both.

If the Survivors manage to somehow pull off the significant achievement of freeing the entire camp, they will also have earned further loyal allies against the forces of the King in Yellow. While not many of the prisoners are fighters, they can be inspired to overthrow the new and corrupt monarchy.

DOZMARY POOL

Dozmary Pool is a small lake located in Cornwall on the lonely Bodmin Moor, near the small village of Altarnum. The pool is located approximately 225 miles from London and some 100 miles from Cadbury Castle and Glastonbury. *Walking in King Arthur's Footsteps* draws attention to Dozmary Pool because of the legend that this body of water was home of The Lady of The Lake, the spirit that presented Arthur with Excalibur. This was the sword which symbolized his divine right to rule over all of Britain. It is also the same lake into which the famed sword was thrown when Arthur was injured/killed by Mordred and retreated to Avalon.

For the Survivors it represents the place where they can reclaim Excalibur, an important prerequisite to summoning forth the spirit of Arthur from wherever he slumbers.

Dozmary Pool is not large, covering merely 37 acres in the midst of an old forest. When the Survivors arrive at the lake, everything seems entirely normal. The waters are calm and silent, no one is around, and a light mist covers the entirety of the moor. Walking the perimeter of the lake doesn't turn up anything other than a small rowboat hidden away in the reeds. It has been pulled up to the bank; its oars are stowed inside. The only other thing of interest can be perceived with a successful **Search** test. Anyone who succeeds (or who has it pointed out to them) can see that the sun glints off ... something ... in the middle of the lake. At first it seems like the reflection is coming off the water but on closer inspection it is obvious that the glint is from something below the surface of the water. The Survivors cannot see exactly what the submerged object is from the shore — the only way to discover more is to go out onto the lake.

Pushing the rowboat out into the water is not a hard job though it might take the Survivors some time. The rowboat is large enough to easily hold up to 4 people, or uncomfortably carry 6 in a push. Rowing out to the middle of the lake is easy enough for any Survivors with STR of 16+; anything lower and the Game Moderator can ask for a **STR×5** or **Pilot (Boat)** test. When the group gets to the middle of the pool, the glint in the water mysteriously vanishes. As the Survivors watch though, the water starts to bubble and boil as something starts to rise to the surface.

Farcical Aquatic Ceremony

Slowly, a sword rises from the water — held aloft by a feminine and slender hand. The water is too dark to see who or what is holding up the sword, however Survivors who make a **POW×5** test notice that the hand which initially looked attractive now looks pale and waterlogged. Quickly it begins to resemble a corpse that has been in water for far too long (Sanity loss 0/1).

Anyone reaching for the sword is in for a nasty surprise. As the Survivor reaches out for the prize, a second hand — similar to the first — reaches up out of the water and grabs the Survivor. Both hands now appear bloated and rotting. The hand pulls at the grappled Survivor in an attempt to pull him or her overboard. The individual must make an **opposed STR×5** test versus the hands' STR of 16. If he or she loses the test, the Survivor is pulled off the boat and into the water. In this commotion, the sword is dropped into the water — an **Athletics** test is required for another Survivor from the boat to grab the sword and keep it from sinking back into the water.

Meanwhile, the hands hold the grabbed Survivor under the surface. The **SUFFOCATION** rules (see page 75) should be consulted as the Survivor starts to drown. An **opposed STR×5** check can be repeated for the submerged Survivor to try and escape the hands' grasp. If the waterlogged Survivor escapes and climbs back onboard the boat, the hands will repeat the attempt to grab and drag them beneath the waves. A quick Survivor can swing the sword at the hands. Any successful hit results in the hands retreating beneath the water with a scream of pain coming from beneath the lake. Only once the terrible hands have receded into the depths can Survivors revel in having achieved their goal — they have Excalibur.

Option: If the Game Moderator wishes to add to the Survivors' woes, while they are dealing with the bloated arms in the lake they may not notice the commotion of Chief Libertine Crowley and two of his Yellowcoats landing their star-steeds close to the shore. Only keen-eyed Survivors (those who make an **Alertness** test with –20% modifier) will see his group arrive. Regardless of whether they are noticed or not, Crowley and his men will immediately attack any Survivors who were left on the shore. If no such sentries were left, the King's men will use this opportunity to sabotage any items left behind (including slitting the throats of any horses brought by the Survivors). Then they will set themselves up to ambush the Survivors when they return to shore. It is unlikely that they will surprise the Survivors — although Crowley and his men will aim to be stealthy, the star-steeds are conspicuous and noisy creatures which will no doubt be noticed before the rowboat makes landfall.

The Curse of the Lake

What is not generally well-known is that Excalibur is under a terrible curse. The sword belongs to whoever retrieves it but only until their quest or mission in life is complete, at which time its ownership reverts to the Lady of the Lake. What that means in the context of this scenario is once the Survivors defeat the King in Yellow, the sword must be returned to the Lady of the Lake (since their mission in life is now complete). If it is not returned, the Curse of the Lake befalls them.

The Curse of the Lake causes the wielder to start retaining water at a frightening rate. Slowly, day by day, they will find their body swelling and expanding from the water they are unable to get rid of. At the end of a week, they will look bloated and flushed but it does not stop there. Every day after the first week, it will keep getting worse — daily the wielder must make a **CON×5** *check. If they fail, they lose 1D2 points of CON. Water seems to leak from everywhere, even sitting down in a chair for a few minutes turns it into a soggy wet mess. Each day they fail their CON roll, their SIZ also increases by 1D2. The Survivor starts to take on a bloated appearance, even sloshing a bit as they walk. When they reach 0 CON, they will explode. Rancid, fetid water will splash everywhere including the victim's insides. Naturally, the victim is killed instantly. Anyone watching this grizzly end suffers a Sanity loss of 1D6/1D10 for seeing someone explode in this way.*

The curse can be lifted only if the wielder, or someone acting at the wielder's express command, throws the sword back into Dozmary Pool.

Excalibur

The sword is a fine piece of workmanship, light yet sharp as can be. The hilt is designed to look like two chimeras, and anyone who examines the blade thinks they can see the eyes of the chimeras flashing like fire. Engraved on one side of the sword, in Welsh, is a phrase which means 'Take me up' and on the other side is a different phrase which translates to 'Cast me away'. Anyone making either a **History** or **Occult** test realizes that this sword matches the description often ascribed to King Arthur's famous sword Excalibur.

The sword is incredibly sharp, able to cut through the hardest substances with little to no resistance. It is a powerful tool in the hands of anyone capable, though it also carries a deadly curse (see nearby box). While the curse may not play a part in this adventure, it could very well befall the Survivor who wields it if the Game Moderator decides to expand this adventure into an ongoing campaign.

According to popular legend, Excalibur was given to Arthur by the mysterious Lady of the Lake. Upon receiving a grievous wound from Mordred, Arthur gave the sword to one of his knights. He asked the knight to return the sword to the Lady of the Lake. After much hesitation, the knight threw the sword into the lake where a hand came out of the lake to catch the sword. Excalibur is said to be incredibly powerful, a fact that the Survivors will find to be very much true.

Excalibur is an enchanted weapon which has several unique abilities:

- It can easily cut through most materials with even the toughest ones only able to stand against the sword's sharpness for a few turns;
- Against **any foe,** it ignores half of the target's armor rating (round down);
- Against **non-supernatural foes,** it delivers damage equal to 1D8+Damage Bonus;
- Against **supernatural foes,** it shines with a brilliant white light which shrouds the wielder and everyone within 10 feet of him or her. If drawn against the King in Yellow, this light nullifies the effect of his Gaze attack;
- Against **supernatural foes,** it delivers Lethal damage. The base Lethality rating is 10% but each critical hit against a given foe increases the Lethality Rating by +10%, but only while that same foe is being attacked. If the wielder switches to a different target, the rating goes back to the base 10% until such time as another critical hit is made.

WAKING ARTHUR

Assuming the Survivors take the necessary steps to try and resurrect Arthur (see **ARISE ARTHUR, KING OF THE BRITONS**, page 272), the following events will take place.

Immediately after the Survivors perform the resurrection ceremony on Arthur's corpse, a wind picks up out of nowhere. It howls through the cavern. Anyone with a POW over 10 can feel the growing presence of something that is approaching, though not in any way known to common man. The air crackles with energy as the hair stands up on the Survivors' arms. Cracks start appearing in the very air around them, as if reality itself was peeling away. The corpse sits up and starts to scream as the cracks in reality continue to form (Sanity loss of 1/1D6).

As the Survivors watch, their surroundings start to lose their vibrancy. No longer does everything look rich and fully colored — now everything starts to look more like a shabby painting. Before their eyes this process continues; every feature of the world except for themselves and the reanimated corpse seem affected. At the same time everything about the Survivors' surroundings seem to lose its depth — becoming less three-dimensional and more two-dimensional. In just a minute, the whole world transforms into a series of painted vertical flats much like stage scenery used in theaters.

Then, with a sudden clatter the scenery flats all topple down revealing that they are really standing inside a vast and ornately decorated space, resembling an enormous rococo ballroom. There are periodic hoarse and guttural screams that fill the area. Sanity Loss for this weird transformation is 1D2/1D8.

The corpse of Arthur is now merely that — a corpse — but the Survivors can see what look like marionette strings attach themselves to the body. These extend upwards and vanish into the shadows above. It is as if an invisible puppet master is animating Arthur (Sanity loss 0/1D2). The only piece of Arthur's that is not part of this puppet show is the sword Excalibur. This clatters to the ground as some unseen puppeteer tugs on the corpse strings, causing the marionette to jerk and twist into a macabre mocking bow.

An Audience With The King

Looking around the room, the Survivors find that the enormous space is a nightmare fusion of the real-world configuration of Buckingham Palace and the nightmare city of Carcosa. Banners painted with the Yellow Sign hang everywhere (Sanity loss 0/1D6 to stare at the Yellow Sign). The architecture combines both Victorian and alien design with strange angles everywhere, engravings and statues of both British nobility and horrible monsters. Still more terrifying is the source of the occasional moaning. With her body half embedded into the wall, still alive but endlessly screaming herself bloody, is the former Queen Victoria. Blood trickles down her face; she is clearly now completely insane (Sanity loss 1/1D6).

Sitting at one end of the room on a massive throne is a tall figure swaddled in multi-color rags. A large cone like hood and yellow scarf hides most of its face; the rest is covered in a pale ivory-like mask. As the Survivors watch, the rags seem to move of their own accord, as if they are either alive or something is moving beneath them. The figure is surrounded by some sort of invisible aura of power that the Survivors can each feel in their very souls. The earthly form of The King in Yellow sits before them (Sanity Loss 1D3/1D10).

Standing guard next to the throne is a small squad of Knights of Carcosa, three in total. Each of them is brandishing a saber.

As the Survivors take in their bizarre new surroundings, they are attacked by more marionette-wires descending from above. The tendril-like wires drop from the blackness above and actively seek to tie themselves around each Survivors' hands and feet. Naturally the victims will seek to avoid this — a **Dodge** test at –20% will escape the wires on the first turn (the –20% modifier due to the Survivor's surprise at the attack). Survivors who are snared find themselves trapped by the King and reduced to mere puppets on strings. The animated wires will continue to pursue Survivors for 5 turns; for every turn after the first an unmodified **Dodge** test is enough to elude them.

Survivors who are made puppets will be held in position just out of reach of Excalibur, which

lies on the throne room floor, fallen from the puppet-Arthur's hands. Anyone who remains at liberty can pick up the mighty blade, as can anyone who pulls hard on their strings and succeeds in a **STR×5** test. The impossibly sharp sword slices through the marionette-wires easily; anyone wielding it can free one trapped victim each turn without requiring a die roll. No other weapons will cut the wires.

Endgame: Nihilist or Hopeful?

Once the strings have either given up their assault or managed to snare everyone, the masked figure on the throne speaks with a booming voice. The Survivors cannot easily determine whether the great voice comes from within the robes, elsewhere in the robe or inside their very own heads.

Exactly how the audience with the King in Yellow plays out depends on whether the Game Moderator has decided on a Hopeful version of the world (see Ending 1) or a more Nihilistic one (see Ending 2).

ENDING 1: A CRUEL JOKE OF THE COSMOS

In this (slightly) more *Hopeful* ending, the King in Yellow will belittle the potency of the Spirit of Britain, and its champions – the Survivors. However, he has not figured on the incredible power of Excalibur which can theoretically destroy this mortal form of the King. The ending revolves around a desperate fight to defeat the Knights of Carcosa and strike down the Libertine King.

The King begins his speech, *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living god but alas for you, you have. Did you think a story, a legend would free yourself and this world of my inevitable reign? The spirits of this land thought that you could save it. However, once I have won here I will replace the spirits of your land. The only truth will be the word of the King in Yellow. All will tremble before me."*

He reaches out both arms towards them and spits out a single word, *"Kneel!"* A clawed and withered hand can be seen protruding from both sleeves, each hand wrapped in yet more tattered rags.

It is unlikely the Survivors will kneel. If they do, a Knight of Carcosa will step forward and attempt to place one of the Pallid Masks on the supplicant's face. If they resist or refuse to kneel then the Knights will attack. The King in Yellow will not join in the fight, it will only sit and watch with its blank face while the Survivors fend off its Knights. Only if the Survivors approach the King or attack it, will the King in Yellow act. Otherwise, once the Survivors defeat the Knights, the King in Yellow will speak once more: *"My reign is inevitable. It spreads across the globe, exposing the true hearts and minds of humanity. Why resist the inevitable? Accept your fate."*

What the Survivors do here is up to them. Again, the King in Yellow will not strike unless they do so first. However, if a Survivor wields Excalibur (or seems about to pick it up), the King will lash out and attempt to destroy that Survivor. In response to the King's rage, Excalibur (wherever it is) suddenly flares up with a fiery white light. The King in Yellow cringes, shielding its hooded face for a second.

If the Survivors attack the King in Yellow, it fights until this particular physical form is destroyed. Of course, such things are never permanent.

A NOT-SO-DOLOROUS STROKE

When the Survivor with Excalibur strikes the final blow, the King in Yellow lets out a horrid sound that seems to vibrate through to everyone's very souls (Sanity Loss 0/1). It is a sound that all present will hear in their dreams for the rest of their lives. The King's form seems to shrink as dark yellow mist starts pouring out from under its robes. The King's robes and rags fall to the ground in a pile, the mist reaching up to the ceiling and slowly vanishing. Poking around finds the rags empty, although they carry a vile stench that makes the Survivors nauseous to their stomachs.

Across the kingdom (not that the Survivors will know it right away) the King's alien emissaries, the Pallid Revelers, fall to the ground also — reduced to empty rags and cracked masks. Anyone wearing one of the Pallid Masks has their mask fall off, though they themselves remain in a catatonic state. Such victims can be led around by hand, sometimes directed to do simple things but without such guidance, they will just stand there until they can no longer go on. Whoever they were is gone forever, snuffed out.

ENDING 2: AN EVEN CRUELER JOKE OF THE COSMOS

In the *Nihilistic* version of the ending, the King in Yellow reveals to the Survivors that the entire purpose of their long quest has been to amuse him. The enigmatic figure on the Underground train was actually the King in disguise, tricking a group of his foolish subjects into carrying out a vastly complex task which had no possibility of unseating him. This ending is probably the more purely Lovecraftian in tone, but before using it the Game Moderator should make sure his or her players won't find such rug-pulling after a long mission unsatisfying.

The King begins his speech, *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living god but alas for you, you have. Did you think a story, a legend would free yourself of my inevitable reign? A magic sword?"* At this last he laughs and raises his hand. Excalibur, whether it still lies unclaimed on the floor or is in the hands of one of the Survivors, suddenly changes — no longer is it a gleaming steel blade, now it is a simple wooden sword, a child's toy. Sanity loss for this elimination of their hard-fought advantage over the alien monarch is 1/1D6.

"I am the god of stories and arts," he continues. *"I infect the very words and medium of expression, my corruption crawls through them and into your minds. The moment you heard the tale, you were already mine. Mine as all who have heard my words behind whatever mask I chose to wear. Your world has always been meant to belong to me. Kneel and worship the one true god!"*

The King stands and begins walking towards the Survivors. As he approaches, his form shifts momentarily — he becomes a well-dressed old man, the same one the Survivors encountered on the Underground at the very start of the scenario. But whereas the old man, Myrddin, previously wore a hopeful expression now he seems mocking and sneering. This form does not stick for long, and by the time he nears the group he has returned to his masked and robed aspect.

When he reaches the Survivors he stands there silently and opens his robes, revealing the horrors they conceal. For a brief moment they can see all of eternity and the universe in the robes. Something shifts in the darkness of the robes and the roiling, monstrous flesh of the King's true body appears, reaching outwards for the Survivors (Sanity Loss 1D10/1D100). If any Survivor retains his or her Sanity after this glimpse, it is possible to attack the monstrous form of the Libertine King. However, without Excalibur the chances of wounding it — let alone killing it — are very small.

The Game Moderator can either allow the Survivors to all fall in a futile last stand, or simply slowly fade to black as the hopeless fight begins. Either way, the Survivors lives have likely been extinguished (unless, of course, some have switched their allegiance to work for the King).

FURTHER ADVENTURES IN THE YELLOWED WORLD?

What happens next is up to the Game Moderator if they wish to expand this adventure further into an ongoing campaign. Here are a few ideas.

IF THE KING WAS DEFEATED

For destroying the King in Yellow and freeing England, the Survivors gain +1D10 Sanity points. If the Survivors saved the prisoners at Cadbury Castle, they gain another +1D6 Sanity points.

Even though the King in Yellow was defeated, England — if not the world — still needs to be rebuilt. How will the Survivors go about such a monumental task?

The King in Yellow is of course not truly dead, in any permanent sense — such eldritch beings cannot so easily be killed. But for now, this avatar must bide its time reforming itself. If the Game Moderator wishes to continue this adventure further into dark fantasy territory, perhaps the Survivors take the fight to the King himself in his home territory — some alien place beyond the stars? Perhaps the city of Carcosa? The possibilities are endless.

IF THE KING WASN'T DEFEATED

The Libertine King's Profligate Empire still stands. Some of the Survivors hopefully have learned a few secrets that hint at weaknesses that could be exploited to overthrow the King ... how will they use that information? And now that the King knows they are out to topple him, how much more vigilant will his forces be?

STATISTICS

Listed below are representative game statistics for the threats the Survivors will encounter on their quest to raise Arthur from his centuries of slumber. Re-use these stats as needed.

SEWER ANGELS / HIGHWAY BANDITS

STR 12 **CON** 12 **DEX** 13 **INT** 12 **POW** 10 **CHA** 08
HP 12 **DB** 0 **WP** 10

Skills: Alertness 30%, Search 40%, Stealth 45%, Survival (*local environment*) 40%, Swim 30%.

Combat:

Club 40%, damage 1D6.

[Bandit's only] Antique Flintlocks (x2) 40%, damage 1D6+1, single shot, requires 4 turns to reload. Considered **JUNK** as per page 101.

YELLOWCOAT SOLDIERS

STR 12 **CON** 11 **DEX** 11 **INT** 10 **POW** 10 **CHA** 10
HP 12 **DB** 0 **WP** 10

Armor: 1-point of padded armor.

Skills: Alertness 35%, Search 30%.

Combat:

Rifles 35%, damage 2D6 (Ammo 2)

Bayonets 40%, damage 1D4 + 1

CHIEF LIBERTINE CROWLEY OF THE KING'S FIRST BOHEMIAN GRENADIERS

STR 13 **CON** 13 **DEX** 14 **INT** 13 **POW** 12 **CHA** 12
HP 13 **DB** +1 **WP** 12

Armor: 1-point of padded armor.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Dodge 25%, Search 45%.

Combat:

Calvary Saber 40%, damage 1D6 + 1

Service Revolver 40%, damage 1D10 (Ammo 6)

KNIGHTS OF CARCOSA

STR 14 **CON** 11 **DEX** 12 **INT** 10 **POW** 13 **CHA** 10
HP 13 **DB** +1 **WP** 13

Armor: Chainmail armor, worth 6-points against melee weapons and 2-points against firearms.

Skills: Alertness 40%, Dodge 30%, Ride (Star-Steed) 45%, Stealth 30%.

Combat:

Calvary Saber 45%, damage 1D6 + 1

Service Revolver 45%, damage 1D10 (Ammo 6)

PALLID REVELERS

The dancers appear as figures shrouded in various lengths of rags, and other cloth. They all wear masks, their features sometimes obscured by layers upon layers of scarves. They move in a strange flowing motion, always dancing and twirling but never speaking.

STR 13 **CON** 10 **DEX** 18 **INT** 10 **POW** 13
HP 12 **WP** 13

Armor: none.

Skills: Alertness 35%, Search 30%.

Combat:

Strangulation 30%, damage special (see below)

Affix Mask 40%, damage special (see below)

Unarmed combat 40%, damage 1D4–1

STRANGULATION: The Dancer slips its rags around the victim's throat and tries to strangle them. The victim can make a **STR×5** or **DEX×5** test (player's choice) to break or slip free. While they are being strangled, the victim must make a CON test every turn. For the first turn, this test is at **CON×5**; if they fail, the check goes from CON ×5 to ×4. If they fail again, it goes to ×3, and so on all the way to CON×1. If this last roll is failed, the victim dies of suffocation.

AFFIX MASK: The Dancer pulls one of its inexhaustible supply of Pallid Masks from within its robes and tries to place it onto the face of its victim. If this grapple attack is not successful dodged or fended off, the mask finds its intended home and the victim must immediately make a **POW×2** test or become a slave to the mask's mind control. See **POWERS OF THE PALLID MASKS** on page 267.

SAN Loss: 0/1D2 to see a Pallid Reveler.

STAR-STEEDS

Bat winged creatures with razor sharp beaks and chitinous hides. These creatures are often saddled and ridden by the Knights of Carcosa to help them travel or patrol long stretches of Britain.

STR 17 **CON** 10 **DEX** 13 **INT** 10 **POW** 10
HP 14 **WP** 10

Armor: 2 points of fur and thick hide.
vs Lethal Damage: NORMAL — affected by Lethal Damage the same way humans are affected.

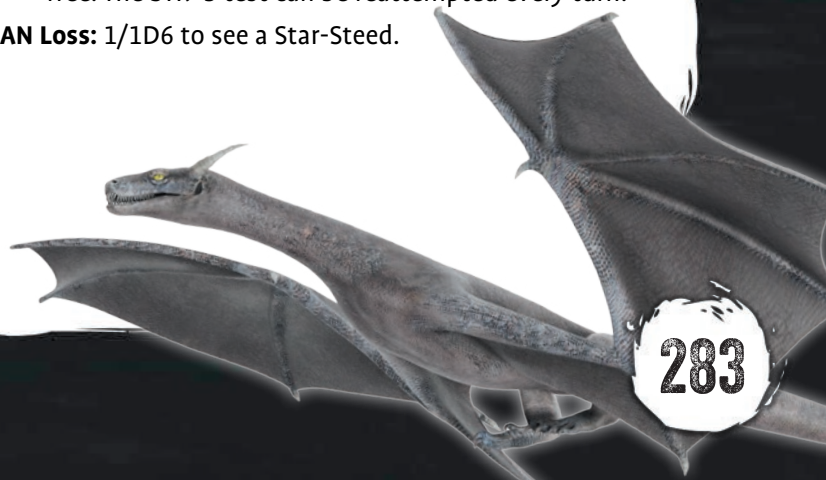
Combat:

Claw 35%, damage 1D6

Bite 35%, damage 1D6 + blood drain (see below)

BLOOD DRAIN: The Star-Steed latches onto their prey and starts lapping at their blood. The victim is pinned in place and must make a **STR×5** test to escape. If they fail, they take 1D4 damage every turn until they are free. The STR×5 test can be reattempted every turn.

SAN Loss: 1/1D6 to see a Star-Steed.



THE KING IN YELLOW

The King in Yellow wears the Pallid Mask, a blank bone looking mask inscribed with the Yellow Sign. Clothed in yellow silk robes and rags, the King in Yellow sometimes appears wearing a hood or a long iron crown.

STR 25 **CON** 106 **DEX** 27 **INT** 50 **POW** 35
HP 66 **WP** 35

Armor: The voluminous robes of the King in Yellow provide 5 points of Armor
vs Lethal Damage: NORMAL — affected by Lethal Damage the same way humans are affected.

Combat:

Razor cloth 75%, damage 2D4 or grapple

Gaze of the King 100%, special (see below)

GAZE OF THE KING: The King in Yellow removes his mask for a split second allowing a brief glimpse beneath it. The King in Yellow can spend 3 WP per turn, causing the victim to lose 1D6 Sanity points per turn, also making them unable to look away as the victim sees the vast spaces of infinity. An affected victim can only look away with a successful **POW×2** test, until that time the victim cannot attack but may **Dodge**. An individual entranced by the King's gaze can re-attempt the POW×2 test at the end of each subsequent turn.

NOTE: If a Survivor is wielding Excalibur against the King, any attempts he makes to use his Gaze against the wielder, or anyone within 10 feet of Excalibur, will automatically fail.

SAN Loss: None while the King in Yellow sits unassuming on the throne. When it stands up and reveals its full glory, including what lies beneath the robes, it costs 1D3/1D10.

PRE-GENERATED SURVIVORS

The following pre-generated Survivors are provided for use with this scenario. If you don't wish to use them, you can easily create new Survivors using the notes included at the start of this scenario.

Each of the pre-generated characters provided below are based on one of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table. It is the author's intent that the pre-gens are meant to be the 'reincarnation' of Arthur's knights, but if this notion isn't to your liking feel free to ignore it.

PRIVATE LANCE DE LAC (SIR LANCELOT), FORMER FRENCH SOLDIER

You are French. You also used to be a military man, although you gave all that up when you made the decision to come to England. You're not entirely clear on why you made the move, but you're sure it was for a very important reason.

You live in London now and work for the major newspaper of the day The Libertine Times. You have a thirst to find out more about what is happening in the city, although the articles that you write are so heavily edited before publication that you barely recognize them when they see print. You have an obsession about reporting on the popular Yellow Art Movement, but again you're not sure exactly why.

One thing that you are quite certain about is that there is something not-quite-right about not just London but the wider world as it exists in 1893. In your newspaper work you routinely see articles about the rise of the new Imperial American Government, and other nations declaring themselves Benevolent Anarchist Dictatorships — you have a strong sense that none of this is as it should be.

STR 14 **CON** 12 **DEX** 11 **INT** 10 **POW** 10 **CHA** 15
HP 13 **DB** +1 **WP** 10 **SAN** 50 **BP** 40

Skills: Artillery 30%, Athletics 50%, Demolitions 40%, Dodge 50%, Drive 40%, Firearms 60%, First Aid 40%, Foreign Language (French) 80%, Heavy Weapons 30%, History 30%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 30%, Melee Weapons 55%, Military Science 60%, Navigate 50%, Pilot (Boat) 40%, Search 30%, Swim 40%, Survival (Land) 40%, Technology Use 40%.

Permanent Resources: 4 [4/0/0, 1 check]

Gear: Service Revolver 60%: 1D10 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity.

Saber 55%: 1D6+1 damage

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Post-Trutheers (Journalists') Guild (community) 2*
- *Monique (artist and journalistic source, individual) 15*
- *Aubrey (best friend, individual) 15*

The Fog Lifts — Lance

You remember more about the circumstances which brought you to England. You were in France – still a soldier – when the news arrived about the coronation of a strange new British monarch, the so-called "King in Yellow." His meteoric rise was something to do with the Yellow Art movement, whose works you found unsettling. You couldn't place why: maybe it was the unwholesome imagery that churned your stomach. It wasn't until months later, when the influence of the Yellow movement had taken hold in America too, that you realized that your sense of unease actually came from a sense of self-preservation. The Yellow Art Movement was in fact one of alien evil and corruption.

Sometime after that, the rule of England fell wholly into the hands of the King in Yellow. Around that time, you began having dreams of yourself in magnificent chainmail, wielding a gleaming sword and fighting back the hordes of the Libertine King. These strange dreams continued, slowly drawing you to travel to England. In the end the visions occupied your mind all around the clock, and you had little choice but to succumb. You paid someone to smuggle you over the English Channel at night, the borders of Britain now thoroughly closed to outsiders. The first moment that you set foot on British soil you felt a charge run through your body as well as a sense that there was some sort of destiny planned for you, even if it wasn't clear what it was. All you knew was that England was in dire need of heroes.

As the days wore on, though, a kind of fog descended on your mind. Your earlier memories, your resolve, and even your sense of identity began to feel … "fuzzy." It was after all of those had departed that you took up a more mundane life working in London.

ABOUT HIS LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *Sir Lancelot was originally a knight from France and King Arthur's right-hand man, virtually treated as a brother. Lancelot went on many quests proving himself a hero time and time again. However, this brotherhood soon dissolved when King Arthur's wife, Queen Guinevere, fell in love with Lancelot and him with her. Lancelot came to the rescue of Arthur in the end during the final battle with Mordred and while he was dying, Arthur forgave Lancelot.*

FATHER GEORGE WANE (SIR GAWAIN), PRIEST OF THE (FORMER) CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Until a year ago, you were a priest — although exactly what that job entailed now feels a bit fuzzy in your mind. You're quite certain that it involved looking after a grand old church building — yours was St Mary le Strand — to which people flocked from time-to-time to gather.

A year ago, in 1892, the new King decreed that the traditional purpose for churches had reached an end. The population unanimously agreed; common thought had moved on to the modern school of Yellowism. Overnight all the priests were out of a job, but in his benevolence the King retained everyone to sustain the grand old church halls — which now serve as barracks for his traditional and non-traditional military forces.

Now your job involves keeping stockpiles of Yellowcoat uniforms for the Army troops, cleaning the quarters of the silk-masked Knights, and arranging feed for the unsettling flying bat-winged "star-steeds" used for rapid deployment of troops. You're thankful that you don't need to do anything with those weird Pallid-Masked forces.

While your day-to-day job is easy enough, you have an unsettling and persistent feeling that things are not as they should be. At least part of that is fueled by the fogginess in your brain around how London, and the wider world, was before the new King came to the throne 3 years ago.

STR 08 **CON** 10 **DEX** 10 **INT** 14 **POW** 17 **CHA** 13
HP 09 **DB** –1 **WP** 17 **SAN** 85 **BP** 68

Skills: Alertness 40%, Anthropology 50%, Archaeology 40%, First Aid 30%, History 50%, Insight 60%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 40%, Melee Weapons 40%, Occult 70%, Persuade 60%, Post-Apocalypse Lore (Christianity) 50%, Reassure 70%, Ride 50%, Search 60%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 50%.

Permanent Resources: 8 [6/2/0, 2 checks]

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Former parishioners of St Mary's (community) 11*
- *Kings' Quartermasters (community) 1*
- *Patricia (former organist at church, individual) 13*
- *Radcliff (publican at local hotel, individual) 13*

The Fog Lifts — George

You remember much more about your life as a priest – as well as what the Christian faith was all about. You can't believe that you had forgotten so much. Before the coming of the new King, the Christian God was worshiped in church every Sunday.

In the days leading up to the coming of the new King, you were sure that God was warning you — maybe giving you a mission. When the Libertine King overthrew Victoria, some three years back, you recognized him for what he was: a supernatural force for evil. Perhaps even The Devil himself. Every night after he took the throne, you were plagued with nightmares. Every night you saw yourself in dreams as a kind of crusader, fighting to overthrow the evil King. In every one of your dreams you carried a cup that you instinctively knew was The Holy Grail. In some dreams you were questing to search it out, once you even dreamed that you were holding the cup as it caught Jesus' blood at the Crucifixion. You were sure that it was a sign, calling you to action.

The Fog Lifts — George (continued)

But then the Libertine King dissolved the Church of England and made you into a lowly lacky maintaining one of his army barracks. For a short time the fire still burned in you, but soon afterwards the fog descended. Your earlier memories, your resolve, and even your sense of identity began to feel ... "fuzzy." It was after all of those had departed that you resigned yourself to your more mundane place in the King's Profligate Empire.

ABOUT HIS LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *Sir Gawain was one of the bravest and most courteous of King Arthur's knights. Legends abound of him standing up for the common folk and the women of the kingdom. It was Sir Gawain who defeated the immortal Green Knight and freed him from his curse.*

ARTHUR DAGWOOD (SIR DAGONET), HISTORIAN AND LIBRARIAN

You are an unassuming bookish little man who works as a paper-pusher in the Department of New Truth in the King's New Model Civil Service. You've worked there ever since the new service came into effect upon the King's assumption of the throne three years ago in 1890. You have vague memories of working somewhere else before that – somewhere with leather top desks and funny little lamps – but it's truly a faint memory.

In your job at the Department of New Truth you are the head of a branch called Post-Truth Proliferation. In short you and your team of typewriter-bound 'post-trutheers' are responsible for writing articles, statements, posters, decrees, depositions, all designed to highlight all that is great about the Profligate Empire of Free and Licentious Britain. When you took the position, you thought that writing the truth about what is transpiring would involve gathering facts and soliciting input, but the King's new methods circumvent the necessity of either. You wonder frequently whether the documents you create are used for purposes that you would personally find objectionable. But your optimistic outlook on life prevents you from dwelling on that suspicion for too long.

Not even an optimistic perspective can, however, thoroughly rid you of the nagging suspicion that there is something not right about London and the Empire. The fact that your memory of the time before the King's rise to power is so vague is also disconcerting. If you think about any of these matters for too long, your cheery personality slips — so you try not to.

STR 10 **CON** 08 **DEX** 14 **INT** 17 **POW** 13 **CHA** 10
HP 09 **DB** 0 **WP** 13 **SAN** 65 **BP** 52

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Archaeology 50%, Dodge 50%, Foreign Language (French) 40%, Foreign Language (Latin) 50%, History 50%, Insight 50%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 40%, Occult 40%, Persuade 60%, Research 70%, Scavenge 50%, Search 60%, Technology Use 60%, Unarmed Combat 40%.

Permanent Resources: 13 [6/6/1, 3 checks]

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Department of New Truth (community) 12*
- *Post-Trutheers (Journalists') Guild (community) 12*
- *Winston (co-worker, individual) 10*
- *Locke (ex-stockbroker friend, individual) 10*
- *Molly (music-hall comedienne, individual) 10*

The Fog Lifts — Dagwood

You remember much more about your life before the coming of the King in Yellow. You used to work as a clerk in the Bank of England. It's funny, that institution no longer exists – in fact the notion of money, as it once existed, lost its meaning when the new King decreed that theft was no longer an offense. The scarcity of resources didn't go away, but the access that people had to items no longer had much to do with how many banknotes one had and a lot more to do with how strong your army of thugs and mercenaries was.

You remember being happy working for the bank; in those days your natural sense of humor had a natural outlet — at both the office and at home you were always cracking jokes, especially when you felt nervous. There isn't much joy in the Department of New Truth, even despite the mandated joy policy being enforced rigorously upon all workers.

Somewhere along the way this change of careers must have taken its toll on you. That must be the reason that the fog descended on your mind. The reason why your earlier memories, your resolve, and even your sense of identity began to feel ... "fuzzy."

ABOUT HIS LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *Sir Dagonet was King Arthur's jester, a cowardly knight who served as a source of mirth and jest for the Knights of the Round Table. Often Dagonet was known for playing tricks and jokes, not just on the Knights of the Round Table but their enemies as well.*

DR. TRISTAN SMITH (SIR TRISTAN), DOCTOR

You have been a doctor for as long as you remember ... which would be more impressive if you could remember more than just the last three years. You are fairly certain that you have been a physician for a long time — certainly you have the skills — but no matter how hard you try to remember any details

of life before the new King took the throne in 1890, you simply cannot. As a medical man this causes you no small consternation.

You share a comfortable home in a nice street. There is a woman named Isabella two doors down who seems very familiar, almost as if you and she were close colleagues or something in a forgotten time. You've asked her how you know her, only to learn that she not only shares your vague impression but also your lack of any concrete memory. It's a shame, she seems nice — sometimes you go places together, as friends, since both of you assume that's what you must be.

You have done some small amount of digging around the London hospitals where you work, trying to find any documented evidence that might cast light upon the mental fogginess surrounding older memories. Save for learning that many people report similar symptoms, your researches have not yielded much. Several hospital workers did warn you, however, that other curious people had previously come asking about records of similar medical phenomena — and all of them disappeared before getting any answers. And not just disappeared from the hospital, but disappeared fully ... as in, their families and friends could no longer locate them. Your hospital friends said you should stop asking questions; they like you too much to wish to hear of anything sinister happening to you.

STR 11 **CON** 12 **DEX** 11 **INT** 13 **POW** 12 **CHA** 13
HP 12 **DB** 0 **WP** 12 **SAN** 60 **BP** 48

Skills: Alertness 40%, First Aid 60%, Forensics 40%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 30%, Medicine 60%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 50%, Reassure 50%, Research 50%, Science (Biology) 60%, Search 50%, Surgery 50%, Survival (Land) 30%, Swim 40%, Technology Use 30%.

Permanent Resources: 10 [6/4/0, 2 checks]

Gear: Scalpel 30%, 1D4 damage

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *King's Medical Association (community) 5*
- *The Lancet Club (medical gentlemen's club, community) 5*
- *Isabella Rose-Smith (friend, individual) 13*

The Fog Lifts — Tristan

You remember much more about your life before the coming of the King in Yellow. You have been a doctor for decades, since well before the coming of the Libertine King in Yellow Raiment. You had your own practice on Bond Street before the events that brought about the fall of Queen Victoria. You cannot believe that you had forgotten all about the old Queen, who was cruelly deposed by the new King.

The Fog Lifts — Tristan (continued)

You also remember much more about Isabella; she was not just a friend from the time before. She was your wife. Sometime before the rise of the King, you met a young woman who came in the middle of the night to your practice with a bullet lodged in her sternum. You cared for her, not asking from whence her bullet injury had come. This woman was Isabella — at the time she was a local woman who made a living on the streets through thievery.

From that day forward, you and she were inseparable. In the crazy days just before Victoria's fall, the two of you chose to get married in a private ceremony — to make an 'honest woman of her.' Unfortunately, your legal status as man and wife was short-lived: almost immediately after the Libertine King ascended to the throne he issued the Ordnance of Hedonistic Freedom. That decree not only dissolved all marriages, but actually made it illegal to be wed.

Sometime in the months that followed, you began to feel the fog descend upon your mind. Even worse was seeing the same happen to Isabella – seeing her slowly forget every moment you had shared from the days of your courting. It wasn't long after that day when your earlier memories, your resolve, and even your sense of identity began to feel ... "fuzzy." Somehow you still retained a vague sense of prior connection to Isabella, even as you retained a sense that somehow things were not completely right with the Empire and the World.

ABOUT HIS LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *Sir Tristan was one of Arthur's knights, sent on a quest to retrieve the Princess Isolde who was supposed to marry the king of Cornwall. Sir Tristan was to be her bodyguard, escorting her back to this local king, who was also Tristan's uncle. However, through the power of a love potion Tristan and Isolde fell in love. Sir Tristan broke his vows and ran away with his new-found love so they could be together.*

ISABELLA ROSE-SMITH (ISOLDE), FORMER CRIMINAL

To the outside world, you lead a boring shut-in kind of life. You reside in a comfortable house on a nice London street, just a few doors down from Tristan Smith, a doctor and a close friend. You assume that the two of you have been friends from way back ... "assume" because neither of you can remember any memory older than about 3 years ago. You've tried and tried, but there's really no memory there before the time that the new King rose to the throne in 1890. You seldom leave your nice home during daylight hours — occasionally venturing out with Tristan to some destination or other.

Without a memory for specific facts from your earlier life, there isn't too much learning with which you can support yourself. But you do have some rather specialist skills that have proven helpful in sustaining

your lifestyle — thievery skills, to be exact. In a city where there is no property except what one can obtain for oneself, skills at pilfering and stealthy burgling are valuable. Even if you don't remember how you honed those skills, they are things you are especially good at. This has led you to a successful career as a night-time sneak-thief. You have been careful to avoid this becoming known to your society friends, including the good doctor, not because you are ashamed of how you make a living ... but to ensure their guard is down should you ever need to supplement your income with some of their precious belongings.

STR 12 **CON** 11 **DEX** 15 **INT** 10 **POW** 10 **CHA** 14
HP 12 **DB** 0 **WP** 10 **SAN** 50 **BP** 40

Skills: Alertness 60%, Appraise 40%, Craft (Locksmith) 60%, Disguise 30%, Dodge 70%, First Aid 30%, Insight 50%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 30%, Melee Weapon 50%, Persuade 60%, Stealth 70%, Search 60%, Swim 40%, Unarmed Combat 60%.

Permanent Resources: 6 [6/0/0, 1 check]

Gear: Hat Pin 60%, 1D4 damage

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Marigold Club (society ladies' club, community) 8*
- *Dr Tristan Smith (friend, individual) 14*
- *Black Norbert (fence, individual) 14*
- *Julianne Francis (president of Marigold club, individual) 14*

The Fog Lifts — Isabella

You remember much more about your life before the coming of the King in Yellow. You were raised on the rough streets of London, doing whatever it took to make money. Thievery, breaking and entering and pick-pocketing were some of the various activities you got involved with in an effort to merely survive. Over time you perfected your skills in all those areas. Unfortunately, your entire world changed the night one of your fellow criminals turned on you and unloaded a vintage musket right at your chest. You thought that the musket-ball was going to kill you; certainly it lodged in your chest and hurt like hell.

In terrible pain, you somehow stumbled into a Bond Street clinic in the middle of the night. There you found not only the medical help you needed to survive, but also found your future husband in the form of Dr. Tristan Smith. The two of you seemed made for each other — you could be yourself around him, never keeping your past a secret but using his civilizing influence as a way to move on from the criminal past that had defined your life to that point.

The Fog Lifts — Isabella (continued)

In the crazy days just before the rise of the new King, the two of you chose to get married in a private ceremony — Tristan joked that he would make an 'honest woman of you at long last.' Unfortunately, your legal status as man and wife was short-lived: almost immediately after the Libertine King ascended to the throne he issued the Ordnance of Hedonistic Freedom. That decree not only dissolved all marriages, but actually made it illegal to be wed.

Sometime in the months that followed, you began to feel the fog descend upon your mind. It wasn't long after that day when your earlier memories, your resolve, and even your sense of identity began to feel ... "fuzzy." Somehow you still retained a vague sense of prior connection to Tristan, even as you retained a sense that somehow things were not completely right with the Empire and the World. Of course with the changes wrought by the new King, your original skills at thievery were suddenly very useful once again.

ABOUT HER LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *The Princess Isolde was an Irish princess who drank a love potion with Sir Tristan. As a result, the two fell in love. Isolde was sentenced to be burned at the stake as punishment for running away with Sir Tristan. However, at the last second, she was saved by her lover. They ran off and lived a happy life together.*

MORTIMER OSWIN (MORDRED), FORMER KNIGHT OF CARCOSA

Your background is something you are more than happy to keep hidden from the world. Why? Because until 2 months ago you were a loyal member of the Knights of Carcosa, the elite fighting force of the King in Yellow and his secret police. You served in that capacity from the very first day that the Libertine King came to the throne, sometime in 1890. Your recollection of the circumstances surrounding the King's rise, who he replaced, and your part in the whole affair are foggy at best, but you do recall that at the time you firmly believed that the new King was a force for good. The force that Britain — and indeed the world — needed.

Now you're not so sure.

In the years of the Yellow King's reign you have seen that the human and not-so-human forces at his command have become riddled with corruption and self-interest. It is perhaps no surprise that a system of government that promotes individual pursuit of liberty and pleasure would veer towards anarchy, but the Knights were always supposed to be there to keep the King's will firmly asserted amid the sea of lawless licentiousness. But you're no longer sure

that's what occurs. That disillusionment, coupled with your concern at news that America is growing its own Decadent Empire that seeks to enforce itself across the world, led to your decision to defect.

You left the Knights repulsed by what you had done while in the service. You hid away your mask and fled, hoping to find some way to bring down the very regime you once fought hard to protect — and may have also fought to install in the first place (you can't recall that far back). Life on the run has not been simple; you know only too well the long reach of the King's informants and the efficacy of his secret listening stations. You even know about the gangs of filthy youths paid to report interesting observations back to the authorities. You need to somehow stay ahead of that entire surveillance network ... you *THINK* you have managed so far, but there's no way to be certain.

STR 15 **CON** 11 **DEX** 12 **INT** 10 **POW** 14 **CHA** 10
HP 13 **DB** +1 **WP** 14 **SAN** 59 **BP** 56

Skills: Alertness 50%, Art (Painting) 20%, Athletics 60%, Dodge 50%, Firearms 60%, First Aid 50%, Foreign Language (Latin) 60%, Insight 50%, Law (Libertine King's Britain) 40%, Melee Weapons 60%, Occult 50%, Persuade 50%, Ride (Star-Steed) 50%, Search 60%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 80%, Unnatural 40%.

Permanent Resources: 9 [6/3/0, 2 checks]

Gear: Service Revolver 60%: 1D10 damage, 10 yards range, 6 shots capacity.
Cavalry Saber 55%: 1D8+1 damage
Yellow silk mask, old battered whistle.

Hardening checks: *0 levels on violence; 0 levels on helplessness.*

Bonds:

- *Turncoats Railway (former knights helping others to escape London, community) 10*
- *Knights of Carcosa (community, only relevant for people who do not know of defection) 1*
- *Molly (music-hall comedienne and sometime lover, individual) 10*

Rituals: Yellow Sign — *The ritual caster forms an arcane sign with their fingers in the air. For each WP spent into the spell, it provides a 5% chance for a supernatural effect to be generated. If successful, the following effects are possible (choose one per ritual):*

1. *Automatically bind any star-steed to your will,*
2. *Temporally hold off servants of the King in Yellow (they cannot approach for a number of turns equal to half of WPs spent), or*
3. *Prove allegiance to the forces of the King in Yellow.*

The spell costs 1D4 Sanity points to cast.

The Fog Lifts — Mortimer

You remember much more about your life before the King in Yellow became installed upon the throne of Britain, usurping the dowager Queen Victoria. The toppling of her long reign was something in which you played a part, though perhaps you're not as proud of that fact as you once were.

You began your career as a simple sergeant in the London Metropolitan police, in the time well before the coming of the Libertine King. You worked on the Jack the Ripper case — that was only five years ago, but it may as well have been a lifetime. It was the Ripper case that turned you to thinking on the true nature of the Universe and the possibility that there are vast forces — gods — that exist in alien places. Forces poised to reward supplicants who knew how to contact them. The King in Yellow was one such force, and there were a few secretive groups in London who not only knew of Him but also worshiped Him. After suffering a mental breakdown on the Ripper case, you came to join a few of the groups that had begun spring up. With these groups, you conspired to bring forth the King in Yellow into this world, sick of the terrible corruption and violence that you had been exposed to in your life as a police officer.

The rituals and the dedications were long-winded, but eventually they were answered. The Libertine King came. Victoria was cast down, and overnight the world became almost as you see it now. For your loyalty you were granted a role in the King's elite force, the Knights of Carcosa. The alien King brought with him an equally alien retinue, who serve side by side with the loyal human forces. But the very presence of the King and his alien beings causes the citizens of Britain to slowly forget the time before their coming. You yourself were not immune to that influence ... though now you think that it may have been a blessing. Had you served as a Knight knowing all that you now recall, it may just have pushed you over the brink.

ABOUT HIS LEGENDARY NAMESAKE: *Sir Mordred was King Arthur's son, born of Arthur and the witch Morrigan Le Fay. Mordred appeared from out of the blue staking his claim to being Arthur's blood. Arthur welcomed Mordred into the fold but eventually Sir Mordred betrayed him. While Arthur was away on a quest, fighting a war (some say it was in pursuit of Lancelot and Guinevere), Mordred usurped the kingdom and Arthur's throne. When Arthur returned, the two men fought in a massive war. Mordred severely injured Arthur, who in turn killed Mordred with his dying breath.*

APPENDICES

CONVERTING MATERIAL FROM OTHER GAMES

Game Moderators may find statistics for horrific creatures and supernatural effects in the rules or supplements published for other Lovecraftian horror RPGs. The general-purpose guidelines below give some assistance with converting creature-related statistics for use in ***APOCTHULHU***.

General notes on converting / re-designing supernatural effects with game statistics for other RPGs may be found on page 119.

Translating Creatures from D100 Games

In most cases, converting horrific creatures found in other D100 games for use in an ***APOCTHULHU*** game is straightforward. A seven-step process for carrying out such conversions is described below.

STEP 1: CONVERT STATISTICS

As described on page 20, characters and other creatures in ***APOCTHULHU*** are principally described in terms of six core capabilities: Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Intelligence, Power, and Charisma. These are measured on a scale of approximately 3–18 for a human being. Most D100 games use a similar set of characteristics although the seventh edition of the world's oldest Lovecraftian roleplaying game chooses to instead measure a character's core statistics on a 1—100 scale.

If the creature or character being translated has game statistics for anything other than the previously mentioned seventh edition game, the translation is simple:

- Strength (sometimes STR) becomes the creature or character's Strength statistic in ***APOCTHULHU***;
- Constitution (CON), Intelligence (INT), Dexterity (DEX), and Power (POW), all become the identically named statistic in ***APOCTHULHU***; and
- If a creature/character has a listed Appearance (APP) rating, that translates to its Charisma (CHA) in ***APOCTHULHU***.

When translating statistics from the aforementioned seventh edition game, the process is effectively the same, but each number is divided by 5 during the translation (e.g., a CON of 65 for a seventh edition creature would translate to an ***APOCTHULHU*** Constitution statistic of 13).

If the creature or character has a listed Sanity (SAN) score, that same number becomes their SAN score in ***APOCTHULHU***.

STEP 2: DERIVE HIT POINTS AND WILL POINTS (AND OPTIONALLY RESOURCES)

In ***APOCTHULHU*** two key game attributes, Hit Points and Will Points, are derived from the core statistics. The formulae for deriving these may be found in the section on creating Survivors, on page 21. Once the core statistics have been translated for the Mythos creature or character, these should be calculated exactly as described in the Survivor generation process.

When translating human characters (as opposed to creatures) it may be important for the Game Moderator to be able to gauge how well-resourced the character is. In that situation, scanning through the list of Archetypes (starting on page 23), the Game Moderator can see which most closely relates to the character's role — the base Resources attribute score for the character can be assumed to be the same as that Archetype. This can be modified up or down by the Game Moderator to reflect a vision for the character's material 'wealth'.

STEP 3: DERIVING SANITY LOSS

For games which list explicit sanity losses for witnessing Cthulhu Mythos horrors, those same sanity losses can be applied in ***APOCTHULHU.*** For games which do not include specific game mechanics for mental stability, use the table on page 79 to pick an equivalent sanity loss based on how disturbing and/or disgusting a creature is described as being.

STEP 4: DERIVING SKILLS

All D100-based games measure skill proficiency of a person or creature on a scale of 0—100, the same scale used by ***APOCTHULHU***. So, any skill scores assigned as part of the game statistics for another game can be carried across without the need for any arithmetic. However, each different game uses its own list of skills, each of them a variant way of carving the broad field of human knowledge and abilities into different categorizations. Thus, in converting game statistics from another RPG, it's necessary to decide which ***APOCTHULHU*** skill most closely relates to each skill named in the source stat-block.

There are four situations that can arise:

1. **Obvious Match:** The skill named in the source stat-block has an obvious counterpart in the ***APOCTHULHU*** skill list. In this case, simply give the person or creature the corresponding ***APOCTHULHU*** skill with the same percentile rating assigned to the original skill.

2. **Multiple Match:** The skill named in the source stat-block has similarities with several different ***APOCTHULHU*** skills. In this case, you can either pick one of the skills (ideally the most relevant) and assign all the original skill's percentile rating to that skill, or you can split up the percentiles among multiple ***APOCTHULHU*** skills.

3. **Clash:** Sometimes during the translation of many different skill ratings, it will occur that several different foreign-game skills all translate to the same ***APOCTHULHU*** skill. In that case, the person or creature's percentile rating in that skill should be the highest of all the different skills that translate to that skill.

4. **Novelty Skill:** Some games like to include silly or oddly specific skills (like "bake cookies" or "defuse nuclear bomb"). You can either ignore these skills altogether or carry them across as similar 'additional skills' (i.e., presume the existence of a cookie baking skill in ***APOCTHULHU***, whose definition you can make up as needed).

References to a rating in the "Cthulhu Mythos" skill used in other games should all be carried across to ***APOCTHULHU's*** **Unnatural** skill (see page 54).

STEP 5: DERIVING ATTACKS

Every D100-based game describes the basic attributes of an offensive capability (or attack) in terms of a percentage chance that the attack will hit its target, plus a dice roll to determine the HP damage that the attack inflicts.

When converting a creature or person's stat-block to ***APOCTHULHU***, each attack mode will typically map to a similar or equivalent weapon skill with the same percentile rating. Damage ratings (die rolls) can either be carried across unchanged, or if the attack mode obviously relates to one of the weapons listed in the examples on page 69, you can just use the ***APOCTHULHU*** damage rating for the listed weapon. Where the damage die listed in the source stat-block mentions adding a "Damage Bonus", consult the material on page 68 to see whether the ***APOCTHULHU*** attack should also include the equivalent bonus.

If converting a stat-block for a creature — especially a large creature, or one with a STR well outside the normal human range — it is probably better to forget about Damage Bonus altogether. Many D100-based games give such massive monstrosities equally massive Damage

Bonuses (+3D6 and above): ***APOCTHULHU's*** combat system doesn't seek to model overwhelming damage by means of large pools of dice — instead, it uses the Lethality mechanic. Consider setting the total damage rating of such a creature's attacks based on its *overall* damage rating in the source system — that is, the attack's base damage ***plus*** the creature's stated Damage Bonus. If that total is no-more than 2 dice, then simply set the ***APOCTHULHU*** damage rating for the attack equal to that.

If the source-game attack mode lists more than 2 dice to roll for damage overall, it is likely that it would be better to represent the damage in terms of a Lethality rating. The table below gives some approximate translations:

Multiple-Dice Damage	*Lethality Rating*
3D6	9%
3D8	12%
3D10	15%
For each +1D6	+3%
For each +1D8	+4%
For each +1D10	+5%

STEP 6: DERIVING ARMOR VALUE

Creatures or individuals who have innate protection from damage, or who wear protective equipment may have an Armor value as part of their original statistic block. They may also have a description of the particular type of armor.

Armor values from D100-based games can be directly translated across — for example, a Mythos creature with an innate Armor of 2 will have the same Armor rating in ***APOCTHULHU***.

An alternate method of assigning an Armor value for worn protection is to consult the table in **ARMORED** (page 72), locating a roughly-equivalent type of protective equipment and use the Armor value shown in the table.

STEP 7: DEFINING SPECIAL POWERS AND DEFENSES

Perhaps the hardest part of converting stat-blocks for creatures (and sometimes human beings) to ***APOCTHULHU***, is translating special powers and defenses, including unusual modes of attack. These are sometimes written in a manner that is specific to the game-mechanics for the source system.

There are two basic approaches to converting special powers:

1. finding a similar power already possessed by a creature with ***APOCTHULHU*** stats, or
2. converting the individual game mechanics underlying the power into ***APOCTHULHU*** concepts piece-by-piece.

For determining appropriate ***APOCTHULHU*** game-statistics to cover special defenses, a good place to start is considering the catego-

Reduced Susceptibility to Lethal Damage

The following common forms of protection against Lethal attacks may be assigned to creatures/individuals which are harder to kill than normal humans.

- **RESILIENT:** *A successful roll on a Lethal attack does not kill the creature/individual but inflicts Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.*
- **RESILIENT TO <attack type, e.g., Firearms>:** *If attacked with other attack types than the one named, damage/lethality is as per normal. If attacked with Lethal attacks of the nominated type, a successful roll does not kill the creature/individual but inflicts Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.*
- **PARTIALLY IMMUNE (less than <number, e.g., 20>%):** *If the Lethal attack has a Lethality rating less than or equal to the number mentioned, it cannot harm or kill the target — even a successful Lethality roll will cause it zero harm. For Lethal attacks with a Lethality rating higher than the number mentioned, the creature/individual is still not automatically killed on a successful Lethality roll but suffers Hit Point damage equal to 2D10 minus any Armor rating.*
- **IMMUNE:** *Is not affected at all by any physical attacks, including Lethal attacks.*

ries of Defenses described in **PROTECTION IN COMBAT**, page 72. These are: Fragile, Exposed, Armored, Huge, and Transcendent.

Furthermore, some creatures have physical forms that are less susceptible to Lethal damage: the box nearby summarizes different levels of protection that the Game Moderator can assign to otherworldly monstrosities.

EXAMPLE TRANSLATION PROCESS: CREATURE

*Jo is designing a new **APOCTHULHU** scenario to thrill and horrify her gaming group. Looking over some material published for a different D100 game she finds statistics for a creature called a "Quicklime Zombie" which seems to be a good fit for her scenario, so she works on converting the previous D100 statistics to **APOCTHULHU** statistics. Here's how she follows the six-step process:*

Step 1: Statistics

The "Quicklime Zombies" are described as having the following basic characteristics in their original D100 system:

STR 15 CON 10 SIZ 15 DEX 9 POW 1

*These translate to **APOCTHULHU** characteristics:*

Strength 15 Constitution 10 Dexterity 9 Power 1

Step 2: Hit Points and Will Points

*Using the rules in the section on creating **APOCTHULHU** Survivors, Jo calculates the derived attributes using the stats she just calculated.*

Hit Points is (CON+STR) ÷ 2 or (15+10) ÷2 = 13, rounding up.

*Willpower Points are equal to POW, so the **APOCTHULHU** version of the zombies have a WP of 1.*

Step 3: Sanity Loss

*The statistics for the Quicklime Zombie in the original game lists a sanity loss of "1/1D8 to see a Quicklime Zombie." The exact same die rolls will work fine for **APOCTHULHU** as well.*

Step 4: Deriving Skills

The original game's description of Quicklime Zombies doesn't list any skills, so there's nothing for Jo to do here.

Some Example Special Attacks

During a translation the GM might need to invent game statistics for special forms of attacks. The following examples provide some example powers that can be used or adapted as needed.

Blood Drain: *The bite of the entity drains blood from the victim each turn until forcibly detached. For each turn of blood loss, the victim loses 1D6 STR. If STR reaches zero the victim dies, however if he or she survives the attack, it will be slowly regained at the rate determined by the Game Moderator.*

Cling & Bite: *After the entity bites a victim, it will cling to it unless forcibly removed. Each subsequent turn inflicts a further 1D3 Hit Points of damage to the victim.*

Engulf Victims: *If a victim is pulled into the entity's mass it becomes absorbed within it. An individual trapped inside the entity must separately make an* **opposed test** *comparing his or her STR against the entity's STR. If the test is failed, the victim takes Lethal Damage with rating equal to 1% × the entity's CON. Trapped targets inside the entity find it difficult to move or attack: only by making a percentile roll below their STR can such individuals make an attack while inside the entity.*

Mental Drain: *If the entity wishes to mentally weaken those in its proximity, it can compel an individual to perform an opposed test which matches the entity's POW versus the victim's INT. If the victim is defeated in this test, he or she immediately loses 1D6 Willpower Points + 1D6 SAN. The WPs are added to the attacker's total.*

Tentacle Constrict/Crush: *If one of the entity's tentacles successfully strikes an enemy it will wrap around it and continue to crush it in later turns. Unless freed by external means, the victim will continue to suffer Hit Point damage equal to half the normal attack damage in each succeeding turn.*

Tentacle Grapple: *If the tentacle of the entity strikes a victim it wraps itself around a limb, effectively* **PINNING** *the target (see page 64). Being held in this way does not inflict any Hit Point damage but the victim is effectively unable to take any actions until he or she is freed. The entity can use its other attacks against victims held by its tentacle. Breaking free from the entity's grip requires success in an* **opposed test** *pitting the entity's STR against the victim's STR.*

Toxic Venom: *The bite of the entity injects a potent toxin with a Lethality Rating equal to the entity's CON.*

Step 5: Deriving Attacks

The source game statistics for the Zombies describe only one mode of attack:

Bite 45%, damage 1D10 + Damage Bonus

*The same basic attack chance and damage information will also apply to **APOCTHULHU**. The only thing Jo needs to do is determine whether the Zombies will have a Damage Bonus according to the table on page 68. Their Strength of 15 puts them into the range where they will have a +1 Damage Bonus.*

*So, the **APOCTHULHU** attack mode will be:*

Bite 45%, damage 1D10+1

Step 6: Armor

The original Quicklime Zombie doesn't have any Armor noted, so there is nothing to do at this step.

Step 7: Special Powers and Defenses

The original description lists two special 'powers' for Quicklime Zombies:

> *"**Chemical Burns:** Quicklime Zombies are coated with quicklime, some of which still adheres to their bodies. Quicklime is a highly caustic powder which produces vicious chemical burns when it comes into contact with skin or eyes. It dehydrates the body and can slow decomposition, which means the zombie will be better preserved and tougher. Quicklime burns can occur from the lime itself, or from its dust. If successfully bitten or grappled by a Quicklime zombie, a victim takes 1 additional Hit Point per round until the lime burn is treated. On a failed Luck roll, there is also burning to victim's eyes from the caustic dust — this results in the victim being blinded until treated. Rinsing with water is the usual treatment for burns to skin or eyes. On a fumbled roll on eye treatment, the character has permanent vision impairment.*
>
> *"**Vulnerability to Water:** Quicklime can swell and heat up rapidly when it comes into contact with water. Splashing the zombie with a large amount of water (at least a bottle's worth) will cause an additional 1D6-1 damage to the creature. However, if this brings the Quicklime Zombie below 0 Hit Points, the rapid chemical reaction will cause the creature to violently explode, showering everyone in a 2-yard radius in caustic flesh. Everyone within that area receives chemical burns as described above."*

Some Example Special Abilities

During a translation the GM might need to invent game statistics for special abilities that aren't attacks but still provide the creature or person with an advantage. The following examples provide a few ideas that can be used or adapted as needed.

Hypnotize: *The entity's gaze can render a victim in a trance-like state. When a victim locks eyes with the entity, he or she makes an* **opposed POW vs POW test** *with it. If the target loses, a hypnotic state quickly descends. Humans controlled in this way will always follow simple instructions. If the commands are inherently self-destructive or injurious to the controlled person, an* **INT×5** *roll can be attempted at the beginning of each turn — success means the person snaps out of the trance.*

Invisible: *The entity has the power to become invisible to normal vision through a supernatural effect; attempts to hit the entity while it is invisible are* halved.

Mental Control: *The entity has the power to control humans via mental dominance. Resolve such attempts as an* **opposed POW vs POW** *test; if the target's will is overcome, he or she is compelled to remain in close proximity to the area where the mental control was initiated. Once controlled, a dominated human can be mentally contacted by the entity regardless of where it is, anywhere on Earth. This communication costs the entity 1 Willpower Point.*

Regeneration: *Regenerates 2 HP per turn after being wounded; if the entity's HP ever reach zero it is dead and will not regenerate.*

Trans-dimensional Travel: *The entity has an innate ability to travel between different dimensions. Initiating a transition from our dimension to another takes a full (uninterrupted) turn and costs the entity 4 Willpower Points. If the entity is holding anything or anyone (e.g., someone held via a previous pin action), they too make the journey.*

*The first of these will work in **APOCTHULHU** without any change. The reference to damage "per round" can become "per turn" to fit* **APOCTHULHU's** *terminology for combat timekeeping. In **APOCTHULHU** a* **Luck** *test is just a 50/50 roll, so she chooses to rewrite that section to simply say "When attacked by a Quicklime Zombie there is a 50% chance of burning to the victim's eyes ..."*

*The second is mostly applicable as well, although Jo decides that she needs to convert the description of the area damage caused by exploding zombie to reference the **APOCTHULHU** rules for Lethality Ratings. She decides that an exploding Zombie should be considered just as deadly as a hand grenade blast but limited to the 2-yard radius mentioned in the original description. Thus, she characterizes it as an attack with a Lethality Rating of 15% and a Kill Radius of 2 yards. This makes exploding zombies quite a deadly weapon in their own right.*

EXAMPLE TRANSLATION PROCESS: PERSON

*Jo wants the principal human adversary featured in her custom **APOCTHULHU** scenario to be a former Navy diver who uncovered something terrible in a sunken research station and came to worship it. She needs some statistics for this villain. Skimming through an old scenario for another D100 game she comes across a Navy diver named Nathan Morelli who has the following statistics:*

STR 80	*CON 60*	*SIZ 65*	*DEX 75*	*INT 80*
APP 30	*POW 65*	*EDU 75*	*Sanity 65*	*Hit Points: 12*

Brawl	*40%, damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus*
Speargun	*40%, damage 2D6*
Dodge	*36%*

Armor: Reinforced Kevlar Vest (Armor 4)

Skills: Climb 30%, Credit Rating 30%, Demolitions 31%, Disguise 45%, Diving 80%, First Aid 60%, Jump 45%, Locksmith 16%, Mechanical Repair 36%, Navigate 35%, Pilot (Boat) 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Survival (Maritime) 30%, Swim 60%

Step 1: Statistics

*Jo looks at the list of characteristics and notes that they are obviously on a 1–100 scale rather than the 3–18 scale used by **APOCTHULHU**, so the stat block must have come from a supplement for the seventh edition of the world's oldest Lovecraftian RPG. Thus, to convert them to a usable form she needs to remember to divide by 5.*

Doing this she determines the following for Nathan Morelli:

Strength 16, Constitution 12, Intelligence 16, Dexterity 15, Power 13.

*She notes that the original statistics include a score for APP (Appearance) which translates across to the **APOCTHULHU** statistic Charisma. That mean's Nathan's Charisma should be 6. The statistics for SIZ and EDU don't translate across to anything in **APOCTHULHU** and are ignored.*

Step 2: Hit Points, Will Points, and Resources

*Using the **APOCTHULHU** formula for Hit Points, Nathan will have (CON+STR) ÷ 2 or (12+16) ÷2 = 14 Hit Points.*

Willpower Points are equal to Power, so Nathan will have 13 WP.

Looking through the list of Archetypes, Jo thinks that Nathan is closest to the "Former Military" Archetype — that has a starting Resources score of 4.

Step 3: Sanity Loss

This doesn't apply to the conversion of Nathan Morelli, since he's just a normal human being.

Step 4: Deriving Skills

Looking at the different percentile skills listed in Nathan's statistics — both in the attack section and the skills section — Jo sees that she has a bit of work to do converting these across.

- *Brawl 40% translates easily across to* **Unarmed Combat** *40%.*
- *Jo decides that Nathan's 40% skill with a speargun can carry across to any projectile weapon which requires precision aiming, and thus can be best captured by giving him a 40% skill in* **Ranged Weapons**.

- *Dodge exists as a skill in **APOCTHULHU**, so can be carried directly across. The same goes for* **Demolitions, Disguise, First Aid, Navigate, Pilot (Boat), Survival (Maritime),** *and* **Swim**.

- *Several of Nathan's original skills seems to relate to his physical fitness — notably Climb 30% and Jump 45%. Jo decides all of these should translate across to different facets of the **APOCTHULHU** skill Athletics. Because this is a 'clash' situation she uses the guideline suggested above, namely picking the higher of the two ratings. So, the translated version of Nathan will have* **Athletics** *45%.*

- *Jo decides that the Diving skill probably relates to the use of special equipment and technology, thus can be captured by giving the translated character a* **Technology Use** *skill of 80%.*

- *Locksmith and Mechanical Repair are both good examples of Craft type skills, so Jo elects to translate them both across as Craft subtypes —* **Craft (Locksmith)** *16% and* **Craft (Mechanics)** *36%.*

- *The Spot Hidden skill has a couple of potential matches with **APOCTHULHU** skills — it could refer to Alertness (i.e., Nathan's ability to perceive dangerous situations) or it could refer to the Search skill (i.e., Nathan's ability to see details that others miss). Jo decides to go with the latter interpretation, giving Nathan* **Search** *45%.*

- *That just leaves the original skill in Credit Rating, which Jo decides has no direct counterpart in **APOCTHULHU's** skill list ... but the fact that Nathan has a medium rating in this "wealth" related skill suggests to Jo that perhaps his Resources ability score should be bumped up slightly — she goes back the base score (of 4) and increases it to 6.*

Step 5: Deriving Attacks

*Nathan's Brawl attack can be carried across as an Unarmed attack in **APOCTHULHU** with the same chance of success. The damage is ok also, but Jo will need to determine whether Nathan should have a Damage Bonus in the new system. Nathan's STR of 16 would, according to the table on page 68, equate to a bonus of +1, so the unarmed attack should have a damage of 1D4-1+1 (that's the standard **APOCTHULHU** damage for bare hand attacks plus the Damage Bonus), or just 1D4.*

The Speargun attack is ok in its original form. Nathan will use his **Ranged Weapon** *skill for this attack.*

Some Example Vulnerabilities

During a translation the GM might need to invent some game statistics for a creature's special vulnerability. Here are a few ideas that can be used as starting points for new inventions.

Hates the Light: *The entity takes damage from exposure to light. Bright light inflicts 1 HP per turn; bright and dazzling light inflicts 3D6. Full daylight reduces the entity to a pile of grey ash. This damage ignores armor.*

Poisoned by <Substance>: *The entity's metabolism is particularly susceptible to a common earthly substance. Whenever the entity comes into direct physical contact with the substance it must make a* **CON** *test; if it fails, the entity suffers Lethality 10% damage.*

Susceptible to Fire: *Fire inflicts* double *damage to the entity. This damage ignores armor.*

Step 6: Armor

The original statistic block for Nathan notes that he wears a reinforced Kevlar vest; checking the table of examples in **ARMORED** *(page 72), reinforced Kevlar corresponds to an Armor rating of 4.*

Step 7: Special Powers and Defenses

The original statistic block for Nathan has no special powers or defenses, so there's nothing to do here.

Gumshoe Creature Conversions

Creature stat-blocks in Gumshoe are relatively brief, consisting of ratings for: Athletics, Health, Scuffling, Hit Threshold, Alertness Modifier, Stealth Modifier, Weapon, Armor, and sometimes Stability Loss. The tables below give a (rough) idea of how these ratings can be carried across to ***APOCTHULHU*** creature statistics. Because Gumshoe is quite a different system, some creativity will be required to fill in statistics like INT, POW, etc. since Gumshoe typically doesn't measure such attributes for creatures.

ATHLETICS RATING

In general, a creature can be assumed to have an ***APOCTHULHU*** Athletics skill equal to its Gumshoe Athletics rating × 12%. Physical statistics like STR, DEX, and CON can — if needed — be inferred from this. A higher Gumshoe Athletics rating almost certainly means one or more of those stats will be well above average.

HEALTH RATING

In general, a creature in ***APOCTHULHU*** will have 2 Hit Points for every single point of Gumshoe Health Rating. For example, a Gumshoe monstrosity with a Health Rating of 10 will have 20 HP in ***APOCTHULHU***.

SCUFFLING AND WEAPON

The chance that an ***APOCTHULHU*** version of an attack will hit its target is usually given by the Gumshoe Scuffling rating × 4%.

For damage associated with an attack see table below.

Gumshoe Damage Rating	APOCTHULHU *Damage Dealt*
−3 Damage	1 HP
−2 Damage	*Either* 1D3 HP *or* 1D4 HP
−1 Damage	1D6 HP
+0 Damage	1D8 HP
+1 Damage	*Either* 1D8+1HP, 1D10 HP, *or* 2D6 HP
+2 Damage	*Either* 3D6 HP, 4D6 HP, *or* Lethality 10%
+3 Damage	Lethality: 15%
+5 Damage	Lethality: 20%
+12 Damage	Lethality: 40%

HIT THRESHOLD AND ARMOR

Skill level in Dodge:

Gumshoe Hit Threshold	*APOCTHULHU Skill in Dodge*
2	0% Dodge *(Attacker gains +40% chance to hit)*
3	15% (easier than normal to hit)
4	30% (average difficulty to hit)
5	50% (harder than average to hit)
6	75% (much harder than average to hit)

Armor:

Gumshoe Hit Threshold	*APOCTHULHU* Armor Stat
−1	1 point
−2	2 points
−3	3 *or* 4 points
−4	5, 6, *or* 7 points*
−5	8—11 points*
−6	12—16 points*
−7	17—22 points*

** Rating may indicate that the creature is* **HUGE** *(see page 73),* **TRANSCENDENT** *(see page 74), or have some form of* **REDUCED SUSCEPTIBILITY TO LETHAL DAMAGE** *(see page 293).*

STABILITY LOSS

Gumshoe Stability Loss	*APOCTHULHU SAN Loss*
1 point	SAN Loss of 0/1
2 points	SAN Loss of 0/1D3
3 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D4
4 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D6
5 points	SAN Loss of 1/1D10
6 points	SAN Loss of 1D6/1D20
7 points	SAN Loss of 1D8/2D20
8 points	SAN Loss of 1D10/1D100

STEALTH MODIFIER

In general, a creature's ability to avoid detection is measured in ***APOCTHULHU*** in terms of its **Stealth** skill rating; if a sentient (likely humanoid) creature has a sneaky kind of ability that would be better modelled by the **Disguise** skill, substitute that skill instead in the table below.

Gumshoe Stealth Modifier	*APOCTHULHU Skill in Stealth*
+1	30%
+2	60%
+3	90%

ALERTNESS MODIFIER

Gumshoe Alertness Modifier	*APOCTHULHU Skill in Alertness*
+1	30%
+2	60%
+3	90%

EXAMPLE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Jo has found a wonderful Gumshoe book that has a perfect alternate type of horror she'd love to use in her game — a marsh spirit that preys on unwitting people by dragging them down to their watery doom. The Gumshoe stats for the creature are:

Athletics 10, Health 8, Scuffling 8
Hit Threshold: 4
Alertness Modifier: +1
Stealth Modifier: +2
Weapon: Claws (+1)
Armor: –2 (watery and partially insubstantial)
Stability Loss: 5

*Using the tables above, Jo is easily able to get a partial set of **APOCTHULHU** game stats:*

HP 16

Armor: 2 points *(watery and partially insubstantial)*

Claw Attack *32%, damage (either 1D8+1, 1D10, or 2D6 — Jo chooses the last of these options)*

Skills: *Alertness 30%, Athletics 120%, Dodge 30%, Stealth 60%.*

SAN Loss: *1/1D10 to be attacked by the marsh spirit*

*This translation doesn't provide any numbers for the spirit's core statistics in **APOCTHULHU** (STR, DEX, etc.) however the creature's impressive **Athletics** skill seems suggest an impressive set of physical stats.*

*Jo decides that the water spirit's athleticism is reason to warrant above-human **STR** (24) and **DEX** (20) but the fact that its HP is only 16 suggests that the powerful STR is offset by a below-average **CON**. Reverse engineering the normal HP calculation yields a CON of 08.*

*Determining scores for **INT** and **POW** are tasks that Jo needs to invent based on the narrative description of the water spirit attached to the Gumshoe stats. These suggest the spirits are spiteful but more animalistic than conniving, suggesting a low INT (maybe 06). They have some supernatural abilities of captivating victims with just the power of their gaze, which hints at a higher-than-average POW — maybe POW 16. Using the normal APOCTHULHU rules, that also means a WP of 16.*

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING / VIEWING

There are literally thousands of movies, novels, and TV shows that depict Post-Apocalypse settings that could inspire an ***APOCTHULHU*** game. Rather than trying to list a broad selection, the notes below give examples which the authors find particularly evocative of the Lovecraftian philosophy and mood.

Movies

Book of Eli (2010): What could be more Mythos than a man who's devoted his life to traveling the Post-Apocalyptic wastelands protecting a book of ancient wisdom, and another man who seeks it out because he knows its words are a weapon? Ok, so the ancient wisdom here is the King James Bible, but it's easy to see how this violent western-like tale could be spun in a much weirder direction.

A Boy And His Dog (1975): Don Johnson plays a lustful young man living in a post-nuclear desert wasteland. Of course he also has a telepathic bond with his dog, who is arguably the more intelligent of the duo. Part black comedy, part offbeat cult classic weirdness. Based on a 1969 novella of the same title by Harlan Ellison.

Damnation Alley (1977): Road trip across post-nuclear America in a camper! Mutant bugs! Ongoing post-nuclear storms! Bunkers! Abandoned children found on the road! Sentient killer cockroaches! Everyone trying to get to Albany because they "hear it's nice there". Scavenging for vehicle parts in Detroit! Based on a novel written in 1969 by Roger Zelazny.

Deathsport (1978): Mutants! Rival city states! Mystical rangers! Dirt bikes with lasers! Playboy playmates with perfect makeup! Cheesy synth soundtrack! David Carradine!

Hostile (2017): A worldwide epidemic has destroyed most of humanity, and monstrosities roam the desert-like wasteland left behind. Juliette, a female survivor returning from a scavenging trip suffers a car accident and becomes trapped in a precarious situation. Flashbacks to scenes in Juliette's life before the Apocalypse contrast the perils of surviving in the destroyed world against everyday perils of romance and relationships. Recommended.

Logan's Run (1976): In the future, people live in a decadent utopia ... or at least they do until they reach the age of 30, when they are obliged to check in for "renewal" (aka being slaughtered). People who flee are hunted down by secret policemen called "sandmen". The movie spawned a short-lived TV show (1977—1978) and has been adapted / extended in several different runs of comics (1977, 1978, 1990, 2010). Based on a novel by William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson.

Mad Max Quadrilogy (1979—2015): The gold standard (and origin) of Post-Apocalyptic 'road warrior' subgenre films — imitated many times, usually badly. Any of the Mad Max movies could provide inspiration for a grim guzzolene-powered ***APOCTHULHU*** setting, particularly **Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior** (1981) and **Mad Max: Fury Road** (2015). They are all worth watching, though.

The Ωmega Man (1971) and its remake **I Am Legend (2007),** both based on a short story written in 1954 by Richard Matheson (see below). In the Post-Apocalyptic future, germ warfare has depopulated much of the planet. Cities are starting to be overtaken by nature. In one such city, the movie's protagonist lives a solitary life — fending off mutant scavengers while believing himself the last true human to have survived. There is also a 1964 movie, The Last Man On Earth, based on the same short story (starring Vincent Price!).

Mindwarp (1992): A Post-Nuclear movie with VR pleasure machines, cannibal mutants, AND Bruce Campbell? Made by the short-lived film arm of Fangoria? How could this not be awesome? Answer — somehow its low budget and endless crawling around in subterranean tunnels render it less effective than it should have been, but still maybe worth a look if you can find it.

On The Beach (1959): Almost the entire human race has been wiped out in a nuclear war, but the submarine captained by Gregory Peck survived the exchange underwater. It heads to Australia, the only place on Earth which seems to have been spared. But, as he and his crew discover, even the Australians are living on borrowed time. A great portrayal of the psychological impacts of surviving in a world whose days might be numbered. Based on a 1957 novel by Nevil Shute. The same tale was recreated as a made-for-TV movie in 2000.

Panic in the Year Zero (1962): A typical sixties family driving to a vacation spot watch as a mushroom cloud engulfs LA. In their holiday home in the mountains they go through the practical motions of preparing to live in the Post-Apocalypse world.

The Postman (1997): Based on a novel written in 1985 by David Brin, this Kevin Costner Post-Apocalyptic epic is set in a near-future where war has destroyed society and left America a wasteland full of isolated communities. Finding an abandoned postal van and uniform, Costner's character takes on the role of a postman — finding that belief in a restored U.S. Government brings solace to the isolated populations.

The Quiet Earth (1985): A Kiwi sci-fi film with a miniscule cast of three, this movie chronicles how scientific experiments into a new energy source caused a wave to circle the earth wiping out all living creatures. The scientist himself survived, moved to NZ, found a pair of other survivors: a woman, whom he fell in love with, and a Maori man. Low budget but thought-provoking.

A Quiet Place (2018) and its sequel **A Quiet Place Part II (2020?):** An understated and low-key (but effective) horror film set in a devastated future in which predator creatures wander the land, slaying any humans they encounter. The beasts are blind but have excellent hearing — which has forced the few survivors into adopting modes of living which are as silent as possible.

The Road (2009): An unremittingly grim tale of a man and his son traveling the road in a world devastated by some unspecified cataclysm. The landscape is gray and lifeless, and slowly getting worse. The best that anyone can hope for is survival. Based on Cormac McCarthy's 2006 novel of the same name.

Stalker (1979, Andrei Tarkovsky): An unsettling and allegorical Russian sci-fi movie based on a novel by Boris & Arkady Strugatsky (see below). Three men wander through a weird, forbidden wilderness called "the Zone." It is a place where reality seems not-quite-right. There are stories of a bunker in the "Zone" which contains a room with the power to make dreams reality.

10 Cloverfield Lane (2016): More subtle and contained than its monster-driven predecessor Cloverfield (2008), this movie is a claustrophobic affair mostly set in the cellar a suburban house. A young woman wakes up after an accident, in the home of a 'doomsday prepper' who she fervently wants to escape – the only problem is that the world outside has become a whole lot less safe.

28 Days Later (2002): Technically a gritty take on the zombie genre, Danny Boyle's film is as much about the grim reality of surviving in Post-Apocalyptic England after the viral plague has consumed most of the population. This time, it's experiments on primates — let loose by animal activists — that are to blame. The tale begins form the point of view of a character who wakes from a coma in an abandoned hospital ward — a classic opening.

Warriors of the Wasteland *aka* The New Barbarians (1983): A low budget 'Mad Max' type knock-off that has its own kind of cult following. The world is a post-nuclear wasteland populated by groups with weird outfits and weird vehicles.

Wizards (1977): A Ralph Bashki animation set on a Post-Apocalypse earth. A swords-and-sorcery tale with an obvious allegory about the perils of war and technology.

The World, The Flesh, and the Devil (1959): A B&W classic with a cast of only three actors. A radioactive dust has circled the world and killed most people. Harry Belafonte plays an African-American man who survives by being at the bottom of a mine. Believing himself the last man alive he travels to NYC, where he meets a white woman who has also miraculously survived — and then a third survivor. More than a little interpersonal tension ensues.

Zardoz (1974): Containing some of the weirdest images ever committed to film, this story follows a man (played by Sean Connery, wearing a kind of red diaper/*mankini* garment) in a distant future wasteland. There's an enormous flying stone head-thing controlled by the god Zardoz. Beyond that, you'll just need to watch it to understand. Maybe. A well-deserved (but strange) cult classic.

TV & AUDIO DRAMA

American Horror Story: Apocalypse (aka *AHS* Season 8, **TV, 2018**): Starting with the Apocalypse, the season forces its characters into a claustrophobic community of (creepy) survivors before bringing back (even creepier) characters from the show's earlier seasons.

Dollhouse (TV, 2009—2010, Epitaph episodes): Joss Whedon's sci-fi masterpiece about people ("dolls") with artificially imprinted on-demand personalities includes some flash-forward episodes in a Post-Apocalyptic future. These were explored further in a series of comics written by Whedon and published by Dark Horse in 2011.

Terry Nation's Survivors (TV, 1975—1977) and the excellent audio-drama reboot/continuation made by **Big Finish (2014–2019)**: While there's nothing supernatural about this Apocalypse — it's brought on by a deadly virus that claims 99% of the world's population — few series are as bleak and unrelenting in portraying the grim life of survivors. Three seasons of TV show are ably continued as audio drama in nine box sets.

The Walking Dead (2010—) and **Fear The Walking Dead (2015—):** Zombie Apocalypses are a dime-a-dozen, but none of them have the staying power of AMC's **The Walking Dead** (and its sister spin-off). As with all long-running Post-Apocalyptic tales, the real threats to life and sanity don't really come from the zombies but from what human beings are willing to do to survive. That's much more horrific.

NOVELS & SHORT STORIES

Robert H. Barlow & H.P. Lovecraft: "Till A' the Seas" (prose poem and vignette, 1935). Reproduced in full at the front of this book.

Alfred Bester: "Adam And No Eve" (short story, 1941) and "They Don't Make Life Like They Used To" (short story, 1963). These stories are variations on the 'Last Man on Earth' parable. In the first, the world has been decimated by a chain reaction which has altered the chemical structure of the Earth; a reaction started when the protagonist's experimental rocket engine shot him into space on a test flight. The second tale has a female 'last human alive' living a luxurious life in NYC by taking whatever luxuries she wishes from the abandoned stores. Both stories can be found in *Virtual Unrealities — The Short Fiction of Alfred Bester* (1997).

John Blackburn: *The Face of the Lion* (1976). In the remote Scottish Highlands, the local laird cordons off part of his land by employing independent mercenary forces. While some fear that this is some plot associated with nefarious Scottish independence subversion, the truth is the cordon isn't to keep authorities out — but something else in. Features a zombie-like contagion spread by touch.

Jorge Luis Borges: *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (1957, original Spanish title, *Manual de zoología fantástica,* English translation 1969). A bizarre work of fiction presented as a bestiary of weird creatures that never existed in reality. Many of the entries have a surreal kind of quality to them.

Jorge Luis Borges: various short fiction including "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbius Tertius" (1940, English translation 1961), "The Circular Ruins" (1940, English translation 1949), "The Aleph" (1949), "The Book of Sand" (1975, English translation 1977). The short fiction of Borges is dense with big ideas and philosophical exploration; these days we would call it "speculative fiction" perhaps of the most speculative sort. Reality and unreality, life and death, thoughts and physicality – each can be fluid and mutable in these tales.

Simon Clark: *Blood Crazy* (1995): One day, for no apparent reason, everyone over the age of twenty — the whole of humanity worldwide — becomes infected with an irrational and uncontrollable urge. A compulsion to kill young people; even their own children. It's a kind of generational zombie plague that disrupts civilization, leaving the world in a state of Apocalypse-like ruin.

Arthur C. Clarke: *Rendezvous With Rama* (1973). Set in the 2130s, the novel tells the story of a strange encounter between humanity and a truly alien civilization. Rama is a huge cylindrical starship — initially mistaken for an asteroid — that enters our solar system. Has spawned several sequels co-written with Gentry Lee, who has subsequently also continued the story with additional solo novels.

Edmund Cooper: *All Fool's Day* (1966). In 1971 there is a sudden unexpected occurrence of sunspots. Coincident with this, though not obviously connected, is a sharp rise in suicides. Both continue for the next decade — ultimately the phenomenon of "Radiant Suicides" cause massive depopulation leaving human civilization on the brink of devastation. Countries fall, leaving the survivors in a brutal and disorganized world.

Drew Ford, ed.: *Grave Predictions — Tales of Mankind's Post-Apocalyptic, Dystopian and Disastrous Destiny* (2016). With a title like that it's hard to go past this anthology, which includes stories by horror veterans like Ramsay Campbell and Stephen King as well as science fiction heavyweights (Harlan Ellison, Ursula Le Guin, Philip K. Dick, Kurt Vonnegut, Ray Bradbury). Sixteen quite different takes on the end of the world.

Dmitry Glukhovsky: *Metro 2033* (2002) and its sequels *Metro 2034* (2009) and *Metro 2035* (2015). After nuclear war ravaged the face of the world in 2013 Moscow's few survivors relocated to the city's underground train system, the Metro. Groups fight for survival against the carnivorous horrors of mutant animals, but also

fight among themselves as factions and bandit gangs form. The original novels also spawned a popular videogame series, short fiction by other writers set in the same universe, a graphic novel, and a Metro 2033 boardgame.

William Hope Hodgson: *The Night Land* (1912), also published by the author in a shorter form as *The Dream of X* (1912). See the detailed description and publication history found on page 156.

Fred Hoyle: *The Black Cloud* (1959). A hard science-fiction novel by Cambridge astronomer/cosmologist and larger-than-life personality. A vast and mysterious black cloud has entered our solar system, taking up a position between the Earth and the Sun. Widespread panic erupts before a brilliant scientist (a thinly veiled cipher of the author) determines that the cloud is an intelligent alien being ... and can be communicated and reasoned with.

Stephen King: *The Stand* (1978). An expanded version of an early short story "Night Surf" written by King in 1969, The Stand tells the story of a viral pandemic that wipes out 99.4% of the global population. This Apocalypse arose as the result of an accident which caused a weaponized (genetically modified) version of influenza to be released. Told as a sprawling tale tracking multiple groups in the depopulated Post-Apocalyptic world as they struggle to build a resistance to a supernatural threat that is building its own army from the few who survived. Basis for a 4-part TV mini-series filmed in 1994.

Fritz Leiber: *Night of the Long Knives* (novella, 1960). America is a Post-Apocalyptic wasteland, bathed in radioactive fallout from a nuclear war. Most of the country is a barren waste called the "Deathlands" in which survivors struggle to eke out a 'Mad Max' type existence below the perpetual orange glow of the sky.

Jack London: *The Scarlet Plague* (novella, 1912). It's 2013. Some sixty years previous, the "scarlet death" — a kind of global epidemic — wiped out most of humanity. Now perhaps a thousand people survive world-wide. Scattered groups of survivors live a savage life scavenging in this Post-Apocalypse.

H.P. Lovecraft: "Nyarlathotep" (prose poem, 1920). Reproduced in full at the front of this book.

John Lymington: *The Giant Stumbles* (1960) and *FROOMB!* (1964): Old-school British science fiction describing unusual global catastrophes created by nuclear science. In the first, the world is ravaged by the sudden appearance of strange storms created by charged particles, a byproduct of nuclear fission. The latter is an odd piece in which a strange experiment to explore "life after death" catapults its subject into a dystopian future where the deliberate release of radiation as a defensive shield has created predictably negative side-effects.

Richard Matheson: *I Am Legend* (1954). This classic short novel is the basis for three (loose) film adaptations — "Last Man on Earth" (1964, Vincent Price), "The Ωmega Man" (1971, Charlton Heston) and "I Am Legend" (2007, Will Smith). Some argue the novel is also the archetype for much of the Post-Apocalypse fiction that's been written since. Robert Neville is the sole survivor of a worldwide pandemic that turns humans into mindless 'vampire' creatures. His lonely life is spent barricaded in a house, venturing forth only to scavenge supplies. In despair he muses on the futility of being the last man on Earth.

Walter M. Miller: *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959). A nuclear Apocalypse has claimed civilization — centuries afterwards, a society of sorts now exists in the South-West United States, strongly reminiscent of Europe in the early Middle Ages. Monks keep alive what little learning has survived the purges, and in particular the holy words of St. Leibowitz ... but is that holy scripture really all that it seems? When first published this book rocketed its author to a kind of sci-fi stardom which he struggled to live up to — for decades he pottered away at a sequel, which was only published a year after his death in 1996.

C.T. Phipps: *Cthulhu Armageddon* (2016) and sequel *The Tower of Zhaal* (2017): Advertised as "Post-Apocalypse Westerns" these novels are set in a future 100 years after the Old Ones of Lovecraft's fiction have assumed control of our planet. There are remnants of modern technology still in place, but the setting is mostly a barren desert-like waste in which Lovecraftian creatures — Deep Ones, ghouls, and others — roam.

Eric Frank Russell: "Dear Devil" (1950). Be-tentacled Martians descend upon planet Earth … but it is a desolate ruin, thanks to the devastating effects of a nuclear war. The aliens encounter a group of surviving humans with whom they communicate telepathically. The Martians work to try to help the struggling humans restore some semblance of civilization.

Margaret St. Clair: *Sign of the Labrys* (1963): This novel has 'RPG Reading List pedigree', having been listed by Gary Gygax in the (now famous) Appendix N to the *AD&D 1st Edition DMG*. It is a slightly psychedelic 1960s take on the Post-Apocalyptic genre — yeast borne plagues have ravaged the Earth, decimating the human population. The few that survive live in underground complexes, returning only to the surface to dispose of their dead. Has a Wiccan overtone.

Darrell Schweitzer, ed.: *Cthulhu's Reign* (2010): A Mythos fiction anthology in which each story is set specifically after Cthulhu and his kin have risen up to take back the Earth. Includes fifteen short stories by Ian Watson, Don Webb, Mike Allen, Ken Asamatsu, Will Murray, Matt Cardin, Darrell Schweitzer, John R. Fultz, John Langan, Joseph E. Lake, Jr., Gregory Frost, Brian Stableford, Laird Barron, Richard A. Lupoff, and Fred Chappell.

George R. Stewart: *Earth Abides* (1949). In an early example of post-WWII apocalyptic fiction, the protagonist contracts a virulent disease. After recovering in isolation, he emerges to find the world nearly depopulated. He slowly works to rebuild civilization, finding other survivors. As he nears the end of his life, he realizes that the world he knew was never returning … but the earth itself abides.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: *The Last Man* (1826). Not much of Mary Shelley's non-Frankenstein fiction is well-known, but this futuristic love story in a world racing towards destruction might be her second-most-famous fictional creation. More of a Pre- or During-Apocalypse type of story, it describes the efforts of two men to stave off a plague that threatens to wipe out humanity. Famous mostly because the two male leads are thinly veiled ciphers of Lord Byron and Mary's poet-husband Percy Shelley (deceased at the time of writing).

Matthew Phipps Shiel: *The Purple Cloud* (1901 as a serial, 1949 as a novel): Acclaimed as one of the greatest 'Last Man on Earth' tales. Describes how an arctic explorer escapes a release of cyanide that poisons all of humanity, trekking through the empty world and slowly descending into madness.

Boris & Arkady Strugatsky: *Roadside Picnic* (1972). The "Zone" is a restricted area, a toxic and supernaturally altered wasteland created by a casual visit by an alien entity. Although forbidden to enter this area, scavenger crews venture into this strange territory in search of artifacts left behind by the extraterrestrial visitors. The basis for the Andrei Tarkovsky film "Stalker" (1979).

Boris & Arkady Strugatsky: *The Doomed City* (written 1972, published 1989): Set in an experimental walled city encircled by a great abyssal blackness. Inhabitants have been plucked from different times in 20th Century history and thrust together to form a society of sorts. Nothing says Post-Apocalyptic like when the intelligentsia garbage collectors are attacked by monkeys. It's always the monkeys.

Gabriel Tarde: *Underground Man* (1905). Tarde was an accomplished French sociologist and criminologist, and this novel was written as an exploration of the theory that mankind is a creature shaped by his environment. A terrible catastrophe has occurred. First the sun grew red, then the seas iced over. Finally, the air began to fall as flakes of nitrogen and oxygen. It has become impossible for people to survive on the surface, forcing all humans underground in an effort to survive from geothermal heat.

Richard Tierney: *The Winds of Zarr* (written 1958, published 1975): A heady mixture of Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, time travelers from a devastated future Earth, ancient astronauts and ancient Egypt.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch & Dean Wesley Smith: The Tenth Planet trilogy — *The Tenth Planet* (1999), *Oblivion* (2000), and *Final Assault* (2000). This trilogy of short novels is really a single story split into three parts, telling the tale of a discovery of impending doom for our planet, through to its actual arrival. Piecing together apparently unrelated observations in rock strata and space images, scientist come to learn of a periodic calamity that strikes earth every 2006 years. These destructions are caused by a 'planet' whose strange orbit brings it past Earth, and when it passes it consumes huge amounts of living matter from our planet as a kind of food.

John Wyndham: *Day of the Triffids* (1951). A classic of British science-fiction. The spectacle of a huge multi-night meteor shower attracts the attention of most people around the globe. What nobody anticipates is that watching this display will leave the population blinded, and that the meteors bring a hostile form of intelligent and mobile plant-life — the Triffids — to Earth. Adapted for film numerous times and also told as a TV mini-series, this hugely inspirational tale has shaped many subsequent depictions of global destruction at the hands of weird alien aggressors.

COMICS

The Beautiful Death (Titan, 5 issues, 2017–2018): In the Post-Apocalypse, a small group struggles to survive in the eerily deserted ruins of a city. Horrifying insect-like creatures — apparently a form of alien life — are now the masters of Earth. Translated from the French comic *La Belle Mort* (Ankarma, 2011).

Deadenders (DC Vertigo, 16 issues, 2000–2001): In the world after "The Cataclysm," the city of New Bedlam is a place of division. In some parts, life carries on approximately as normal thanks to artificial sunlight. But in other places, the city is a dystopian and crime-ridden slum full of converts to the new cult of "Doomsterism."

Grendel Tales (Dark Horse 1993–1997): A collection of eight mini-series set in eight different visions of a Post-Apocalyptic world where Grendels are numerous. The mini-series cover a host of topics, depicting different ways in which the world went wrong and how people try to cope. In many cases, the Grendels have moved past being anti-heroes and have become allegories for the violence prevalent in the Post-Apocalyptic landscape.

Land of the Sons (Norton Agency Titles, Graphic Novel, 2018): Written by Italian Cartoonist Gipi (Gianni Pacinotti) with sparse dialogue, the story

is set in an empty swampland beyond which it's said that nothing exists but death and poison. A father and his sons survive by hunting and scavenging the wasteland.

The Massive (Dark Horse, 30 issues, 2013–2015): An environmental catastrophe has brought about the end of the world, but some — including the crew of The Kapital, a ship operated by a direct-action environmental group — have survived. They scour the decimated globe in search of their missing sister ship, The Massive.

Métal Hurlant (Les Humanoïdes Associés, 1974–1987, rebooted 2002–2004): A French comic anthology series featuring horror and science fiction, sometimes with mind-bending or bizarre concepts. The original inspiration for the American magazine "Heavy Metal". Some of the French comics featured went on to their own independent collections – of particular note are the Loan Sloane and Delirius comics by Phillipe Druillet and Lob. A short-lived live-action TV show (2012, 2014) "Métal Hurlant Chronicles" was generally panned by critics as mediocre.

Propeller Man (Dark Horse, 8 issues, 1993–1994): While it may not be Post-Apocalyptic per se, the world inhabited by Propeller Man is a trippy and dystopian fever-dream. Bizarre characters, and more disembodied human brains than a Mi-Go cylinder factory.

Skreemer (DC Vertigo, 6 issues, 1989): Peter Milligan uses the backdrop of a version of NYC 38 years after the fall of civilization to write a tale that is part gangster epic, part philosophical reflection on free will. If you want your Post-Apocalypse gritty with rival crime gangs and a strong noir sensibility, this is the comic for you.

The Squidder (IDW, 4 issues, 2014): The world has fallen to the betentacled masses of Cthulhu and his squidgy minions, after terrible wars. In this Post-Apocalyptic world, an old genetically enhanced soldier — one of the famed "Squidder Legions" — survives. A discovered relic offers some hope that humanity's Mythos overlords might be overthrown.

V For Vendetta (originally published in Warrior magazine 1982–1989, collected by DC): Alan Moore classic about a dystopian future version of England and a vigilante 'freedom fighter' called V. Adapted as a movie in 2006 (Hugo Weaving, Natalie Portman).

The Walking Dead (Image, 193 issues, 2003–2019): Few comics can sustain this level of long-form storytelling and world building over such a period. Yes, it's about zombies, but really ... there are so many other sources of tension and terror as well that the story avoids falling into the predictable sameness that plagues many zombie apocalypses.

Wasteland (Oni, 60 issues, 2006–2015): Set one hundred years after The Big Wet destroyed modern civilization and left the seas poisonous. America is a barren wasteland with scavengers, survivor cities, and newly created religions. The comic has associated 'original soundtrack' performed by series creator Antony Johnston and available for purchase on Bandcamp.

Winterworld (Eclipse, 3 issues, 1987–1988; and later IDW, 7 issues, 2014–2015): Mad Max on ice. The Post-Apocalyptic world is a frozen and bleak place. Ice shrouds the entire planet. Across this desolate landscape an adventurer and an orphaned girl fight to stay alive.

Y: The Last Man (DC Vertigo, 60 issues, 2002–2008): In one of the more unorthodox Apocalypses, the world is disrupted by a planet-wide plague that only kills mammals with a Y-chromosome. Apparently, the only exception to this is a young man, Yorick, and his pet monkey. In the words of the Beatles, "everybody's got something to hide 'cept me and my monkey."

ROLEPLAYING GAMES

Aftermath! (Fantasy Games Unlimited, 1981–1987; rebooted in 2003 and 2016): A game with notoriously 'crunchy' and complex mechanics, ***Aftermath!*** is a simulationist RPG that takes place in a Post-Apocalypse world. The exact nature of the Apocalypse is left to the GM, but the default assumption is that the world has reverted to a 'Mad Max-like' state.

Apocalypse World (Lumpley Games, 1st Edition 2010, 2nd Edition 2016): A ground-breaking Post-Apocalypse game which opens up the responsibility of world building to become a collaborative process between GM and players. Designed as a player-facing 'pick up and play with minimal preparation' kind of game.

Cthulhu Apocalypse (Pelgrane Press, 2011–2015, for *Trail of Cthulhu*): Both a generic framework and a specific Apocalyptic setting. The former is delivered by 'The Apocalypse Machine', a series of guidelines that allows a GM to make decisions about the impacts of different characteristics of a Post-Apocalyptic setting. The latter comes via a multi-chapter campaign which begins with an End of the World that occurs in *Trail of Cthulhu's* default 1937 timeframe. Recommended.

The Day After Ragnarok (Atomic Overmind, 2013, written by Kenneth Hite — first for *Savage Worlds,* then ported to *FATE Core,* and *HERO* systems): The book offers an unusual form of alternative-historical Apocalyptic setting. Late in WW2, the increasingly desperate Nazis embarked on a bold attempt to recreate the world according to the Norse Apocalypse, summoning the Midgard Serpent into existence. Three years later, the Earth is a poisoned globe thanks to nuclear fallout, supernatural creatures, and other toxic hazards.

End of the World: Wrath of the Gods (Fantasy Flight Games, 2015, stand-alone game book): FFG published four different stand-alone games, each catering towards a different category of Apocalypse — Zombie, Alien Invasion, Return of the Gods, or Rise of the Machines. Most veer away from the kind of Mythos Apocalypse vibe, although Wrath of the Gods has some material that is specifically relevant.

Gamma World (TSR, 1978–1992; subsequent editions by other publishers): Arguably the 'grand daddy' of all Post-Apocalypse RPGs. The game has been rebooted many times over the decades, and the tone of the game setting has varied from semi-serious to not-at-all-serious.

Legacy: Life Among the Ruins (UFO Press, 1st Edition 2015–2018, 2nd Edition 2018–): Powered by the same system found in *Apocalypse World,* Legacy is a game that both evokes a classic Post-Apocalypse setting and embraces a more sweeping view of life after the End. The latter comes from the fact that players take on the role not just of individual survivors, but distinct families/tribes whose story might span many generations of individuals.

Paranoia (West End Games, 1984–2009; Mongoose Games 2017–): Although mostly a game of whimsical adventures with clones romping around corridors in a dystopian Kafkaesque indoor complex controlled by an insane Computer … the world got that way via a (vaguely-specified) Apocalypse. So, technically it's a dystopian, Kafkaesque, whimsical Post-Apocalyptic game. This is highlighted in the few adventures which take clones to the "outside" — e.g., "Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues" in which even Great Cthulhu makes a cameo appearance.

Mutant: Year Zero (Modiphius, 2014–): Based on a Swedish RPG, this Post-Apocalyptic game places characters — each of whom has some kind of mutation — in a gritty world where most things are falling apart or rotting. Survival is the biggest challenge, followed by learning more about the world around the haven in which the characters live.

Summerland (Fire Ruby Designs, 1st Edition 2009, 2nd Edition Kickstarted in 2018): A game revolving around a novel kind of Apocalypse — at some point in the past "The Event" caused a vast forest to emerge, breaking through most human-made infrastructure and disrupting civilization. Accompanying this unexpected rise of greenery, a paranormal "Call" drew most humans into oblivion.

RESOURCE SCARCITY TABLES FOR EXAMPLE POST-APOCALYPSE GAME SETTINGS

In the Game Resources section of this book, there are descriptions of eight different Post-Apocalypse game settings, each with a different Cthulhu Mythos influence. As described briefly in the setting outlines, the scarcity of resources in each ravaged world varies based on the nature of how the world 'ended' and what has happened since.

The tables below and on the pages which follow describe the scarcity of different resource types for each of the example settings. The rating scale for scarcity is the one described on page 100. In order from least-to-most scarce the ratings are: Abundant — Uncommon — Hard to Get — Very Hard to Get — Impossible to Get. A similar resource scarcity table for William Hope Hodgson's 'Night Land' setting may be found on page 179.

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 1: The Stars Turn, Turn, Turn

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — others	Impossible to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Uncommon
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Uncommon
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Uncommon
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Uncommon
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Uncommon

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Very Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Impossible to Get
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Uncommon
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Very Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Very Hard to Get
Animal-Based Transport	Very Hard to Get

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 2: Nyarlathotep Unmasked

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — others	Hard to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Impossible to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Very Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Very Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Very Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Hard to Get
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Abundant
Weapons — military	Uncommon
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Abundant
Protective Equipment	Impossible to Get
Communication Equipment	Hard to Get
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Hard to Get

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology	Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Impossible to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Abundant
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Uncommon
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Hard to Get
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Very Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Very Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Impossible to Get
Animal-Based Transport	Impossible to Get

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 3: God From The Uttermost South

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — others	Hard to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Abundant
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Abundant
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Abundant
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Uncommon
Weapons — military	Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Uncommon
Protective Equipment	Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Impossible to Get
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Abundant
Information Technology — Long Distance Communications	Impossible to Get

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology — Non-Communications	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Abundant
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Uncommon
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Abundant
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Uncommon
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Impossible to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Uncommon
Animal-Based Transport	Uncommon

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 4: Firelands of Melqart

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Very Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Very Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — others	Impossible to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Impossible to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Very Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Very Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Impossible to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Hard to Get
Weapons — modern, non-military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — ammo 🔥	Impossible to Get
Weapons — military	Impossible to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Very Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Impossible to Get
Communication Equipment	Hard to Get
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Hard to Get

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology	Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Impossible to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Very Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Impossible to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Very Hard to Get
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Hard to Get
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse (non-cult material)	Very Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse (cult, in bunkers)	Abundant
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse (cult, outside bunkers)	Uncommon
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Impossible to Get
Animal-Based Transport	Impossible to Get

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 5: Under the Charcoal Sky

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Uncommon
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Uncommon
Medicine 🔥 — others	Very Hard to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Uncommon
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Very Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Uncommon
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Uncommon

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Uncommon
Information Technology	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Very Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Uncommon
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Hard to Get
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Very Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Uncommon
Animal-Based Transport	Uncommon

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 6: Shake the Disease

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Abundant
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Very Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — others	Impossible to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Very Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Very Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Very Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Very Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Very Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Very Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Very Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Very Hard to Get

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Communication Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Information Technology	Very Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Very Hard to Get
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Very Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Very Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Very Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Hard to Get
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Very Hard to Get
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Very Hard to Get
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Abundant
Animal-Based Transport	Abundant

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 7: The Silent World

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥	Uncommon
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Uncommon
Medicine 🔥 — others	Very Hard to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Abundant
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Uncommon
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Abundant
Weapons — modern, non-military	Uncommon
Weapons — ammo 🔥	Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Uncommon
Protective Equipment	Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Abundant
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Abundant

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Information Technology	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Abundant
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Abundant
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Uncommon
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Uncommon
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Uncommon
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals	Impossible to Find
Animal-Based Transport	Uncommon

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

Resource Scarcity for Apocalypse 8: This Fecund Planet

Human Consumables	
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥 — Contaminated by floss	Abundant
Food 🔥 and Water 🔥 — Uncontaminated by floss (e.g., cans)	Very Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — first aid supplies	Hard to Get
Medicine 🔥 — others	Impossible to Get
Technological Items	
Mechanized Transport — all (non-combat) ground and water vehicles	Uncommon
Mechanized Transport — combat vehicles (ground, air)	Very Hard to Get
Mechanized Transport — transportation aircraft	Hard to Get
Fuel 🔥 — non-aviation	Uncommon
Fuel 🔥 — aviation	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — ground	Hard to Get
Low-Tech Transport — water, air	Uncommon
Weapons — modern, non-military & ammo 🔥	Hard to Get
Weapons — military	Very Hard to Get
Weapons — archaic ranged & manufactured hand-to-hand	Hard to Get
Protective Equipment	Very Hard to Get
Communication Equipment	Uncommon

Technological Items (cont'd)	
Cameras / Recording Equipment	Uncommon
Information Technology	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — tools	Uncommon
Construction & Demolitions — Explosives	Very Hard to Get
Subterfuge Equipment	Hard to Get
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — non-weapon	Uncommon
Spare Parts for Technical Items 🔥 — weapon	Hard to Get
Navigation Aids	
Reliable maps and charts	Uncommon
Compass, Sextant, Other Navigation Tools	Hard to Get
Books and Other Recorded Information	
Books/Recordings created pre-Apocalypse	Uncommon
Books/Recordings created during or post-Apocalypse	Hard to Get
Livestock	
Domesticated Animals — Contaminated by floss	Hard to Get
Domesticated Animals — Uncontaminated by floss	Very Hard to Get
Animal-Based Transport	Hard to Get

NOTES: Resources which are consumable are denoted by the symbol 🔥

LOVECRAFTIAN APOCALYPSE SURVIVOR CHARACTER RECORD

NAME _____

SETTING _____

ARCHETYPE _____

AGE _____ GENDER _____

HOME _____

BIRTHPLACE _____

>> STATISTICS

STATISTIC	SCORE	x5	DISTINGUISHING FEATURE
Strength (STR)			
Constitution (CON)			
Dexterity (DEX)			
Intelligence (INT)			
Power (POW)			
Charisma (CHA)			

OTHER ATTRIBUTES

Willpower Points

MAX _____ CURRENT _____ ❶ ☐ Exhausted (-20%)

❶ WP 2 or less = emotional breakdown (-20%), WP 0 = incapacitated

DAMAGE BONUS _____

BODY ARMOR _____

MAX/STARTING HP _____

Current HP					
	STUNNED	00	01	02	❹
		03	04	05	
	06	07	08	09	10
	11	12	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20

MAX SAN _____ RECOVERY SAN _____

❶ Insane	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	Current SAN ❶
08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76
77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

INCIDENTS OF SAN LOSS WITHOUT INSANITY

Violence ☐☐☐❷ Helplessness ☐☐☐❷

BREAKING POINT ❸ _____

❶ Circle current SAN on meter. Black out numbers above MAX SAN. Draw box around Breaking Point

❷ Third checkbox filled, character is adapted

❸ >5 SAN lost in one roll, temporary insanity. If SAN reaches Breaking Point, acquire a Disorder and reset BP

❹ HP 2 or less = unconscious AND roll for permanent injury. HP of 0 = dead

PERMANENT INJURIES ❹

_____

_____

_____

APOCTHULHU

>> SKILLS

Base ratings shown in [square brackets]. All skills with fill-in spaces for specializations, except Survival, have a base rating of 0%.

- ☐ ALERTNESS [20%] _____
- ☐ ANTHROPOLOGY [0%] _____
- ☐ APPRAISE [10%] _____
- ☐ ARCHEOLOGY [0%] _____
- ☐ ART (_____) _____
- ☐ ART (_____) _____
- ☐ ARTILLERY [0%] _____
- ☐ ATHLETICS [30%] _____
- ☐ CRAFT (_____) _____
- ☐ CRAFT (_____) _____
- ☐ DEMOLITIONS [0%] _____
- ☐ DISGUISE [10%] _____
- ☐ DODGE [30%] _____
- ☐ DRIVE [20%] _____
- ☐ FIREARMS [20%] _____
- ☐ FIRST AID [10%] _____
- ☐ FOREIGN LANGUAGE (_____) _____
- ☐ FOREIGN LANGUAGE (_____) _____
- ☐ FORENSICS [0%] _____
- ☐ HEAVY MACHINERY [10%] _____
- ☐ HEAVY WEAPONS [0%] _____
- ☐ HISTORY [10%] _____
- ☐ INSIGHT [10%] _____
- ☐ LAW (_____) _____
- ☐ LAW (_____) _____
- ☐ MEDICINE [0%] _____
- ☐ MELEE WEAPONS [30%] _____
- ☐ MILITARY SCIENCE [0%] _____
- ☐ NAVIGATE [10%] _____
- ☐ OCCULT [10%] _____
- ☐ PERSUADE [20%] _____
- ☐ PHARMACY [0%] _____
- ☐ PILOT (_____) _____
- ☐ PILOT (_____) _____
- ☐ POST-APOC. LORE (_____) _____
- ☐ POST-APOC. LORE (_____) _____
- ☐ RANGED WEAPONS [20%] _____
- ☐ REASSURE [10%] _____
- ☐ RESEARCH [10%] _____
- ☐ RIDE [10%] _____
- ☐ SCAVENGE [10%] _____
- ☐ SCIENCE (_____) _____
- ☐ SCIENCE (_____) _____
- ☐ SEARCH [20%] _____
- ☐ STEALTH [10%] _____
- ☐ SURGERY [0%] _____
- ☐ SURVIVAL (_____) [10%] _____
- ☐ SURVIVAL (_____) [10%] _____
- ☐ SWIM [20%] _____
- ☐ TECHNOLOGY USE [0%] _____
- ☐ UNARMED COMBAT [40%] _____
- UNNATURAL [0%] _____
- ☐ _____ _____
- ☐ _____ _____

>> BONDS

INDIVIDUAL BOND	SCORE

COMMUNITY BOND	SCORE

MOTIVATION / MENTAL DISORDER

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PERMANENT RESOURCES _____

RESOURCE CHECKS ✪ ☐ ☐ ☐ (1 2 3) ✪ Black Out Unavailable Boxes

MAX 6	MAX 6	Unlimited
AT HAND	STOWED	IN STORAGE

>> SURVIVOR'S STORY SO FAR

TERRIBLE TOMES & ARCANE RITUALS

>> GEAR

RECORD PRISTINE/WORN/JUNK

>> WEAPONS

(db) = damage bonus
(ap) = armor piercing

WEAPON	SKILL %	BASE RANGE	DAMAGE	(db)	(ap)	PRISTINE/WORN/JUNK	LETHALITY %	KILL RADIUS	AMMO
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			
						☐ ☐ ☐			

APOCTHULHU RULES CHEAT SHEET

Test Outcomes: Roll d100. If under test → **Success**; if digits of dice match also *(or roll 01)* → **Critical**.
Roll over test → **Failure**; if digits of dice match also *(or roll 00)* → **Fumble**.

Opposed Tests: both sides roll and compare results Critical beats Success beats any failure. If both parties succeed or crit, whoever rolled **HIGHER** wins

Combat Options: Aim, Attack, Called Shot, Disarm, Dodge, Escape Pin, Fight Back, Move, Pin, Wait.

Resisting Insanity: Project SAN loss onto Bond, Use Bond to Repress Temp Insanity / episode of Disorder

POST-APOCALYPSE WORLD

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