

CALL OF
CTHULHU

TAILS OF VALOR

Three adventures for Cathulhu set in Ancient Egypt, Ancient Rome, & Dark Ages France

By Stuart Boon,
Oscar Rios, &
Jeffrey Moeller

Art by David Lee
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Art by David Lee Ingersoll

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THANK YOU

First and foremost, we must thank the many backers of the *Tails of Valor and Terror* Kickstarter. Without your generous support, neither of these two books would be possible. Additional thanks go to backers from the Bengal, Abyssinian, and Council levels; we hope you approve of the tributes we've created to honor your special feline heroes and heroines.

Thank you to my fellow RPG authors, Jeffrey Moeller and Stuart Boon, for joining me on this rather strange project, and especially to Jeff, for starting this entire odd endeavor.

Additionally, many thanks go to Lisa Padol, our editor; Mark Shireman, our designer and layout artist; David Lee Ingersoll, our artist; Gregory Shipp, our cartographer; and Rob Meyer, Brian S Piorkowski, Liam Scanlon, and Danielle Thomas, our proofreaders. You did all the heavy lifting, and as always, we really appreciate it.

Last but not least, thank you to Ingo Ahrens, Adam Crossingham, Daniel Harms, and everyone at Sixtystone Press for allowing us to come over and play with your cats! We had a great time.

Oscar Rios—President, Golden Goblin Press

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to cat lovers everywhere, especially those involved in trap, neuter, and release programs; animal shelters; animal rescue; and fostering. This book is also dedicated to those who have adopted cats in need of a forever home, entered into their lives, and then shed tears at the end of said lives.

IN MEMORY OF...

We also dedicate this work to our hero Mason. This ancient, battle scarred, haunted feral tom with terminal kidney disease was rescued and given a chance to live out his days in a home. He then became Grandpa Mason, a loving mentor to scores of fostered kittens, enriching their lives with what was left of his own. To learn more about his story, and the amazing organization behind it, visit <http://www.tinykittens.com/cases/mason>.

Oscar Rios

FREE CONTENT NOTICE

Golden Goblin Press will be offering a free PDF download of printable character sheets for all of the pre-generated player characters contained herein, at or soon after the release of this supplement. Please check the Free Offerings section of the GGP web store (<https://www.goldengoblinpress.com/store/#!/Free-Offerings/c/33065361/>) to download!

Tails of Valor

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THE CATS OF GOLDEN GOBLIN PRESS

RAMSES



VALENTINE



PICKLES



CARMINE



CONVERTING CATHULHU TO SEVENTH EDITION

BY ADAM CROSSINGHAM

This article summarises the changes that must be made to *Cathulhu* so that it remains compatible with *Call of Cthulhu* seventh edition rules.

Most changes are obvious and simple, but I have taken the opportunity to revise some aspects of *Cathulhu*.

ATTRIBUTES (CATHULHU PAGE 7)

Multiply Cathulhu attributes by five to create seventh edition attributes. **Sentience** equals POW. The **Know** roll needs to be equal to or less than EDU. Both **Idea** and **INT** rolls need to be equal to or lower than **INT**. (See page 90 in the *7th Edition Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*.) **Luck** equals (3D6)×5.

The seventh edition introduction of Build is difficult for small characters like cats. Most cats will be -2 BLD. Use the normal BLD value when interacting with larger creatures.

When dealing with cat- and dog-sized creatures or smaller multiply (STR+SIZ)×10, and then use the damage bonus and Build values from the table on page 33 of the *7th Edition Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*. If you are playing cats and humans at the same time, make sure to write both values down, i.e., 0/-2 for *Cathulhu*/*7th Edition Call of Cthulhu*

Keeper Rulebook Build values.

BREEDS (PAGES 8-16)

Breeds that have bonuses or drawbacks that add to or subtract from their attributes should multiply the amount by five. Thus +1 becomes 5% and +2 becomes 10%. Add these amounts to the attributes as directed.

TRICKS (PAGES 17-21)

Tricks that modify the success level of a skill check still do that, but the sequence is now the seventh edition version.

BEST ← → **WORST**
Extreme Hard Regular Failure Fumble

Any trick that adds to attributes should multiply the amount by five. Thus +1 becomes 5% and +2 becomes 10%. Add these amounts to the attributes as directed.

Any trick that uses modified attribute rolls should roll the appropriate attribute at the following difficulty levels:

ATTRIBUTE MULTIPLIER	x5	x4	x3	x2	x1
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Regular	Regular	Hard	Hard	Extreme

MODIFIED TRICKS

🐾 **Brave:** Your starting SEN is equal to POW×1.2.

🐾 **Catch Vermin:** Allows you to catch vermin in non-stress situations automatically but in stress situations like combat or physical opposition, gives a bonus die to Fighting (Feline) rolls. This bonus die is available for any combat against any opponent whose SIZ is equal to your own or smaller, and is for the duration of the stress situation.

🐾 **Catch Birds:** Allows you to catch birds, bats, large flying insects, etc. in non-stress situations, just as the Catch Vermin trick does, but in stress situations like combat or physical opposition, gives a bonus die to Fighting (Feline) and Jump rolls when fighting avian opponents. This bonus die is for the duration of the stress situation; it stacks with the Catch Vermin bonus die only if the Keeper deems it acceptable.

🐾 **Catch Rabbits:** Allows you to catch rabbits, hares, and other similar-sized creatures in non-stress situations just as the Catch Vermin trick does, but in stress situations like combat or physical opposition, gives a bonus die to

Fighting (Feline) rolls when fighting rabbit-sized opponents. This bonus die is available fighting any opponent whose SIZ is equal to your own or up to twice as large, and is for the duration of the stress situation. This bonus die does not stack with the Catch Vermin bonus die.

🐾 **Mirror Gazer:** The initial difficulty level for mirror-gazing is an Extreme POW check. The difficulty level can be lowered by one for every two Magic Points used, to a minimum difficulty of a Regular POW check.

🐾 **Shadow Walker:** You can step into a shadow and out from another shadow up to (POW/5)×meters away.

SKILLS (PAGES 22–24)

SKILL POINTS

Feline investigators have (EDU+INT)×2 points to spend on skills. Feline investigators do not have occupation and personal skill point pools.

Feline investigators are not subject to capped starting skill values. (See page 48 of the *7th Edition Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*.) Skills can start play at 99% or even higher, if desired. If the feline investigator needs a skill higher than 99%, it is best to raise it during character generation, as it will be very hard to improve the skill during play.

MODIFIED SKILLS

The following skills now have new base levels:

🐾 **Cuteness** now starts at APP/2.

🐾 **Dodge** now starts at DEX/2.

🐾 **Human Language** now starts at INT/3.

🐾 **Human Lore** now starts at EDU/5.

🐾 **Natural World** now starts at EDU/2.

The following skill has been modified in its use:

🐾 **Wash (25%):** In addition to its effect on Cuteness, Wash can also be used as a feline version of First Aid. It can restore 1 HP of damage per wound. It can treat unconscious and dying cats as per the First Aid rules on pages 65, 120–121 of the *7th Edition Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*.

NEW SKILLS

Seventh edition saw several skills being

amalgamated into new skills. *Cathulhu* is no different.

Bite, Rip and Scratch are now Fighting (Feline). The former skills become attack options of Fighting (Feline) which starts at 25%:

ATTACK	Bite	Rip	Scratch
DAMAGE	1D4	2D4+DB	1D3+DB

The Grapple skill is now a Fighting (Feline) maneuver. Use this maneuver to immobilize the opponent prior to breaking its spinal column with Bite, or disembowelling it with Rip. (This only works with similarly sized creatures; a normal house cat is not going to be able to bite a human dead.)

In addition, cats know a fighting maneuver called the Deadly Cat Attack. See “Additional *Cathulhu* Rules” for information about this.

Hide and Sneak are now combined into Stealth, which starts at 50%.

RETIRED SKILLS

Healing is merged with Wash.

Nimbleness is replaced by Dodge. They are essentially the same thing.

ADDITIONAL CATHULHU RULES

CATNIP (PAGE 27 OF CATHULHU)

If using published material, compare the POT of the catnip to the chart below to find its strength.

A cat in the presence of catnip must make a SEN roll to resist the lure of catnip. They can, of course, eat the catnip voluntarily and avoid the SEN roll. The difficulty of the SEN roll depends on the strength of the catnip. If the cat fails the SEN roll they must interact with the catnip for the rolled duration.

A cat under the influence of catnip is affected for the rolled duration in minutes. If combat starts during this period, the catnip lasts for half the duration in combat rounds. The effects end when either of these durations (minutes or combat rounds) finishes.

Whilst under the influence of catnip, the

affected cat receives the number of bonus dice indicated. These bonus dice may be used once on a single chosen DEX, Climb, or Jump roll, and then discarded. The usual rules about bonus dice still apply; i.e., no more than two bonus dice may be added to a roll, but the third may be used to cancel a penalty die. Any unused bonus dice are lost when the effect of catnip wears off.

POT	1–9	10–19	20+
CATNIP STRENGTH	Mild	Moderate	Strong
SEN ROLL	Normal	Hard	Extreme
DURATION	2D6	4D6	6D6
BONUS DICE	1	2	3

THE DEADLY CAT ATTACK (PAGES 27–28 OF CATHULHU)

This is a fighting maneuver. Massed cats swarm, attack, and overwhelm individual targets. Ignore the Build rules for targets greater than 40 SIZ. Instead use this process:

Cats attempt to halt and knock the target to the ground. Each cat is 5 SIZ. If the number of cats is equal or greater than the target's SIZ, the target must make a Regular DEX check or fall to the ground. If the number of cats is greater than the target's SIZ but less than double the target's size, the target must make a Hard DEX check or fall over. If the number of cats is equal or greater than target's SIZ×2, the target must make an Extreme DEX check or fall over.

Once prone the target cannot Dodge but can Fight Back. The target cannot fight back more than its number of attacks. Roll for the massed cats' attacks with a bonus die. If successful, roll 1D3×number of cats attacking for the damage inflicted.

If all of the cats are NPCs, the Keeper uses the average Fighting (Feline) skill of the massed cats. If one or more of the cats are PCs, use the highest of the PCs' Fighting (Feline) skill, as the PCs should be leading the cat attack.

Once the target has suffered a Major Wound, the target will start to take maximum damage plus maximum damage bonus in the next round (as if suffering the results of an attacker's Extreme success) as internal organs are damaged.



TRIUMPHIS FELIS FERAЕ

(or, Stray Cat Strut)

BY JEFF MOELLER



INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIA/ AUTHOR'S NOTES

This is a heroic fantasy-oriented scenario for Cathulhu, set in the Cthulhu Invictus era. Specifically, it is set in Rome in early 41 C.E., in the last days of Emperor Gaius the Younger, better known to history as Caligula.

At the outset, an apology is appropriate, albeit in the Classical Roman sense of the word: a rhetorical explanation about a course of conduct. My writ was to write a Cathulhu scenario, not a Call of Cthulhu scenario. These are different things, and if you are looking for unmitigated nihilistic horror, it will not be found here. Even under normal circumstances, I try to do things a little differently, by exploring themes of different writers in the 1920s–1940s pulp genre, and if that's not your bag, mea culpa.

I took the project on initially with my tongue firmly in my cheek, and while I never quite separated the two, I like where the scenario ended up. Cathulhu involves playing pseudo-anthropomorphic cat investigators, within a distinct sub-genre of pulp fiction. Lovecraft's "The Cats of Ulthar," positing cats as creatures grounded in the Dreamlands and with hidden depths of purpose, is itself not a typical Lovecraftian nihilistic horror tale. It is a weird fantasy tale, with some horror undertones. It follows themes far more in keeping with a typical Clark Ashton Smith tale: a weird setting as a backdrop, with foolish men

causing their own destruction by meddling too much with things that they do not understand. The horror is sly, self-executing, and entirely tied up with human weaknesses, not divorced from them.

Indeed, a Cathulhu scenario almost has to fall within this particular genre; there is a limit to a cat's, or a group of cats', ability to affect the world around them. There are limits to their ability to interact with humans, let alone fight them. This scenario, too, follows Smithian, not typical Lovecraftian, themes and tropes: things man was not meant to know, heroic fantasy, sly and ironic horror, and foolish men being the authors of their own destruction.

Just as with the core scenarios in *De Horrore Cosmico*, this scenario draws on some classic pulp-era stories. To better fit the constraints of a cat-driven scenario—inherently fantastic and necessarily driven by exploration and interaction—I have chosen to use a Clark Ashton Smith cycle of stories as a framework: *The City of the Singing Flame* and *Beyond the Singing Flame*. These stories are in the public domain and readily available online. *The City of the Singing Flame* was originally published in the July 1931 issue of *Wonder Stories* magazine, and *Beyond the Singing Flame* in the November 1931 issue of the same magazine.

In this scenario, strange things are afoot (get used to the puns) in Rome. Vermin have inexplicably become scarce. Weak-minded cats and little kittens have been seen wandering off, never to return, in unusual numbers. The cats will discover that many of

their missing comrades have been heading generally in the direction of the Imperial Palace. Others have been out and out disappearing.

Weak-minded humans have likewise begun wandering off, likewise generally in the direction of the Imperial Palace, where clashes with the Praetorian Guard—elite and politically-influential legionaries who guarded the Imperial Palace and policed Rome—against these seeming gatecrashers have become increasingly commonplace. The Guard thinks that this turmoil reflects an uprising against an increasingly pernicious and abusive Emperor, Caligula.

Part of the reason for the disappearing cats is the need to furnish the dinner table of the mad Caligula, who likes to eat cats as late-night snacks, among his other atrocities. The bigger reason for the turmoil, applicable across species, however, is that Caligula brought two carved stone pillars back from Mauretania, received as tribute from his cousin Ptolemy in early 40 C.E. These were offered to Rome in an (unsuccessful) effort to fend off a direct power grab in Mauretania.

Caligula has set these ancient things of power up as symbols of his triumph in his personal temple, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, connected to the Imperial Palace. The pillars send out a subtle, but persistent, siren call to come toward them and move between them, which brings the ensorcelled humans into conflict with the Guard around the temple/palace complex. Many of the missing cats, who alone

among all animals (and unlike humans) have free rein to enter Roman temples, have also been drawn into the realm beyond the pillars, and vanished.

Beyond the pillars, as in the story cycle, lies a weird dimension and citadel, at the center of which is the Singing Flame. The Flame calls to entities from across realities and dimensions, drawing them to it and ultimately causing them to seemingly immolate themselves in it, hypnotized into a willing semi-fugue. Beyond (or within) the Singing Flame, as it turns out, is a paradise-like dimension from which no being readily returns.

Caligula, not exactly a model of sanity, has just fallen victim to the Singing Flame, and has taken up residence in the realm within it. Meanwhile, the palace and Rome itself are in an uproar about the missing emperor.

The investigators are tasked with finding out what happened to the missing cats (both those eaten and those who wandered off), ending the threat to Rome (and the multiverse) by disrupting the Singing Flame, and (depending on what they learn) punishing Caligula. They find that punishing him effectively requires dragging him back to our dimension, and preventing him from escaping back through the portal again.

Cats, with their abilities to travel in the Dreamlands and enter into normally off-limits temples, are uniquely positioned to tackle this crisis. They are somewhat more resistant to the lure of the Singing Flame, and able to travel within the Dreamlands to seek aid and assistance as to how to stop it. Dreamlands travel will prove difficult, however, due to the Flame's pull.

This placement of the City of The Singing Flame in the Dreamlands requires a further apologia about the nature of the Dreamlands, viz a viz Clark Ashton Smith's various fantasy dimensions. Prior attention to this topic (hashed out between John H. Crowe, III and myself incident to John's seminal *Zothique* segments in *Realm of Shadows*, Pagan Publishing, 1997), posited that Smith's odd dimensions were fairly treated as out of the way sections of the Dreamlands. They are quite similar in theme, phantasmagoric description, and tone, and no one ever claimed that the Dreamlands described by Lovecraft were the entirety of the lands of dream. Furthermore, both Lovecraft's described Dreamlands and the City of the Singing Flame's dimension are overseen by certain vaguely described Elder Gods (or Great Ones). These Elder Gods are not further described or named by Smith in his Singing Flame cycle, so there is no canonical impediment to having them include Hypnos, or any of Lovecraft's dream deities. As a result, this conceit (if conceit it is) will continue here.

Finally, an apologia is appropriate about certain assumptions that have been made about cats in Rome. This is a topic which, from the outset, engendered debate internally at Golden Goblin Press. What we know of Rome today comes from written histories and inferences from ruins, which are not always consistent, clear, or necessarily even reliable. There are ample mentions of cats in first century C.E. Rome, including: depictions of them in murals, accounts of them traveling back from Egypt with the legions, and

special mention of them as the only animals permitted to roam through Roman temples. At the same time, the histories also discuss how it is that they are not widely domesticated. Slightly later accounts, after the time of the construction of the Flavian Amphitheater (hence, about 50 years after events here), mention feral colonies of them living in its underworks.

Histories of Caligula are largely consistent in their depiction of him as a debauched, violent, and arbitrary madman, but such imperial histories (written after the fact) are believed to be sometimes exaggerated or purposefully defamatory. Nonetheless, one of the consistent rumors surrounding Caligula is that he ate cats, a taboo in Rome. These accusations necessarily imply their existence in Rome circa 41 C.E., at least to some degree.

For our purposes, at least at the outset, Caligula's dietary peccadilloes are in the realm of unsubstantiated gossip. The cats have heard about it, but it is in the realm of vicious gossip, perhaps being spread by the enemies of Rome, and a terrible thing to say about the emperor of the greatest city in the world.

Cats are also not living in the Imperial Palace. Whether this is because cats are not widely kept domestic animals (which we assume), or for far darker reasons, is, at the outset, a matter for conjecture among the investigators. However, we assume that cats are generally not domesticated (perhaps with rare exceptions), but that there are semi-feral colonies here and there throughout the city, concentrated in places where prey animals are abundant. These would be places where humans leave a lot of trash, and which draw a lot of vermin. This would certainly include the Circus Maximus, or the periphery of any games or public festival. Is this unassailable historic fact? No, because when it comes to Roman history from this era, that is an elusive goal on any topic.

In short, the author invokes literary license on all of the foregoing fronts, to the extent necessary.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

CHARACTER GENERATION AND "PROUD ROMAN CATS"

For purposes of Cathulhu character generation, your typical Invictus era cat will be a "domestic shorthair" (i.e., a semi-feral mixed breed). Most purebreds are unavailable as characters. Cats fresh off of the boat from Egypt, and with a plausible backstory, might be Abyssinians or Maus.

You may, if appropriate for your character's backstory, opt to have your player character be a Proud Roman Cat. Proud Roman Cat is a kit (pardon the pun), which offers benefits and detriments for a cat who is part of the landscape of Rome. All of the pre-generated cats, following, are Proud Roman Cats.

Proud Roman Cats are not domesticated, growing up on the street of hard knocks, although the best streets anywhere in the world. They are absolutely convinced of Roman superiority, and have a swagger about them that translates into pushy self-confidence (even more so than for a normal cat). Because they are

not domesticated, nor do they spend large amounts of time around bipeds, they suffer a -10 penalty to EDU. They offset this disadvantage with a patron—a biped who is favorably disposed to them and will give them treats, shelter, or aid on Yowling request. Their swaggering resolve also translates into an extra Nine Lives trick. However, they themselves are expected to behave with honor, both helping those beneath them in the cat hierarchy and upholding Roman values, or they lose face. Losing face results in a Status penalty of -10% per violation.

Roman Justice

As part of being a Proud Roman Cat, the cats will place importance on the tenets of Roman justice. Roman justice, it must be emphasized, is public justice—meted out in public, in the view of society and those who have been wronged. Assassinating a villain or criminal in private "just to get him out of the way" is un-Roman and diminishes the importance of Rome as a whole. Roman justice is also driven by two concepts: the punishment fitting the crime (an eye for an eye), and the idea that crimes against the state are punishable by death. Rome did not make heavy use of prisons except as pre-trial detention pens, and trials were often dispensed with if the criminal was caught red-handed.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The names given for each pre-generated cat are their "official" human-reference names. Feel free to give them your own true or secret name. Someone must play Sulla, as he is the investigative sort who prompts the others into action. Someone should play Turnstile, as well, as this cat's skill set is invaluable to overcoming the challenges ahead.

AUGUSTUS

Roman, Male, 6

STR 15 CON 55 SIZ 5 INT 65 POW 70

DEX 105 APP 45 EDU 55 SEN 70

LUCK 70 HP 6 MP 14 MOVE 12 BUILD 2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 84% (42/16)

SKILLS: Climb 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 27%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 80%, Human Language (Latin) 26%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 40%, Listen 60%, Natural World 26%, Navigate 25%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 50%, Sleep 50%, Spot Hidden 25%, Status 51%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 71%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Stray, Top Cat

STRESS DISORDER: Excessive Territoriality

NOTES: Augustus is a tough, alpha tom street cat, the head of the largest semi-feral cat gang patrolling beneath the bleachers of the Circus Maximus. He is a loyal and proud Roman, who

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expects to be respected, and takes it for granted that he is the leader. He has a reputation to maintain among cat-kind, and is sensitive about how brave and tough he appears.

PATRON: Cena ("dinner"), a janitor who works and sleeps underneath the Circus Maximus. That's not his real name, but that's what the cats call him.

BELLA

Roman, Female, 4

STR 10 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 5 **INT** 70 **POW** 75
DEX 110 **APP** 80 **EDU** 55 **SEN** 75
LUCK 75 **HP** 4 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 88% (44/17)

SKILLS: Climb 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 90%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (Latin) 28%, Hypnotize 30%, Insight 50%, Listen 60%, Natural World 26%, Navigate 25%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 50%, Sleep 80%, Spot Hidden 25%, Status 41%, Stealth 55%, Streetwise 21%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 70%, Yowl 90%.

TRICKS: Fish for Tea, Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Rumblepuss

STRESS DISORDER: Excessive Grooming

NOTES: Bella is a soft-spoken manipulator, used to getting her way. She is kept in pampered comfort at the temple of the Vestal Virgins, the guardians of Roman virtue.

PATRON: Livia, a young Vestal Virgin.

TURNSTILE

Roman, Player's Choice, 9 months

STR 5 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 5 **INT** 75 **POW** 75
DEX 120 **APP** 55 **EDU** 25 **SEN** 75
LUCK 90 **HP** 5 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 96% (48/19)

SKILLS: Climb 90%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 33%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (Latin) 40%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 21%, Listen 70%, Natural World 34%, Navigate 25%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 10%, Sleep 20%, Spot Hidden 25%, Status 11%, Stealth 95%, Streetwise 21%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Open Doors, Cat Burglar

STRESS DISORDER: Restlessness

NOTES: Turnstile is a very young cat, little more

than a kitten, who is friends with the human crumb-droppers who take admission at the gates of the Circus Maximus. In their young life, they have already become well-respected among cats for their ability to get into and out of places that other cats cannot, and to avoid the feet of humans while doing so. However, they are frenetic, immature, constantly in motion, and like to show off what they can do.

PATRON: Lupo, a watchman at the Circus Maximus, who keeps a camp just outside the gates.

SULLA

Roman, Male, 10

STR 10 **CON** 35 **SIZ** 5 **INT** 90 **POW** 50
DEX 100 **APP** 50 **EDU** 80 **SEN** 50
LUCK 50 **HP** 4 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 80% (40/16)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 30%, Dream Lore 55%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (Latin) 36%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 61%, Listen 40%, Natural World 86%, Navigate 65%, Occult 65%, Own Kingdom (Rome) 95%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 60%, Sleep 50%, Spot Hidden 25%, Status 31%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 21%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 80%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Sleuth, Unsettling Stare

STRESS DISORDER: Litterbox Problems

NOTES: The oldest and wisest of all cats in Rome, at least according to himself. Sulla is a pompous, portly windbag who, despite himself, actually does know a good deal about a great many things, including where things are in Rome and how to get there. On the other hand, if he had more common sense and initiative, he probably wouldn't be living around the river docks, catching droppings as barges are unloaded. His Sleuth trick should be used by the Keeper to unstick the investigators if they lose their way or get off track.

PATRON: Rota, a dockworker at the port.

ZOE

Roman, Female, 4

STR 10 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 5 **INT** 70 **POW** 70
DEX 105 **APP** 70 **EDU** 70 **SEN** 69
LUCK 70 **HP** 5 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 84% (42/16)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 01%, Cuteness 60%, Dream Lore 35%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (Latin) 90%, Hypnotize

10%, Insight 41%, Listen 60%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 45%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 10%, Sleep 50%, Spot Hidden 25%, Status 11%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 21%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 70%.

TRICKS: House Cat, Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Doolittle (can talk to weasels), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Scholar (Latin) (can read Latin, and write *in extremis*, at 90%).

STRESS DISORDER: Talks Even More, Without Even Pausing For Breath

NOTES: An attention-seeking cat that never, ever shuts up. Needy and demanding. No cat ever got something that they wanted by just lying about quietly, after all. Zoe always has an opinion on something, and is never shy to express it. She often spends time in the Forum marketplace, listening to augurs and oracles and disagreeing with what they (and everyone else) have to say.

PATRON: The White Sibyl, a mysterious and creepy soothsayer who appears when least expected.

CASSIUS

Roman, Male, 6

STR 15 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 5 **INT** 50 **POW** 60
DEX 100 **APP** 25 **EDU** 55 **SEN** 60
LUCK 40 **HP** 5 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +2D6/-1 (due to Bruiser trick)

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 90% (45/18); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 80% (40/16)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 15%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 90%, Human Language (Latin) 24%, Hypnotize 40%, Insight 11%, Listen 50%, Natural World 26%, Navigate 35%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 50%, Sleep 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Status 41%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 41%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Bruiser, Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Lion Heart, Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences)

STRESS DISORDER: Player's choice (due to Lion Heart trick)

NOTES: A big, orange, fearless, battle-scarred behemoth of a tom. Cassius is the toughest cat in all of Rome (in his own mind, at least, but he's probably right). He believes he really ought to be in charge, but for some reason, other cats do not follow his lead. They don't think he's very smart. As a result, Cassius sullenly goes along with the crowd, always looking for a chance to prove that he should be the leader. He is ready to whoop anyone or dare anything, be it weasel, cat, or human, to reinforce how tough he is and vie for leadership. Cassius is a legion camp cat, living at the Praetorian Guard's camp just outside of Rome.

PATRON: Publius Sextus, a centurion with the Praetorian Guard.

A CLOWDER AT THE CIRCUS

This scenario begins at midday on January 22, 41 C.E., coinciding with the day of Caligula's reported assassination by the Praetorian Guard.

Leading up to his execution of his cousin Ptolemy and assumption of direct rule over Mauretania in late 40 C.E., (fictionally) we posit that Caligula brought two ancient pillars back to Rome as tribute, reassembled them, and placed them in what was once known as the Temple of Castor and Pollux ("TCP"). Late in his reign, Caligula began to portray himself as divine, and rededicated the TCP to his own divinity, so now the TCP doubles as Caligula's temple to himself. It is attached to the imperial residence on the Palatine, off of the Forum and connected to the palace by a cryptoporticum (a secret tunnel).

Normal people are not allowed in the TCP, only those who have a pre-arranged audience with the emperor, and certainly not the crazy rabble who have been trying to get in past the Praetorian Guards lately. Cats, of course, are exceptions—they have free run of Roman temples. If they dare to go into a temple dedicated to a mercurial despot rumored to eat cats, that is.

Since the columns were brought back, subtle and weird things have been going on. Some of these things have now been noticed by the feral cat colonies that help to keep vermin down at the Circus Maximus, although they have no idea why these things are happening. Prey is getting scarce; vermin have seemingly disappeared. Old, feral, or mentally infirm cats have also slowly been disappearing, some seen wandering off, others just vanishing when no one is looking.

Unknown to the cats at the outset, weak-minded humans have also started wandering off (though not generally vanishing); there has been a general shift of such people of Rome toward the Forum, where they have not been treated gently by the Praetorian Guard.

Now kittens have started wandering off in the night. Finally, just today, there is a new but unconfirmed rumor that Caligula himself has gone missing. Rome is in an uproar, and all the citizens of Rome, including its feline citizens, are demanding answers!

Sulla, wisest of all cats in Rome (just ask him), has called a conclave of various cat gangs from around Rome. A series of events has come to his attention, affecting all cats, and he is forming a group of the best cats from across Rome to investigate these egregious threats to feline welfare and stability, and to help the Emperor put an end to these disappearances, and bring justice to whoever is responsible. Ave Caligula!

What the players know at the outset is set out in Triumphis Felis Ferae Handout #1. They are also familiar with general, publicly known information and rumors about the Emperor; their perspective on some key rumors about him is noted.

TRIUMPHIS FELIS FERAЕ HANDOUT #1:

A Cat's Eye View of the News Around Rome, Midday, January 22, 41 C.E.

- 🐾 Last January, cats started disappearing throughout Rome. At first, these were the weak and infirm, those who seemed about to die. They would vanish instead of dying where they lay. Healthy, sound of mind, and younger cats were not affected.
- 🐾 As summer came around, the disappearances spread to somewhat better off cats throughout the city. They would make vague excuses about where they were headed, act furtively, head off by themselves, and not return.
- 🐾 Some traitorous cats around Rome have been joking that, perhaps, the missing cats ended up on Caligula's dinner table. A persistent, nasty rumor among the humans is that Caligula eats cats, mostly to shock his enemies. Loyal Roman cats put no stock in such slander against the state, of course.
- 🐾 Nonetheless, there are stories of a man in a cloak and white sandals haunting the alleys and side streets of the Capitoline Hill, killing cats with a club to the head and throwing them in a leather bag. Doubtlessly, this is some unrelated fiendishness in need of severe and public punishment.
- 🐾 As fall progressed, however, the joking stopped. Kittens began disappearing from their mother's side while she slept, all throughout Rome. Worse still, prey animals became scarce, even though they would normally come inside as winter approached.
- 🐾 Some street humans around town, known to share a morsel with cats, have likewise started to go missing from their usual spots.
- 🐾 There are honorary games going on in the Forum, athletic contests and theater productions in memory of the late Emperor Augustus. They have been running for a few weeks, and continue today. Just now, a new rumor has been spreading throughout Rome like fire that the emperor has gone mysteriously missing, after visiting the games in the morning. No one can seem to find him. If this state of uncertainty persists for long, Rome will inevitably devolve into riots and chaos.
- 🐾 No cats live in the Imperial Palace, so the rumors of Caligula's disappearance are all secondhand from the humans. Caligula, like most humans, keeps domesticated weasels in the palace to control pests.

EARLY INVESTIGATION

All investigatory leads will take the cats, eventually, to the Imperial Palace/Temple of Castor and Pollux (TCP) complex, off the Forum on the Capitoline Hill. Spending enough time doing their legwork before heading there will put the cats at a distinct advantage on their arrival. There is information to be gained at each of the cats' usual haunts and patrons. These are: beneath the bleachers at the Circus Maximus, outside the gates of the Circus Maximus, at the Temple of the Vestal Virgins, when seeking out an oracle (which causes the White Sibyl to appear), at the docks on the Tiber River, and from the Praetorian Guard. Feel free to use unused PCs as cooperative NPCs. The investigators can also gain additional information from any humans or cats that they encounter who are suffering from madness (although these are increasingly concentrated in and around the Capitoline Hill) or are within the palace itself, and from any weasels that they manage to parley with, who have their own rumor network.

Note that as Proud Roman Cats, visiting their respective patrons (and snack providers) is what the players ought, if properly roleplaying, to think of doing as a starting point.

Beneath the Bleachers of the Circus/Visiting Cena (Augustus' Patron)

Cena is caring for some obviously distressed cats (as well as some just plain hungry ones). Lucia is an example of one of several distraught mother cats, whose vanished kittens have unsettled the community beneath the Circus' bleachers. All of their kittens wandered off in the night about a week ago. She is acquainted with Augustus, who may well be the kittens' father.

Lucia's five baby kittens all wandered off as a group. Their eyes were barely open and they were still nursing, so it makes no sense. They were complaining that they were too cold and wanted to "move closer to the fire." It was not a cold evening, and there is no fire to move closer to, except for that kept by the watchmen at the Circus' gates. When she woke up, they were gone and she could not find them anywhere. The other mother cats whose kittens went missing that evening tell a very similar story.

BEYOND THE GATES OF THE CIRCUS/VISITING LUPO (TURNSTILE'S PATRON)

There are cats that hang around the various fire pits and houses near the Circus Maximus who might answer some questions. Lupo, a night watchman, keeps a fire that the cats who hang out around the exterior of the Circus are familiar with and welcome at. Julius, a young orange tom, is one such cat; he hangs out at a fire pit where night watchmen over the Circus keep themselves warm. He is friendly to Turnstile. Alternatively, Turnstile might somehow strike up a rather one-sided conversation by being a loud nuisance and looking in and around things until the humans get the idea that he is looking for other cats.

No gangs of kittens came by or warmed themselves by these comparatively nearby fires; this story is repeated by any number of witnesses around the Circus, except at Julius'/Lupo's fire. He did not see any particular gang of kittens, but has seen "rude" cats wander by his fire with increasing regularity in recent months, headed in the direction of the Capitoline Hill. He says "rude" because they stomp by in the middle of the night and do not even say hello, just complain about how cold they are. There was about a week of this kind of behavior, mostly with rats and street people, last January as well. Then it started up again a few months ago, and has gotten steadily worse.

Julius thought that he was being quite generous to the occasional cat that would stumble by, half asleep and complaining about needing more warmth. This is a prime hunting spot; ever since last January, a steady stream of rats, voles, and other prey have made their way in this direction from under the stands at the Circus. This is a new thing as of last winter.

As the cats make their way in the direction of the Capitoline Hill, there is rampant chaos. Humans are scarce, but those that are active are frantically running about, yelling and arguing with one another. Troops of Praetorian Guards are arresting and hauling off people. A crowd is assembled on a street corner, demanding to know what has become of the emperor.

THE TEMPLE OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS/VISITING LIVIA, BELLA'S PATRON/CHAOS IN ROME

This is Bella's usual haunt; it is locked up tighter than a drum, with a grim-faced detachment of Praetorian Guards standing at the doors. No one is trying to get past them; one body belonging to someone who tried is being hauled away as the cats arrive. One of the Guard can be overheard commenting that no one can get at the emperor's will, until he's confirmed dead. (The Vestal Virgins were entrusted with holding the wills of prominent men in Rome.) Cats, of course, are allowed in, especially Bella, who is known to the guards.

Any cats who try to get the attention of Livia or one of the Virgins are placated and ultimately told to hush, in a one-sided conversation. The Virgins are fond of talking to Bella, monologuing about the day's events while assuming that she does not understand, but might talk at any cat that is friendly enough. These are dangerous times, they say; the emperor has disappeared after the morning's games. If he is dead, his body must be found quickly, so that his will can be read, the Senate can act, and a successor can be declared. With his fate unknown, rivals will vie for control, and Rome will burn until things are settled. Similar information might be imparted by anyone else in Rome who likes to talk to cats as though they might understand.

While in the temple, especially if one of them sneaks into the presence of Vesta's sacred fire, you might expose the cats to a "tugging." A "tugging" will be an urge (resistible but unmistakable) to throw oneself into the fire. This might be accompanied by a momentary impression of unseen things rushing toward the flame, with strange and unidentifiable sounds and smells, and a feeling of intense cold,

despite being close to a huge, roaring flame. The cat can sense that it is not the right flame to jump into, however, somehow. SEN loss is 0/1D3 for a "tugging." A "tugging" might occur whenever any of the cats loses any SEN, as the momentary weakness and fear attunes the cat's mind to further chaos.

THE SOOTHSAYERS/SEEKING OUT THE WHITE SIBYL (ZOE'S PATRON)

Most soothsayers (including those who are friendly to Zoe) are predicting gloom and doom for Rome. Great turmoil, looming chaos, ruin, foreign armies descending on Rome—the signs are everywhere, most agree. In any case, all reputable soothsayers (and even disreputable ones) are doing a bang up business, with the emperor's whereabouts unknown and people seeking solace in the supernatural.

Zoe, or other cats with ties to the human soothsayer community, knows who the best soothsayer in Rome at present is, but she is a weird and intimidating figure. If the cats even think about talking to a soothsayer, she should be found to have set up her table around the next corner. Zoe knows her as the White Sibyl, a standoffish woman who comes and goes mysteriously and never feeds cats (except Zoe) or lets them on her table (including Zoe).

The White Sibyl seems to be young, maybe 25, but strikes the cats as a very old soul. She dresses all in white and sits, alone with a mammoth, incredibly complex and detailed scroll/star chart, on streets where fortunes are told. Her Latin is flawless, yet she looks to be Greek, or perhaps from Scythia. She is cryptic, and her prophecies and answers are couched in riddles and innuendo, and she forecasts using astrology based on very advanced (and Mythos-informed) star charts, as distasteful as that is to the typical Roman.

She is scrupulously polite, and on this instance, unusually calls out to the cats by name. She even has fish for all of them—grossly out of prior character. Disconcertingly, she is able to have a two-sided conversation with the cats, speaking in Latin yet sensing what their questions are.

The White Sibyl should not be used as a "Mary Sue" or info dump; she is a bit of a quasi-real hallucination giving voice to spreading madness and uproar. She knows everything that there is to know about each cat, since she is, at least in part, a reflection of the collective unconscious. Keep interactions with her cryptic and mysterious, but the cats should be able to get the following out of her:

- 🐾 This is a pivotal moment in Roman history, and only the cats can safely go where good Romans are now needed.
- 🐾 A grave injustice is being done to cats, and you must set it right. Decide the truth for yourself.
- 🐾 One of you will not return, if justice is your goal.
- 🐾 Justice for the crimes you will uncover can only be truly meted out in Rome, for all to see.
- 🐾 You don't hear it, do you? Your minds are too strong to hear it from here, but soon, you will.

- 🐾 When the time comes, and not before, one of you must jump as high as you can. But wait until you can see the moon, and the others must help.

Any nosy cat that sneaks a look at her star chart while she is talking to the other cats finds them incomprehensible, written in a language other than Latin. (In fact, they are in Greek hexameter, like the Sibylline Books themselves.) This time the White Sibyl makes no move to shoo the cat away, despite her seeming semi-prescience and dislike of cats on her table. The section of the scroll that is open is the end; nothing is written beyond today. SEN loss for this observation is 0/1. Any cat that is so daring as to stick its nose in her book gains an automatic unnatural insight the next time it loses 5 SEN or more.

When the White Sibyl's warnings are delivered, she is simply gone. SEN loss for seeing her disappear without explanation is 1/1D6. Note the potential for a "tugging" episode upon losing SEN.

THE DOCKS (PRIOR INCIDENTS)/VISITING WITH ROTA (SULLA'S PATRON)

This is a particularly useful investigatory avenue. If the investigators seem stuck or lost, the Keeper can call for an Idea roll (Sulla's Sleuth trick can also prompt this suggestion), if and when the cats encounter someone entranced and heading toward the Forum. If successful, the cats might remember that they have seen a similar fugue state before, last January during part of the emperor's Mauretanian triumph. (The existence of similar, but short-lived, chaos last January can also be obtained by interviewing Julius or Lupo at their fire.)

The triumph (a victorious processional whereby spoils of war and/or tribute are ceremoniously marched through the city to pump up morale and improve an emperor's prestige, followed by a division of the spoils among the citizenry) would have been a comparatively minor one in the scheme of things. It was only a payment of tribute masquerading as a "gift." However, a few folks at the docks still remember some oddities about it. This information can be gotten from any number of dockside rat-catchers at the dock where the shipment was offloaded, such as Azrael, a skinny and easily distracted grand old dame, particularly with Sulla's help:

- 🐾 One of the barges that brought back spoils from Mauretania crashed into the docks. The crew was sleepwalking, and kept complaining about being too cold.
- 🐾 One of the wagons that the dockworkers loaded was just crawling with tasty rats. It was like they were drawn to it, easy pickings. That wagon had two big stone pillars in it, covered with symbols that none of the cats could understand.
- 🐾 Several kittens also disappeared around that time, all at once, but no one thought that this was anything other than a coincidence.
- 🐾 A delegation from the palace itself came down to meet those barges, led by a shriveled up old man dressed all in red. They remember the guard dogs

THE MAURETANIAN TRIUMPH?

A bit of literary license is begged here. Near the end of Caligula's reign, he lured his cousin, King Ptolemy of Mauretania, to Rome and had him assassinated. This was shocking behavior, even by Caligula's standards. Not only was Ptolemy also a close blood relative and a Roman citizen (a grandson of Mark Antony and Cleopatra); he was a long time, loyal ally and friend to Rome. Over the course of his 20+ year reign, Ptolemy had backed Roman military plays on repeated occasions and helped Rome subdue several, potentially disruptive North African revolts.

When word of this treachery got back to Mauretania, around the time of Caligula's own assassination, Mauretania revolted. Rome then proceeded to conquer and assume direct imperial control of the province of Mauretania, after Claudius assumed the throne.

Mauretania had been one of the wealthier and better run client kingdoms of the era. The whys and wherefores of Ptolemy's assassination are a bit murky in the histories, as are the particulars, but Caligula was not above killing anyone for a chance at grabbing their money for himself.

Nonetheless, I posit that in January, 40 C.E., a year before the scenario, a shipment of tribute from Mauretania arrived in Rome at the docks—a "gift" of valuables from Ptolemy intended to placate cousin Caligula. The effort at placation failed.

The river docks connect Rome itself via river to the sea port of Ostia. This is the major import route for goods arriving by sea to Rome.

from the palace. He was interested in a scroll that the barge captain gave him from his cabin.

- That the old man was appropriately respectful to the dockside cats, and gave them some dried fish.

THE PRAETORIAN GUARD/ VISITING PUBLIUS SEXTUS (CASSIUS' PATRON)

Cats connected with elements of the Praetorian Guard that marched with the Mauretanian Triumph of a year ago, or who were accompanying palace guards at that time, will give pertinent information, especially to any cats accompanied by Cassius. (Publius Sextus, Cassius' patron, himself might be encountered at the riot line currently surrounding the palace.)

- As triumphs go, it was not a particularly big deal, but it was chaotic. There seemed to be a lot of crazy people out that day, trying to climb on board one wagon in particular. The Praetorian

Guard had to beat them off with clubs before things calmed down.

- That wagon carried a couple of ancient stone pillars, covered with some kind of symbols.
- Rumor has it that the pillars were some kind of sacred stones, sent from Ptolemy's Palace at Tingis (modern Tangier).
- The court sorcerer, an ancient Scythian named Arax, was involved in overseeing the transfer of the goods. Arax is a decent enough fellow. He is polite and respectful to cats and people alike, but he would have to be to survive in Caligula's Palace.
- Arax does habitually dress all in red. He has been tasked with building Caligula's image as a god during his lifetime. Arax is not crazy enough to instigate something as dangerous as such a claim, but he is a good enough functionary to help such a claim along.
- The pillars are believed to have been delivered to the Palace itself.

ENCOUNTERING SOMEONE UNDER THE SWAY OF THE SINGING FLAME/LOSING SENTIENCE AND TUGGINGS

The cats should have an opportunity to observe and interact with one or more persons or animals stumbling, half out of sorts, in the direction of the Capitoline Hill, when the plot needs forward momentum. These are, generally speaking, weak-minded folks or creatures, but the lure of the Singing Flame is gradually wearing on the population of Rome. They are generally aware of their surroundings, in a happily addled sort of way, but bent on getting "to the flame". "It's so cold, can't you feel it? Can't you hear it?" (Such ensorcelled people have no compunctions about talking to cats.)

If the cats follow such a person from a far distance, they head to the Forum. If the cats follow too closely, or do anything to interfere with the pilgrim's progress,

they are liable to be attacked. The person will only fight the cats long enough to drive them off; this may be a good object lesson for the cats in just how hard it is for six cats to physically defeat a human on their own, one that will serve them well later.

If, at any point, one of the cats temporarily (or indefinitely) loses Sentience, they will temporarily (at least) fall under the sway of the Singing Flame and inexorably march toward it. If and when they recover, they will remember little of the lost time; it will seem almost like a dream. They will remember hearing a weird, droning, but beautiful song, although hearing might not be the right word. Sensing? Being itched by? They know that they wanted to head to the Capitoline Hill (or, if they are already there, to the Forum, and then the Temple of Castor and Pollux). They also remember feeling very, very cold.

Any afflicted cat who succeeds in a Dream Lore check after such an episode feels as though they were lucid dreaming while in their fugue state, although the vistas they half-remember, once recovered, are not the familiar Dreamlands haunts they may have previously visited. Rather, they half-remember a huge city and glimpses of bizarre and unfamiliar creatures, some of which they could not bear to gaze upon for long.

Any loss of SEN at all might result in a momentary, flash of "tugging" and a feeling of cold.

ENCOUNTERING WEASELS OUTSIDE OF THE PALACE

Far more common than cats as domesticated animals in Rome, weasels are the companion animal/furry pest controller of choice. Unlike cats, they are not secretly hyper-intelligent, nor possessed of free agency. The typical domesticated weasel is ferret-sized, ferret-like in temperament, and highly territorial when it comes to cats. They will generally attack if threatened or cornered, being not afraid of much of anything.

However, by design, one of the cats (Zoe) is able to communicate with them. The typical weasel: is monosyllabic, speaks in one word sentences giving a general indication of what it wants to communicate, scheming, a vicious combatant, and dislikes cats,

ENSORCELLED HUMAN

*Under the Sway of the Singing Flame
Human, Roman, Variable, 40*

STR 60 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 60 **POW** 35
DEX 60 **APP** 55 **EDU** 06 **SAN** 20
LUCK 35 **HP** 12 **MP** 7 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Large Knife 35% (17/7), 1D4+2+DB, HP 20, short length, impales and parries; Dodge: 30% (15/6)

SKILLS: Empire 30%, Insight 30%, Listen 30%, Natural World 40%, Own Language (Latin) 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Status 10%, Write Language 20%.

TEMPORARY INSANITY: Monomania (find "the Flame" and jump in it).

TYPICAL DOMESTICATED WEASEL

Weasel, Roman, Age and Gender Variable

STR 10 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 15 **POW** 35
DEX 75 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN/SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 6 **MP** 7 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting Bite 70% (35/14), 1D4+DB; Dodge 80% (40/14)

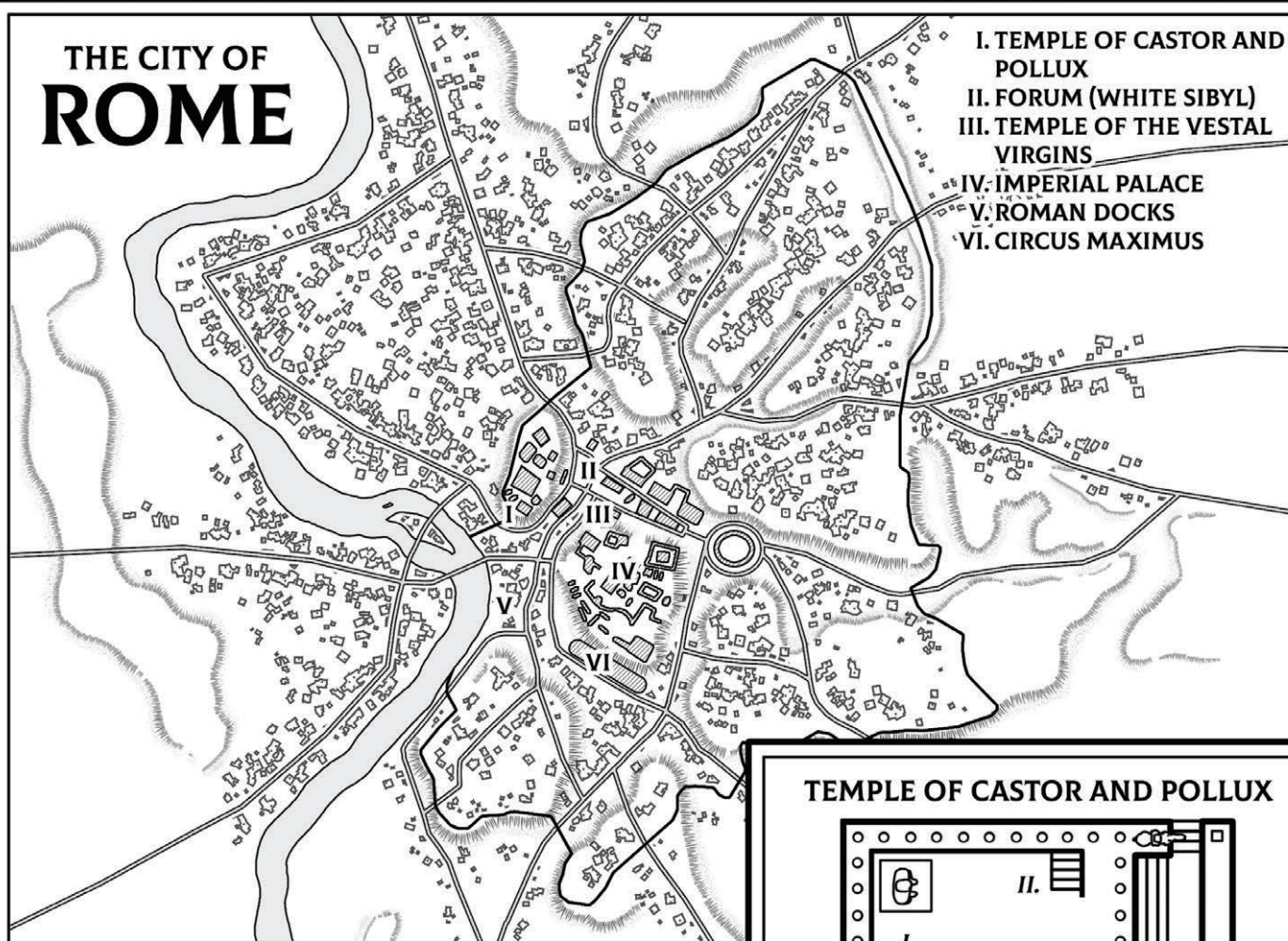
SKILLS: Listen 50%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 50%, Spot 50%, Stealth 50%, Track 40%.

TRICKS: Lion Heart.

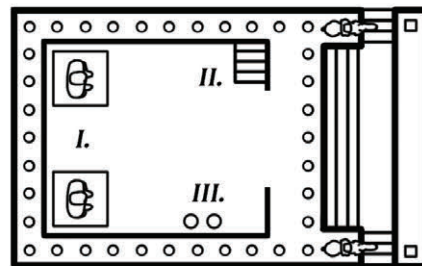
STRESS DISORDER: Lion Heart

THE CITY OF ROME

- I. TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX
- II. FORUM (WHITE SIBYL)
- III. TEMPLE OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS
- IV. IMPERIAL PALACE
- V. ROMAN DOCKS
- VI. CIRCUS MAXIMUS



TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX



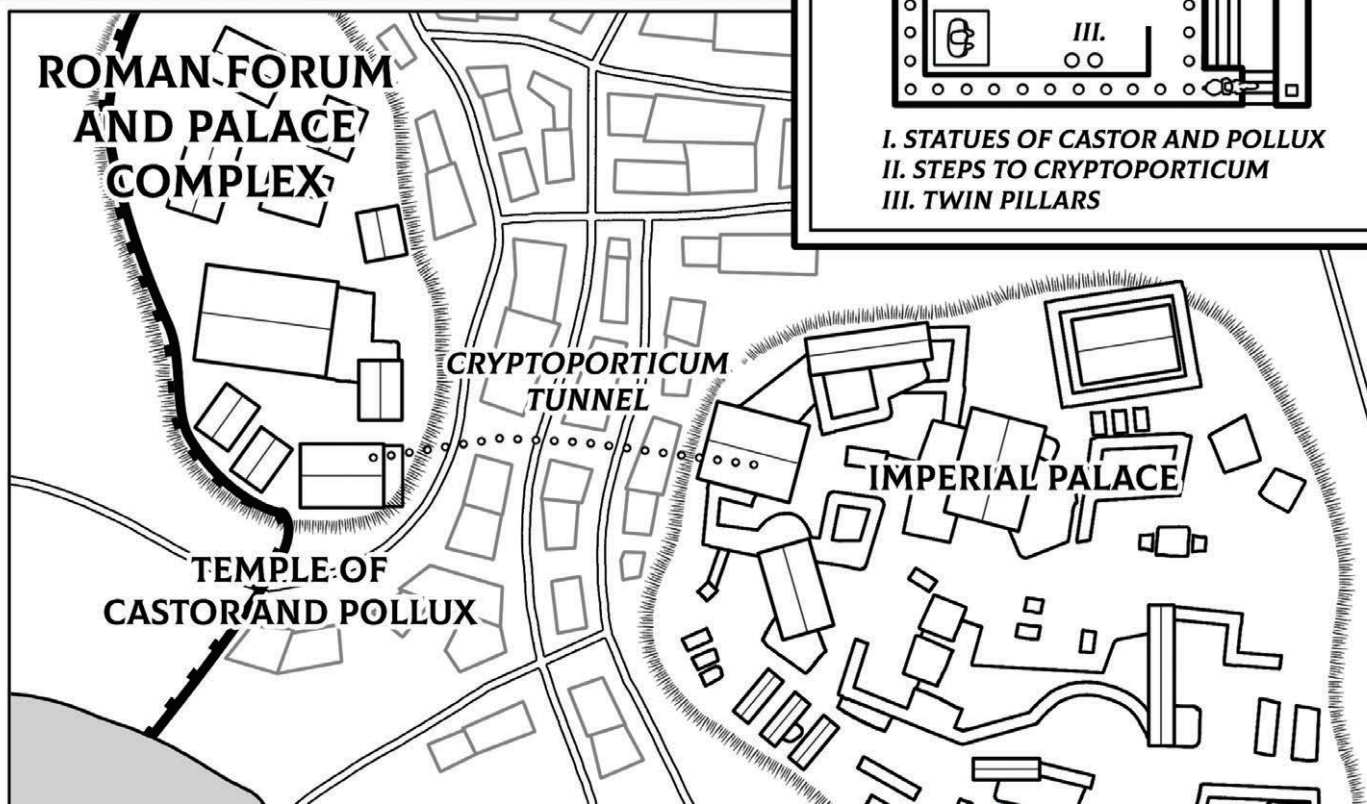
- I. STATUES OF CASTOR AND POLLUX
- II. STEPS TO CRYPTOPORTICUM
- III. TWIN PILLARS

ROMAN FORUM AND PALACE COMPLEX

CRYPTOPORTICUM
TUNNEL

TEMPLE OF
CASTOR AND POLLUX

IMPERIAL PALACE





CALIGULA

Truth, Fiction, and Places In Between

Emperor Gaius the Younger was emperor of Rome from the death of his great-uncle Tiberius in 37 C.E. until he was assassinated by the Praetorian Guard in January, 41 C.E. Precise dates for his assassination are variously reported, but we will use the 22nd. He assumed the imperial throne at the age of 23 and was killed at the age of 28.

As noted above, histories of unpopular figures like Caligula are somewhat unreliable, due to possible after-death slander intended to pander to those who had since assumed power. Following is a fairly mainstream and syncretic view of Caligula, at least according to Roman historians.

Caligula was a younger son of Germanicus, an immensely popular Roman general and member of the extended imperial family. He was also popular (at least as a child) with the legions, chiefly out of nostalgia for his father, explaining how it is that he managed to seize the throne when his great-uncle died. His nickname, Caligula ("little boots"), reflects how he would travel with the legions as a child.

Though only a minor member of the imperial family, Caligula promised the Praetorian Guard the moon and the stars in exchange for backing his play for the throne. It was a corrupt bargain by which a young and apparently somewhat psychotic young man became a military dictator—albeit one dependent on the continued good will of the military elite to keep his throne.

Accounts of Caligula consistently claim that he was quick to kill, torture, and terrorize political critics, real or imagined. This was hardly uncommon behavior for members of the Julian dynasty—it was a way to show power and cow critics. Caligula, however, liked to kill critics publicly, and liked the targets of his purges to die slowly. He also took family members hostage against politically-powerful opponents' good behavior, and killed wealthy opponents chiefly to escheat their estates and add to his coffers. Whether he was ruthlessly brutal, or psychopathic, or some of both, can probably be debated. We assume, for our purposes, that he was some of both.

Moralists of the era also described Caligula's excesses. To some extent, these appear to have been standard fare for the Julian dynasty: orgies, sadomasochism, lavish parties, grand games and building projects, and conquests for the sake of building his own image. Again, whether he was simply an extreme outlier from the debauched mainstream of the Julian dynasty, or overdoing the things that the Julians did to secure their positions because of his insecurities about his throne, is debatable.

Some of the things that he is reported to have done were particularly scandalous, even by Julian standards. One of them was eating cats. Cats were not widely domesticated at that time, but were still seen as taboo. They, alone among all animals, had free run of the temples, and had a certain mystique about them. Eating them would have been a gross outrage to Roman morals.

Toward the end of his life, Caligula began claiming divinity, setting a shrine to himself up inside the Temple of Castor and Pollux. He was fond of sitting between the central statues and presenting himself as a god from there. He began to demand that he be referred to as the Neos Helios (New Sun), and Egyptian coinage from the era so depicts him. This was, again, a gross outrage against Roman decency.

There is a story of how he threw part of the crowd to the animals at a circus, because he was bored and out of criminals to have executed. Another accuses him of incest with his sisters, Agrippina, Drusilla, and Lavilla, prostituting them and turning the entire palace into a brothel. He is also rumored to have anointed his horse, Incitatus, as a priest and perhaps even made him a consul. These last few stories are regarded by historians as dubious, and perhaps all too typical after-death slander against a despised former emperor, an effort to ingratiate the historian to the new regime.

Near the end of his reign, Caligula made a fatal miscalculation. Although the histories report that he would belittle and question the sexual orientation of Cassius Chaerea, the head of the Praetorian Guard, he made an even bigger blunder with his military supporters. According to the historian Josephus, Caligula had started musing aloud about moving the seat of the empire to Alexandria. This would have been a direct threat to the power and position of the Praetorian Guard, which was settled and had a lot invested in the city of Rome. The Guard reacted.

On January 22nd, 41 C.E., amid some Palatine Games at the Forum (athletic contests and theater productions in the memory of Emperor Augustus), Caligula headed back to the palace to take an afternoon nap. He went toward the palace through a cryptoporticum, one of a series of secret tunnels connecting various portions of the palace complex. There he was ambushed by Cassius Chaerea and a number of other high-ranking citizens, and cut to pieces. Generally, Roman conspiracies would directly involve all major conspirators in the murderous act, so that they maintained a forced coalition for mutual self-defense in the aftermath. The assassination occurred outside of the presence of the Germanic guard, Caligula's personal bodyguards.

The point, for our purposes, is that Caligula disappeared from public sight for a while during a public event, and was killed by a bunch of self-interested conspirators out of the public eye, away from his bodyguards. That is the history, but other explanations for the ambush may come to mind.

NOTE: If you are planning to run follow up adventures using the same pre-generated cats, particularly "The Graveyard of the Gods," note that the nightmares emanating from this place played a formative role in Caligula's madness, lurking in the background of his psyche. The Graveyard of the Gods, a poorly contained Mythos site situated just outside of Augusta Treverorum (modern day Trier, Germany), is a nexus point to a particularly dark area of the Dreamlands. Caligula spent considerable time there in his youth, as his father campaigned in Germania north of the Rhine. His naturally weak and unstable mind was unable to handle the dark dreams which leaked out of the Graveyard, and depravity became second nature to him. Moreover, as discussed in the section of this book on the Council of the Library of Alexandria page 27), the Graveyard and the Library of Alexandria are each nexus points to the Dreamlands, albeit different aspects of them. This is why Caligula was impelled to move the seat of the empire to Alexandria. There, he could bask in the comfort of more benign dreams and perhaps find a measure of peace.

but is also interested in avoiding fights if possible and preserving their own hides at all times. They may make simplistic trades for basic information, and they like their favorite humans as much as a weasel can.

It may be necessary to thrash some who are reluctant to talk, and several of them may gang up on a clowder of cats encroaching on their turf. They do

not "network" across Rome, but do network more locally, so what you might find out from a given weasel depends on where you are asking.

Weasels might be used as either spot antagonists to liven up a purist affair with a scuffle, or as potential witnesses to any missed clues or failed interrogations in other areas. The weasels inside the palace are a special case, discussed on page 16.

WHITE SANDALS?

Finally, at some point before the cats arrive at the Forum, but not far from it, the Keeper should stage an encounter with a young, frantic mother cat, Felicia, who is sporting freshly broken ribs from blunt force trauma.

Distraught, she cries that, early this morning, one of her baby kittens, Fluffy, was catnapped by a human

in a black cloak and strange white sandals. She tried to fight back, but he hit her with a cudgel and broke her ribs. A couple of other cats and a weasel or two also witnessed this, but shamefully failed to intervene.

The witnesses can give a general description of the perpetrator: older, thin, with black hair and a hooked nose. He pinched Fluffy's thigh and muttered something about "nice and tender" and "going to need the good garum," before stuffing her in a felt bag and (once again) heading off in the direction of the Capitoline Hill and the palace.

The abductor's scent still lingers, and cats with appropriate skills might remember it if they encounter him again. SEN loss from this disgusting revelation is 0/1.

Cats given "White Sandals" description in the Forum itself can attest that such a person comes in and out of the palace itself, and often smells of blood.

Nearby weasels might taunt the cats to "follow the cat-catcher" in a sarcastic way. They might know, and have beaten out of them, that he often comes from the palace, captures vulnerable cats, and then heads back to and into the palace.

AT THE FORUM

The Forum is in a state of chaos. Some respectable looking humans are fleeing away from the Forum, many showing signs of having been beaten. Numerous other humans are shuffling toward it. Fires are being put out here and there on the Capitoline Hill. In the

Forum proper, the Praetorian Guard (led by Publius Sextus) is out in force, wielding clubs to maintain order, and they have been liberal with beatings. Soothsayers and street prophets are holding court at the edges, proclaiming doom and the end of the world. Everyone but the Guard members who are administering the beatings is demanding to know where the emperor is. A couple of cats and other animals have been sadly trampled underfoot in the chaos. SEN loss is 0/1D3.

The entranced humans, as they come in, are hurling themselves against the line of Praetorian Guards blocking access to the palace complex, which includes the Temple of Castor and Pollux. They are screaming that they are cold, and must get to "the Flame," before they are beaten down. The Guard looks stressed and worried, and might be overheard to say among themselves that if the emperor does not appear, dead or alive, soon, Rome is going to burn. Any cats who skitter through their feet, particularly Cassius, might get a friendly warning not to go in the palace, as it is not a friendly place for cats.

The Praetorian Guard is unconcerned with keeping cats out of anywhere, so assuming that they can avoid being trampled, the investigators can easily slip through the perimeter and into the palace. The cella (interior) of the TCP itself is sealed up tight, but can be accessed via a cryptoporticum after gaining entrance to the palace itself. If the players have a regular human adventuring group in this time period of the Cthulhu Invictus

setting, they might put a cameo appearance in at this point, frantically pleading with the riot line that they must be let in to the Palace, and that all of Rome faces doom, before they are beaten down by the Guard's clubs. The cats slip by, unimpeded.

IN THE PALACE

GENERAL RECONNAISSANCE

The Imperial Palace is likewise in an uproar. Access between sections of the palace (most notably, to the cryptoporticum leading from the Palace proper to the TCP) is monitored by pairs of Germanic guards (a separate cadre of Celtic-born legionaries who serve as Caligula's bodyguards). They look grim. Pairs of them are also patrolling the palace, looking high and low for Caligula and interrogating whomever they come across. Most other palace functionaries, other than some high-ranking overseers, have largely been confined to their quarters. The various animals in the palace are in hiding from the furor.

Cats who wish to move about unnoticed must make periodic group Stealth rolls. However, even if the Germanic guard patrols do notice a gang of cats wandering about the palace, all that they get are disbelieving looks, and perhaps a joking comment about how this is the last place a bunch of cats would want to be: "Oh, cats, you really ought to get out of here—if the emperor is not dead, he is going to be very glad to see you..."



If the cats listen to enough of the chatter among the palace officials and the Germanic guards, they learn that the emperor has been missing since noon on the day that the scenario began. He was last seen leaving the games in the Forum and heading via the cryptoporticum in the direction of the palace, although he had given his bodyguards the slip (much to their chagrin). They have searched high and low for him, and found nothing. They are suspicious that Arax, the court sorcerer, is involved, since he too disappeared soon after being “interrogated.”

Any cat who loses even a single point of SEN while in the palace will experience a “tugging” vision of the Singing Flame, as described above, and feel a momentary compulsion to move in the direction of the cryptoporticum leading to the TCP.

THE PALACE WEASELS

The palace’s weasels—several dozen of them in total—are locked up in various rooms around the palace proper, in groups of two or threes. (They are not permitted in the TCP; only cats are.) Fortunately, the palace’s mastiff guard/war dogs are either locked up or being used by the Germanic guard to try and track the emperor, although some of the dogs might be smelled and/or heard behind certain doors.

The palace’s weasels are extremely territorial, and attack any cats intruding into their turf. However, if they can be subdued or intimidated, they can be questioned and have useful information:

- 🐾 They can give directions to anywhere in the palace complex, including the cryptoporticum entrance that connects to the TCP, the court sorcerer’s workshop, the kitchen/larder, and the quarters of the man who wears white sandals. If, after getting directions to the kitchen/larder, the cats ask where any captive cats might be, they snicker and ask if the cats did not hear the directions to the larder the first time. “Stupid cat.”
- 🐾 They know who the man who wears white sandals is: Flavio, one of the chefs. He’s in charge of night time snacks for the emperor.
- 🐾 They are aware that Caligula eats cats. (They hesitate to admit that he is not the only one in the palace who does. The weasels do as well, and White Sandals needs to make sure that the cats are cooked right. No one else in the palace would be comfortable eating cat, as that is completely taboo.)
- 🐾 They last saw the emperor in the palace after he was coming back from the games. He was heading in the direction of Arax’s room; then he came out and headed in the direction of the TCP.
- 🐾 Yes, they too hear the odd, buzzing music that any cats who have experienced a “tugging” have heard, at times. A few older weasels have wandered off to find out where it is coming from, complaining that they were cold. They have not returned.
- 🐾 They do not know anything about any pair of stone pillars from Mauretania.

- 🐾 Interrogating any palace weasels after the horrible discovery of the “weasel chow” in the kitchen leads to a fight or flight reaction from the weasels. Word spreads quickly among the palace weasels after that discovery is made.

PALACE COLOR

There are, behind closed doors, all sorts of horrible things going on in the palace. In the emperor’s inexplicable absence, old debts are being settled, and some of his more depraved courtiers are, if you will pardon the pun, letting it all hang out. I suggest playing these events for their complete lack of SEN impact or even significant interest to cats. Humans are being tortured slowly and killed in a vain effort to obtain information on what happened to the emperor and who may be in on it. Other humans are being tortured, abused, and killed on the pretext of gaining information, but really to settle old scores. Some are frolicking sexually in all sorts of pairings or groupings (none, thankfully, involving cats). Simply point these things out matter-of-factly, in as much horrible detail as individual Keepers and their players are comfortable with, as the cats wander by, and point out how they are of no interest to the cats.

THE COURT SORCERER’S STUDY

The Court Sorcerer, Arax the Scythian, is not in his chambers. There are clear signs that he had been tortured in his room, however: signs of a struggle, blood spatter, dried pools of blood. (He was horribly beaten, abused, and tortured for information about the emperor’s whereabouts by the Germanic guards, but did not give any information up. The stress from this torture shook Arax, weakening his will. After the guards were done with him, Arax could no longer resist the siren song of the Flame and succumbed to it, running off to the TCP in the chaos.)

Arax locked his door prior to leaving, so the cats will need to break in somehow. There are hypocausts with vents under the floors, so if a cat adept at getting into tight places (e.g., Turnstile) can get into a nearby room, he can scamper through the underfloor vent (taking one point of damage from the hot surface) and come up through a floor register, unlocking the door from there. Or, they can stand at the door and Yowl until some biped lets them in, but this will take considerable time and potentially attract the attention of the Man in the White Sandals, who will come prepared for cats and not be caught by surprise.

Arax’s room is well furnished in Scythian style (lots of gold and silver carvings and wool rugs), with nothing especially evil readily apparent. He has a variety of scrolls (standard occult works of the era, in a variety of languages) on a shelf. He kept no animals, although there is a faint scent indicating that cats have been here before. Some cat toys and dried fish are on the shelf; Arax liked cats and would occasionally rescue one from the larder.

There are significant clues in a scroll hastily stashed in a bag in the hypocaust vent (where any cat entering the room this way necessarily notices it). Given the heat in the vent, it cannot have been there for long, and must have been stashed out of desperation.

TRIUMPHIS FELIS FERAE HANDOUT #2:

*Arax’s Notes on the Emperor’s
Behavior and the Pillars*

- 🐾 Arax is a “court sorcerer” largely in name and trappings only. He is more of a trusted advisor and learned man, although he is as skilled as anyone else in the business at matters of divination. He is more a very learned student of the occult than a practitioner, but can work some minor magic.
- 🐾 The emperor had been coming to him regularly to consult, ever since two ancient pillars were sent from Mauretania. Arax had asked for the pillars, based on a reference he found in something called the Book of Eibon, which said that the inscriptions contained information on a “heavenly realm” sacred to the “Elder Gods.”
- 🐾 Arax includes a sketch of the pillars in his notes, which have a variety of inscriptions in them in pictographic form.
- 🐾 Caligula has been deteriorating even further into madness lately, and claims that he keeps “hearing things” from the pillars. The emperor complains that there is a song, calling to him, and he is cold whenever he hears it. He gets a headache whenever he resists, and refraining from going to the Temple of Castor and Pollux, where he has set the pillars up, is becoming increasingly difficult.
- 🐾 An entry dated the day that the scenario began reports that the emperor (unaccompanied by any bodyguards, as was often the case when he wanted to seek Arax’s private counsel) was beside himself, shivering with cold and complaining about the music and the “beautiful things that lie Beyond the Flame.” He ran out shrieking and holding his ears.
- 🐾 Arax spent some time doing research after this, and had managed to learn (from consulting the Book of Eibon) that there is a distant, remote area in the land of Dream, far past where men have ever traveled, where titanic, sentient beings dwell in a great stone citadel called Ydmos. There, they worship a thing called the Singing Flame. The Singing Flame calls out, encouraging those near it to “join the Flame”, although the titanic natives who serve as its Unhearing Priests are deaf and hence, immune to its lure. Arax speculates that, could such a thing somehow be heard beyond its own city, it would slowly grind away at the weak-minded, resulting in chaos and death wherever it could be heard.

The scroll is in Latin (Scythian is not a written language), and so can be read by Zoe or other Latin-literate felines. The scroll consists of Arax's notes and analysis of certain unsettling conversations that he has had with the emperor, in recent weeks. A summary appears in Triumphis Felis Ferae Handout #2, nearby.

If any of the cats succeeds in a Dream Lore check, they recognize the inscriptions on the pillar sketches as reminiscent of certain mysterious and indecipherable runes known to be carved on the mountains in the farthest north of the Dreamlands, seen only by a few of the greatest cats. These are said to be near the part of the Dreamlands where lies Unknown Kadath in the Cold Waste. Kadath is the rumored home of the Great Ones, the gods of the Dreamlands, including the great god Hypnos, father of all dreams and rumored friend to cats.

THE KITCHEN AND LARDER

The scents of cats (including that of Fluffy in particular) and the Man in the White Sandals can be picked up as the cats near the kitchen. There is also a scent of blood and fresh meat...delicious! But somehow very wrong...

Inside of the kitchen lies horror. Hanging from hooks on the ceiling are the mostly flayed (with the feet left on) carcasses of numerous, unfortunate, decapitated cats. The kitchen workers have cleared out in mid-meal preparation; it looks like a cat spit roast was being contemplated, as there are skewers and a marinating pan filled with olive oil, salt, fennel, and pepper for a little pre-cooking. Another has been left flayed but not yet decapitated—too late for one of the missing kittens from the Circus Maximus.

Six domesticated weasels (use statistics on page 12) have climbed up on the preparation table, and are busily chewing on this kitten's legs...they freeze, with their mouths full, when they first notice the investigators. SEN loss for this barbaric and despicable violation of all that is decent and sane is 1D3/1D8. Recall the "tugging" vision that follows the loss of any SEN within the palace, but also give the cats one free round of fury before the weasels can react, fight back, or try to flee.

If given an opportunity to beg for their miserable lives, the weasels can point out where the chef in charge of such matters—the Man in the White Sandals—has his rooms, not far away.

Fluffy

At the back of the kitchen, through a closed door, is a pantry and larder. Inside of the pantry, apart from other foodstuffs, is a cage containing one still living but badly hurt cat: Fluffy, the (female) baby kitten just catnapped by the Man in the White Sandals from her mother. Fluffy is down to 1 hit point due to broken ribs, but is able to walk.

Apart from being thrilled to be removed from the palace menu, Fluffy has a lot of intelligence to be harvested, simply from having been in the palace for a day or so, and being able to easily communicate with the investigators. Fluffy can attest to the following:

❖ They were going to *eat* her, just like those other cats! The late-night snack cook—the Man in the White Sandals—said that he was keeping her alive and fresh until the emperor came back. Caligula had been upset and acting strangely lately, and he hoped that his favorite kitten casserole would make him feel better. The other kittens that had been here when she arrived were all butchered for spit roasting, except for a black one with white socks, Boots, who had successfully made a break for it. How many kittens has that monster eaten? (The players should recognize Boots as fitting the description of one of the missing kittens from the Circus Maximus.)

❖ The kitchen weasels have been teasing her and taunting her, calling her "fresh meat" and "lunch."

❖ She has overheard the cook talking with some of the other kitchen workers about the strange goings on lately. People in the palace have been complaining more and more about being cold and having a buzzing in their ears. The emperor left the games yesterday (or however long ago January 22nd was) early because of it. He ran by the kitchen holding his head and shrieking about "becoming one with the Flame and glimpsing the glory Beyond it." That was the last that anyone in the kitchen saw or heard of him.

❖ About an hour later, the chaos started, with his bodyguards confining people to quarters and beating information out of anyone that they thought might have some.

❖ Fluffy implores the players to get justice for her and the already eaten cats. Caligula must be brought to Roman justice.

Fluffy is in no condition to get out of the palace on her own, let alone to get past the weasels and mob in the Forum. Her mother would be eternally grateful for someone taking the time to bring Fluffy back to her, however. At the Keeper's option, such a good deed may pay hefty dividends at the end of the scenario, in terms of a posse of cat reinforcements.

THE MAN IN THE WHITE SANDALS

If he hears a larger than currently usual amount of chaos coming from the kitchen or the surrounding hallway, the Man in the White Sandals comes down the hall, taking five minutes to walk from his rooms to investigate, wielding his awful, cat-killing cudgel. He is an elderly man, far more suited to whacking one cat at a time over the head than fighting a gang of angry cats. Nonetheless, six cats vs. one human with a club is a tough go for the cats. Fortunately, if he is attacked en masse by a determined gang of cats, he runs screaming and does not put up a determined fight; rather, taking odd swipes with his cudgel as he attempts to get away. Unfortunately, one solid hit from his cudgel may well result in a Nine Lives check. Note that the cats are faster than he is. He may helpfully run in the direction of the cryptoporticum in the basement of the palace, distracting the guards posted there.

THE MAN IN THE WHITE SANDALS

Unspeakably Heinous Monster
Human, Roman, Male, 60

STR 40 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 50 **POW** 60
DEX 55 **APP** 40 **EDU** 40 **SAN/SEN** 60
LUCK 60 **HP** 10 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Cudgel 35% (17/7), 1D6+1+DB, HP 10, medium length; Dodge 30% (16/6)

SKILLS: Craft (Cook) 50% (Cat 75%), Empire 30%, Insight 30%, Listen 30%, Natural World 50%, Own Language (Latin) 50%, Spot Hidden 40%, Status 30%, Write Language 20%.

THE CRYPTOPORTICUM

If the players have not gotten the big picture, feel free to call for an Idea roll. Caligula is a monster by cat standards, and needs some rough justice. He must be found and brought to justice, and Roman justice is public justice. They should be able to deduce that the pillars at the TCP are involved, and beat directions to them out of a weasel or two. Furthermore, Rome is going to burn in riots unless some certainty, one way or another, is brought to the question of Caligula's whereabouts. Their duty is clear: find Caligula and pass judgment on him, in as public a way as possible.

The cats should be able to find the only readily accessible way into the TCP at present (given that it is locked down tight): through the emperor's personal cryptoporticum. This is in the basement of the palace, and runs underground, connecting with a hidden stairway leading up into the enclosed space (cella) of the temple. While there is no obstacle to the cats getting into the basement, the door to the tunnel is guarded by two Germanic guards who have had a really rough day so far, and is closed and barred from the Palace side.

Ordinary Yowling will not persuade the guards to open the door for a bunch of cats. Bella may be able to use her Fish for Tea trick to convince the guards to open the cryptoporticum door to let a bunch of cats through, however. If she fails, other capers that might get the cats past include loud distractions followed by some creative door opening. The guards might be momentarily lured away by a loud animal fight (cats vs. weasels), or by the spectacle of a palace functionary (White Sandals) being chased by angry cats out for revenge.

Once the cats are past the door, a rough, flagstone paved tunnel, lit with occasional lamps, runs directly over several hundred feet to a second door, which in turn leads up a flight of spiral stairs directly into the cella of the TCP. This door is ajar and poses no obstacle to the cats slipping through.

Stationed at this far end door is a motley crew of six men, one dressed like a very high-ranking soldier, the others dressed in fine clothes with cloaks. They are speaking in

hushed tones. (These are Cassius Chaerea and a number of high-ranking co-conspirators. They pay no mind to passing cats.) They may be overheard discussing how they believe that the emperor is hiding somewhere in the TCP, although they cannot find him there. One comments that he must be in there somewhere; he was seen going in and never came out. Another conspirator comments that the Germanic guards have looked high and low and not found him. The conspirators are armed with swords (illegally) and are openly plotting to kill Caligula if he can be found and lured out of the TCP somehow. Killing him in a temple would be an egregious sin in Roman culture, not to mention very poor form.

THE TEMPLE OF CASTOR AND POLLUX ("TCP")

The enclosed portion (cella) of TCP is one enormous, rectangular chamber, roughly 35 by 50 feet. It serves a civic purpose as the storehouse for the official weights and measures of Rome. During Caligula's reign, however, it has also been co-opted into a sort of shrine to the cult of Caligula, as part of his efforts in trying to have himself seen as a living god. At present, the cella is locked down tight and surrounded by guards, although there are large numbers of vermin, ensorcelled humans, and creatures being held back outside.

Apart from a large number of stored weights and measures, there are two (painted) marble statues of Castor and Pollux, as well as a variety of other riches and spoils that have been seized pending further examination by the emperor. These include two rough-hewn, greyish-green, soapy feeling, identical pillars, standing next to each other up against the west wall, three feet apart. Someone has begun to carve the pillars into identical statuary: obvious likenesses of Caligula. This is clear evidence that Caligula is trying to set himself up as a god during his lifetime. Make sure that the cats take note of this, as this is extremely dishonorable, and they need to remember this affront later.

Once within the TCP, the cats continuously half-hear, half-feel an almost musical buzz in their heads, and the temple is distinctly chilly. Any cats who lose more than 5 points of SEN or who have already lost more than 20% of their SEN in the last hour must make a POW checks every minute with increasing levels of difficulty: Regular, then Hard, then Extreme, then Extreme with a penalty die, and finally Extreme with two penalty dice every following minute until they leave the TCP or fail. Any failure means that they are seized by chills and move, in a fugue state, toward and between the pillars, unless and only as long as they are physically restrained. Both pillars are covered with odd, identical pictograms which (as noted above), on a successful Dream Lore check, remind the cats of certain mysterious and indecipherable runes known to be carved on the mountains in the farthest north of the Dreamlands, seen only by a few of the greatest cats. These mountains are said to be near Unknown Kadath in the Cold Waste, rumored home of the Great Ones, where the gods of the Dreamlands are said to dwell.

There is a strong scent trace in the TCP which can easily be Tracked (with a successful Regular check

with two bonus dice) by any cat. A large number of different sorts of animals have, over a significant period of time, come through the door and/or up through the cryptoporticum, and made a beeline directly for the space between the odd pillars. Behind them, however, is only a blank wall. A Hard Tracking check can pick up the known scents of Arax, Caligula, and Boots (the kitten who escaped from the larder). Of course, any cats who walk directly through the pillars and toward the wall fade from sight, as the pillars function as a Gate to the City of the Singing Flame. SEN loss 0/1 for seeing this, or going through the Gate.

THE REALM OF THE SINGING FLAME

Cats who proceed through the Gate feel themselves tumbling through utter darkness. After a fall of about a minute, they emerge in a strange landscape, a rolling meadow covered with violet grass with a variety of monoliths here and there. Surrounding the meadow in most directions is an ancient and dense forest, mostly purple and yellow in color. The air is thickly misty, and clear vision is limited to about twenty feet. Nonetheless, titanic, miles-high spires of a city about two miles away can be made out in the one direction that is not surrounded by forest. The sky is amber in color, diffusely lit, and no sun, moon, or other sky feature is apparent. Time does not seem to flow, as the sky never changes. (Indeed, with reference to Rome, time does flow but minimally, so if the cats are gone for any amount of seeming time, they return to Rome, eventually, about a minute later.) The architecture of the nearby city is blocky and made of some sort of dark red, smooth stone.

Not even the most experienced of dreaming cats has ever visited this place, but a successful Dream Lore roll causes the cat to realize that they are in some very far, incredibly extremely remote, corner of the Dreamlands. Note that they are here physically. This realm is clearly the same place that any cats who underwent "tuggings" in Rome were glimpsing.

From the city, but yet somehow at the same time from all around, comes a haunting ululation, somewhere between a voiceless chorus and a theremin. The meadow is cold and damp, and the promise of warmth and comfort coming from the nearby city is palpable.

Any cat who temporarily or indefinitely loses Sentience while in the realm of the Singing Flame must succeed in an Extreme POW check or start walking, quite happily, for the gates of the city and ultimately, to the Singing Flame in a plaza at its center. Then, they happily jump into the Flame unless physically restrained. Even then, they resume course as soon as they can free themselves, which they single-mindedly keep attempting.

Note that Cassius (by virtue of his Lion Heart trick) will only become affected if he is reduced to zero SEN (otherwise, he is able to pick his temporary insanity), so there should be at least one cat available to keep the others on track. Even cats who are still Sentient must make periodic (in the Keeper's discretion) POW checks to avoid becoming entranced and happily

wandering off toward the Singing Flame; inflicting damage on such cats (such as one point via bite on the ear) snaps Sentient cats out of it. There is no way of snapping a non-Sentient cat out of it.

Sooner or later, the cats will go into the Singing Flame. However, cats in possession of their wits might wish to explore the environment around the City first. This is possible for a while (subject to periodic "trance checks"). The various monoliths scattered around the violet meadow are opportunities for fluff: strange inscriptions, hints as to the past or future, perhaps an allusion to a clue that they missed. Each monolith is similar to the twin pillars in Rome: made of an odd, greyish-green, soapy stone, covered in pictograms, and seemingly unfathomably old. A series of images seem to depict various sorts of beings walking through a large flame, only to emerge unscathed and standing in a group with their arms (or other appendages) held high in supplication. Other hints or leads to subsequent adventures might also be found among the field of monoliths.

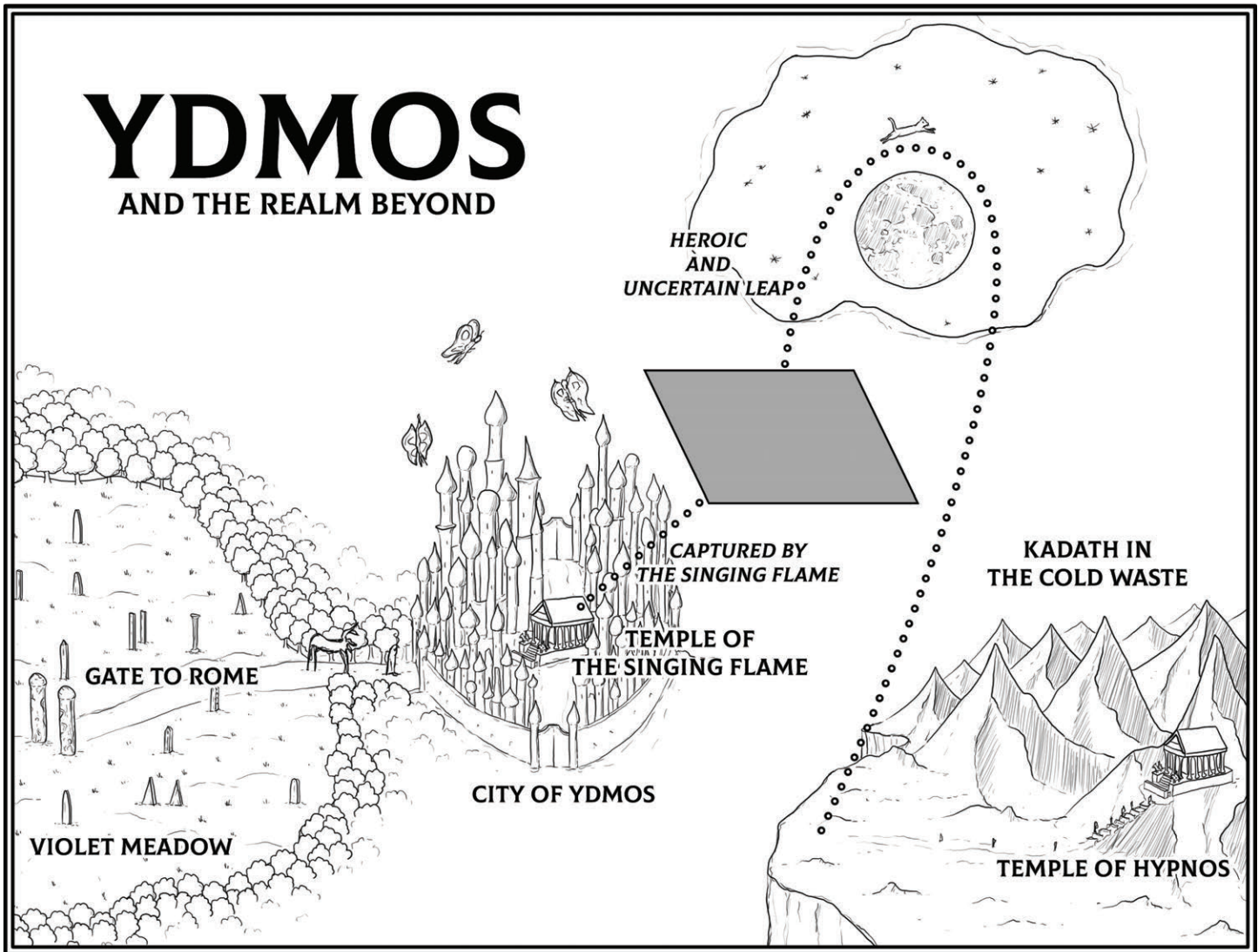
Behind them, the way they came, is not a set of ancient pillars, but rather an ornate marble Gate made of horn and ivory (a myth symbol of the gates of sleep). The Gate is open. It can be closed, but the cats instinctively know that closing the Gate will trap them here physically, with no ready way back to Rome. Attempting to leave back through the Gate at this stage, while the Flame burns undisrupted, feels like physically swimming against a riptide, and as one gets closer, like walking into the force of a psychic tornado. Any cat who persists at this stage should be told that the effort is incredibly painful, and may not be survivable. If the cat nonetheless persists, allow an Extreme POW check with a penalty die. Success puts the cat back in the TCP, at a cost of 5D6 permanent POW. Failure results in a loss of 10 SEN, and likely sends the cat scurrying directly for the Singing Flame. In short, it is not easy to get back out, at least while the Singing Flame still burns. (Once the Singing Flame is disrupted, leaving requires a Regular check and does not cost permanent POW upon arrival.)

Lingering in the violet meadow, or in the surrounding woods, for more than a few minutes results in a potentially disturbing or even dangerous encounter. The Singing Flame is drawing creatures to it from all realities; similar Gates can be found throughout the surrounding forest, in an infinite number of other clearings. These may range from weird (put in a favorite from any genre that strikes your fancy) to dangerous (e.g., a gang of Cats from Saturn) to straight out of the source material (giant moth-like creatures) to mind-shatteringly surreal and alien (costing 1D3/1dD0 SEN or even worse) or huge enough to crush the cats as it flows entranced across the meadow (e.g., a shoggoth or a giant orange baby).

Cats, with their special relationship to the Dreamlands, are the only ones with any resistance to the pull of the Singing Flame; all other beings are entranced on arrival and will not menace the cats, unless attacked and successfully damaged. Otherwise, the dangers such beings pose are possible SEN loss or trampling the cats in the rush to go into the Singing Flame.

YDMOS

AND THE REALM BEYOND



LEAPING TO THE MOON?

Players unfamiliar with the Cathulhu setting may not realize that all player cats have the Leap to the Moon trick, allowing them special travel abilities within the Dreamlands. Normally, within the Dreamlands, this trick allows dreaming cats to instinctively leap from one part of the Dreamlands *at night, to the moon, and then back down to another location*.

Any cat who decides to flee the realm of the Singing Flame for elsewhere in the Dreamlands first has the problem of finding the moon. There is no sun (or moon) in the sky, and what time is it, anyway? Second, this is an *extremely* distant corner of the Dreamlands... it's a long jump, no matter what. Finally, there is the nagging, insistent pull of the Singing Flame itself. Any cats who try to Leap to the Moon at this stage of the proceedings fail spectacularly, losing 1D10 SEN (or at the Keeper's option, more, depending on what they see waiting in line at the City ahead of them on reentry) and landing near where they leapt from. They cannot find the moon, or get their bearings! They do realize, however, that they are far, far off the beaten path; nothing looks familiar, no matter how high they get. The violet meadow seems to splay out forever

around the citadel, in every direction. Remember the consequences for cats losing Sentence in terms of getting sucked in to the Singing Flame's draw. They will have their opportunity later to access the larger Dreamlands.

And at that point, if the players are not aware of their investigators' ability to Leap to the Moon, you should tell them; it is instinctive.

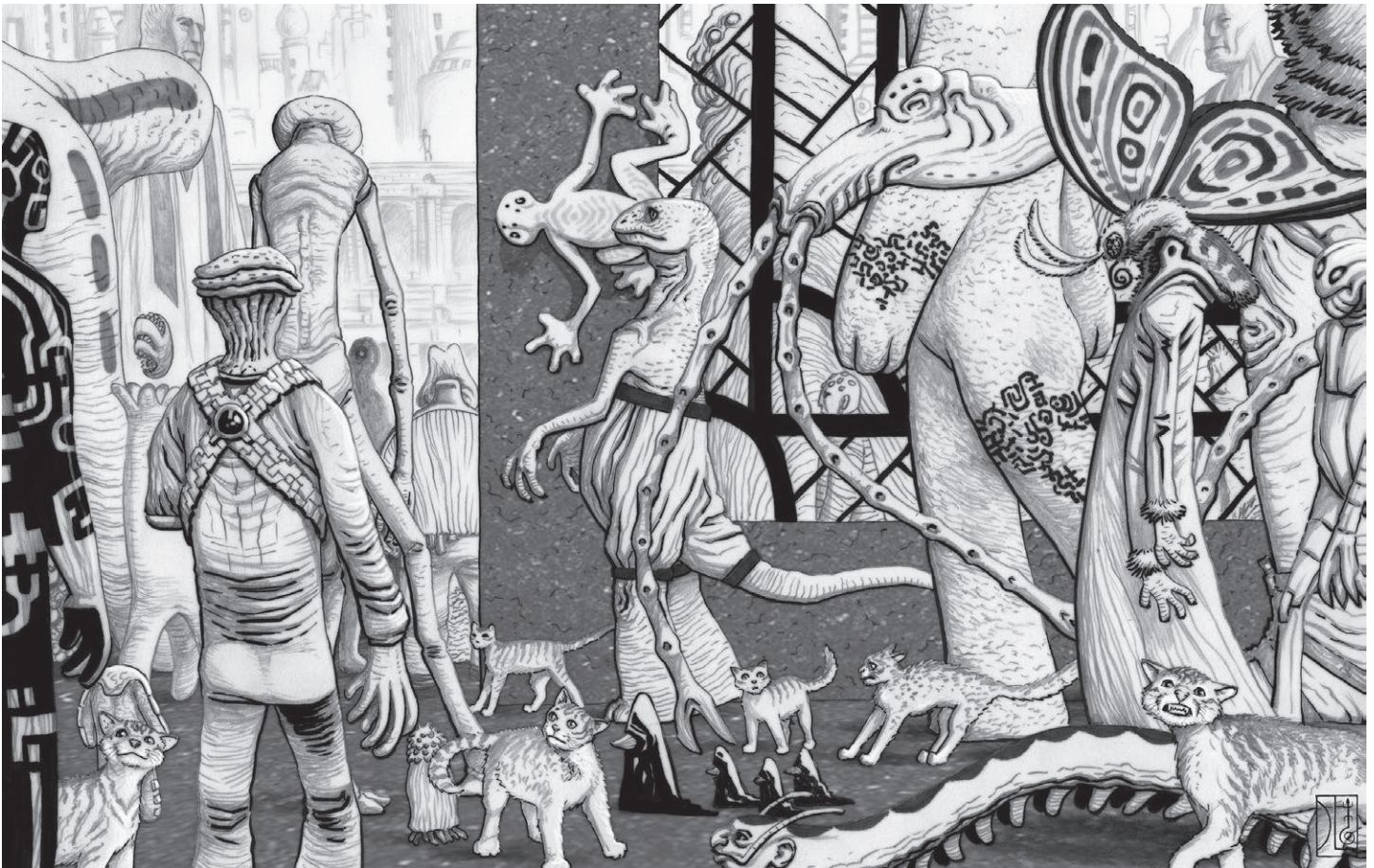
YDMOS, THE CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME, AND CHATTING IN LINE

"The melody was piercingly sweet, and resembled at times the singing of some voluptuous feminine voice. However, no human voice could have possessed that unearthly pitch, the shrill, perpetually sustained notes that somehow suggested the light of remote worlds and stars translated into sound." — Clark Ashton Smith, *The City of the Singing Flame*

This should be a very harrowing section of the scenario, but the Keeper has a fair amount of leeway as to how to make it harrowing. The tug of the Singing Flame, while it can be resisted by the cats, is insistent, and only the cats have any resistance to it. Things—potentially

horrible things—will be seen coming out of the woods or out of other structures in the monolith field, and walking/flying/oozing purposefully, although not entirely willfully, toward the City. Eventually, the cats will have to head that direction, and constantly avoid being trampled underfoot. The goal is to make the cats feel crowded at all times.

Roads, with stupendous paving blocks twenty feet across, lead from various directions out of the surrounding forest and into various gates to the City. The gates are enormous, sized to admit giants. And indeed, huge, indescribable things are pushing and shoving past one another to get inside and forward, as smaller things from every plane of existence or imagination try to avoid being trampled beneath their feet. Stress how small, and utterly unimportant, the cats feel among this bizarre throng of weird beings. SEN loss for the various horrors in the pilgrim crowd is 1D3/1D20, imposed when the Keeper thinks it will best move the plot along. This loss likely disrupts the party (except for cats with the Lion Heart trick), but any loss of Sentence only tends, in the City, to suck the players into the Singing Flame's pull. They will all be reunited, eventually, within the Singing Flame, so do not worry about the party getting separated.



There are “locals” standing alongside the labyrinth of streets that wind through the cyclopean city. They are roughly 200 feet tall, and only vaguely humanoid. Their features are blocky and right-angled, their eyes jet black, their lips straight, and they seem to have no ears at all. (And indeed, they are deaf in any conventional sense of the word.) The music of the Singing Flame grows louder the farther one goes into the City, until it is nearly deafening.

Attempting to go back against the flow of traffic once the cats are in the throng is extremely difficult, at least without getting trampled. This requires a DEX check, with an increasing difficulty modifier per 500 yards of travel into the city (Regular, then Hard, then Extreme, then Extreme with a penalty die, and finally Extreme with two penalty dice for distances of 3000 yards and above). Any cat failing such a check should be allowed a Dodge roll to avoid getting trampled and squashed flat by something really big and really strange. Several near misses should impress on the cats just how perilous such a course of action is (and to make them wonder how, if they do find Caligula, they would get a slow moving, potentially uncooperative biped out of the City and back to Rome).

Attempting to converse with the various weird entities all making their way to the center of the City is, by and large, pointless. They are silent, entranced, shuffling forward, and nearly insensate. Should they encounter something that they might be able to communicate with, it is like talking to a zombie on mescaline:

grunts, groans, and maybe a muttered phrase about how beautiful it all is.

There are a couple of exceptions to this rule. If the still-sentient members of the party are keeping an eye out for any other cats, or any other entities that do not seem to be flowing with the traffic, allow each a Spot Hidden or a Track roll (if looking specifically for Boots). Cowering in a corner of a cyclopean building, near the feet of a gaggle of the immense “locals”, is one of the missing kittens from beneath the Circus Maximus. He is familiar to Turnstile or Augustus as Boots, and is the same kitten as the one that managed to escape from the Imperial larder.

Boots is severely traumatized, has been stomped on by something, and is on the edge of permanent loss of Sentience, and so cannot be thoroughly questioned. Boots has some helpful information, however, summarized in Triumphis Felis Ferae Handout #3, that he can mumble out in a half-dazed fashion. Boots stands as evidence that it is possible to return from the Singing Flame, at least for a cat, so this encounter should be staged if at all plausible.

Alternatively, the cats might attempt to communicate with one of the “locals”, the Unhearing Priests of Ydmos (hereafter, “Priests”). The cats are far too small to be noticed by them under normal circumstances; not even a bite on the toe succeeds in getting a Priest’s attention. And yet, cats are good and persistent at getting the attention of others, and the fact that they are not herding themselves toward the Singing Flame

TRIUMPHIS FELIS FERAE HANDOUT #3:

The Babbling of Boots

Beyond the Flame...it’s beautiful. Nobody wants to leave, even if they can. Surely the gods of dream created it, but it’s wrong now, all wrong. So crowded, you can’t sleep, let alone dream. The gods must be angry, but why do they do nothing? Unseeing, uncaring, why don’t they listen? Maybe they don’t know...someone has to tell them...Then HE came. The Cat Eater! Nightmare! Nightmare! No one’s going to eat me...I ran and managed to escape it, but got kicked...How can I go home?

might eventually attract one’s attention. Yowling incessantly does no good, as the Priests are deaf, but extreme feline measures (climbing up and swatting one in the face) might work.

A typical interaction with a Priest will go along the following lines (communicated via booming but silent voices that the cats can sense in their heads, rather than hear). These gigantic entities are well beyond the cats’ ability to physically harm:

🐾 A CAT? WHAT DO YOU DESIRE OF THE
UNHEARING PRIESTS OF YDMOS OF

THE CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME,
PUNY CREATURE OF ROME?

🐾 YOUR QUESTIONS ARE PRIDEFUL
AND IMPERTINENT! THE FLAME IS
INEVITABLE! ALL SHALL KNOW ITS
WARM EMBRACE AND THE SUBLIME
PLEASURES OF THE WORLDS WITHIN
AND BEYOND IT! GET BACK IN LINE!
EVEN THE SMALLEST TINDER SUCH
AS YOU MUST FEED THE FLAME!

🐾 DO WE CARE ABOUT HOW IT IS
AFFECTING ROME? HOW IT IS
AFFECTING LOWLY QUADRUPEDS
SUCH AS YOU OR YOUR PATHETIC,
MEWLING YOUNG? INSOLENT
CREATURE! THE FLAME GROWS
EVER STRONGER, THE MORE FUEL
IT RECEIVES! WE CARE NOTHING
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE JOINED IT,
OR WHO WILL JOIN IT. ALL WILL
JOIN IT! ITS ENTROPY IS PART OF
THE NATURAL ORDER. ALL THINGS
MUST PASS INTO ENTROPY. SOON
ALL THINGS, ACROSS ALL REALITIES,
SHALL FEEL ITS WARM EMBRACE!

🐾 STOP US?! HA HA HA! PUNY,
INCONSEQUENTIAL FELINE!
THERE IS NOTHING THAT YOU
CAN DO TO STOP US! NOT EVEN
THE SLEEPING, PATHETIC GODS OF
DREAM CAN HEAR YOUR PRAYERS
AND ENTREATIES IN OUR CITY! GET
BACK IN LINE, LOWLY FAVORITE OF
SLEEPING, FALSE, AND IMPOTENT
GODS! (The Priest then violently brushes the
cat off for 1D6 of damage.)

This interchange should hopefully put the players to thinking about how to get the attention of the gods of dream. If not, be sure to stage the later encounter with Arax within the Singing Flame, which is where the investigators are going to need to be. If they focus on avoiding the Singing Flame at all costs, the Keeper should call for an Idea roll from everyone. If any roll succeeds, the investigators realize that the only way out is through, and that they should find a way to get the attention of the gods of dream. If they encountered the White Sibyl, the Keeper should remind them of her words, particularly about when and how to jump.

THE TEMPLE OF THE SINGING FLAME

At the center of the City is a temple, which (at least to the cats) looks like a dead ringer for the Temple of Castor and Pollux in Rome: marble, on a high pedestal, with many columns and a cella, only on a titanic scale. The throng of entranced pilgrims is pushing and jostling to be the next one up the stairs and into the cella; the sound of the Singing Flame here is deafening, requiring a Listen check to hear above the din. The traffic runs one way into the cella; no one is coming out.

Inside of the cella are statuary examples of a number

of the outré beings that are flocking in, lining the walls. In a great fire pit at the back of the cella is an immense, blinding, greenish-hued flame. The pilgrims, with rapture on their faces (those who have faces, anyway) joyously dive into the flames, seemingly immolating themselves. A few of the Priests are inside, mostly to keep the assembly line moving smoothly and to break up any scuffles between entities who want to be next.

Any cats who get into the cella of the Singing Flame are, in all likelihood, either going into the Flame with everyone else or getting trampled as the end result of any effort to avoid it. Cats who are entranced will fight and resist any efforts to dissuade them at this stage. Cats who try to hide and/or linger outside of the temple can hold out for a while, but eventually, the onslaught of the song, the need to eat, and the sight of the bizarre creatures filing by all wears them down. Eventually they will fail a SEN check, or run completely out of SEN, and their wills will be subsumed. This assumes that they do not flee back to Rome, which is theoretically possible if difficult, as discussed above. It also does not resolve the problem of the Singing Flame nor does it bring justice for Caligula's crimes.

Cats who fling themselves into the Singing Flame feel their flesh being burned away, but strangely, it does not hurt. SEN loss is 0/1D6.

BEYOND THE SINGING FLAME

"All about me were endless avenues of super-prismatic opal and jacinth, arches and pillars of ultra-violet gems, of transcendent sapphire, of unearthly ruby and amethyst, all suffused with a multi-tinted splendor. I appeared to be treading on jewels; and above me was a jeweled sky. Presently, with recovered equilibrium, with eyes adjusted to a new range of cognition, I began to perceive the actual features of the landscape. I...was standing on a million-flowered grass, among trees of a paradisaical vegetation, with fruit, foliage, blossoms and trunks whose very forms were beyond the conception of tri-dimensional life. The grace of their drooping boughs, of their fretted fronds, was inexpressible in terms of earthly line and contour; and they seemed to be wrought of pure, ethereal substance, half-translucent to the empyrean light, which accounted for the gem-like impression I had first received." Clark Ashton Smith, *Beyond the Singing Flame*

All cats who pass into the Singing Flame emerge with their SEN stabilized (although lost SEN points are not restored, any cats not completely out of SEN regain agency and functionality). This is fortunate, because despite its eldritch beauty, something is profoundly wrong inside the realm of the Singing Flame. There is a psychic sense of being crushed in a crowd, oppressive and inescapable, as though the cats have been crammed into a tiny space. And not a fun box, either. There are strange smells and senses of panic and despair. It is at once soothing, idyllic, and panic inducing, like being hugged far too tightly. In other words, it is cat hell. SEN loss is high for the bizarre transition and transfiguration: 1D6/2D6.

In a sense, the investigators are in yet another dimension,

and in a sense, have merged with the Singing Flame itself. Smith does a far better job of conveying what it looks like (see the above quote) than I could.

The Inner Dimension, as it is known, is a non-corporeal one. The cats will not be able to physically interact with anyone while there (at least, not while the Flame is still burning undisrupted), and have no need to eat or sleep. It is a spiritual, heavenly realm (for most), and its denizens can communicate with one another telepathically.

It is a simple matter, once the cats get acclimated, to seek out and find other denizens by filtering through the cacophony of thoughts, fears, and emotions that churn loudly in the background of their minds. (Indeed, it takes a conscious effort to "visualize" and remain in contact with the other cats they arrived with.) This realm is populated with a vast, overcrowded number of entities from many different dimensions and realities, some familiar, others utterly alien.

The cats will likely seek out the essences of the following entities. If, for some reason, the entity does not wish to interact with them, each cat must succeed on an opposed POW roll in order to "summon" the entity. (All of the listed entities will show up, at least briefly, to find out what the cats want.) These entities are: other cats from Rome, Emperor Caligula, or someone who can explain this place to them. If the cats start casting about the cacophony of minds for the last category of helper, they are approached by Arax, the court sorcerer. Talking to others in the Inner Dimension is certainly possible, but they know less of any use.

OTHER ROMAN CATS?

Depending on how long they have been here, other Roman cats are in various stages of discontent. Ones that have been here for a while remember the place fondly, but it has gotten very oppressive and crowded as of late. More recent feline arrivals are nervous and eager to leave, but they are afraid to try for fear of getting trampled. Eventually, they know that, once people have acclimated to the Flame, over the course of a few months of seeming time, they can then pass on to other, even higher dimensions. No one has ever returned from such dimensions, suggesting that they must be rather nice places. Or maybe they are just inescapable.

Lately, however, there has been a huge rush of pilgrims joining the Flame. Some who questioned the Priests of Ydmos on their way in were told (as the investigators themselves might have been told) that the Priests are now trying to deliberately stoke the Singing Flame as high as possible, in an effort to build their own power across dimensions and thrust the universe into entropy.

The investigators and other cats are also aware that, wherever they are, they are still in a far-off part of the Dreamlands. They now feel that, with great effort, they could probably extricate themselves and return to the City of Ydmos, but that this would be extremely dangerous. (In fact, it requires a successful POW check, failure indicating that the cat is consigned to the Flame forever, or until the cat moves on toward its final rest in some other dimension. It also costs 25 points of permanent POW, so great is the strain. And then finally,

there is the issue of getting trampled by trying to move against the stream of traffic, which is extraordinarily likely. Only cats, with their instinctive ability to travel the Dreamlands, have any hope of exiting the undisrupted Flame back to the City of Ydmos.)

Some, but not all, of the missing cats from Rome are here. (Those that are not here met with misadventure or ended up in the emperor's stomach.) Each heard the song emanating from the TCP, and cats are nothing if not curious.

None of them has first-hand evidence of Caligula's misdeeds toward cat-kind, but all observe that he has been here but a short time, and seems eager to move on to the rumored paradise that awaits Beyond. Nor are the investigators the first new arrivals who have made such treasonous accusations against the emperor; not long ago, a small black kitten with white socks (Boots) came, ran into the emperor, and actually managed to run back out to the City of Ydmos, screeching about how the emperor was a cat eater.

It is possible that the investigators will convince as many as 4D10 other Roman cats, through good roleplaying, that Caligula is guilty of eating cats. Good roleplaying is the key: present your evidence and make it sound convincing. Although it is not possible to combat or physically interact with anyone within the Flame's Inner Dimension, the more allies they have, the easier it will be to move on to request greater assistance. Arax being persuaded to lend his voice to matters results in successful recruitment of the 4D10 cats.

ARAX

Arax is relieved to see Roman cats in possession of their faculties, and "comes" quickly if the cats either look for him, or cast about for a wise man to explain the situation. He is aware that cats are sentient and tries to impress on them that they are the only hope for all of reality. He is also aware, and does not try to deny, that Caligula murders and eats cats, and might be persuaded (Yowled) to try and convince other cats of this fact.

Arax can explain the nature of the Singing Flame (recovering any missed clues in his study). He can explain that they are all existing within the Flame, and that the Flame allows beings, after a few months of acclimation, to move on to other realms. He is also acutely aware that the way that the Priests have stoked up the Flame is a self-reinforcing threat that will eventually destroy Rome as well as countless other worlds. The pull will draw more and more beings into it, which will feed the Flame, but the Priests are fools if they think that they can harness or control it at that level.

There is hope, however, now that the investigators are here. Cats, with their relationship to the Dreamlands, are better able to travel within it. Others are largely stuck here until they move on to their respective paradises. It might be possible, with a great effort, for a cat to petition the gods of the Dreamlands to do something about the out of control Flame. If they disrupt the Singing Flame, the threat to Rome is averted, and they may be able to get back to Rome. They might even be able to persuade, or drag, Caligula to come along with them. However, someone has to

close the gate leading back to Rome, or some amount of the weak-minded (or Caligula) might try to get back through.

A cat who now thinks about trying to Jump to the Moon (or elsewhere in the known Dreamlands) from where they are thinks that they can see something, at the farthest edge of their perception, but is quite sure that it is just too far to jump. However, Arax can help with some advice, or you might allow Sulla his Sleuth trick or an Idea roll. If enough cats (a combined POW of 500 or more) all focus together, they can enable one cat to jump from here to the remotest part of the known Dreamlands. They will need to convince some of the aforementioned 4D10 skeptical cats to assist them to pull enough POW together. (The typical sentient cat has a POW of 70.) This requires a *permanent* POW sacrifice of 500 points, so spreading it out as far as possible is wise, and likely only one cat will be able to be sent.

Fortunately, if they are looking for help to disrupt the Singing Flame, the remotest part of the known Dreamlands is the part that they want to go: Kadath in the Cold Wastes, home of the Great Ones, gods of the Dreamlands. The cats will have to choose their emissary carefully, as he or she has to go one on one with the Great Ones. He or she will also have to make one heck of a jump, so there should rightfully be a good debate about which cat gets sent. Turnstile is the one best equipped to make the effort physically, Bella is the most persuasive, but each investigator has his or her own merits.

CALIGULA IN PARADISE

Caligula has gotten a bit of a wake-up call since arriving in the Flame. He might show up on his own initiative (if he "hears" himself being "discussed"), or the investigators might seek him out.

He is a bit stunned to learn that his favorite snack food is sentient, but it is more amusing to him than anything else. He denies eating cats with practiced ease, and feigns imperial offense against any so-called "Romans" that insinuate otherwise. No one is capable of acting physically against anyone else here, as the Inner Dimension is an insubstantial mindscape, so

both Caligula and the cats are safe, at least while the Singing Flame persists.

Encounters with Caligula will go one of two ways: cooperatively, or not. The cats might try to trick or flatter Caligula into coming back with them to Rome, if they are able to appeal to his sense of entitlement and grandeur. This only works if they do not give him any hint that they know he eats cats, or that they are planning to punish him for any reason. Telling him (semi-truthfully) that Rome is in an uproar in his absence and that he must return and calm the city might work; he is unaware that there is an imminent assassination conspiracy waiting for him, which is why he was wandering about the palace without his bodyguards in the first place. If convinced (Persuade/Yowl vs. Insight check, with appropriate bonuses for plausibility of lies told), he waits for any plan to disrupt the Singing Flame to succeed or fail. He then willingly accompanies the investigators back to Rome, intent on playing the hero and setting things in Rome aright.

If Caligula decides not to cooperate, he may feign cooperation, or disappear back into the communal mindscape and be difficult to find, at least until the Singing Flame is disrupted. Either way, he uses the investigators as best he sees fit, turning on a dime and perhaps literally stabbing them in the back. He is superficially charming and an excellent liar in his own right.

DEATH'S LITTLE BROTHER

Any cat selected to seek out and petition the gods of Dream jumps as high and far as possible, aided by the wills and good wishes (focused POW) of the others. Up, up they go, soaring through space, the weird landscape far beneath as seen from near orbit. For a while, the cat is afraid that they are going to simply drift off into the void, until they reach the zenith of the trajectory. Then they start to fall, down, down, slowly at first, but gradually picking up speed. Doubt should continue as to whether the cat will make it, but they hurtle toward the very lip of a flat mass of land, beyond which there is nothing but emptiness. If the cat still has a Nine Lives trick left, you might interpose a Hard DEX roll to enable a safe landing. It should be a near thing either way.

The cat can make a Dream Lore check upon arrival, with a bonus die. Cats have likely seen this place in their dreams: Kadath in the Cold Waste, rumored home of the Great Ones, the gods of the Dreamlands. It is a bleak, freezing cold, arctic landscape of impossibly high mountains, and long, generally cylindrical-shaped, snow-covered hillocks, stretching out for miles ahead. Yowling for attention is only drowned out by the howling wind and snow.

In the distance is a fire, apparently coming from a cave part way up a mountain, a couple of frigid miles away. Littered around the landscape are numerous, soapy, greyish-green pillars and ruins, each carved with indecipherable pictograms reminiscent of those seen on the pillars in the TCP in Rome and in the violet meadow around Ydmos. Also littered around

GAIUS THE YOUNGER

*aka Caligula, Emperor of Rome
Human, Roman, Male, 28*

STR 65 CON 50 SIZ 70 INT 65 POW 70

DEX 65 APP 60 EDU 60 SAN 20

LUCK 70 HP 11 MP 14 MOVE 8 BUILD 1

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Large Knife 55%, 1d4+2+DB, HP 20, medium length, impales and parries; Dodge 55% (27/11)

SKILLS: Persuade 80%, Status 100%.

INDEFINITE INSANITY: Psychopathic Personality Disorder.



the landscape are the skeletons of many different sorts of creatures, frozen, and fists (or equivalent) clenched in agony, from human to cat to other things (some gargantuan) best left undescribed. SEN loss is 1/1D6, and the cat gains +1% to Dream Lore.

The most direct route to the fire source in the distance takes the cat up and over one of the oddly cylindrical hillocks, and requires a successful Climb check. This gives the cat a good and disturbing look at the “hillock” from the top of it: an immense, sleeping, terrible-visaged, humanoid being. The hilltop rises and falls as the sleeping being breathes, and no amount of cat annoyance can wake the sleeper. SEN loss 1/1D6, but give the cat +1% to Dream Lore for the revelation. Failing the Climb check means that the cat simply cannot get up that hillock, and ends up going around to avoid freezing and to keep moving, suffering 1D4 points of damage (but not below 1 hit point) and losing 20 points of Cuteness, permanently, from frostbite.

As the cat is near the end of their endurance, they arrive at the base of the mountain from which the flame is shining. A set of white marble stairs leads up, amid ornate, beautiful Corinthian pillars and Greek-inspired statuary, into a temple set flush into the side of the mountain. The frozen bones of prior pilgrims litter the stairs, while the flame emanates from within the temple. If the cat dares to look back out at the Cold Waste from the top of the stairs, he can clearly see that all of the hillocks are sleeping titans,

covered by snow and ice as they lay. SEN loss is 1/1D6, and the cat gains +1% to Dream Lore.

The cella of the temple is nearly a dead ringer for the TCP in Rome, full of records, weights, and measures. There are no pillars leading to Ydmos, fortunately. Seated upon a throne of horn and ivory within the temple is Hypnos, god of Dreams, in his most pleasant appearance, a grey-winged, beautiful Grecian god. He says:

GREETINGS, [NAME OF CAT]. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE FARTHEST EDGES OF DREAM? WAIT...YOU ARE NO DREAMER! YOU ARE HERE IN THE FLESH? HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? SPEAK, CAT!

Hypnos is an extremely powerful being, especially here in the Dreamlands, but he is neither omniscient nor omnipresent. He is generally fond of cats, but generally not a very nice entity. He is jealous of his power, has a sore spot for mortals claiming to be gods, does not suffer fools gladly, and is fond of putting uppity mortals in their place.

He knows of the City of the Singing Flame, but does not know what has been going on there recently, simply because he has not bothered to check. Specifically, he does not know that the Priests have been deliberately stoking the Flame up, claiming his dreaming mortal subjects from the waking world before their times. Nor does he know anything of what Caligula has been up to, because (as he may share with

the petitioning cat), “CALIGULA IS A MADMAN AND STOPPED DREAMING YEARS AGO. HIS DREAMS IN THE GRAVEYARD OF THE GODS BROKE HIS YOUNG MIND.” (See page 26 for more information about the Graveyard.) Hence, Hypnos is unaware of Caligula’s thoughts or aspirations, and does not know that Caligula has been setting himself up as a god during his own life. (Nor, since the investigators have not dreamed since they saw the inside of the TCP, can he access their dreams to verify this).

Petitioning Hypnos for aid should be played as a roleplaying exercise and not turn exclusively on the dice. Hypnos needs to be informed of what is going on and talked into intervening. He will frequently interrupt, talk over the cat, and ask “HOW DOES THIS CONCERN THE GOD OF DREAMS?” Hypnos will be favorably influenced by the following considerations:

❧ *The Singing Flame is being deliberately stoked by its Priests and is spiraling out of control.* This is bad for Hypnos because it will eventually destroy the world, which he cares about because that will decrease the number of dreamers and undermine his influence. This, alone, may not move him to action. “TRUE, PERHAPS, BUT A WARNING TO THE PRIESTS MIGHT SUFFICE...”

❧ *Caligula has been eating cats.* “THIS IS EFFRONTERY. CATS ARE SACRED TO ME. BUT IT IS NOT UNKNOWN.” He can



access the dreams of anyone still living with direct knowledge of this atrocity (including Arax and the kitchen staff, as well as Fluffy) and confirm this. “PERHAPS CALIGULA SHOULD BE PUNISHED, CAT, BUT HE DOES NOT DREAM. CANNOT YOUR KIND HANDLE THAT?” Hypnos might be swayed by having it explained to him that the Singing Flame has put Caligula beyond the reach of Roman justice (or feline justice), and that unless the Flame is disrupted, he will escape to a higher plane eventually.

❗ However, the notion that *Caligula has been setting himself up as a god during his life* is a bridge much too far. “WHAT? BLASPHEMY!!! WHAT PROOF HAVE YOU OF THIS, CAT?” Hypnos can verify this by either accessing the dreams of Arax or Boots, or stealing a glance for himself at the TCP through magic.

❗ If the cat repeats *the arrogant ranting of the Priest in Ydmos, about how none can stop them, not even the impotent Gods of Dream*, that will likewise shove Hypnos over the edge.

❗ He is not especially impressed by pleas to goodness, for the sake of Rome, or to spare any living thing in particular.

Assuming a decent effort at roleplaying, Hypnos will ultimately smile wickedly, look deep into the soul of the petitioning cat, and ask: “HOW WELL DO YOU HANDLE STORMS, LITTLE CAT?” Shift the narrative at this point abruptly back to the rest of the cats still in the Singing Flame.

THE FALL OF YDMOS

Smith’s story cycle does not explain why it is that the Great Ones lay waste to Ydmos, but they do. For the cats in the Singing Flame, their entire world begins to pulse, shake and shatter. Gaps appear in their perceived environment, through which they can see the Temple of the Singing Flame. It is quaking and falling apart, and loud booms and crashes can be heard. The endless queue of entranced pilgrims have regained their senses and are beginning to flee, trampling one another underfoot as they go. The floors are slick with ichor, blood, and other pulp. SEN loss is 0/1D6.

Assuming that they have convinced Caligula to accompany them back to Rome, their way is still not completely clear, but at least they can head in the right direction without being crushed by entities pressing forward to immolate themselves in the Singing Flame.

The song of the Flame still persists. Entities who have emerged from the Flame are no longer susceptible to being drawn into it, but outside of the temple, it’s a massacre. The vast throng mills in confusion, some wanting to run only to stop short by the pull of the Flame, while countless others brawl and murder in an effort to get where they are going. SEN loss is 1/1D8 for the horrible slaughter outside of the temple.

The City is being laid waste by huge pillars of fire, lightning, and smoke, dwarfing the architecture and even the titanic Unhearing Priests. Some in the crowd wail that the Great Ones, the gods of Dream, have (finally) taken offense and are punishing the City. Riding atop one of the pillars of destruction, and able to spot and rejoice the rest of the party at their leisure, are any cats who left to petition Hypnos. Those heroic cats should be rewarded—transformed by Hypnos—with a free “I Was Always Up Here” trick, allowing them to climb down from the pillars without explanation when no one is looking.

If Caligula has been convinced to go back to Rome, he cooperates all the way back to the Gate to Rome. He did not want to be here in the first place, entranced by the Singing Flame, but it should be obvious that he is still struggling with its pull. He may shiver with cold or mutter to himself about the “beauty Beyond”. If he was not convinced, the cats may have to subdue (or kill) and drag him back. This can at least be attempted (with the assistance of the aforementioned 4D10 cats). Caligula may fight back, flee, or both, and subduing him is difficult even with 4D10 helpers. (Use Zoe’s physical stats for the typical cat combatant.) But the bigger challenge for the cats will be dragging his dead or unconscious body back to the TCP, through a riot and massacre, so this justice is best delayed.

At best, only Boots manages to stick with the players through the turmoil and get back to the portal to Rome, with any others trying to flee with them being trampled (SEN loss 0/1 per lost cat), lost in the crowd, losing Sentience and fleeing into

ROLEPLAYING CHALLENGES FOR EACH CAT AT THE MOMENT OF SACRIFICE

The decision about who stays behind to close the gate poses characterization challenges for each of the pre-generated cats:

- ❗ Augustus is a natural leader and may instinctively want to fall on his sword. However, staying behind would likely be the end of him, as he does not have the skills of any of the other cats that would help him find another way back to Rome.
- ❗ Bella might be able to sweet-talk her way back to Rome, but is unlikely to survive the trampling hordes scattering from Ydmos on her own.
- ❗ Zoe has the best human communication skills and eldritch knowledge but, like Bella, will probably end up depending on the kindness of strangers to find another way out.
- ❗ While Sulla thinks that he is the greatest cat in all of Rome, staying behind is almost certain death as he lacks the physical skills to survive on his own. However, he is smart enough that he might discover a way out.
- ❗ Cassius is the toughest cat, and this might be a time for him to try and take charge, such as by jumping Augustus from behind so that he can make the sacrifice and be remembered as a great hero. That is how Cassius' mind might work. However, his Bruiser and Lionheart tricks mean that he is also probably in the best shape near the end of a harrowing scenario, and his combat capacity against Caligula is a cut above everyone else's. As a result, he is needed in Rome to give the cats the best chance to eliminate Caligula and finish the job, and may have to be persuaded of this.
- ❗ Turnstile could argue for being the least likely to immediately be trampled and most likely to survive long enough to start a journey to somehow return to Rome. However, by this point, Turnstile is probably a psychic train wreck.

Ydmos, or just not wanting to go to Rome.

When (if?) the cats reach the gate back to Rome, they realize the next problem if they have not already: people could still come through it from Rome. Some brave cat has to remain behind to finish shutting the gate behind the others, saving Rome from the threat of the Singing Flame. If no one does, the lure of the Singing Flame can still be felt from the waking world side. The pillars might eventually be moved, separated or smashed, but that takes time and somehow convincing some humans to do that. People will still be drawn to them for some time, and once they enter, they will be cast into chaos. And the first to try to

dive back through to Ydmos will be the weak-minded Caligula, who will do so immediately, resulting in mission failure. (Once the Singing Flame is disrupted, leaving simply requires a Regular POW check and does not cost permanent POW upon arrival.)

ROME AGAIN, ROME AGAIN

With Caligula back in Rome under his own power, the cats have a number of options. They may simply try to kill him right then and there. Resolve the combat, bearing in mind that Caligula will probably try to

run away from a bunch of bloodthirsty cats if they start inflicting any real damage. Caligula may quite possibly win a fight with the remaining investigators, if they are standing alone.

There are other possibilities, however. If Fluffy was returned home or put on a path where she might get home to her mother, she quickly spreads the word of Caligula's atrocities against cat-kind, and returns to the TCP with 3D20 cat reinforcements who are waiting with swishing tails and grim demeanors, ready for vigilante justice against the emperor. This version of the fight will likely go very badly for Caligula, but unless taken down very quickly, he will again try to flee.

If Caligula does try to flee from a bunch of angry cats, he initially tries to escape out of the TCP through the front doors, perhaps yelling for help. These have been barred, though, and he is not focused enough under sustained cat attacks to unbar them. He then makes for the cryptoporticum back to the palace, where he encounters the cabal of his would-be assassins.

It may be that the cats kill him in the TCP and the conspirators concoct a different story for public consumption, while strange rumors of numerous scratches and bites all over his body circulate around Rome as a warning to others who would offend cats. Perhaps the warning induces the superstitious Romans to curb the worst abuses of the emperor and reinforce the role of the Senate in Roman affairs, leading to a renewed Golden Age for Rome. Or, the cats may simply succeed in driving Caligula to his historical assassins, resulting in a military dictatorship holding sway over Rome for the next several decades, but at least gaining justice for cats.

Regardless of all else, award 1D6 SEN and +5% Status to each cat if Fluffy is found and reunited with her mother.

Finally, if the cats succeed in killing Caligula themselves, back in Rome, award another 1D6 SEN as Roman government is influenced for the better.

OUTCOMES & REWARDS

- ❗ If the cats somehow disrupt the pillars without retrieving either Boots or Caligula, they are lost in the Dreamlands and beyond. Rome goes crazy and burns due to the protracted power vacuum and uncertainty. There is no SEN reward or penalty.
- ❗ If the cats seal the entry to the City of Ydmos from the Dreamlands side, fail to bring Caligula back (dead or alive), but retrieve Boots, award 1D3 SEN. Rome still burns due to the power vacuum, but something was accomplished.
- ❗ If Caligula is retrieved and brought back to Rome to face justice, award 1D6 SEN. In such a case, award an additional 1D6 SEN if Boots is retrieved and another 1D6 SEN if the portal is sealed from the Dreamlands side.



SINISTER SEEDS ♦ FURTHER ADVENTURES

I, CLAUDIUS

Historically, Caligula is followed on the imperial throne by his uncle Claudius. Claudius was, to some extent, a puppet under the sway of the Praetorian Guard, or at least very dependent on their continued support. A scholarly and introverted fellow, he was fond of writing about obscure antiquarian subjects. Claudius might well find, read, and take seriously any writings left behind by Arax, and act as a patron to the investigators, once he learns the truth about cats.

Claudius finishes the annexation of Mauretania and conquers Britain during his reign. He established numerous colonies along the Roman frontier, providing opportunities for feline investigators to butt up against conflicting cultures and holdover belief systems. Claudius also cracks down on non-orthodox religions (including Druidism and non-Roman soothsayers), providing additional potential work for Proud Roman Cats.

One such crackdown where the cats might be summoned into duty on behalf of Rome would involve a tricky matter in Mauretania. As Rome asserts its authority and overlays its systems onto Mauretanian society, a problem arises in the capital, Colonia Julia Tingi or Tingis (modern day Tangiers). Roman officials, and later, Roman legionaries have mysteriously disappeared when attempting to assess a small and unassuming temple in the heart of the city. Several waves have gone missing, with only a smell of cooking meat wafting through the streets later.

The temple is consecrated to Melqart, also known as Ba'al Haamon, the city-god of Tyre in Lebanon. Melqart is a god of fire and civilization, whose worship is a minority religion with a minor presence throughout Northern Africa. They have never been any trouble before to Rome, and should not be any trouble this time, but numerous oracles have warned of a fiery cataclysm should the temple be taken by force. And strangely, no one is going in or out of the temple—priests, functionaries, and even food and water deliveries are all absent and have been since the Roman legions landed.

Claudius directs the surviving cats to reconnoiter the Temple of Melqart in Tingis and report back as to the situation. Joined by Julius, the orange tom who frequents the fires around the Circus Maximus, the cats travel to Tingis and infiltrate the temple. Melqart is an avatar of Cthugha, and within lies horror: displeased by a lack of timely and proper (human, preferably infant) burnt offerings, Melqart's ifrits (fire vampires) have taken over the temple. The Romans' arrival has disrupted the gathering of sacrifices, and this is the fallout.

The ifrits have immolated all of the attendants and nosy Romans, and will not rest or leave until the high priest, Alexander, atones for his failures by immolating himself on Melqart's burning altar. It is important that he not only pay for his "crimes", but that he do his duty and burn himself upon the altar. Alexander cowers within, desperately hoping for another solution, his faith gone. The cats are beneath the ifrits' notice, at least at first, and must eliminate the mad Alexander to end the threat to Tingis.

Statistics and the life story for Julius can be found in "The Council of the Great Library of Alexandria."

THE GRAVEYARD OF THE GODS

While it may seem that any cat who apparently sacrificed himself to close the portal may never be seen again, a follow up adventure might revolve around that cat's efforts to escape the Dreamlands. This would be an extended romp through portions of the Dreamlands, known and unknown, to try and find a physical way back to the waking world.

Assuming that Zoe survives the events of "Triumphs Felis Ferae", her patron, the White Sibyl, whispers a message to her (otherwise, Keepers should substitute another cat to receive the message). The Sibyl advises that whichever cat stayed behind in Ydmos has survived and is poised to escape the Dreamlands, but must be retrieved from the Graveyard of the Gods in Augusta Treverorum (Roman era Trier).

Augusta Treverorum is, during the reign of Claudius, a sizeable Roman city and imperial residence (as it has a palace) in the Roman province of Belgica, near the border with Germania. It is the capital of the largely Romanized Treveri Celts, but is also a military headquarters where Caligula spent much of his youth.

Consultation with Legion doctors or appropriate mystics reveal that madness and suicides are disproportionate in that area, and one or more cats who have returned with legions from that area bear witness that something is off about the city. Cats are uneasy and discomfited there, and few cats want to dwell there for long.

The reason is the Graveyard of the Gods. An area of about one square mile in the forest just outside of the city, it is full of shrines to every sort of god, known and unknown, stretching back centuries at least. (In reality, it stretches back to pre-humanity.) It is a nexus point to the Dreamlands: an unstable rift through which dreams and nightmares pour out. No one of fragile disposition sleeps well in Trier, but to the strong-minded yet sensitive, it is a place of mystical visions and inspiration. It broke Caligula's weak mind, and animals instinctively sense the wrongness.

The perils of the Graveyard are real: nightmares made flesh, sanity-shattering dreams from other dimensions, and a group of angry, guardian druids bent on bloody murder against any who would defile the forest. But if these horrors can be braved, a physical passage to the Dreamlands lies at its heart, large enough for cats to enter, and to retrieve a long-lost hero.

VISITING HOURS

Many years later, in 192 C.E. to be precise, the assassination of the increasingly megalomaniacal Emperor Commodus marks the end of the relatively peaceful Antonine era. This was preceded, in 191 C.E., by a fire which destroyed the Temple of Vesta.

As noted in the *7th Edition Guide to Cthulhu Invictus*,

the Vestals had long been charged, in connection with the Christian Bishops of Rome, with safeguarding the First and Second Scrolls of Arax. Arax was a friend to cats (as noted above) and the fact that cats are secretly sentient (and that some are knowledgeable about eldritch horrors) is among the secret lore passed down from generation to generation. Indeed, when humans are read in to these mysteries by the Vestals and the Popes, they are required to swear many sacred oaths, then shown a certain prisoner kept chained (both physically and mystically) beneath the Temple of Vesta. This is both literal and metaphorical—the Vestals were the guardians of and symbols of Roman rectitude. (See pp. 68–69 in the *7th Edition Guide to Cthulhu Invictus*.)

The prisoner (as he will happily tell you) is Tiberius Gemellus, nephew of the late and unlamented Emperor Caligula. History tells us that he was supposedly purged by Caligula (after a brief run as his co-heir to the throne), dying in late 37 or early 38 C.E. The truth is worse. Caligula forced Arax, under pain of death, to summon up a monster referred to in the *Book of Eibon* as That Which Lurks Beneath The Waves. The smallest part of That Which Lurks reached out of a pool of shadow and coiled itself around poor Gemellus, biting him all over with its lamprey-like sucker mouths and inserting itself with numerous phalluses into his every orifice.

Gemellus survived somehow, but began to transform into a smaller, part human replica of That Which Lurks—maddened by pain and whispers that only he could hear, but unable to die or be killed by any means. This was the plan, of course—to create a torture victim whose tortures would never end, as a warning to any who would defy Caligula, an example no one would forget.

The thing that was once Gemellus still has a version of its human mind—it knows who it once was, and its memories are intact. But it is a thing of impulses and urges now: bite and copulate (each of which inexorably spreads its taint), and ultimately, flee to the sea. A victim is best killed quickly before the inevitable transformation renders it unkillable, although, perhaps, a stray bite that is amputated quickly enough might save the victim.

It was imprisoned beneath the Temple of Vesta as, it was assumed, no one would be mad or careless enough to disrupt an imprisonment there. That is, until Commodus came along and the governance of Rome hit new lows.

This serves as a coda for the Proud Roman Cats, as Rome itself enters a decline. The cats are likely on their ninth lives and have guarded Rome from horrors for going on 200 years. Now, amid a fire that burns Rome for days, Gemellus has escaped and gone to ground, searching for a means to escape the Eternal City. Fighting it is hopeless for the cats; it is corruption incarnate and can only be harmed by magic (although a tease of a magic weapon might be offered). Research might disclose that Gemellus simply wishes to rejoin what is now the rest of him and should be allowed to flee to the sea, but the legions and other cats each howl for vengeance for those that have tried to stop him and failed. Cats who try to help him escape may succeed in saving Rome, but likely do so at the cost of their lives.

THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

BY JEFF MOELLER

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The events of “Triumphis Felis Ferae” and its follow-on adventures made the Proud Roman Cats acutely aware of a recurring threat to peace and sanity in the Roman Empire: the oneiric nexus. These were weak points in the fabric of reality, places where dreams and nightmares were more strongly felt than in others. In extreme cases, or with proper focuses (exemplified by the pillars used by Caligula), physical pathways to the Dreamlands might even open, allowing beautiful, inspiring dreams to sift through, and horrible nightmares to walk the waking world.

These places needed to be tended and watched by those who were sensitive to such matters and unlikely to be tempted by them—the wisest and greatest of cats. While there were a few humans who were up to the task, they were weak creatures by nature, and subject to temptation. Those humans who understood them might try to widen a nexus or plumb its secrets to gain

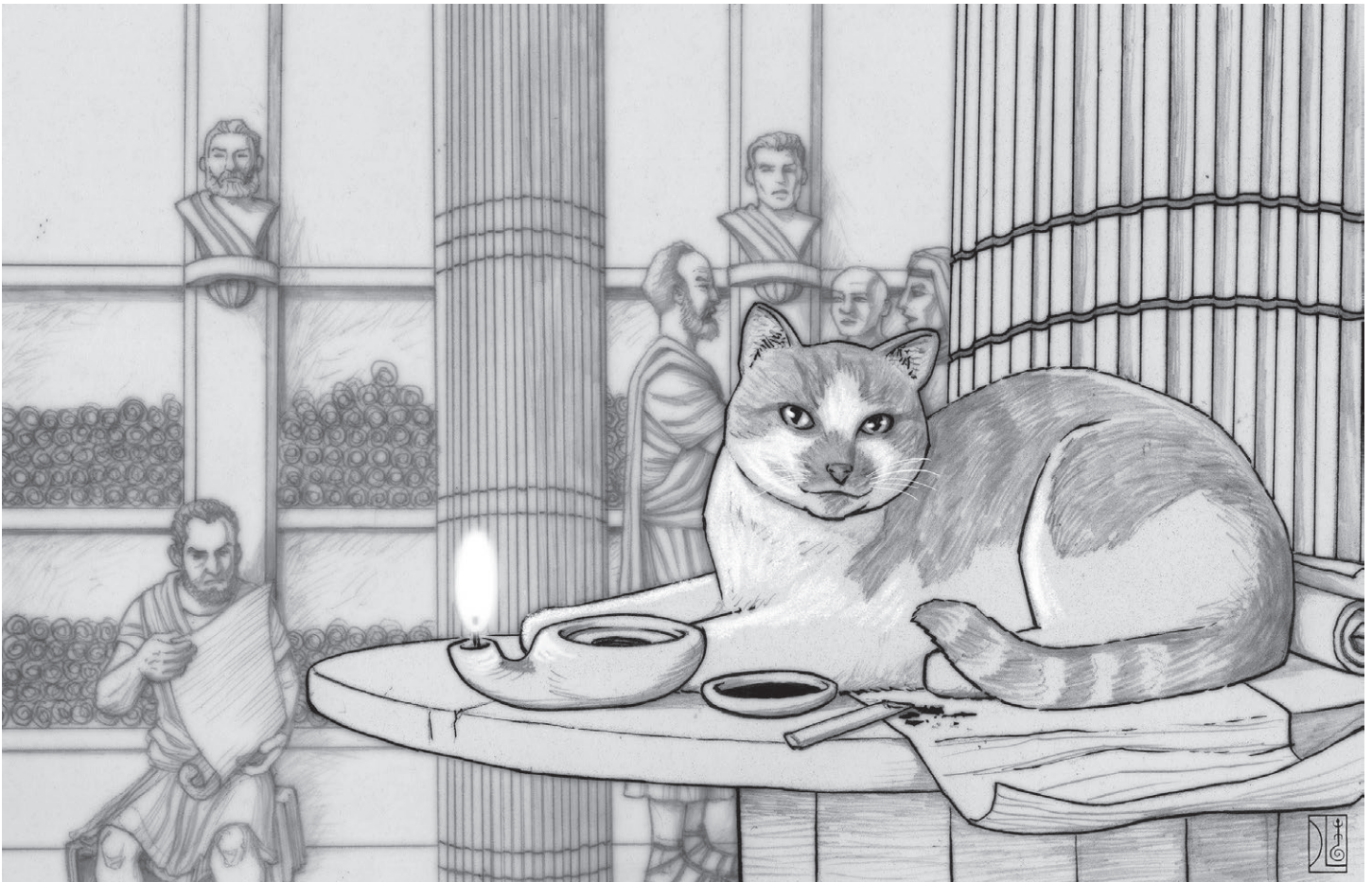
personal power, without regard to the welfare of the Empire. And in some instances—exemplified by the Graveyard of the Gods in Augusta Treverorum—the humans seemed not to know what exactly to do when one got out of control.

More dangerous in some ways were the subtle effects of such nexuses on the weak-minded. While being near such nexuses might inspire the brilliant or artistic, to the benefit of all, they might drive the unstable to madness.

One such nexus both inspired the creation and lies at the root of the Library of Alexandria. Great cats who will not be led astray must tend both the library and the nexus, allowing humans who will better mankind to bask in the nexus’ tendency to inspire humans with creativity and to move them to act on their ideas, doing what is necessary. Subtly and instinctively, this greatest of oneiric nexuses draws those who dream big to come to it, study near it, and create or conquer, depending on their innate proclivities. It both impels the Roman Empire forward and threatens it by provoking madness in those who would be better kept away.

The cats of Egypt once guarded the area, but were displaced by Ptolemy I when he founded a Greek-style athenaeum there after Alexander conquered the region. So powerful is the nexus at Alexandria that its history has been chaotic: great councils of wise cats are cyclically established, destroyed, rise from the ashes, or filter in along with Alexandria’s new masters. In other words, Greek, Roman, and Parthian cats have all joined the Council of Alexandria when such powers ruled the city. In the Antonine era in which Cthulhu Invictus is set, the current Council has historically been the surviving Proud Roman Cats of “Triumphis Felis Ferae”, on their last lives, or their descendants. But even most of these have disappeared recently, last seen heading off to Rome to investigate an alleged escape of the dreaded prisoner kept beneath the Temple of Vesta.

One last, great feline hero of Rome was left behind to guard the Library and, in a sense, the integrity of reality—Julius “Naranjo”. And now he stands alone.



THE GREAT LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA, HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

The Library of Alexandria is a bit of a misnomer. While there certainly was a large collection of writings kept there, it was much closer to a modern university campus. It was a temple complex dedicated to the Greek Muses, with meeting rooms, dormitories, communal dining, a zoo, an observatory, gardens, and scholars in residence, and it was part of a larger complex of higher learning known as the Musaeum of Alexandria. Estimates of the number of scrolls on deposit range from 40,000 to 400,000 at its height, mostly written on papyrus. There was, the histories tell us, a catalog to the holdings that has been lost to history. The Musaeum was a philosophy school, a poetry school, and a school of music as well.

Alexandria itself began as a Greek-founded city; the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt (ending with Cleopatra) was culturally Greek. The Musaeum was the dynasty's crowning act of patronage, an effort to out-Greek the Greeks.

The library grew its collection largely through copying; all ships visiting the port of Alexandria were required to have any books in their possession copied. It employed a large number of scribes whose jobs were to copy everything they could, and they would be dispatched to other centers of learning, such as Rhodes and Athens to make copies as deals could be negotiated.

Despite its value and prestige, the Library burned down several times over the course of its existence (roughly 3rd century B.C.E. until roughly 391 C.E., when a daughter institution called the Serapeum was destroyed by the Coptic Pope Theophilus). This final destruction was incidental to the banning of paganism by Emperor Theodosius; the Library (with its attendant temple functions and dedication to the Muses) ran afoul of this edict. Burnings attested to in the histories occurred in 48 B.C.E. (when Julius Caesar invaded Alexandria and conquered it for Rome) and incident to an attack on the city by the Emperor Aurelian circa 270 C.E., to suppress the revolt of Queen Zenobia of Palmyra. Periodically, all foreign scholars would be purged from the library during times of insecurity or unrest.

There remains a good deal of mystery among scholars as to many of the events surrounding the library and the ultimate fate of many of its holdings.

One might rightly assume that a number of mystical, experimental, and pseudo-scientific scrolls were among the library's holdings; and that, because it was a center of learning, one could obtain access to visiting scholars was certainly possible to obtain. And this being Egypt, albeit a Romanized Egypt, cats in the temples would certainly be normal.

Why all the fires, especially during times of unrest? Why would conquering armies consistently trash such a treasure? Or is there another explanation?

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

Alexandria itself, in the Antonine era, is a major city, but it is a new one by Egyptian standards. While a town called Rhakotis is said to have been at its location before the Ptolemaic dynasty, and was incorporated into it as its Egyptian quarter, Alexandria was basically built from scratch by Ptolemy I, beginning in 332 B.C.E. It became the capital of Hellenistic and later Roman Egypt, with Rhakotis becoming the Egyptian quarter of the city. Other quarters were the Royal Greek quarter, as well as a substantial Jewish quarter throughout the Greek and Roman eras.

There is a dark story related by Tacitus about the expansion of Rhakotis by Ptolemy. To bless the city's founding, a certain statue of Pluto, god of the underworld, was taken from Sinope and put in place at the site of a former temple of Serapis, originally a Babylonian chthonic deity. Some scholars interpret the name Rhakotis as roughly "bridge" or "mouth" to a "construct", and it is said to have been the home of guardians against foreign intrusions into Egypt in pre-Ptolemaic times.

The site is, in fact, the location of a powerful oneiric nexus, a source of dreams and inspirations of great potential value, if it can be controlled. Cat-kind had guarded it against intrusion and abusers long before Ptolemy and Caesar. Alexander's invasion disrupted the temples but, instinctively, Ptolemy was inspired to build a massive temple to the Muses over the nexus

on the site of the previous temple. The nexus lies in the deepest sub-levels of the library itself, beneath a subterranean temple to the Muses, under which is a temple to Serapis, under which is a temple to Isis: layers upon layers. But ultimately, there is a physical entrance to the Dreamlands, better isolated and warded than the one in Augusta Treverorum, which great cats have long been charged with guarding. The nexus draws dreamers and creative thinkers from across the world to congregate, to share knowledge, and to innovate and invent; but it also draw those tortured by nightmares or besieged by visions, those who hear voices urging them to violence, and those who seek not just power but sorcerous power.

It's the job of the cats to do what they can to keep the humans from flying too close to the proverbial sun. They cannot risk losing the control of the Musaeum complex to the next Caligula, or allowing interlopers into the deepest layer of stacked temples to find the gate to the Dreamlands. They police those at the Musaeum, seeking to separate the benevolent, who seek inspiration, from the malevolent, who seek to uncover secret sources of power. And when push comes to shove in defense of the nexus, they do what cats can do: monkey wrench the situation by knocking over a lamp onto a pile of scrolls.

With the rise of Rome, Proud Roman Cats took over the responsibility for the library from the prior guard of Graeco-Egyptian cats.

THE COUNCIL OF THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA (RECENT PAST TENSE)

The most recent incarnation of the Council of Alexandria began as the remaining Proud Roman Cats of "Triumphis Felis Ferae", with their new recruit Julius in tow, emerging from the Gate to the Dreamlands at the bottom of the Musaeum complex with their lost member, Augustus. (If events went differently in "Triumphis Felis Ferae," adjust the details in this section accordingly.) Augustus had stayed behind in Ydmos after retrieving Caligula from the City of the Singing Flame, to seal that portal and prevent Caligula's escape. The Proud Roman Cats took advantage of finding the open Gate in Augusta Treverorum and guided Augustus back from the Dreamlands. But given how dangerous the Graveyard of the Gods had proven to be, they found another Gate back to the waking world, the one emerging in Alexandria. They had thus completed their hero's journey, and learned enough about the secrets of the universe to take over for the prior generation of guardians.

For his part, Julius first learned of the horrors that threatened the Empire at the end of "Triumphis Felis Ferae." Formerly content to lie by a fire near the Circus Maximus and control the vermin that were drawn to it, his attention was woken by something truly awful. A mother cat raised an alarm, claiming that her missing kitten, Fluffy, had been freed from the imperial larder and that the blasphemous rumors of the emperor eating cats was actually true. Julius bestirred himself

JULIUS "NARANJO", THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE

Roman, Male, Over 100

STR 15 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 70
DEX 105 **APP** 55 **EDU** 50 **SEN** 45
LUCK 70 **HP** 6 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 81% (40/16)

SKILLS: Climb 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Cuteness 37%, Dream Lore 55%, Hiss 80%, Human Language (Latin) 66%, Human Language (Greek) 26%, Human Language (Demotic) 26%, Hypnotize 40%, Insight 60%, Listen 60%, Natural World 46%, Navigate 25%, Occult 25%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 70%, Sleep 50%, Spot Hidden 65%, Status 60%, Stealth 50%, Start Mysterious Fire 50%, Streetwise 50%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Fish for Tea, Rumblepuss, Top Cat. No more lives left, though.

STRESS DISORDER: Excessive Territoriality

PATRON: Apollodorus, a docent at the Library of Alexandria.

to join the posse, but unlike the bulk of the posse, he was curious about the truth. He took a detour into the palace, snuck into the kitchen, and what he saw there shook him deeply. He rallied numerous other cats to see a half-prepared roasting pot for themselves, and screwed their courage to the sticking post. His faith in the empire was permanently shaken, and he landed the fatal blow against Caligula.

After that, Julius was among the first to volunteer whenever an eldritch threat arose. He now knew the depths to which things could sink.

JULIUS—STILL ON THE JOB

Julius is an old, old cat, on his last life by the end of the Antonine era. He is a picture of stoicism and wisdom at this point in his existence. He is not too

hot, not too cold; not too afraid, not too brave; not too loud, not too soft. Reasonably friendly, reasonably unobtrusive, reasonably calm—all the things needed to go unnoticed in a public place like the Musaeum for decades and maintain continuity. He has long been the face of the Council of Alexandria, the one who reaches out and tweaks the humans to do what must be done, because he lacks the flamboyance of the others. The humans are comfortable around him as a result.

Alexandrian society, like the rest of the Roman Empire in the reign of Commodus, is slipping into a period of decline. Rome is inward-looking, and a relative period of calm and peace is coming to an end. It is exactly this stoicism and reliability that had him pledge to remain behind when the rest of the Council of Alexandria went to their apparent doom, back to Rome to confront the escaped prisoner.

Julius now watches Alexandria and the civilized world beyond Alexandria alone, at a watchfire at the gates of the Musaeum. He is charged with finding successors to carry the mission forward, but has begun to doubt that a new generation will discover the mysteries and emerge from the Musaeum's deepest recesses, as others have, with the change of dominant civilizations.

Just as every cat charged with watching the Musaeum before him, Julius knows what to do if the wrong forces seem poised to capture the Musaeum, or forbidden knowledge is poised to leak out: burn it down to cause a panic, and use the distraction to eliminate the threat as best he can. The fire will be fought, the fire will be put out, but the chaos that follows will enable the cats and their allies to rally the situation unnoticed. Fires are needed sometimes to clear out the dead wood.





THE SHADOW HARVEST

BY STUART BOON

Primary Location:

Temple of Bast in Bubastis (Lower Egypt)

Date:

2327 B.C.E., Fifth Dynasty, the reign
of Pharaoh Djedkare Isesi

INTRODUCTION

In the Late Fifth Dynasty, the significance of the once-great Temple of Bast wanes, falling into the shadow of the Temple of Isis and the ascendant Temple of Osiris. Most within Bast's dusty temple halls and corridors are content to hide in the shadows, to live simply in worship of their quiet, benevolent goddess. But others... others are not so complacent.

Few in the temple know of the greatness reached by the priests of Bast in the Fourth Dynasty—in past times now openly cursed, if remembered at all. Few dare to seek out the forbidden scrolls and study the faded hieroglyphics from the reign of Nephren-Ka, recalling a time when the Temple of Bast aligned itself with the cult of the Black Pharaoh to achieve terrible power. Fewer still dream of a return to that greatness.

But as the year's harvest approaches, three within the temple are doing much more than merely dreaming. Secreted away in murky chambers, their work finally begins to bear dark fruit. Though the trio's dark machinations go unnoticed by the vast majority of acolytes and priests of Bast, not all eyes are blind to the strange happenings in the temple. The revered cat population of the Temple of Bast is increasingly on alert.

Over the past few weeks, a number of cats have gone missing. Life in Lower Egypt is often brutal and short, the burgeoning city of Bubastis itself is a dangerous place, and their cat-kin often come and go, so few thought anything of the first disappearances. But when two elder cats disappear and a young kitten is found murdered, a call to action is required. A group of six cat acolytes is brought together to investigate the murder and the strange disappearances. Will they discover what tragedy has befallen their kin? Will they uncover the darker secret that lies behind the disappearances and the horror soon to change the face of Bubastis and possibly the whole of Egypt?

KEEPER'S INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND

As the autumnal harvest of 2327, late in the Fifth Dynasty, approaches, the Temple of Bast, once preeminent and powerful, is in a slow and steady

decline. The Pharaoh Djedkare Isesi favors Osiris over all other Egyptian Gods and under his patronage, the temples of Osiris have grown strong, overshadowing other, once popular temples such as those of Isis and Bast. Few among the current generation remember a time when the temples devoted to the Goddess Bast and home to her blessed cats were not slowly diminishing in popularity and prominence.

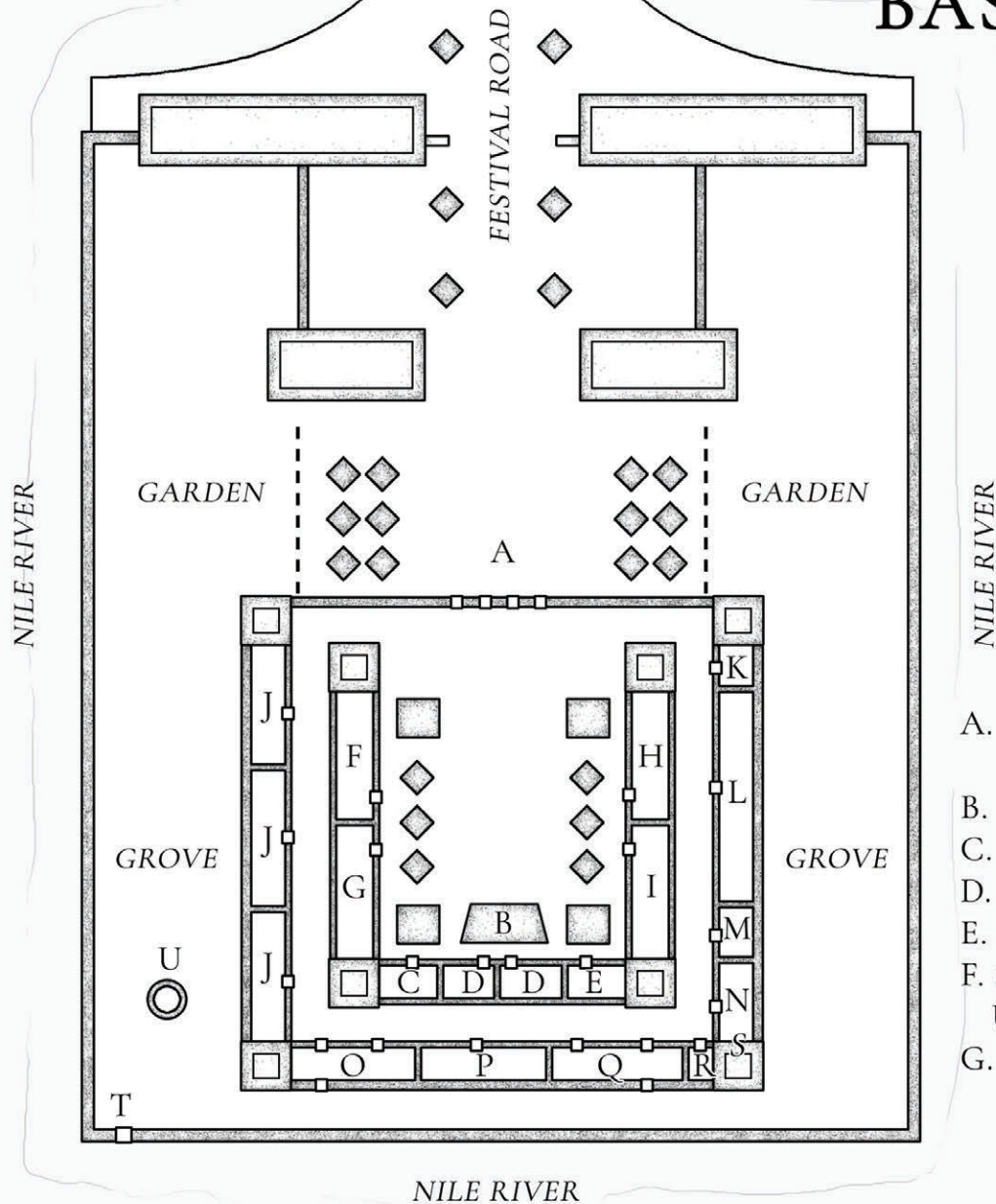
Fewer still know—with any certainty greater than cursed rumor—the true power and ascendancy the Temple of Bast had when it aligned itself with the Black Pharaoh Nephren-Ka during the Fourth Dynasty. Virtually all record of those heady times has been destroyed: scrolls burned, hieroglyphics chiseled from stone walls, and vows taken amongst the learned to ensure that all knowledge of the temple's dark time would end with them. However, the dark stain of those times is such that its knowledge can never truly be washed away or otherwise obliterated. It ever lingers. And so, in dark corners and dusty vaults, the history of those dark days and the blasphemies conducted survived, just as the Black Pharaoh himself survived.

For the Black Pharaoh, or Nephren-Ka—or, in truth, the great and malevolent Outer God Nyarlathotep—remains powerful and ever-scheming within Egypt. And the Black Pharaoh does not forget. Nor does he forgive. Nephren-Ka has been scheming as ages pass, as dynasties rise and fall, subtly influencing the course of history, playfully but also meaningfully, with terrible purpose. He has never forgiven the betrayal of Bast's priests and acolytes who so openly turned against him, breaking their alliance centuries ago.

While the Black Pharaoh has taken some delight in the diminishing of Bast and her temples under Djedkare Isesi's rule, the slow decline does not sate his twisted desire for revenge. Nyarlathotep has, as is his wont, waited and watched for an opportunity to arise to bring about a devastating and suitably dramatic fall from grace. He would see not only the Temples of Bast crushed to dust, but also her worshippers utterly corrupted and poisoned from within.

In the end, his opportunity for revenge came from a most unlikely source: Irtutamen, a dying cat within the Temple of Bast in Bubastis. Such an unexpected turn this was that at first, even Nyarlathotep himself was surprised. How perfect and simple a thing was this: the proud cat, companion of the temple's high priest, Sath-tefhet, panicking on the verge of death, begged the Outer God for a means to extend his life. The Black Pharaoh, seeing the potential inherent in such an unanticipated situation, gave the dying cat his wish and so, so much more.

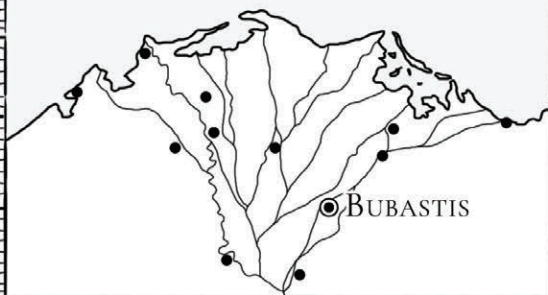
THE TEMPLE OF BAST



- A. MAIN TEMPLE ENTRANCE
- B. STATUE OF BAST
- C. KITTENS' ROOM
- D. CATS' ROOMS
- E. ELDER CAT'S ROOM
- F. SANCTUARY OF USERKAF
- G. SANCTUARY OF NEFERIRKARE KAKAI

- H. LIBRARY
- I. HIGH PRIEST'S SANCTUM
- J. ACOLYTES' CHAMBERS
- K. WATCHMAN'S CHAMBER
- L. PRIESTS' CHAMBERS
- M. ADEPT'S CHAMBER
- N. HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBER
- O. WASHROOM & TOILETS
- P. STORES
- Q. KITCHENS
- R. STAIRS TO CRYPTS
- S. SECRET STAIRWELL FROM HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBER
- T. RIVER GATE
- U. WELL

5TH DYNASTY LOWER EGYPT



CAST LIST

DEITIES

Nephren-Ka, aka The Black Pharaoh: Avatar of Nyarlathotep, enemy of Bast, bent on suborning the Temple of Bast in Bubastis
Bast: Cat goddess of Bubastis

PLAYER CHARACTERS

"Cast of Cat Investigators" has full details on these.

Sref-ra, Toser, Tufu, Akki, Djedu, Hadi

OTHER CATS

Userat: Elderly female cat, murdered by Ittutamen
Hensu: Elderly female cat, murdered by Ittutamen
Pihmay: Kitten, murdered by Sath-hemute
Ittutamen: Traitor to Bast, working with the human high priest and his daughter to make the Temple of Bast a tool of Nephren-Ka, murderer of Userat and Hensu, currently gathering the investigators as an unwitting distraction while his plans come to fruition
Ankhu: Large, elderly male cat, rumored to eat anything and everything
Den-Fed: Belligerent male cat, able and eager to fight
Mehdim-nin: Female cat who claims she can hear the dead

HUMANS

Sath-tefhet: High priest of the Temple of Bast, traitor to Bast, working with Ittutamen to serve Nephren-Ka
Sath-hemute: Daughter of the high priest, also serving Nephren-Ka, murdered Pihmay
Menirdis: Adept priest supposed to succeed Sath-tefhet as high priest, imprisoned by the high priest and his daughter so they can sacrifice him to Nephren-Ka
Hepeshef, aka Wanderer: Sref-ra's patron, night watchman
Sobekhef, aka Coins: Toser's patron, houseman
Pasenheb, aka Stingy: Tufu's patron, priest who frequents the temple library
Meshtep, aka Fatman: Akki's patron, acolyte, cook
Khen-afah, aka Softtouch: Djedu's patron, priest, healer
Malehuwani, aka Smiley: Hadi's patron, new acolyte
Kos: Elder priest who dislikes Sath-hemute
Rahoses: Acolyte, food bearer

OTHER

Teeth: Rat with a prophetic riddle

Over the past two harvests, Nyarlathotep, through Ittutamen, has subtly and carefully manipulated not only the cat's companion, High Priest Sath-tefhet, but also the priest's daughter, Sath-hemute, who arrived at the temple a few months earlier. Both the high priest and his daughter have subsequently succumbed to the Outer God's will, enticed by offers of power and immortality. Under the guidance of the Black Pharaoh, Sath-tefhet has put into motion plans to utterly undermine the Temple of Bast. Sath-tefhet plans to upset the ascendancy of Adept Priest Menirdis to the role of high priest at harvest and to install his daughter instead as the High Priestess of Bast.

As High Priestess of Bast, Sath-hemute would, in fact, be little more than a figurehead for the will of Nephren-Ka. Together with her father, she intends to see that Nyarlathotep becomes the true power within Bast's own high temple in the very city named after the cat goddess. And, as the days grow closer to harvest, there appears to be nothing anyone can do to alter this result. Will this harvest see the Temple of Bast fall beneath the shadow of the Black Pharaoh?

THE SCENE UNFOLDING

Two days before harvest, Sath-tefhet escorted the Adept Menirdis to an inner sanctum within the temple's crypts promising to initiate him into one of the rites of ascendancy. Once in the sanctum, Menirdis was surprised by the high priest's daughter, who struck him on the head, knocking him unconscious. The blow was not strong enough to kill the adept, who later awoke to find himself imprisoned in the dark, alone save for a bowl of water meant to keep him alive until harvest. On the eve of harvest, Sath-tefhet, Sath-hemute, and their cat companion Ittutamen plan to return to the crypts, bind the adept, and ultimately sacrifice Menirdis to the Black Pharaoh before the statue of Bast in the main temple, fulfilling the first part of their bargain.

High Priest Sath-tefhet has announced to the other priests of Bast that Menirdis is performing a fasting ritual in his chambers and is not to be disturbed until the ascendancy ritual on the eve of harvest. In truth, Sath-tefhet has merely locked Menirdis' empty

chamber. With Menirdis trapped out of sight deep beneath the temple, the success of Sath-tefhet's plan would seem assured.

However, the agent of the Black Pharaoh's involvement in this affair, the aged cat Ittutamen, has also become the agent of the cat investigators' involvement. At the behest of Nephren-Ka, fearing the intervention of the more intelligent of the cats, Ittutamen has begun sacrificing select cats to Nyarlathotep. For this vile act, Ittutamen has been promised the Black Pharaoh's blessing and guaranteed immortality—which may, or may not, come to pass, depending on the investigators' actions. Unlike the humans who were so easily pacified with Sath-tefhet's explanation for Menirdis' supposed self-imposed exile, the cats of the temple have grown increasingly dismayed and agitated by the number of their cat-kin disappearing on a daily basis. Their collective sense is that something is amiss and something must be done about it.

PLAYER CHARACTERS: PRE-GENERATED CAT INVESTIGATORS

Six pre-generated cat investigators are provided here for players to use. For players who wish to roll their own cat investigators, guidelines are laid out in the "Further Character Options" section immediately following the list of pre-gens below.

All six cat investigators listed here make use of the "Bast Temple Cat" kit specific to these most revered temple cats of ancient Egypt. This kit provides the feline investigators with specific advantages and disadvantages, and reflects the specialist upbringing and opportunities afforded to cats residing within Bast's inner sanctums.

The cats that inhabit Bast's temples are among the most pampered, respected, and honored cats in all of Egypt. They are typically descended from purebred Abyssinian or Egyptian Mau stock. On rare occasions, they may be closer in lineage to the jungle cats of old, being more muscular, less tolerant, and significantly more prone to violence.

BAST TEMPLE CAT KIT

Cats raised or bred in Bast's temples are afforded luxuries and experiences not often experienced by street cats and wildcats. Temple cats know little of the hardship of the world outside. They are not accustomed to the dusty streets outside or the farms and wilder places beyond: their lives are spent in the etched and gilded temple halls, protected, venerated, and watched over by the temple's priests and acolytes. Each temple cat has a patron who serves and feeds them, although they may call upon any member of the temple at any time for aid or a simple tummy-scratch. Indeed, a successful Yowl might bring half a temple's occupants to her aid!

Despite being so pampered and benefitting from a significantly improved Status (+10%, in addition to any other breed bonuses or penalties), temple cats are not generally haughty or arrogant. They recognize their position as Bast's favored children and, as best they can, contribute to the temple's smooth functioning. Due to their constant close proximity to learned humans, they gain a +10% bonus to Human Language (Coptic) as well as a +10 EDU bonus. These bonuses are offset by a series of penalties to combat and physical skills. Bast Temple cats suffer from a -10% penalty to all combat skills. Additionally, they suffer -5% penalties to Climb, Jump, Swim and Throw.

Lastly, Bast Temple Cats all gain the Scholar trick as well as the unique trick Eye of Bast. Eye of Bast provides the cat investigators with +10% to Spot rolls and +5% to Sense Danger.

CAST OF CAT INVESTIGATORS

Keeper's Note: Below are statistics for the pre-generated cat investigators. Statistics for the investigators' primary adversaries, Ittutamen, Sath-tefhet, and Sath-hemute are provided in the Cast of Non-Player Characters section.

The names given for each pre-generated cat character below are their honorific names or titles given to them by the human priests and acolytes currently inhabiting the Temple of Bast. If the cats of Bast's temple have true names, they are not shared, but are kept secret, even amongst themselves. The names given to them are variable: often changing throughout the lifetime of the cat as their natures, skills, or attitudes change.

SREF-RA

Egyptian Mau, Male, 17

STR 05 **CON** 35 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 90 **POW** 85
DEX 90 **APP** 50 **EDU** 80 **SEN** 66
LUCK 85 **HP** 4 **MP** 17 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 50% (25/10); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Climb 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 06%, Cuteness 50%, Dream Lore 65%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (Coptic) 90%, Hypnotize 25%, Insight 60%, Listen 40%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 40%, Occult 70%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 70%, Sleep 50%, Spot 15% (Sref-Ra's Spot is lower than usual for a cat because his eyesight has faded with advanced age), Status 80%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 25%, Swim 05%, Wash 55%, Yowl 70%.

TRICKS: Doolittle (can talk to rats), Eye of Bast, Familiar, House Cat, Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands Travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Scholar x2 (Coptic and Hieroglyphics) (read language and, in extremis, write or draw at 90%), Trickmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Restlessness

NOTES: Sref-ra is the second oldest cat living in the Temple of Bast. He is half-blind, arthritic, and as ornery as they come. Even in his youth, Sref-ra didn't suffer fools or the young kindly, and he sought out more enlightened companionship. This ultimately led him down a dark path where he spent a few years as the familiar to a cultist of Abthoth. He was rescued from that life by one of Bast's blessed cats and he has striven to repay that favor with dedicated service to Bast ever since. Highly intelligent, shrewd, and rational, Sref-ra is frequently the one the other cats come to when problems arise.

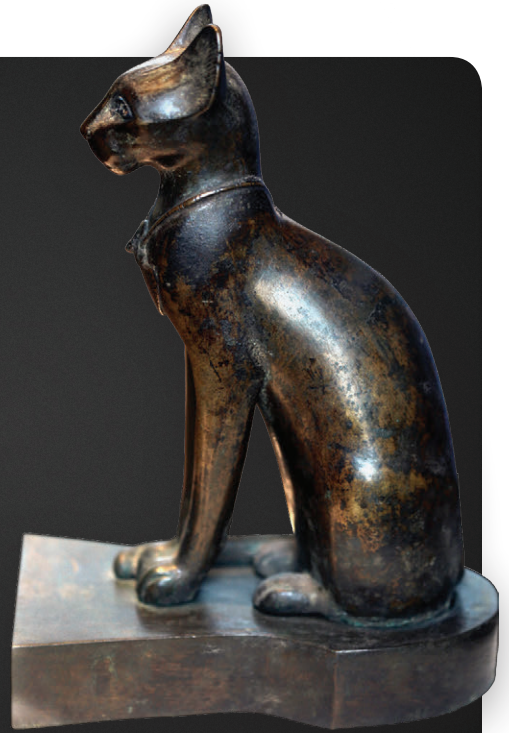
PATRON: Hepeshef, known as "Wanderer" to the cats, is effectively the Temple of Bast's night watchman, who serves jointly as security warden—overseeing the cadre of young men hired from Bubastis and charged with watching over the temple—and ensures that the temple fires do not go out. The Wanderer looks after Sref-ra caringly in his old age, even providing him with his own small fire in his chamber (K, Watchman's Chambers).

THE CATS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Cats have long been associated with ancient Egypt. This is no wonder, as cats were both venerated and revered by her people and treated as demigods for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence dating back to 6000 B.C.E. reveals Egyptians cohabiting with their furry feline friends. This coexistence was mutually beneficial as the humans protected the cats from larger predators while the cats dealt with rats, snakes, and other vermin that plagued Egyptian settlements. Domestication is not a word we can use in this context, however: the Egyptians did not seek to domesticate or in any way change these four-legged predators. They valued the cat's wild nature and hunting instinct.

The Ancient Egyptian Mau is believed to have descended from the African wildcat (*felis silvestris lybica*) and the jungle cat (*felis chaus*). The resulting Mau was possessed of a calmer disposition and was significantly more tolerant of humans. Cats in Ancient Egypt were not considered pets, in a modern sense, but as beneficent incarnations of the protective goddess Bast—a veritable blessing upon one's home or farm. For this reason, cats were protected at all cost.

Although Bast (or sometimes Bastet) was not the first god or goddess associated with cats—others included Mafdet, Mut, Neith, and Sekhmet—she was certainly the most popular. Represented as a woman with the head of a cat, Bast was worshipped widely for generations within temples in both Egypt's Old and New Kingdoms. Her cult's home and her greatest



temple was situated in Bubastis (or Per-Bast, literally "home of Bast") on the Nile River Delta. Unsurprisingly, Bast's temples were home to a great number of cats, each looked after by one or more of the priests or acolytes.

Inside and out of her temples, cats were protected throughout Egypt: any abuse of, or insult to, a cat was perceived as insult or abuse directed at the great goddess Bast herself. The death of a cat warranted the death of its killer, regardless of his or her intent. This protection was continuously afforded cats until roughly 350 B.C.E. when the cult of Bast was ultimately outlawed and went underground.

TOSER

Egyptian Mau, Male, 9

STR 10 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 75 **POW** 60
DEX 115 **APP** 75 **EDU** 70 **SEN** 60
LUCK 60 **HP** 5 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 70% (35/14); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 80% (40/16)

SKILLS: Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Cuteness 37%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 70%, Human Language (Coptic) 50%, Hypnotize 50%, Insight 20%, Listen 60%, Natural World 30%, Navigate 35%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 75%, Sleep 50%, Spot 55%, Status 60%, Stealth 65%, Streetwise 30%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Cat Burglar, Cling, Curious, Eye of Bast, House Cat, Master Thief, Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Open Doors, Scholar, Sleuth, Trickmeister, Unsettling Stare.

STRESS DISORDER: Excessive Grooming.

NOTES: To say that Toser is a know-it-all who sticks his nose into everyone's affairs would be a gross understatement. For all intents and purposes, Toser appears to be unable to help himself. He seemingly must investigate anything that is remotely unusual, different, or of interest—to Toser or to anyone else. He is a frequent apologist when found snooping in others' business, but the apologies are just for convenience: Toser loves being a know-it-all and delights in teasing out every last bit of information about a person or an event, and the stranger, the better. Unsurprisingly, he is a social pariah, but he couldn't care less.

PATRON: Sobekhef or "Coins", as he is known by the cats, is the temple's houseman—effectively a housekeeper and procurer, who negotiates with suppliers in Bubastis to keep the temple stocked and running smoothly. In attitude and outlook, Sobekhef and Toser are not significantly different and, therefore, make good companions. Sobekhef can be found in the Stores (P) by day or the Priest's Chambers (L) by night.

TUFU

Egyptian Mau, Male, 8

STR 10 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 60 **POW** 70
DEX 95 **APP** 50 **EDU** 75 **SEN** 70
LUCK 70 **HP** 5 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 65% (32/13);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 60% (30/12)

SKILLS: Climb 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%,
Cuteness 37%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 60%,
Human Language (Coptic) 41%, Hypnotize
10%, Insight 40%, Listen 60%, Natural World
32%, Navigate 25%, Occult 05%, Scent 50%,
Sense Danger 55%, Sleep 50%, Spot 35%, Status
75%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 27%, Swim 05%,
Throw 05%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Eye of Bast, House Cat, Leap
to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine
Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal
consequences) Scholar, Tricksmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Restlessness

NOTES: Tufu is one of the older cats in
the Temple of Bast and certainly the most
fastidious. He takes great pleasure in making
sure that things get done, each according to
their need, on time, and to the best of his—or
others—abilities. His attention to detail
makes him a master at getting things done
and a friend to no one. He is easily the least
popular among the cats, but one of the most
popular among the priests and acolytes.

PATRON: Pasenheb, priest of Bast, known
to cats as “Stingy” due to his frugality
when handing out meals or treats. During
the day, Pasenheb can be found walking
the gardens between prayers or, more
often, asleep in the Library (H).

AKKI

Egyptian Mau, Female, 6

STR 15 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 75
DEX 105 **APP** 45 **EDU** 60 **SEN** 65
LUCK 75 **HP** 5 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 70% (35/14);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 65% (32/13)

SKILLS: Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%,
Cuteness 48%, Dream Lore 25%,
Hiss 70%, Human Language (Coptic)
25%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 40%, Listen
65%, Natural World 25%, Navigate 25%,
Occult 05%, Scent 60%, Sense Danger 60%,
Sleep 45%, Spot 55%, Status 55%, Stealth
55%, Streetwise 40%, Swim 10%, Throw
10%, Track 35%, Wash 30%, Yowl 40%.

TRICKS: Bravo, Eye of Bast, Catch Birds,
Catch Vermin, House Cat, Legendary Mouser,
Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal
consequences), Scholar, Trickmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Aggression
to people and other animals.

NOTES: Akki is the acknowledged hunter of
the group of investigator cats. She is the one
who dares most often to leave the Temple
of Bast in search of prey and adventure. She
is a loner and tends to shun the company of
other cats, unless on business. She wears
her battle scars proudly and has little time
for the primping and preening of other, more
delicate, cats. She takes great pleasure in
leaving her trophies, usually local birds, for
the acolytes and priests, and has the habit
of leaving such prizes in the most unusual of
places (e.g. in bed rolls, atop books, in front of
doorways, etc.). Although this does not endear
her to the inhabitants of the temple, her
hunting skills certainly garner much respect.

PATRON: Meshtep, an acolyte of Bast, has
befriended Akki of late and won her respect
by reacting positively to numerous “gifts” left
in his chambers. Meshtep is a lowly cook
in the Temple who leaves small morsels
for Akki in his chambers—a fact she keeps
secret. Meshtep is known as “Fatman” by
the cats. From dawn to dusk, Fatman can
be found in the Kitchens (Q), and otherwise
in one of the Acolytes’ Chambers (J).

DJEDU

Egyptian Mau, Female, 2

STR 05 **CON** 35 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 70 **POW** 60
DEX 115 **APP** 85 **EDU** 35 **SEN** 60
LUCK 60 **HP** 4 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 50% (25/10);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 37% (25/15)

SKILLS: Climb 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%,
Cuteness 70%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 50%,
Human Language (Coptic) 50%, Hypnotize 10%,
Insight 20%, Listen 60%, Natural World 25%,
Navigate 25%, Occult 05%, Scent 55%, Sense
Danger 45%, Sleep 50%, Spot 45%, Status
65%, Stealth 75%, Streetwise 20%, Swim 10%,
Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 60%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Bravo, Eye of Bast, Fish For Tea,
House Cat, Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid
fatal consequences), Rumblepuss, Scaredy
Cat, Scholar, Sleep On It, Trickmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Hiding from
people and other animals.

NOTES: Djedu is the youngest of the investigator
cats, the one who adores human attention and
goes out of her way to attract it. She is beloved
by all the acolytes and priests of the Temple
of Bast. She can almost invariably be found in
the lap of one of the priests or tangling herself
affectionately around the legs of working
acolytes. This persistent need for human
attention is, in part, the result of her being a
scaredy cat of the first order. Djedu’s youth and
inexperience have led her to become alarmingly
insecure. Despite this fact, she possesses a
range of talents—being particularly adept at
manipulating humans easily lies at the top of this

list. Her predilection for human company makes
her less comfortable in the company of her
own kind, but only marginally so. When in the
company of other cats, she will ingratiate herself
with whoever looks most likely to protect her.

PATRON: Khen-afah, a priest of Bast and
the temple’s resident healer. Khen-afah
is known to the cats as “Softtouch”, not
because of his manner or relations with
other humans, but precisely because of
his gentle touch when petting the temple’s
cats. During the day, Softtouch watches over
the sick and infirm in both the Acolytes’ and
Priests’ Chambers (J & L, respectively), before
returning to the Priests’ Chambers at night.

HADI

Egyptian Mau, Male, 7

STR 10 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 40 **POW** 50
DEX 90 **APP** 60 **EDU** 60 **SEN** 50
LUCK 50 **HP** 6 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 65% (32/13)

SKILLS: Climb 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%,
Cuteness 25%, Dream Lore 25%, Hiss 50%,
Human Language (Coptic) 40%, Hypnotize 10%,
Insight 40%, Listen 50%, Natural World 55%,
Navigate 35%, Occult 05%, Scent 55%, Sense
Danger 65%, Sleep 50%, Spot 35%, Stealth
50%, Status 50%, Streetwise 25%, Swim 10%,
Throw 20%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Bruiser, Eye of Bast, Feral, House
Cat, Lion Heart, Nine Lives (reroll one
result to avoid fatal consequences),
Scholar, Throw Things, Trickmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Lion Heart
trick, i.e., player’s choice.

NOTES: Hadi is perhaps the most notorious
of the cats inhabiting the Temple of Bast, and
not for the best of reasons. He is inherently
troublesome and seems to go out of his way
to cause problems for cats and humans alike.
There is something truly wild in his nature that
sets him apart from all the other cats within
the temple. He is not above attacking other
cats when the mood takes him, and he has
caused a number of significant arguments. He
invariably wins these battles, as he is a large,
big-boned bruiser of a cat who has even won
the grudging respect of the few humans that
he has tangled with. His warrior spirit, however,
does him no favors amongst the humans or his
fellow cats, who view him as a bit of a bully. Just
how he has remained in the temple so long
is a question many cats ask themselves. Hadi
has an uncanny knack for landing on his feet
and avoiding the worst of any confrontation.

PATRON: Malehuwani, known as “Smiley”
to the cats, is a relatively new acolyte in the
temple and of Kushite descent. He is currently
unaware of Hadi’s history of infractions and
predilection for trouble. Hadi finds Smiley’s
innocence and gullibility amusing, and so has
begun hanging around him, waiting to watch it



all go wrong. Charged with keeping the Kitchens (Q), Washrooms & Toilets (O) clean during the day, Malehuwani can invariably be found washing up in one of those rooms and otherwise sleeping in one of the Acolytes' Chambers (J).

FURTHER CHARACTER OPTIONS

Should the players wish to roll their own cat characters or use pre-existing characters from an on-going campaign, the following guidelines should be considered to ensure the best playing experience. First and foremost, all cat characters should almost exclusively be from the Egyptian Mau and Abyssinian breeds. One possible exception to this rule would be the option of playing a feral jungle cat, one that has perhaps strayed into Bubastis, or indeed the Temple of Bast, and determined some reason to remain within.

While the pre-generated cat characters do not utilize spells, players may wish to use the optional rules in *Cathulhu* to provide their cats with some knowledge of magic. This choice is left up to the Keeper, but some thought should be given towards balancing the adventure so that it remains a significant challenge. Other optional elements (e.g. items of power) may likewise be incorporated with the same consideration regarding balance.

If the cat characters are native to Bubastis and the temple, it is sensible to use the Bast Temple Cat Kit described in a box on page 32. However, if the players are making use of pre-existing characters or rolling new cat characters, Keepers may consider giving

the player character cats additional Tricks to ensure balanced play. Finally, if the cat characters are not native to Egypt, Keepers should give some thought to how the player character cats will interact with humans in the scenario. While they will have little trouble communicating with other cats, they will indeed struggle if they have no knowledge of Coptic. Keepers might consider using one of the Bast temple cats as an interpreter in this case. Certainly, this has a number of dramatic possibilities.

All other choices regarding character generation are left to the will of the players and Keeper.

INVOLVING THE CAT INVESTIGATORS

Aware of the growing agitation amongst the cats regarding the recent murder and disappearances, Ittutamen has devised a plan to preoccupy the cats and throw off suspicion long enough for the Black Pharaoh's sacrifice to take place as planned on the eve of harvest. Intuiting the demands of his catkin, Ittutamen has called together a group of likely cat investigators. Taken from a diverse section of the temple cats' population, the investigators have been handpicked to appease the will of the cat collective but also to keep the nosiest and most troublesome cats busy elsewhere. Of course, Ittutamen's direct action in arranging and overseeing the investigation removes him from any lines of inquiry and, therefore, any suspicion—at least initially. The ancient cat may

be insane, but his mind is anything but addled; he is a powerful, determined, and calculating enemy.

Putting his plan into action, Ittutamen calls the investigator cats to a quiet corner of the gardens near the north inner pylon of the temple, intent on giving them an important mission, namely to investigate the seeming disappearances of the elder cats, Userat and Hensu, and the murder of the kitten, Pihmay.

The garden corner Ittutamen has chosen is one of the few quiet places in the temple. As harvest approaches and the harvest festival with it, a growing number of humans from Bubastis and further afield are visiting. The festival road just outside the temple is filled with carts and wagons wedged between the enormous, decorative columns that lead down into the Bubastis marketplace. While merchants are kept outside the temple wall's for now, suppliers, messengers, actors, and others involved in planning elements of the festival's proceedings come and go at will. Even a cage of trained rats has been brought in for the festivities, sitting just outside the temple's main gates near the south pylon, so as to re-enact the exodus of rats at the temple's inaugural blessing.

Once all the cat investigators are assembled, Ittutamen will address them. Being a consummate actor himself, he appears unwaveringly calm, confident, and authoritative. He speaks in a low, steady tone:

"My kin, I have spoken with each of you individually on this matter. I now bring you together to act on

THE SHADOW HARVEST HANDOUT #1:

Herodotus's Description of the Temple of Bast

Authentic descriptions of the ancient city of Bubastis and the Temple of Bast come to us from several important Greeks including Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Herodotus (484-425 B.C.E.). In his *Histories*, Herodotus provides a striking and detailed description of the Temple of Bast as follows:

"In this city there is a temple very worthy of mention, for though there are other temples larger and built with more cost, none more than this is a pleasure to the eyes." (Book II, 137)

"Except for the entrance, it is completely surrounded by water; for channels come in from the Nile, not joining one another, but each extending as far as the entrance of the temple; one flowing round on the one side and the other on the other side, each a hundred feet broad and shaded with trees; and the gateway has a height of ten fathoms (60 feet), and it is adorned with figures six cubits (9 feet) high, very noteworthy. The temple is in the middle of the city and is looked down upon from all sides as one goes round, for since the city has been banked up to a height, while the temple has not been moved from the place where it was first built, it is possible to look down onto it; and round it runs a stone wall with figures carved upon it, while within it there is a grove of very large trees planted round a large temple-house, within which is the image of the Goddess; and the breadth and the length of the temple is a furlong (660 feet) every way. Opposite the entrance there is a road paved with stones for about three furlongs (c. 2000 feet), which leads through the marketplace towards the East, with a breadth of four hundred feet; and on this side and on that grow trees of height reaching to heaven..." (Book II, 138)

behalf of all of Bast's Blessed. All of us are now aware that over the past few days, perhaps longer, a number of our brethren have gone missing. Worse, one of our young, the kitten Pihmay, has been found dead near the temple well. Some have called this murder—a serious claim and one I leave to you to verify or dismiss. Additionally, while many of our number come and go as they please, a few of the louder voices amongst us have thrown suspicion on the departure or disappearance of the elder cats, Userat and Hensu, citing that they were too infirm to have willingly left the temple. If they have not left the temple, the question remains... what has become of them?

"The fates of Pihmay, Userat, and Hensu are unknown. These are questions, questions that need answers. So I have brought you together to use your talents to find those answers. Harvest approaches and it is a busy time

with many strangers at our doors, but I put my trust in you, my kin, to see that the unknown becomes known. Find out what has happened to Hensu, to Userat, and to poor Pihmay, so that we may end the growing disquiet within our numbers and celebrate the harvest as we have always done—in peace and reflection.

"I will spread word among our kin of your endeavor so that they might be open to your questions and offer what help they can. Keep your ears and eyes open to what the priests and acolytes say and do: though they often seem blind, deaf, and stupid, humans can sometimes surprise. Lastly, be mindful of the harvest and of the numbers among us who are new and strange. Do not discriminate against them unnecessarily, but be cautious nonetheless.

"See what you can find, and report anything of interest to me. We must settle the minds of our catkin. It may prove, as I suspect, that there is no real basis for this growing unrest. But we will all be wiser—and I am sure happier—for taking time to address these mysteries. You have your task. I trust you to approach it however best suits you. Remember, if you learn anything, return to me first. And if I can be of help in any way—any way at all—I will. Bast bless us all."

If the cat investigators have any immediate questions, Ittutamen will reply to them immediately. Otherwise, they can always find him in the company of the high priest, normally in the High Priest's Sanctum (I) or the High Priest's Chamber (N).

STARTING POINTS FOR INVESTIGATION

As Ittutamen suggests in his briefing, there are numerous starting point for investigating the apparent murder of Pihmay and the mysterious disappearances of the elder, female cats, Hensu and Userat. The players may wish to start at the Temple Well (U) where the kitten was discovered dead or they may wish to visit the Elder's Room (E) to speak with other elder cats. The remainder of the cat population roams the temple freely or inhabits specific areas (see the section "Speaking with Temple Cats", below).

Alternatively, if they wish to start with the human population, the cat investigators might return to their patrons, listen in on conversations being had in any number of locations, or investigate the new arrivals near the Main Temple Entrance (A). Unlike the roaming cat population, the priests and acolytes are more tied to specific locations during the day and can be readily found there. Information on Patrons can be found in the description of each pre-generated cat character in the section "Cast of Cat Characters". Information on other human activity can be found in the text about each map location. With the players' handout of the Temple of Bast Map, the investigators have a number of destinations to explore.

Wherever their investigations take them, Ittutamen's wary gaze will follow. Despite his spoken assurances that he trusts the cat investigators, he of course does not and will—whenever possible—try to follow their progress. He never knowingly makes his presence known to the investigators, choosing instead to

remain in the shadows and watch them from a distance. Ittutamen is, however, well past his prime and is not nearly as stealthy as he believes himself to be, so there is the possibility that the cat investigators realize that the elder cat is tracking them (for example, an Extreme success on a Spot roll might reveal not only what the investigators were looking for, but also that Ittutamen is watching them from a distance). What they make of this is up to them.

SPEAKING WITH TEMPLE CATS

The resident population of cats within the Temple of Bast ranges in number between 45 and 60 at any time. About twelve of those cats will be elder cats (aged 12+ years), while roughly twenty-four will be adult cats (aged 2-12 years), and a further twelve to fourteen will be kittens (aged under 2 years). However, on any given day or evening, an additional 5-10 adult cats might visit the temple from Bubastis proper, or from even further afield. The result of this variation means that no one ever truly knows how many cats are roaming the Temple of Bast. To date, this has never been a problem: all cats are welcome within the temple. The recent disappearances, however, make accounting for all the cats—present and missing—quite a difficult task.

Housing for the Temple of Bast cats is located behind the statue of Bast herself, in the temple's main chamber. Rooms are provided for kittens, adult cats, and elder cats, and this separation is generally maintained for the comfort of all cats. During all hours, cats can, and do, roam the entirety of the temple. In fact, more are present in their respective chambers sleeping through the hottest part of the day than during the cooler nights. There are a few exceptions to this general rule: for example, the Kitchens see a regular amount of cat activity throughout the day and night. The majority of temple cats use the groves or gardens to the north and south of Bast's temple as their toilet. Nonetheless, priests have learned to tread carefully within the temple's walls, and acolytes are charged with cleaning up after any of the less discrete cats.

Cats of Note

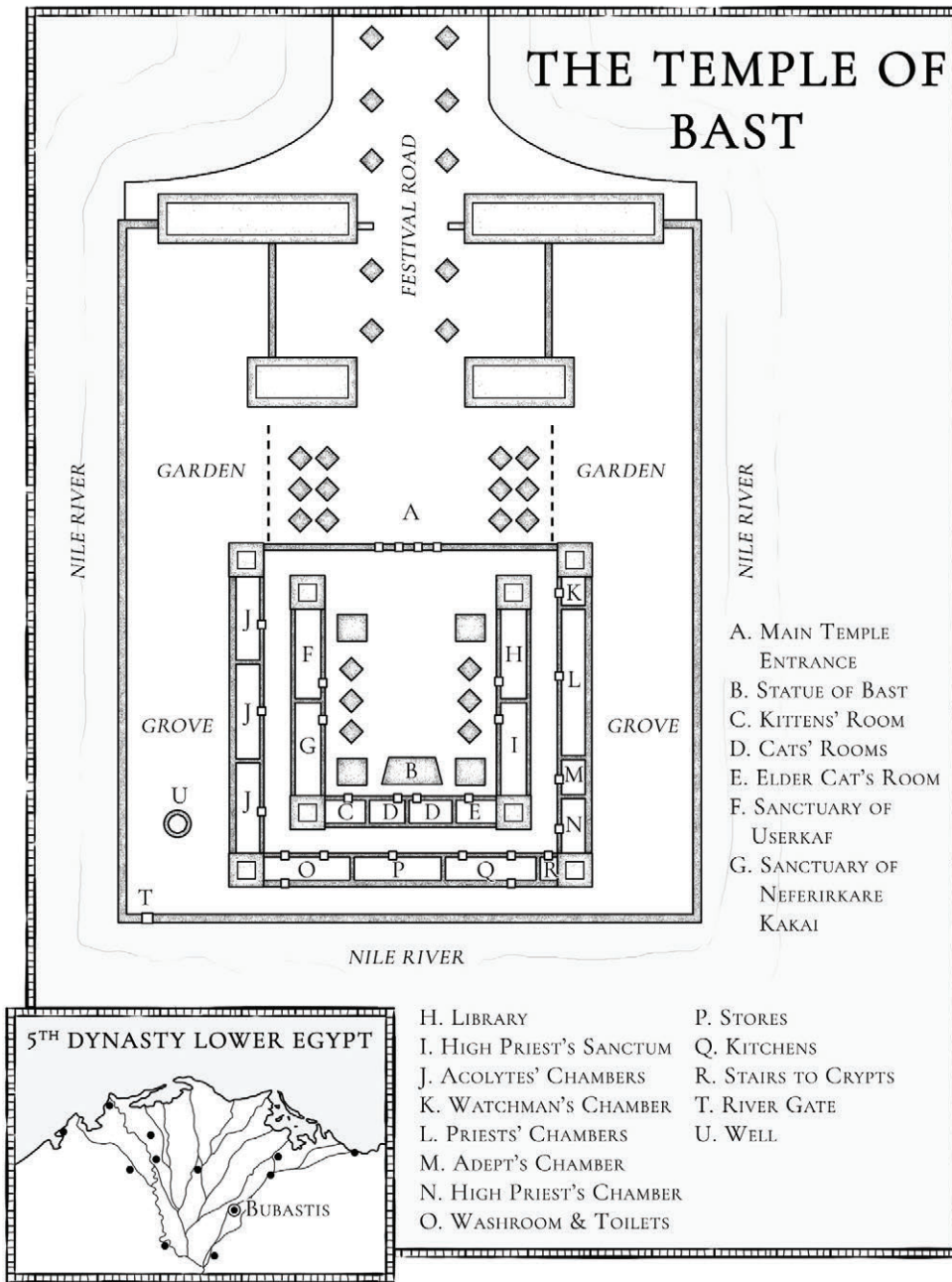
As their investigations progress, the cat investigators will likely wish to speak with some of the more outspoken cats within the temple. Like any population, the cats of the Temple of Bast contain a number of outspoken, nefarious, or otherwise notable characters. These are particularly useful for Keepers looking to introduce further red herrings into the already convoluted case for the investigators. One of the cats listed below, "Mad" Medhim-nin, is in fact in possession of information directly related to the case, but her long-standing reputation is such that none who truly know her would believe her.

ANKHU

The elder cat, Ankh, is a near-permanent resident of the Kitchens (Q) of Bast's temple. A self-indulgent, insufferable slob, the mangy Mau is also an excellent source for information about the goings-on in the temple. This is primarily because the Kitchens are a hotspot for news and gossip, and a large number of the human population pass through the Kitchens daily.

THE SHADOW HARVEST HANDOUT #2:

Temple of Bast - Player's Map



Ankhu himself is notable, or perhaps notorious, for his furry bulk. Sitting in the Kitchens all day, feasting on whatever scraps are given to him (or he can steal), the Mau has grown to huge size. When he does leave the Kitchens, normally only to foul the grounds near the rear door, he does so with considerable commotion—huffing, puffing, groaning, and the like—as his belly scraps along the granite floor.

It is rumored that Ankhu will eat anything, which is one of the reasons why the cat investigators will hear his name brought up in conjunction with the recent disappearances. Long before the disappearances, someone in the cat community joked that Ankhu was so perpetually hungry that he would soon need to take up cannibalism in order to attempt to sate

his growing appetites. The tasteless joke resurfaced shortly after the disappearance of the two elder cats, but quickly died out when the body of the young kitten Pihmay was subsequently discovered by the temple well. Of course, Ankhu is aware that the joke has been making the rounds again, and he is none too happy about it. As a result, when the cat investigators encounter him, he will be even surlier than normal—at least initially.

If the cat investigators do talk to the portly feline, Ankhu will refuse his help until a successful Yowl or Cuteness roll persuades him to open up. Of course, once he realizes that he has a willing, attentive audience, the Mau will happily and rather melodramatically spill the beans on all he's heard, true or false:

- ❖ As it will be his last, High Priest Sath-tefhet intends the harvest festival this year to be the most spectacular yet, and has hinted at a surprise ending. (True)
- ❖ Ever since the kitten, Pihmay, was discovered by the temple well, the water brought up has tasted faintly of blood. (False)
- ❖ Adept Priest Menirdis sneaks out of his room every evening to steal food from the nearby stores. (False)
- ❖ The trained rats, held in cages near the temple's main entrance, are treated like princes by their freakish, human minder, not like the disgusting vermin that they are. It is said that the human even speaks to them. (True)
- ❖ "Wanderer," the human Watchman, is known to have thrown dead cats to the Nile crocodiles out the River Gate... who is to say he's not done the same to Hensu and Userat! (False)
- ❖ One of the new acolytes, a young man recently from Tannis, is said to be a shape-shifter, capable of taking on the form of a cat. Is this the work of Bast or—Goddess protect us—something else? (False)
- ❖ The high priest's daughter, Sath-hemute, virtually lives in the High Priest's Chamber (N), and hasn't been seen for days. (True)
- ❖ The loss of Userat and Hensu would make Ittutamen and Sref-ra the eldest of the Bast's Blessed. Although the "precious" Ittutamen has never revealed his actual age. (True)
- ❖ Menirdis has several times been seen in the company of a Kushite sorcerer in Bubastis, but none has ever gotten close enough to hear what the pair were talking about. (False)
- ❖ Sath-tefhet does not truly wish to relinquish his role as High Priest of Bast. It must be hard for a man of his ambition. (True)

DEN-FED

A half-breed mix of Egyptian Mau and jungle cat, Den-fed is a notorious and pathological troublemaker amongst the Blessed of Bast. His "claws first" approach to every situation has landed him in hot water countless times, but never enough to encourage him to change his antagonistic ways. A fighter born and bred, Den-fed actively looks for trouble. If he cannot find trouble, he makes trouble. He constantly preys on the weak, particularly in the female cat and kitten population. There is no doubt that Den-fed could have killed Pihmay, Userat, or Hensu. That knowledge has inevitably led to speculation that he did, in fact, kill the kitten and the two elder, female cats.

If the cat investigators come to Den-fed looking for information, they will experience his "claws first" approach personally. The half-breed may start off on the defensive (but only if outnumbered by more than three to one), but actively aggravates the situation until he can go on the offensive. His pathological nature

makes this outcome virtually inevitable and again points a suspicious finger at his being behind one or more of the disappearances. Even more troubling, if he is beaten or subdued, he won't back down from accusations that he could have killed the other cats. He openly takes pride in the fact and throws it in the face of his accusers, particularly if he thinks it will lead to another fight. Den-fed is so trapped in this aggressive loop that it is possible that he even confesses to the crime, particularly if he believes it will infuriate his "opponents" and lead to another battle.

Taking Den-fed on one-on-one is inadvisable due to his size, strength, and unpredictability. He is a dangerous, rage-fueled opponent, and the cat investigators will undoubtedly have heard tales of him savaging some other cat (or cats) they know. If they choose to interact with Den-fed, solely or in a group, the result will be an attack. Even if they ignore him as a potential lead, he may well come looking for them and, of course, for a fight.

DEN-FED

*Aggressive Cat Combatant
Feline, Egyptian Mau, Male, 7*

STR 30 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 20 **POW** 75
DEX 100 **APP** 30 **EDU** 20 **SEN** 35
LUCK 75 **HP** 5 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +4/-2
DAMAGE BONUS: +3D6/-2
ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 85% (42/17);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Hiss 60%

TRICKS: Bravo, Eye of Bast, Feral, Trickmeister.

"MAD" MEHDMIM-NIN

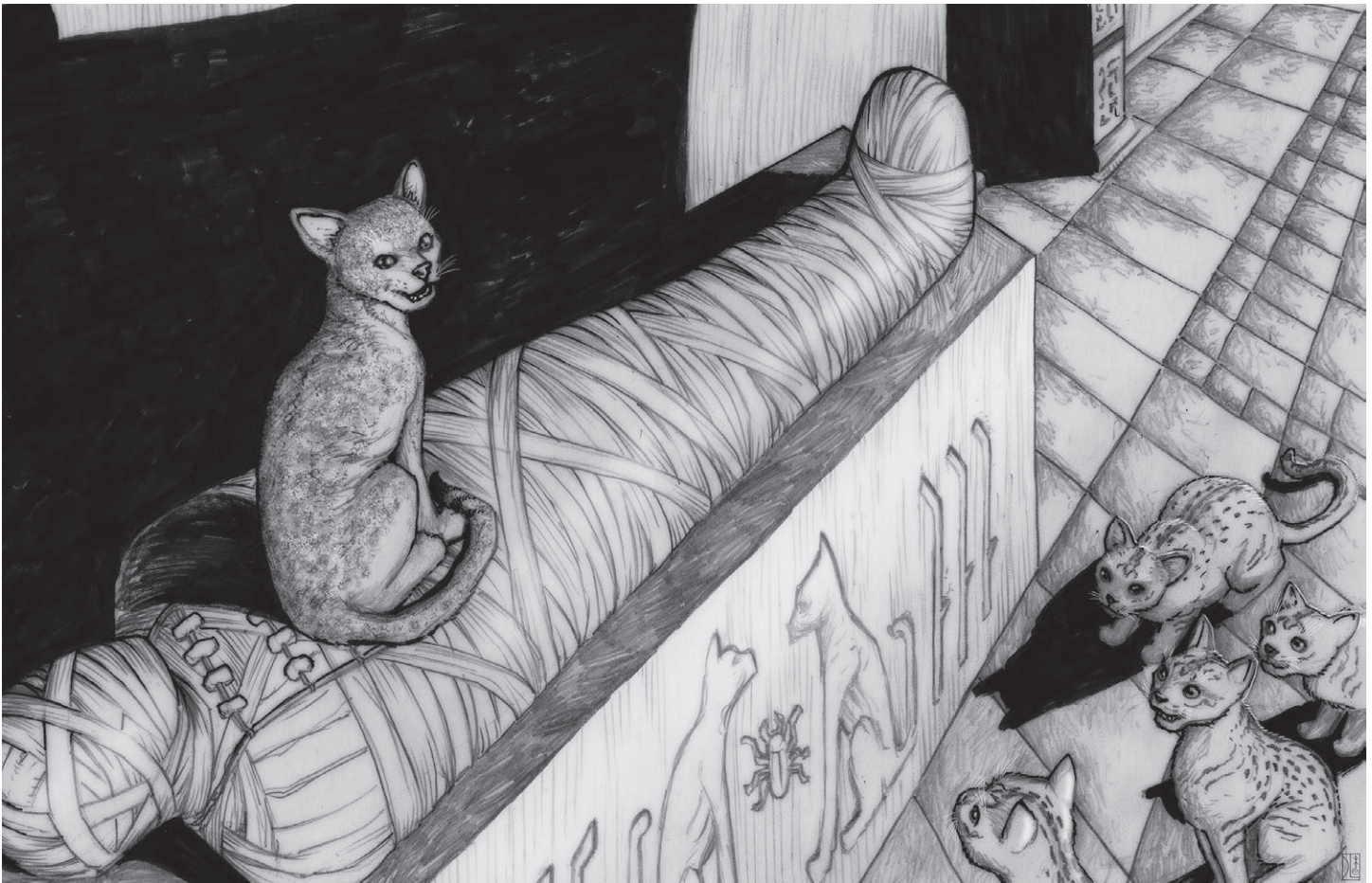
Mehdim-nin has a long-standing reputation for being slightly mad. The grey, female Abyssinian came to the Temple of Bast more than ten years ago and has spent an inordinate amount of that time in the temple's crypts. Mehdim-nin asserts—to anyone willing to listen—that the dead speak to her, whispering their laments from the spirit world, seeking her attentive ear. Though clearly "touched", the majority of the cat population has deemed the unhinged Abyssinian harmless. To this day, Mehdim-nin can rarely be found outside the temple crypts, coming up the stairs usually no more than once a day to visit the Kitchens and take a solitary stroll outdoors.

If they make any exhaustive search of the temple, the investigators encounter "mad" Mehdim-nin within the crypts. They will likely overhear her quiet, plaintive counsel to the dead before ever laying eyes upon her, as she spends much of her time consoling and advising lost souls in the spirit world. Her soft-spoken prosaicisms drift through the crypt's labyrinthine halls like so many wandering ghosts.

Mehdim-nin will invariably be found perched atop one of the mummified corpses. Her dark grey coloring and penchant for lurking in shadows often makes her difficult to distinguish at first, but she will be sure to greet any living creature entering the crypt and ask the reasons for their visit. After more than a decade, the Abyssinian is rather territorial, having long claimed the crypt as her own.

On this occasion, the cat investigators will find the normally distant Mehdim-nin surprisingly agitated. Her sleep, she will explain, has been interrupted continually by the wailing of one of the recent dead. If the investigators inquire about the wailing, the Abyssinian first begins by explaining how the newly dead find the transition to the spirit world difficult: "The immaterial soul rebels against its new, formless existence. It cannot fathom its own lack of substance, of detachment from what we take for the real world. This—this discombobulating mess—they cry for it, like a kitten cries for milk. Imagine."

This particular spirit, she will continue, denies its spiritual existence, clinging to the memory of the life it once had. Rolling her eyes, she recounts a scene earlier: "Help!" the spirit screams. "Help! I am trapped! Can anyone hear me! Help! I am down here! In the dark!" Over and over this proceeds, invariably, until he is exhausted and silence returns to the crypts. Only then can I get some sleep. They are not usually as loud, or as persistent, as this one. A difficult case, to be sure.



Sad really... if you bother to think on it."

In fact, Mehdim-nin has been hearing the cries of Menirdis who is trapped beneath the High Priest's Chamber in a cell accessible only by the secret door within that chamber. The dried, cracked earth between the cell and the crypts here are riddled with fissures that allow a little air and sound to move between. So it is that Mehdim-nin has had to suffer Menirdis' frequent attempts to alert anyone within the temple to his incarceration. Unfortunately, no one can hear him from the temple proper; more unfortunately still, mad Mehdim-nin believes him to already be dead.

There is a 25% chance that Menirdis' wailing will recommence while the cat investigators are within the crypts. If they instruct Mehdim-nin to collect them when the wailing starts, there is a 50% chance that Menirdis is still calling when they reach the crypts. If he has stopped, they may well question whether Mehdim-nin is merely imagining things. However, if they do hear the "spirit" calling, a successful Listen roll will roughly locate the voice as coming from behind the alcoves nearest the stair upward. Two mummified corpses lay in dedicated, tiered alcoves and the voice is loudest from the rear wall of the top alcove. An Extreme success on that same Listen roll (or a successful pushed roll to get an Extreme success) suggests that the voice of the spirit is actually that of Adept Priest Menirdis.

FREEING MENIRDIS EARLY

If the cat investigators determine Menirdis' location and find a means of freeing him—namely through discovery of the secret stair in the High Priest's Chamber and bypassing Sath-hemute—then the final confrontation between the high priest and his daughter, and the cats is imminent. Menirdis will force the confrontation and the flustered high priest will summon Nyarlathotep as soon as he has drawn Menirdis out before Bast's statue in the main hall—using any excuse to do so. Sath-teffhet will then attack Menirdis, seeking to sacrifice him before Nyarlathotep and Bast, and bring about the future he so desperately desires. At that point, events should play out as described in the Final Confrontation section below.

INTERACTING WITH THE TEMPLE'S HUMAN POPULATION

As preparation for the harvest festival begins, the Temple of Bast swells with human visitors. The usual population of priests and acolytes averages around forty, with nearly thirty of those being the younger acolytes. The elder priests number roughly ten and include (in descending seniority) the high priest, the adept, the houseman, and the watchman. However, during the festival the number of humans within the temple walls and lining the Festival Road is often closer to one hundred.

Cat investigators may interact with any of the humans in any manner they see fit. Normally such interaction would be limited to listening and manipulating humans using Cuteness, Yowl, or other special skills. As per the Call of Cathulhu rules, only on the very rarest of occasions or in extremis would a cat ever communicate directly with a human being—verbally or through written text—whether they be their patron or not. Thus, investigating and interacting with humans should largely be carried out indirectly.

Interacting with Cat Patrons

HEPESHEF

As his nightly duties keep him up from dusk until dawn, Hepeshef can be found in the Watchman's Chambers (K) from dawn to shortly after noon. He then normally goes straight to the Kitchens (Q) for what would be his breakfast. During the night, however, the watchman is one of the few humans active in the temple, apart from the cadre of guards near the temple's gates and outside the Main Temple Entrance (A). During the night, "Wanderer", as the cats know him, follows a standard route around the temple with a torch, ensuring that the temple fires stay lit throughout the dark night.

Hepeshef is a quiet man who, when observed, talks little and instigates very few conversations. He does, however, have an impressive memory and diligently records the events of each night's watch in a series of scrolls kept in his room. Should the cat investigators peruse these scrolls, they will see that the Wanderer keeps detailed notes of who comes and goes by night. A name that comes up time and again is Sath-hemute, the high priest's daughter. Several times in the past week, she has left the temple and returned before dawn's first light. She has also caused considerable trouble amongst the acolytes.

Regardless of when the cats encounter the Watchman, they will initially find him in a conversation with one of the elder priests, Kos. The dialogue is one-sided as Kos berates Hepeshef with a tale of how "that witch" Sath-hemute acts like she is Bast herself. Many of the elder priests question the continued presence of the high priest's daughter, but are too afraid to confront the high priest himself. Kos himself goes on about how "it's not right" and "she should not be here" as "she's causing serious problems with the acolytes!"

When Hepeshef asks of the nature of these problems, Kos reddens in the face and reveals that Sath-hemute "acts like the Queen of Cats herself" choosing favorites among the acolytes and taking them into the gardens or groves to have her way with them. Hepeshef asks if the acolytes see this as a problem themselves; Kos stammers that it is a problem for them all: "She cannot be let to run about, corrupting whomever she chooses." So as to get Kos off his back, Hepeshef agrees to look into the case and speak with the high priest. At this point, Kos takes his leave and Hepeshef resumes his activities.

KHEN-AFAH

The temple's resident healer spends his days caring for

the old and infirm, roaming variously between the Acolytes' and Priests' Chambers (J & L, respectively) during the day and sleeping in the Priests' Chambers at night. The old priest, known as "Softtouch" to the cats, is a gentle, talkative soul. He frequently talks to cats as he gives them a cuddle. He relaxes his own mind by pouring out his thoughts to his feline companions.

Of primary concern to Khen-afah at the moment are his charges and one of those, namely the Adept Priest Menirdis, is out of his reach, which worries the healer greatly. And so, any cat that receives a cuddle from Khen-afah stands a 50% chance of hearing the healer worry about the adept. Menirdis suffers from a condition (in fact, diabetes) that leaves him frequently and dangerously dehydrated. Softtouch is aware his apparently self-imposed fast will endanger the adept: "Without food or sufficient water, well, I don't want to think about it. He's in danger. I spoke with the high priest, but he said there was nothing to worry about. How should he know?! No one knows where Menirdis is now. He could be dead within his chamber by now! No, I must not think that. Not that."

Ruminating aloud further, Khen-afah will reveal that he is old enough to remember Sath-teffhet's ascendancy to high priest and there was "none of this fasting nonsense then!" He questions, therefore, the purpose of this dangerous fast. In fact, he himself has several times put his ear to the Adept's Chamber (M) door, but never heard a thing from within. And when he's tried to engage Menirdis through the closed door, there has never been a reply. Softtouch is genuinely worried and is considering some kind of action to get through the locked door. He himself would never put religious observance above one's health and he doesn't believe the Goddess herself would either.

Should the cat investigators conceive of a way to empower and motivate Khen-afah to secure a means of getting into the Adept's Chambers, he will immediately attempt entry to ascertain the fate of Menirdis. As noted in the description of the Adept's Chamber, however, they will first need to find a way to get past the locked door.

MALEHUWANI

The thin, gangling Kushite is invariably found in either the Kitchens (Q) or the Washrooms & Toilets (O) during the day, and the Acolytes' Chambers (J) by night. Smiley, as the cats know him, is new to the temple and still wanders about in awe of the temple itself, his mouth slack and his eyes wide in astonishment. This has done his reputation no favors and the humans now consider him to be a simpleton. His quiet nature only contributes to this misperception.

Whether the cat investigators encounter him in the Acolytes' Chambers, Kitchens, or Washrooms & Toilets, they will be able to pick up on a number of rumors, true and false, floating about the temple grapevine:

- One of the elder priests locks himself away in the Sanctuary of Neferirkare Kakai every afternoon for twenty minutes. He looks about furtively as he comes and goes, as though he's doing

something secretive. (True)

- ❖ Someone was saying that there is a door on the back of that great, granite plinth that the statue of Goddess sits on in the main temple. He said it's virtually impossible to see and only the high priest and the adept know how to get in. Is that true? (False)
- ❖ Did you know some old cat sleeps in the crypts beneath the temple, with all the dead priests? Apparently it purrs and meows to itself all day long, like it's lost its little mind. (True)
- ❖ Talk about tempting fate, I've heard that the high priest's daughter, Sath-hemute, actually hates cats?! Some acolytes have seen her mockingly hiss or kick at the temple cats. What on earth is she thinking? (True)
- ❖ Did you hear there's going to be some rats let loose in the temple during festival? Seriously, there's some guy with a cage of big rats just outside the temple gates. What is that all about? (Partially true, see the Festival Road section below.)
- ❖ Is it true that the adept priest is sick? That's why he's locked himself away? Someone said it has nothing to do with the ascendancy. If he's got plague, he should be sent away, not locked up! (False)
- ❖ Someone was saying that the dead kitten that they found near the well actually drowned after it had fallen in. If that's true, the question is who pulled it out and just left the poor thing there? It deserved better, especially in the Temple of Bast! (False)
- ❖ I swear that festival makes the cats a bit crazy. Like they know the feasting is coming. That Ittutamen, the high priest's cat, looked at me the other day like he'd like to eat me! (False)
- ❖ I heard there were mice found in the Stores again. We are surrounded by cats! In a temple dedicated to Bast! How do they survive? How do they get in there in the first place? (False)

MESHTPE

"Fatman", as the cats call him, can be found by day (and often night) in the Kitchens (Q). The acolyte is a junior cook intent on becoming a chief cook one day. Whether the cat investigators find him in the Kitchens or in the Acolytes' Chambers (J), they will be able to overhear him talking to another acolyte, this one a food bearer named Rahoses. Talking conspiratorially, Meshtpe and Rahoses are discussing events from the night previous when the food bearer took the high priest's food to him in his chamber (N).

Through the door to the High Priest's Chamber, Rahoses overheard Sath-tefhet and his daughter, Sath-hemute, arguing. The young woman was irate, her voice carrying easily into the hall, while the high priest was berating her, telling her to keep her voice down. She argued that she needn't be quiet, that soon she would be able to do as she pleased, to whomever she

pleased. The high priest told her to calm herself and, lowering his own voice, placated her in hushed tones. Thinking the argument was over, Rahoses knocked on the chamber door. From within, he heard some shuffling and a strange grating sound.

When the door opened, the high priest greeted Rahoses as though nothing had happened and thanked him for his service, as he had done a hundred nights before. Rahoses had expected to see the high priest's daughter within the chamber, but was surprised to find no trace of her. Sath-tefhet thanked the food bearer again and intimated that he should be on his way. Rahoses turned about and made his way back toward the Kitchens, but casting a glance back, he saw the high priest glaring at him from his chamber door.

Rahoses is worried he has somehow offended Sath-tefhet and/or that the high priest suspects that he overheard the argument with Sath-hemute. Idly, Rahoses also wonders if the high priest might be keeping his daughter near to him because she herself is a danger: "Perhaps she is mad and he seeks to cure it, or at least to protect her. She's clearly willful, but perhaps there's more than that to it."

PASENHEB

The priest and chronicler known as "Stingy" to the cats can be found in the Temple's Library (H), where he is—more often than not—asleep during the hottest part of the day. This, however, is not one such situation as Pasenheb has come upon a scroll by pure chance, a scroll that he's not read before. His face looks ashen as he pours over the scroll, the content of which piques his interest, but also disturbed him greatly. He is so absorbed in his reading that he barely notices the entrance of the cats into the library.

Whispering to himself, Stingy provides a broken reading with added commentary: "No, no, this can't be... slowly now, slowly... And so it was, after his most persuasive offering was made, the truth and power of which could not be ignored or contested... the priests chose—chose!—to overlook the will of Bast, their Mistress, and to ally themselves with a new Master, the one they called Nephren-Ka, he the self-named Black Pharaoh... No, no, no. This is rumor, rumor and legend, this is blasphemy! But, shh! Shh! The High Priest will decide what is to be done. That's the surest route. A scroll wrapped in another scroll, a chance finding, but what a find!

"What's this..." he continues, his finger tracing quickly over the scroll. "Festival... the holy festival... shadow... harvest... the most innocent... sacrifice!" The old man stands, stumbling and nearly tumbling over. His eyes are wild and he looks as though he is struggling to breathe. One half of his face is slack while the other half betrays such horror and terror. The old man stiffens suddenly, his right hand reaches up to his head, but all of a sudden he collapses to the stone floor. In a matter of moments, he is dead.

Having suffered a massive stroke, there is no possibility of saving Stingy. The scroll that brought on his stroke lies atop the reading desk. It is written in an old dialect

of Coptic and, as such, requires a Hard success in Human Language (Coptic) to translate correctly (see The Shadow Harvest Handout #3). If the cat investigators do manage to read the scroll, this will not be the first time it has been read by a cat. Ittutamen is well versed in the contents of the scroll and many others like it.

A Spot success, even an Extreme success, will reveal nothing out of the ordinary in the library. However, an Extreme success on Scent from anywhere in the room, or a Regular Scent success for any cat sniffing the scroll itself, reveals the faint smell of Ittutamen himself.

SOBEKHEF

Known by the cats as "Coins", he can be found in the Stores (P) by day or the Priests' Chambers (L) by night. The time of festival is an incredibly busy time for the temple's houseman, and Sobekhef is feeling the strain. His negotiations with suppliers in Bubastis and merchants flocking to the temple ahead of harvest have pushed him to the boiling point. Coins thrives on his ability to manage any and every situation, and the festival tests his abilities like no other event in the priests' calendar. As a result, whether they come to him by day or night, the cat investigators will find Sobekhef agitated and mumbling to himself about a number of points (true and false) about the coming festival:

- ❖ "No one cares about how much work I have at festival time. No one comes forward to help, do they? No. Oh no, no one cares for Sobekhef's troubles. Not even the high priest himself! He couldn't care less about the preparations. And why is that? Why is that indeed?" (True)
- ❖ "The merchants are thieves. Thieves! Extorting outrageous prices for everyday goods. They are—none of them—to be trusted. The festival road is crawling with men trying to sneak into the temple, to rob us blind!" (False)
- ❖ "Someone is stealing from the stores at night. Hepeshef does nothing about it. His 'guards' are useless. But every night a little more oil, some dried fruit, and incense, or some other sundry, goes missing. I may need to lay a trap for this two-footed mouse!" (True; in fact, the thief is Sath-hemute, who nightly treats herself from the Stores to a little more reading oil, some dried dates, or whatever else takes her fancy.)
- ❖ "I don't like the look of this 'Rat Man' parked outside our very gates. I don't like him one bit. He's mad—you can tell just by looking at him! Rumor has it that he talks to his rats. Can you imagine? And that cage of his, teaming with them: must we use so many rats and must they be so... large?!" (False)

A thousand and one other topics are on Sobekhef's mind, and he will share them with any other temple dwellers that he comes across or, absentmindedly, while stroking one of the cats. Coins will remain similarly distracted until the festival is over and his control over affairs returns.

...And so it was, after his most persuasive offering was made, the truth and power of which could not be ignored or contested, the priests chose to overlook the will of Bast, their true Mistress, and to ally themselves with a new powerful Master, the deceiver, the one they called Nephren-Ka, the Black Pharaoh.

At the time of festival he came, taking the holy festival as his own, and the priests bent on their knees as one, falling into His Shadow, in the most holy Temple of Bast, Nephren-Ka did command them, to make an unholy harvest, a harvest of the young, the most innocent, that their blood should be spilled before the great statue of the Goddess, a sacrifice not to Her, but unto Him, the Black Pharaoh.

Their will freely given, their minds ensnared, the priests did this thing, and in doing so made the first blood harvest, a harvest of the innocent, a blasphemous betrayal and most precious gift both, to His glory, a shadow harvest for a Pharaoh of the shadows....

THE SHADOW HARVEST HANDOUT #3:

Library Scroll

...And so it was, after his most persuasive offering was made, the truth and power of which could not be ignored or contested, the priests chose to overlook the will of Bast, their true Mistress, and to ally themselves with a new powerful Master, the deceiver, the one they called Nephren-Ka, the Black Pharaoh.

At the time of festival he came, taking the holy festival as his own, and the priests bent on their knees as one, falling into His Shadow, in the most holy Temple of Bast, Nephren-Ka did command them, to make an unholy harvest, a harvest of the young, the most innocent, that their blood should be spilled before the great statue of the Goddess, a sacrifice not to Her, but unto Him, the Black Pharaoh.

Their will freely given, their minds ensnared, the priests did this thing, and in doing so made the first blood harvest, a harvest of the innocent, a blasphemous betrayal and most precious gift both, to His glory, a shadow harvest for a Pharaoh of the shadows...

All information on other humans and potential clues can be found in the locations inside and outside the Temple of Bast, respectively.

VISITING LOCATIONS INSIDE THE TEMPLE OF BAST

A. MAIN TEMPLE ENTRANCE

The entrance to the Temple of Bast is suitably extravagant, featuring four large doors surrounded by etched stone, painted murals, and hieroglyphics. Bright gold, green, and red colors dominate while white and black are used mostly to highlight or outline figures and scenes. The artwork of the etched stones and the murals is, typically for its time, favoring stylized figures in angular poses, often elongated or dramatically enlarged. The effect is both imposing and awe-inspiring.

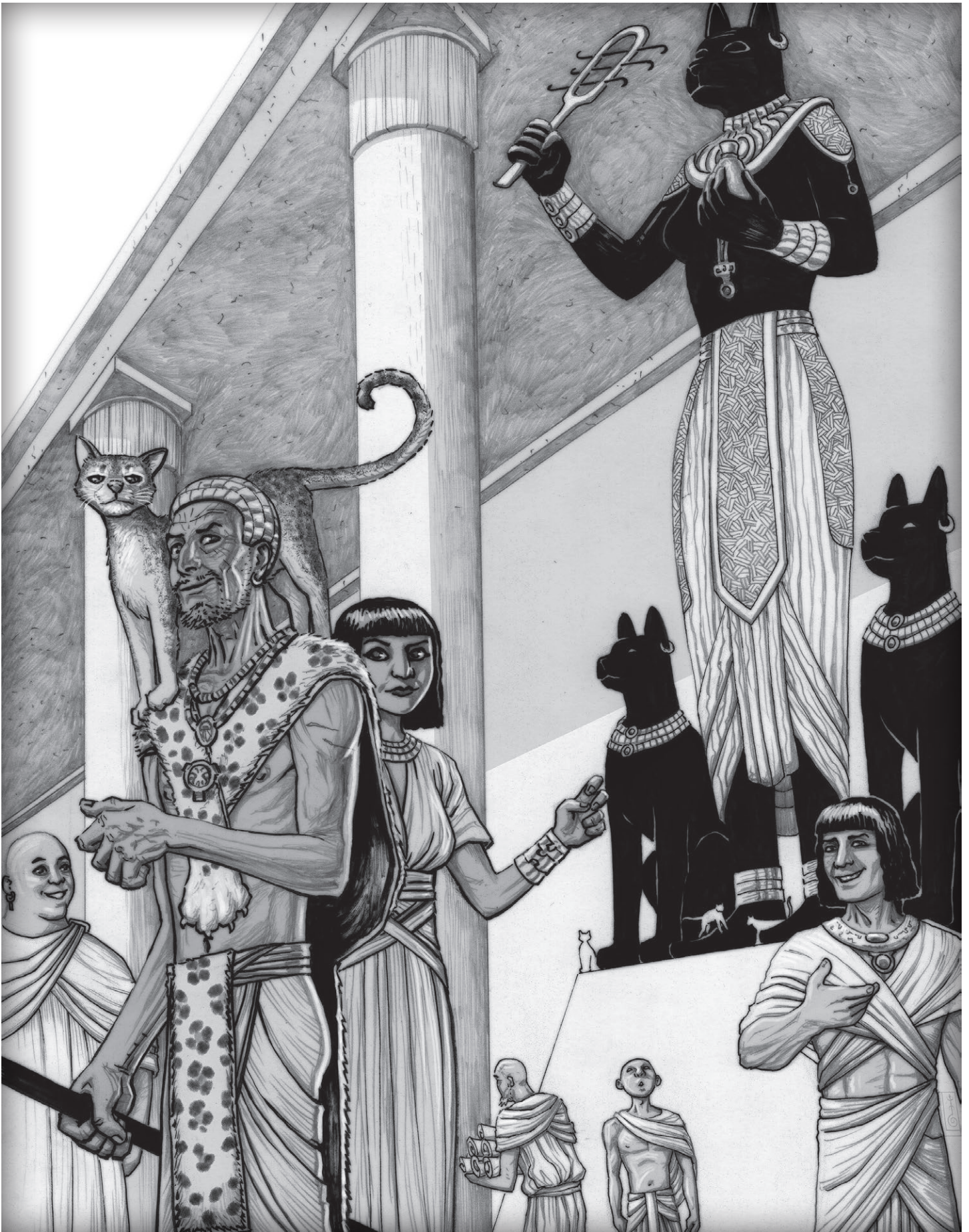
The doors themselves are six cubits (nine feet) tall, stained gold, and covered in hieroglyphics describing the beneficence of the Goddess herself and the shelter she offers to all, but especially to her catkin. Each of the doors has an arched opening at its base, creating a portal or opening for the temple's cat population. The gold doors are dwarfed by the temple-house building itself, which rises to 60 feet and continues the pattern of etchings and painted murals—a new “layer” or level of artwork beginning at each ten-foot mark. All of this would be impressive enough, but the main temple entrance is made more impressive still by its location within the inner courtyard.

The inner courtyard is bordered by two clusters of six ornate columns to the north and south, and to the east by the temple's massive inner pylons—sloping up delicately to 80 feet. The columns are similarly etched and painted up to near their full 60-foot height before they end in a stylized “palm tree” capstone. Behind these columns, a perforated curtain wall separates the courtyard from the temple gardens. The monolithic inner pylons create a kind of gateway to the outer courtyard to the east and the temple gates beyond.

The temple doors can be individually locked (Hepeshef has four large, wooden keys for this purpose), but are normally kept open day and night. Two human sentries—one to either side of the four doors—stand outside the main entrance day and night. Inside the temple-house, a further two, more senior, sentries stand before the two 12-foot-wide columns that support the stone ceiling overhead.

B. STATUE OF BAST

Rising up so that the tips of her feline ears nearly touch the 60-foot ceiling is the beautifully constructed and finished stone statue of the Goddess Bast. Her sleek, feminine body stands atop a huge trapezoidal, granite block that is about 24 feet wide by 12 feet high, and inscribed with hieroglyphics. Painted black and gold, the body of the Goddess virtually fills the space within the inner sanctum, towering over all who come into her presence. Two stylized Egyptian Maus, each six feet tall, flank Bast atop the granite block, keeping guard eternally.



Walking up to the colossal statue, priests, acolytes, and visitors alike pass between a series of columns to the north and south. Four of those columns, forming a square are painted, structural columns 12 feet square, rising up 60 feet to the temple ceiling. Between these massive blocks, six slender, etched basalt obelisks crane up 40 feet, dressed in gold hieroglyphics. These and the hieroglyphics on the trapezoidal block supporting the statue of Bast recall the virtues of the goddess and recount feats of her generosity and kindness. A few interspersed here offer vague warnings of what befalls those who displease the goddess.

Behind the columns, obelisks, and the statue of Bast herself, are a series of doors leading off to the Library (H), the High Priest's Sanctum (I), the Sanctuaries of Userkaf and Neferirkare Kakai (F and G, respectively), and to the rooms designated for Bast's cat-kin. These last rooms, situated behind the statue, are broken down into a room for kittens (C), one for elders (E), and two for adult cats (D). Access to all other areas of the temple is found via corridors to the north and south of the temple's inner sanctum.

C. KITTENS' ROOM

Lawlessness, chaos, and discord reign in this smaller room for the kitten population of the Temple of Bast—all in the name of fun, of course. The Kittens' Room is a mess: cushions, blankets, toys, and articles of human clothing have all found their way into this room after having been "claimed" by one or another of the kittens. Virtually everything in the room has been clawed, chewed, bitten, and rent asunder in some way. Amongst all this chaos, a clutch of 10-12 kittens are invariably playing, sleeping, or considering what trouble to get into next.

This is the room where, before her death, Pihmay spent much of her time. The cat investigators need considerable patience in attempting to get useful information out of the assembled kittens: they talk over one another, disagree, and offer random statements and commentary on just about anything. The kittens invariably try to get the investigators to play and, should they acquiesce, they then have an opportunity to tire out the kittens (and themselves) and get more sensible answers from the then-relaxed kittens. Otherwise, the investigators must perform successful Yowl rolls to get anything useful out of the kittens.

Should they succeed in either venture, they learn that the assembled kittens liked Pihmay very much. She was lovely, fun, and very, very adventurous. She was one of the few kittens who spent more time outside of the Kittens' Room than in it. In fact, her curiosity led her as far as the Temple Gates and the River Gate. Pihmay was a great one for getting into trouble and an excellent stalker. More than a few kittens had been surprised and unsuspectingly pounced upon by Pihmay during the past few months. But she also grew increasingly bored and spent more and more of her time looking for "adventure" outside the room.

While none of the kittens were present when Pihmay died, they find it hard to believe that she—of all the kittens—would fall into the well. They've all visited the well: it's a rite of passage to look into the dark

waters below and to have one of their brethren nudge them just enough to frighten them. None of them, however, has been back to the well since Pihmay's death. In fact, fewer and fewer of them have bothered to leave the Kittens' Room since the event. Most of them, with few exceptions, have been frightened that something might happen to them.

D. CATS' ROOMS

Comfortable mats, a few pillows, balled up blankets, and the like cover the floors of the Cats' Rooms. A collection of clay bowls filled with water are found near the door, some more full than others. During the hottest part of the day, up to 20 adult cats can sometimes be found in both Cats' Rooms spread out napping. A few may be having conversations, but most will simply be lounging between meal times. Even less occasionally, visiting cats might be encountered regaling resident cats with tales of the outside world.

The adult cat population of the Temple of Bast is a remarkably independent lot who care little for collective thought or activity, caring more about where their next meal is coming from or where they can find a comfortable spot to sleep. Pampered and unthreatened, the vast majority of temple cats have grown complacent and, frankly, dull. Once riled, however, they are quick to panic, and the death of the kitten Pihmay and the apparent disappearance of elder cats Userat and Hensu has achieved just that. Ittutamen rightly judged the temperament of the cat population and his creation of the party of cat investigators is a clever smoke screen intended to calm down the cats and keep them quiet until his plans come to fruition.

Unfortunately, the adult cats know nothing useful—although they might be used by the Keeper to introduce additional red herrings or to provide clues that the players have missed elsewhere. Rather than answering questions, the catkin in the Cats' Rooms will harangue and even abuse the cat investigators with questions and accusations about what is (or isn't) being done to ensure the safety of the cat population—namely their safety! The feeling in both rooms is tense, but becomes significantly worse when one or more of the cats begin to panic outright.

The cat investigators may well have to use some skill or diplomacy to calm the cats before getting an opportunity to question them. Even then, there is little that the cats can do to help; few of them have anything to do with the kittens or with the elder cats, and so, cannot comment on the situation with Hensu and Userat or the unfortunate death of Pihmay. But they will collectively spend an inordinate amount of time trying to find out what the investigators have or haven't learned. Ittutamen is carefully and slyly using the adult cats' distress and the cat investigators involvement to draw attention away from the machinations of himself, the high priest, and his daughter. Unless the Keeper wishes otherwise, all interactions and investigations in these two rooms would indicate (to one who knows the plan) that Ittutamen's plan is working perfectly.

E. ELDER CATS' ROOM

Similar in all aspects to the Cats' Rooms (D), the Elder Cats' Room contains even more soft furnishings, but a significantly smaller number of cats—less than 10 at the time of the investigators' visit. The sudden disappearance or departure of Userat and Hensu has broken the otherwise normal calm of the room. Many of the cats will be all too happy to talk about the two female cats who, after Ittutamen and Sref-ra, were the oldest cats in the Temple of Bast. The theory that the two cats might have left the temple doesn't wash with the other elder cats. Both Userat and Hensu were unwell and did not possess the constitution for long travel. Hensu suffered from swelling of the joints and found walking—indeed most movement—painful, while Userat suffered from some unknown malady that left her unable to take much nutrition from her food. Both the cats were thin, frail creatures.

If the cat investigators ask after any visitors, the elder cats reveal that few come to visit in the Elder Cats' Room, apart from the human Softtouch, who visits daily. Apart from offering the cats each a gentle massage—in fact, Khen-afah is checking them for disease—he brings treats and so his visits are often the highlight of their day. Most cats leave the room less than five times a day. Userat and Hensu were no different. The two females were inseparable and would always take their walks together; however, owing to Hensu's joints, they would often only go so far as the Main Temple Entrance (A) or the grove out behind the Kitchens (Q).

A couple of the cats here have somewhat better memories than others and can reveal that the last time that they saw Userat and Hensu, the two female cats seemed troubled. When they asked after their troubles, the two cats looked at one another, but remained tight lipped. They had just returned from their afternoon walk, which consisted of little more than a lap around the temple's inner sanctum, but something seemed to have spooked them.

In fact, they had overheard snatches of an argument between Ittutamen and the high priest. They had heard the two discussing a sacrifice—of what nature, they never did learn—before Ittutamen noticed their presence and hissed at them angrily. That night, Ittutamen murdered both cats in the shadows behind the Kitchens and dragged their corpses through the River Gate (T), dumping them into the Nile.

Unless the Keepers wish to introduce other information or red herrings here, this is all the cat investigators can learn during their visit.

F. SANCTUARY OF USERKAF

Both Userkaf and Neferirkare Kakai contributed slaves and some of their wealth toward the creation and/or maintenance of the Temple of Bast and, thus, have personal sanctuaries within the temple's inner sanctum. Userkaf's sanctuary is the least visited of the two sanctuaries. The simple wooden door to Userkaf's sanctuary is inscribed with the former Pharaoh's name and a blessing bestowed upon him. Inside, the simple room is dominated by a long, rectangular altar in the

centre and a statue of Userkaf behind it, flanked by two large, stylized cat figures.

Once per day, a clay bowl of water and a plate of dried fruit are laid atop the altar. On special evenings, a low flame and ceremonial incense are lit in Userkaf's memory. The high priest and the watchman are two of the few humans who know the calendar dates—those of Userkaf's birth and death—when this ceremonial exercise takes place. Userkaf is still mentioned in some of the priest's daily prayers, but otherwise he is virtually forgotten.

G. SANCTUARY OF NEFERIRKARE KAKAI

The sanctuary of Neferirkare Kakai serves the same role as that of Userkaf, namely to venerate the former Pharaoh for his patronage to the Temple of Bast. The door to the room bears a similar blessing upon the Pharaoh as adorns Userkaf's sanctuary next door. The layout of the two rooms differs, however. Here in the sanctuary of Neferirkare Kakai, the Pharaoh's statue stands out from the west wall, furthest away from the door. A plate of dried fruit and a clay bowl of water sit atop the squat, square altar here, while the Pharaoh's statue resides in shadow at the room's end.

Like that of Userkaf, the sanctuary of Neferirkare Kakai is little used, lacking even the ceremonial significance of his neighbour. However, Neferirkare Kakai sees more visitors by far. Or rather, the sanctuary receives a single visitor almost daily. This visitor is an arthritic, elderly priest by the name of Nyukaur. It is in the sanctuary of Neferirkare Kakai that Nyukaur self-medicates with the psychoactive blue Egyptian lotus. The native flower is sacred, but it is also prohibited within the temple, so Nyukaur secretly enters the sanctuary to eat a few of the blue petals per day. Though they offer no pain relief and often make him sick, the euphoric effect they offer is worth his trouble.

The High Priest Sath-tefhet and perhaps one other are aware of Nyukaur's weakness for the blue lotus. Should the occasion arise where Sath-tefhet sees some use in offering up Nyukaur as a scapegoat, he will use the elder priest's addiction to his benefit.

H. LIBRARY

The library and archives within the Temple of Bast are home to a collection of scrolls, parchments, and tablets bearing hieroglyphics and other written forms. The walls of the library are home to a grid-work system of shelves whereupon the scrolls and parchments are stowed according to a system that few in the temple can rightly claim to know. A series of three tables with low benches sit in the middle of the room, topped high with discarded scrolls and a few clay and stone tablets.

In truth, few come to the library. The vast majority of priests and acolytes are illiterate or barely literate, and the challenge that is present in deciphering the often-ancient texts and hieroglyphics are more than most can handle. Indeed, the most frequent visitor to the library is Pasenhab (or Stingy, as the cats know him). Though he is capable of reading hieroglyphics and other forms of written text, the real reason he

comes to the library is to sleep uninterrupted for long periods of the day.

The only other inhabitants of the temple that occasionally make use of the library are the high priest and Itutamen. In recent days and weeks, the two—occasionally along with Sath-hemute—have sought out information relating to the distant past in the temple's archives. On one of these occasions, the trio was interrupted and the high priest hid a blasphemous scroll within another on a random shelf, believing that it would never be found. He was wrong.

Whether the cat investigators come to the library of their own accord or come seeking Pasenhab, the events described above in the "Interacting with the Temple's Human Population" section, specifically those listed for Pasenhab, occur. This can reasonably happen during the day or night, as it is possible that Stingy found it impossible to sleep in the Priests' Chambers (I) and came to the library seeking some peace and quiet. Refer to the events described on page 40.

I. HIGH PRIEST'S SANCTUM

This is a modest affair off the inner sanctum of the temple where High Priest Sath-tefhet frequently meets with Bubastis socialites and other local powers who wish to have the ear of the high priest or come seeking absolution before the goddess. The chamber contains a carved replica of the Statue of Bast (B) outside, though only 9 feet high, a granite altar, a wooden table/desk, and three wooden benches—two on either side of the table and one along the wall across from the statue of Bast and the altar.

Sath-tefhet is supposed to spend most of his day within his chambers here, but given the need to progress his plans for the Black Pharaoh's return, he has actually been spending a considerably greater amount of time in his High Priest's Chamber (N) behind a locked and closed door. If any of the priests or acolytes asks to meet with him, Sath-tefhet will direct them here. He considers the sanctum a safe place where he can conduct Temple business. As most of his true work is conducted elsewhere, the High Priest's Sanctum is remarkably empty. In fact, the cat investigators will not have to spend long in the sanctum to reason that: either the high priest does little work at all or he does it outside his sanctum.

Sath-tefhet has been very careful not to leave anything suspicious lying about, so even the most arduous searches will result in no useful information. In truth, the high priest's only mistake, so far, has been to leave a blasphemous scroll hidden within the Library (H) next door. He has otherwise been meticulously careful in bringing forward his plans for the harvest.

J. ACOLYTES' CHAMBERS

The acolytes of Bast make up the largest population of humans living inside the temple walls—only the dead entombed in the temple crypt outnumber them. Thirty young acolytes are currently divided into three living accommodations (J). During the annual induction in spring, up to an additional 30 new acolytes can join the current cohort, making the living space somewhat cramped. However, as happens

every year, a large number of those who embark on temple life will choose to leave before the end of the summer, citing all manner of reasons for wanting or needing a different life.

In addition to their prayers and other religious duties, the occupations of the acolytes centre on cleaning, cooking, maintaining the grounds, and serving the priests. Most put up with the hard labor and servitude in hopes that one day, they will attain the rank of priest and become the ones to be looked after. Admittance to the priesthood coincides with the harvest festival and, for this reason, the acolytes are on high alert, doing their best to be helpful and subservient. This is true even with respect to the cat population. The acolyte population becomes considerably more amenable and prone to treat-giving during the approach to harvest.

The first thing that the cat investigators will note upon entry to any of the Acolytes' Chambers is the smell and general disarray. While they clean and manage the Priests' Chambers, the acolytes have little concern for their own rooms. The simple, narrow cots lining the walls are covered in laundry that needs doing; underneath the cots, collections of plates and clay mugs sit with dried food and drink clinging to them. How long they have been there is anyone's guess.

When the cat investigators enter into the Acolytes' Chambers, the discussions had—whether day or night—will revolve around one of the following:

🐾 The approach of harvest and the admittance to the priesthood. The acolytes are desperate for information regarding who of them might be in the running for admittance, but the high priest has been distinctly secretive and offered no real clues. In the past, there had always been some hint or suggestion as to who might be admitted, if any. This year, however, the high priest has only shown lack of interest—or worse, anger—at any request for information.

🐾 The harvest festival. Those less focused on admittance to the priesthood are instead focusing on the festival itself, now only days away. The harvest festival brings with it additional work and chores, but also feasting, theatre, music, and games. It is one of the few times of year when the quiet life of the temple is set aside and the acolytes are allowed the freedom to enjoy themselves and hear, if not see, more of the world outside.

🐾 The high priest's daughter, Sath-hemute. While her looks, and certainly her temperament, are not to all tastes, Sath-hemute's overtly sexual actions have certainly got the acolytes talking. Her habit, now confirmed amongst them, of choosing one of them to satisfy her sexual appetites has caused a rift among them. Some see this as an opportunity, if a rather salacious one, while others see this as a threat and unwanted distraction from their worship of Bast and adherence to the principles of selflessness and spirituality.

Apart from these discussions, the Acolytes' Chambers offers the cat investigators few real clues. That said,

Keepers are encouraged to use the discussions amongst the acolytes to point the investigators to authentic clues or to potential red herrings.

K. WATCHMAN'S CHAMBER

Home to the Temple Watchman, Hepeshef, this simple, unadorned room is rarely occupied. A simple mat in one corner serves as a bed next to a small wooden table and bench. In the opposite corner is a desk of sorts that is home to several wooden boxes, which contain a number of rolled scrolls. The scrolls themselves contain written descriptions of nightly events or encounters noted by the Watchman as he makes his rounds. If the cat investigators seek Hepeshef here, they will find him in his chambers from dawn until just after noon. At all other times, the Watchman will be out in the temple grounds.

If the cats do encounter the Watchman here, information regarding the encounter and his conversation with Kos is listed in the "Interacting with Cat Patrons" section, page 39.

L. PRIESTS' CHAMBERS

The priests reside in what is the largest continuous room in the temple outside the central sanctum itself. A long, rectangular room with a single door at the midpoint of the inner wall, the Priests' Chambers are home to ten priests who range in age from 27 to 60. While they share a single rank, a few among them are notable for their role or seniority. Each of the priests has a bed roll or mat, a small table, an oil lamp, and a collection of small personal items (ranging from smooth stones plucked from the Nile riverbed, to small scrolls or bits of parchment, to hand-carved statues of religious or personal significance, etc.).

Occupying the largest share of the room is the houseman, Sobekhef or "Coins", who spends the majority of his day in the Temple's Stores (P). His bed mat is twice the size of the others in the room. This is not owing to his size, but more to his inflated ego. Late at night, the houseman returns to the Priests' Chambers and promptly goes to sleep, rarely conversing with other priests in the room. He wakes at sunrise to meet with the watchman and makes a general round of the temple interior before having his breakfast in the Kitchens (Q). Should the cat investigators encounter Coins here, he will likely be asleep. However, if he is awake, he may still offer some clues, albeit talking under his breath so as not to wake any of the other priests in the room.

The other priest of note who resides in the chamber is Khen-afah or "Softtouch", the Temple of Bast's resident healer. Using the same simple bedding as the other priests, his spot is largely indistinguishable from the others excepting the tanned leather bag that he carries his medicinal supplies (ointments, salves, and herbs largely) in. Softtouch generally sleeps in this room from midnight until just after dawn. His daily rounds take him all over the temple and grounds. He sees not only to the priests and acolytes, but also looks after the watchman's sentries and any others currently visiting the temple. He is also one of the few humans who regularly visits the four cat chambers behind the Statue of Bast (B). While nominally checking the health of

the temple's cats, Khen-afah takes comfort in the quiet company of the cats and frequently brings them treats.

If the cat investigators come to the Priests' Chambers by night, they will find Softtouch here asleep. Should they attempt to wake him, they will have a job on their hands; in fact, they are far more likely to rouse one of his neighbors who will then, perhaps, wake the healer on the cat's behalf—or attempt to shoo them out of the room! (They respect and love the cats, but even priests of Bast need to sleep!)

Once Khen-afah is fully awake, the cat investigators have the same 50% chance of hearing the priest discuss his worries of Menirdis, as detailed in the section "Interacting with Cat Patrons," page 39. If awoken, the priest will assume that one of the cats in the entourage needs looking after and will attempt to look each one over. If he finds nothing untoward, he will chide the cats for just wanting to play and robbing an old man of his sleep. Subsequently, he will attempt to find some way of pacifying the cats and returning to his bedroll.

M. ADEPT'S CHAMBER

The greatest challenge that the cat investigators encounter in searching the Adept's Chamber is in getting past the locked door. The high priest now holds both the keys to this room—Menirdis' own key and the only copy—having stripped the adept of his when he was unconscious. Sath-tefhet keeps the keys on his person day and night; thus, the cat investigators will need to come up with a plan to retrieve them. Even if they do acquire one of the keys, opening the door is a significant physical challenge without a human co-conspirator. Their keyhole is four feet above the floor and the keys themselves are wooden and half a foot long—not easy for a cat to manipulate.

Accessing Menirdis' chamber can be achieved by, at least, two different means: the cats could retrieve the key and provide it to a willing human (e.g. Khen-afah) who might open the door for them or one of the cats might use the trick Leap to the Moon to access the Dreamlands and then leap back into Menirdis' room. However, a cat leaping into the Adept's Chamber will require a long rest before leaping back out.

The interior of the Adept's Chamber is a reflection of Menirdis' inner mind: it is clean, neatly kept, and focused entirely on the worship of the Goddess Bast. A large bed mat occupies one corner beside a pile of neatly folded clothing and blankets, and a stacked bundle of scrolls (consisting of the reminiscences of former high priests). A small altar occupies the centre of the long exterior wall and has a beautifully carved statue of Bast atop it. Stacked neatly beside the statue are two scrolls, both describing the rites of ascendancy from adept priest to high priest.

Finally, a large table/desk occupies the other end of the chamber and a low bench sits before it. Atop the desk are yet more scrolls and a few clay tablets. The assembled information all relates to the tenets of worship and the procedure of various rituals used in the service of Bast. Included here are a compendium of mundane daily activities and complex yearly events, as Menirdis was attempting to familiarise himself with

all the requirements of taking on the role of high priest.

Notably absent from the Adept's Chamber is the adept himself. Due in part to Menirdis' fastidiousness, there is no sign of the priest. Cat investigators may rightly determine that Menirdis left his chamber willingly; after all, there are no signs of struggle here whatsoever. Unfortunately, there are also no clues as to where the adept might have gone.

N. HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBER

Occupying the quietest corner of the temple—and yet still close to amenities such as the Kitchens (Q) and Toilets & Washrooms (O)—the High Priest's Chamber is large and spacious compared to any other single-occupancy room in the temple. Although the door is rarely locked, it is often closed nearly all the way: this is largely due to the continued presence of Sath-hemute, the high priest's daughter. While guests to the Temple are common, they rarely stay more than a few weeks. Sath-hemute, on the other hand, has resided within the Temple for more than two months.

Gaining access to the room is achieved relatively easily, however, as Sath-hemute does not like to be cooped up and frequently wanders the temple and its grounds, both day and night. Being prone to boredom and possessing a high metabolism, she frequently goes out to satisfy her various appetites. Slipping in the door behind her, or behind one of the acolytes bringing food or water to her, is a relatively easy affair. Even if the door is nearly closed, the combined strength of two cats opens the door enough to allow them access.

The High Priest's Chamber is a sumptuous affair and stands apart from any other room in the temple. Richly decorated and possessing many pieces of furniture, it is a clear contrast with the austere décor found throughout the remainder of the temple. Many of the pieces have been brought in recently at the request of the high priest's daughter. These include comfortable chairs, a raised bed, and a small wardrobe. The room smells of perfume and, unless the cat investigators have timed their visit, will be inhabited by Sath-hemute herself. Statistics and a description for Sath-hemute are provided in the section "Cast of Non-Player Characters".

Some of his daughter's extravagances have clearly worn off on the high priest. His bedroll is draped with a fine silk sheet and an ornate silver mirror sits on the small table beside his bed. A small leather pouch, also atop the same table, contains a number of gold rings and a rich collar of beaten gold and copper with inset turquoise gemstones. This jewelry is too large for Sath-hemute and is clearly meant for the high priest himself. Such adornments are unheard of for Bast's priests.

Sath-hemute, on the other hand, veritably covers herself in such luxuries, rubbing scented oils into her skin and covering herself in as much gold jewellery as she can. The effect is profound: she looks the part of an Egyptian queen. Her striking looks, her arrogant attitude, and her substantial appetites have resulted in rumours that she sees herself as a physical incarnation of the Bast Herself. However, Sath-hemute has no great love of cats. Should she find any cat, save

Ittutamen, inside the High Priest's Chamber, she will openly hiss at them and chase them from the room. This behaviour is so profoundly unsettling that most cats will quite happily leave the woman's presence and think twice about returning.

If the room is empty, either Sath-hemute has gone out or has descended through the secret stair (S). The hidden door to the secret stair is a remarkable piece of Egyptian engineering and craftwork. Around the High Priest's Chamber are four etched-stone panels, each six feet high and depicting Bast in a different incarnation: as a cat, as half-cat/half-human, as a human, and finally as a Goddess. Each incarnation faces a different point on the compass facing north, south, east, and west. The western incarnation—that of the Goddess Bast—is in fact a cleverly hidden door.

Spotting the secret door without any idea of its existence is an exceedingly hard thing to do, requiring an Extreme Spot success. If the cat investigators are aware of the potential for a secret door or some kind of access point in the room, they require a Hard Spot success. There are two other means of determining the presence of this secret portal: either by having the cat investigators succeed an Extreme Scent roll, but only if Sath-hemute is within, or if the investigators are in the room while Menirdis is wailing below in his cell (25% chance), a successful Listen roll will bring them directly to the west panel.

Opening the panel requires another trick still. In the panel, the Goddess Bast is depicted in the same form and stature as found in the Statue of Bast (B) in the temple's inner sanctum. A pair of cats is etched round her feet, a stylized background rises up past her waist, and above—to the left and right of her shoulders, respectively—are a beautifully rendered sun and moon. The sun and moon are, in fact, pressure plates. Opening the panel requires that both the sun and the moon plates are pressed at once. If this is done, the plates will sink to a depth of half an inch and disengage the simple lock on the panel's reverse.

The difficulty for the cat investigators is in reaching both the sun and moon plates. The small wardrobe standing to the left of the panel makes reaching the sun plate a relatively easy task. A successful Jump roll will bring the cat up to the five-foot level of the sun plate. On the right hand side, however, the moon plate stands five feet above the floor and more than two feet from the wardrobe. A cat may jump from the wardrobe and exert enough pressure on the moon plate to trigger the lock, but both the moon and sun plates must be pressed at the same time. A carefully coordinated effort should result in a soft click sounding from behind the panel and the right side of the panel swinging open an inch or two.

Apart from the chance to encounter Sath-hemute, hear Menirdis, and find the door to the secret stair, there is little else of interest in the High Priest's Chamber.

O. WASHROOM & TOILETS

The room here is split into two areas: one where priests and acolytes may wash themselves with water collected from the Nile, and one where they can take care of

other necessary bodily functions. Unsurprisingly, this is the room least visited by cats. Although the room is attended by a number of acolytes and kept as clean as humanly possible, by cat standards, it is revolting. Two four-foot high, reed panels separate the two functions of the room. Water is collected through the rear door and the nearby River Gate (T). Urine and feces is collected in buckets—some of which goes towards fertilizing the gardens and groves, some of which is tossed into the Nile.

Most of the temple population passes through the Washroom & Toilets several times a day and, thus, Keepers might wish to use an encounter in the room to impart information missed elsewhere or to introduce new information or further red herrings. Malehuwani can often be found here cleaning or in the nearby Kitchens (O).

P. STORES

Wooden boxes and barrels, reed baskets and leather bags, and a huge assortment of other containers—gourds, wineskins, and satchels—fill this room, cataloged and placed on wooden shelves or in specially constructed boxes. The room smells strongly of spices, perfumes, and dried fruit and meat. Apart from the shelves and boxes, a small desk topped with sheets of parchment sits in one corner. This is the desk of "Coins" or Sobekhef, the houseman, who looks after the collected goods and procures more so as to keep the temple fed and running smoothly. Apart from the opportunity to encounter Coins here, there is little of interest in the room.

Q. KITCHENS

Bursting with life and animation, the Kitchens are a hive of activity. Acolytes and a few priests work in shifts to ready meals and offerings for the inhabitants of the temple—cat and human—day and night. Food is also prepared for visitors, which makes the time of festival and harvest a very busy time indeed. Cooks and preparers use open flame and clay ovens to create a variety of dishes daily. There are very few times of day—once in the middle of the afternoon and once in the middle of the evening—when the Kitchens are not bustling.

Meshtep can be found here throughout the day, and Malehuwani too can be found here on occasion, cleaning. The din of human voices never stops in the Kitchens, and it is an excellent spot for the cat investigators to learn gossip and to hear the rumours making their way around the temple.

R. STAIRS TO CRYPTS

A doorway not far from the Kitchens (Q) and the High Priest's Chamber (N) opens onto the infrequently used stairs to the crypt. Most avoid the crypts and their gloomy reminder of the death of all things. The stairwell itself remains unlit virtually all year round and descends more than twenty feet into the rock beneath the temple. The steps themselves are rough and drop a foot a time. Alcoves placed around the circular crypt hold the bodies of former high priests and a few other notable servants of Bast. The only other inhabitant of the cold dark beneath

the temple is the strange cat, Mehdim-nin, described in full in the "Cats of Note" section, page 38.

S. SECRET STAIRWELL FROM HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBER

Should the cat investigators manage to breach the secret door in the High Priest's Chamber, they will find themselves in a stairwell not dissimilar from the nearby Stairs to Crypts (R). During the temple's construction, these stairs were at first intended to lead to the crypts, but after excavating only a small cell, the diggers found themselves confounded by a circle of dense stone. Subsequently, the crypts were dug elsewhere and this small cell and its solitary stairwell were abandoned.

During his apprenticeship, Sath-tefhet learned of the stairwell and, upon his ascendancy to high priest, he decided to make use of the stair and cell as a private retreat from the demands of his post. Over time, he paid laborers to dig out a small reading alcove to the left of the stairs themselves and to add a door to the cell at the bottom. He began to collect writing and hieroglyphics of interest from the Library (H) and store them in the alcove and cell for his personal use. Now in league with the Black Pharaoh, the high priest and his daughter use the secret stair and alcove to plan their overthrow of the temple, while the cell at the bottom of the stair now houses the Adept Menirdis.

Should Sath-tefhet, Sath-hemute, or Ittutamen discover or encounter the cat investigators within this secret space, they will attempt to murder the intruders, using whatever means necessary. Such a breach is unthinkable at this late stage of their plan, and they will have no compunction about killing the investigating cats. If, on the other hand, the cat investigators find the stair and alcove unoccupied, they will find the alcove full of ancient scrolls and parchments detailing a period of distant history where the priests of Bast aligned themselves with the Black Pharaoh. Keepers should feel free to reveal as much of the background information to the scenario as they see fit.

Although the high priest, his daughter, and Ittutamen have been careful not to put any mention of their plans to paper, the collected papers here in conjunction with the discovery of Menirdis in the cell below will undoubtedly give them a sound picture of what the trio are planning. With this knowledge, they must tread carefully in secret or confront the three, bringing about the Final Confrontation, see the box "Freeing Menirdis Early" on page 39.

Of course, anyone securing a means of accessing the stair is also going to plumb its depths and find the bolted door containing the starving and desperate Adept Priest Menirdis. Cat investigators need not succeed on a Listen roll or Scent roll to determine that a human being is being incarcerated within. Unbolting the door requires some strength, i.e., a successful Hard roll based on the combined STR of two cats (see page 88 of the *7th Edition Call of Cthulhu Keeper Rulebook*), but will see the door finally unlocked. Unless the Keepers have other plans in mind, the discovery of Menirdis leads to the adept confronting the high priest, again leading

to “The Final Confrontation.”

There is nothing of interest in Menirdis’ cell itself: it contains only himself and a nearly empty, clay bowl of water.

T. RIVER GATE

The River Gate is a thick and sturdy wooden gate, nine feet high in the northwestern corner of the temple’s outer wall. Beyond the gate itself is a small section of shoreline banking onto the River Nile. Large and dangerous Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*) are often found basking in the sun on the shores here, so priests and acolytes take special care in approaching the waters day and night. More than one recent tragedy has involved an unwary acolyte becoming a meal for a Nile crocodile. Despite the obvious danger, the shoreline here provides the best mooring point for visitors arriving by boat.

U. WELL

Little more than a rough-cut cylinder cut down to the water line, the well is unremarkable. Three strong wooden planks have been bound together with thick rope to provide a tripod above the well, allowing a bucket on another measure of rope to be lowered into the cool water below. A single line of clay bricks circles the well’s opening, providing an almost symbolic warning.

It was a little more than a foot from the well that the body of the kitten Pihmay was discovered one morning two days ago. Pihmay was an adventurous kitten and an inquisitive one. The night before her death, Pihmay wandered out from the Kittens’ Room (C) and into the temple gardens, where she heard a high, strange sibilance coming from a dark corner. There she found the new woman, the high priest’s daughter, naked in the moonlight, whispering some kind of prayer with her arms stretched wide to the night sky.

Ittutamen knows the truth of what happened next, but it is unlikely he will ever tell of it. He knows that Pihmay foolishly watched the human woman until she lowered her arms and began to dress herself, that the woman spied the kitten and encouraged her to come closer, and that Sath-hemute picked up the kitten and ruthlessly snapped her neck. Sath-hemute herself explained that, in her rush back to the High Priest’s Chamber, she attempted to throw the kitten in the well, but missed. The throw was badly timed as a sentry came round the corner from the kitchens and saw the kitten lying sprawled in the moonlight.

Due to the volume of traffic round the well, it is very difficult to pick up any clues regarding Pihmay’s death here. Pihmay’s body was passed on to high priest; in fact, he ordered that it be given to him after he discovered what his daughter had done. He deflected any further discussion of the kitten’s death amongst humans by saying that the kitten would be mummified and laid to rest in the crypts following the harvest. In truth, that same evening, Sath-tefhet threw Pihmay’s body into the Nile. Subsequently, cat investigators searching for Pihmay’s body anywhere within the temple will meet with no success.

VISITING LOCATIONS OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE OF BAST

THE FESTIVAL ROAD

At this time of year, the Festival Road stretching from the Temple of Bast in the west to the Bubastis Market in the east is packed with merchants’ and suppliers’ carts, and more than a few vagrants and vagabonds. The cat investigators will find little amongst the collected humans that is of interest, with one exception: the human trainer known to them as the “Rat Man.”

The staged exodus of the rats—in fact, all vermin—from the Temple of Bast at harvest time is symbolic of the arrival of the goddess into the earthly temple constructed for her. Year upon year, the theatrical re-enactment confirms Bast’s divine presence persists within her greatest temple. The Rat Man and his cages, which contain more than 50 large and well-fed rats, are therefore a necessary evil, even in the eyes of the cat population.

A few of the rat elders are demonstrably more intelligent than the others and one among them—charmingly called “Teeth”—knows a little cat speech. At the sight of the cat investigators, this bold rat will mockingly hiss and laugh at them. These actions may well seem mad to the cats, but those willing to engage with Teeth will find the rat has something to say. The cat investigators might try to speak with Teeth. If Sref-ra is present, his Doolittle trick allows him to speak with rats; otherwise, Teeth will use his broken knowledge of cat speech to converse with any willing cats.

Of course, rats hate cats and cats detest rats, so this conversation is never going to be genial. In fact, Teeth’s only interest is in taunting the cats with a riddle he’s devised. He will never answer the cat’s questions honestly, darting around truths and spelling out lies in an attempt to discomfort them. His riddle has been artfully composed to have the same effect:

Teeth will not provide an answer to his riddle—it is prophetic rather than explanatory—nor will he rise to derisory comments on its artistic merit, but will

THE RIDDLE OF TEETH

In the Temple of Bast,
amongst sleeping cats,

One lays trapped, while three lay traps,
None the same, but with the same purpose,
Minds twisted, on twisting minds bent.

In the Temple of Bast, amongst
the weeping cats,

Darkness rises, the shadow harvest comes,

Nile and crocodile consume,
both kitten and cats,

And the great statue falls, falls, falls.

only laugh and tell them to leave: “Go now, cats. Go to your ending! Go to your great doom!”

BUBASTIS MARKET

Should the cat investigators go so far as the Bubastis Market, they will find it teeming with humans young and old, selling and buying, barking and crying, amongst the myriad market stalls. The market itself is a labyrinth that even a cat can get lost in, and it is not without threats. Both dogs and rats in numbers enough to be significant dangers are present, moving largely unnoticed and unseen amidst the humans. Keepers should carefully judge whether or not the actions of the cat investigators attract the wrong kind of attention and end them up in a difficult or dangerous situation.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

The final confrontation between the trio of Sath-tefhet, Sath-hemute, and Ittutamen, and the cat investigators, potentially aided by other cats and even humans (for example, their patrons or Menirdis himself, if they have managed to free him), is intended to take place in the Temple of Bast’s great inner sanctum before the Statue of Bast herself. It has always been the high priest’s intention that his adept, Menirdis, be sacrificed in the presence of the Black Pharaoh, Nephren-Ka, before the Statue of Bast (B).

STAGING THE FINAL FIGHT

One way or another, Keepers should try to ensure that the cat investigators witness the high priest, together with his daughter and their elder, Ittutamen, summon the avatar of Nyarlathotep, the Black Pharaoh. When summoned, Nephren-Ka will step from a column of black fire that roars and whips up to the temple’s 60-foot ceiling. The Black Pharaoh himself stands no less than 20 feet tall, bristling with power, resplendent in gold and black. His face is a pit of darkness, an impenetrable abyss that literally appears to absorb light. Have the cats make a Sentience check for 1D4/1D12 SEN. As the column of dark flame evaporates, Nephren-Ka looks down to his servants—Sath-tefhet, Sath-hemute, and Ittutamen—to complete the sacrifice.

Whether Menirdis is still their prisoner or he has come to confront the high priest—in which case, Sath-tefhet will have maneuvered the adept before the Statue of Bast—the high priest will use Menirdis’ shock at the arrival of the Black Pharaoh to produce a black dagger while Sath-hemute restrains the adept. Ittutamen, meanwhile, will be looking to protect the high priest and his daughter while they complete the sacrifice. If no one, cat or human, interrupts the proceedings, the high priest raises the dagger in praise of the Nephren-Ka and, cursing Bast, plunges it into the adept’s heart. He will finish moments later by slitting Menirdis’ throat and anointing himself and his daughter in the adept’s blood. The cats must make a Sentience roll for 0/1D4 SEN.

If, on the other hand, the cats and/or their companions intercede, the sacrifice will be interrupted and battle



will ensue. During the chaos, Menirdis will try to break free and ally himself with the cats. If Menirdis has been sacrificed, however, battle will still ensue as Nephren-Ka commands the trio to kill the cats—in fact, all the cats in the temple (apart from Ittutamen). Regardless of either eventuality, a moment after Nyarlathotep's apparent triumph, a clap of thunder sounds in the temple, effectively stunning all present with the notable exception of the Black Pharaoh.

From the shadow of the Statue of Bast, a black feline figure appears atop the trapezoidal base. As it moves lithely into view, it seems to grow in size until it matches the size of Nephren-Ka. The avatar of Bast prepares to pounce, its eyes blazing as two bright coals. The Black Pharaoh raises its arms and a deep, booming phrase of some indecipherable language rolls about the open space, but the spell is cut off as Bast leaps atop Nephren-Ka. The two titans roll back into the nearby obelisks, which shatter with deafening noise and fill the air with dust. From nowhere a storm rises in the inner sanctum, the two competing voices of the god and goddess booming as thunder, cracking as lightning. In amidst this roiling storm, the cats must face off against Nyarlathotep's servants.

Believing themselves to be right and just in their actions, the high priest, his daughter, and the mad cat, Ittutamen, will fight unto the death. Their deaths will weaken Nyarlathotep's hold on this place and he will be forced to quit the temple. Should they survive

and destroy the cat investigators, then they will join with Nephren-Ka to banish Bast. In time, they will instill themselves as the new powers within the temple and force all the priests and acolytes to bend to their, and therefore Nyarlathotep's, will.

Statistics for all the combatants are provided in the "Cast of Non-Player Characters" section.

CAST OF NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Listed below are the statistics for Adept Priest Menirdis and the trio of villains, the insane, elder cat Ittutamen, and the human pawns of Nephren-Ka, Sath-tefhet and Sath-hemute.

ITTUTAMEN

Feline, Egyptian Mau, Male, Unknown

STR 05 **CON** 30 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 90 **POW** 65
DEX 75 **APP** 40 **EDU** 92 **SEN** 00
LUCK 65 **HP** 3 **MP** 13 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 45% (22/9);
Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB;
Dodge 40% (20/8)

SKILLS: Climb 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%,
Cuteness 45%, Dream Lore 80%, Healing
60%, Hiss 60%, Human Language (Coptic)

90%, Hypnotize 65%, Insight 70%, Listen 35%,
Natural World 60%, Navigate 55%, Occult 95%,
Scent 45%, Sense Danger 75%, Sleep 70%,
Spot 15%, Status 90%, Stealth 55%, Streetwise
45%, Swim 05%, Wash 35%, Yowl 80%.

TRICKS/SPILLS: Doolittle (can talk to rats), Doolittle (can talk to crocodiles), Eye of Bast, Familiar, House Cat, Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives x2 (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences, twice), Scholar x2 (Coptic and Hieroglyphics) (read language and, *in extremis*, write or draw at 90%), Trickmeister.

STRESS DISORDER: Loss of appetite.

NOTES: Ittutamen is the oldest cat living in the Temple of Bast. He has outlived virtually his whole generation and he remains in surprisingly good health. Both his age and his health are in no small part due to his unholy alliance with Nyarlathotep and his willingness to engage in blasphemous rituals to extend his life. No one in the temple truly knows how old Ittutamen is and certainly no one realizes how many of his catkin he has sacrificed to remain alive. He is now effectively a cultist of Nephren-Ka and cares little for the cat world. Though physically, he is far from a capable warrior, his intellect makes him very dangerous indeed. He is a master manipulator, of both cats and humans, and has in part survived this long by pitting his enemies against one another.

PATRON: Sath-tefhet. There was a time that

he would call Sath-tefhet “Master” but now he merely calls the high priest “Brother.” The two are virtually inseparable, and Ittutamen is nearly always found in the high priest’s presence, usually in the High Priest’s Sanctum (I) or High Priest’s Chamber (N).

SATH-TEFHET

*High Priest of Bast
Human, Egyptian, Male, 48*

STR 40 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 90 **POW** 85
DEX 60 **APP** 55 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 00
LUCK 35 **HP** 10 **MP** 17 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5); Long Blade 25% (12/5), 1D6+1+DB; Dodge: 30% (15/6)

SKILLS: Art (Sculpture) 22%, Charm 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 08%, Fast Talk 80%, Insight 66%, Library Use 88%, Listen 30%, Natural World 18%, Other Language (Latin) 30%, Own Kingdom: Egypt 55%, Own Language (Coptic) 95%, Persuade 90%, Spot Hidden 40%, Status 60%, Write (Coptic) 70%, Write (Hieroglyphics) 60%, Write (Latin) 20%.

SPELLS: Call Nyarlathotep, Dream Vision, Wrack

NOTES: Sath-tefhet is a rough-shaven, grey-haired man with deep brown eyes and high cheekbones. His physique is lithe, but not athletic. His brown skin is weathered and wrinkled. He wears the fine white robes and colorful jewelry of the High Priest of Bast. His clothing and ornamentation suitably reflect his demeanor, which is taciturn and self-important, always with a flair for the dramatic. When encountered, Sath-tefhet is business-like,

distant, and perhaps overly serious. This is the mask he presents to the world; on the inside, the high priest is barely in control of his emotions, driven by a lust for power and for eternal life, almost in equal measure.

SATH-HEMUTE

*Acolyte of Nyarlathotep
Human, Egyptian, Female, 20*

STR 60 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 70 **POW** 75
DEX 85 **APP** 80 **EDU** 50 **SAN** 00
LUCK 55 **HP** 12 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5); Long Blade 55% (27/11), 1D6+1+DB; Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Charm 55%, Conceal 75%, Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 50%, Insight 68%, Jump 55%, Listen 70%, Medicine 28%, Natural World 35%, Occult 70%, Own Kingdom: Egypt 15%, Own Language (Coptic) 80%, Persuade 90%, Spot Hidden 50%, Status 10%, Stealth 65%, Track 25%, Write (Coptic) 15%.

SPELLS: Call Nyarlathotep

NOTES: Sath-hemute is a thin, attractive woman with silky black hair and bright hazel eyes. She can trace her father’s line in her high cheekbones and lithe, sinewy form. Sath-hemute is accustomed to the eyes of men following her every movement, and she moves accordingly. As an acolyte of Bast, she is undeniably cat-like and more than just in her physicality: she is as variable, selfish, and prone to acting on impulse as any of the temple’s cats. Now insane, Sath-hemute is even more dangerous and predatory.

While some of the more attractive acolytes benefit from her growing wildness, the majority has learned to give the high priest’s daughter a wide berth. Provocative in every sense, she seems to bring out the worst in people.

MENIRDIS

*Adept Priest of Bast
Human, Egyptian, Male, 37*

STR 50 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 80 **POW** 80
DEX 65 **APP** 70 **EDU** 85 **SAN** 70
LUCK 45 **HP** 12 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5); Staff 25% (12/5), 1D6+DB; Dodge 32% (16/5)

SKILLS: Art (Painting) 27%, Charm 50%, Insight 70%, Library Use 50%, Listen 50%, Natural World 27%, Other Language (Latin) 50%, Own Kingdom: Egypt 60%, Own Language (Coptic) 95%, Persuade 80%, Spot Hidden 55%, Status 55%, Write (Coptic) 75%, Write (Hieroglyphics) 45%, Write (Latin) 30%.

SPELLS: None.

NOTES: Menirdis is a quiet, unassuming soul and a profoundly religious and penitent man. A little over five and a half feet, the adept is thin and not possessed of great musculature. At 37 years of age, his hair has thinned considerably and his face is crisscrossed in fine wrinkles. Nonetheless, he is a pleasant looking man with a wonderful, warm smile. His calm demeanor and quiet self-confidence have the effect of putting others at ease. His careful and thoughtful approach to difficult situations has won him much respect amongst the temple’s priests and acolytes. It is roundly agreed that he will make a fine High Priest of Bast.

REWARDS AND PENALTIES

- 🐾 The most positive outcome that can be achieved is to save Menirdis, who then ascends to the rank of High Priest of Bast, and to defeat Nyarlathotep’s servants in battle (or otherwise), thus saving the Temple of Bast. If the cats do this, reward them with +1D10 Sentience and +1D6 Status.
- 🐾 If the cats are unable to save Menirdis, but manage to stop the Black Pharaoh and his servants, they have still saved the Temple of Bast. Reward them with +1D6 Sentience + 1D6 Status.
- 🐾 For all other outcomes, there are only penalties. The most severe of these is their deaths at the hands of Nephren-Ka or his servants. In any situation that sees the Black Pharaoh rise to power in the Temple of Bast, the entire cat population will be summarily murdered, their bodies cast into the Nile. Even if they succeed against the avatar of Nyarlathotep and his servants, the cats will lose 0/1D2 SEN for every cat, priest, or acolyte who dies during the climactic final battle.
- 🐾 Lastly, in the case of a positive outcome, Bast Herself rewards every cat who fought to defeat the Black Pharaoh and stop the plans of Sath-tefhet, Sath-hemute, and Ittutamen, with the trick Nine Lives or an additional iteration of the trick. This is true even if a cat already has 8 iterations; Bast’s divine intervention trumps the usual rules.



SINISTER SEEDS ♦ FURTHER ADVENTURES: SHADOW HARVEST

BY STUART BOON

1. THE CITY IN THE SANDS

The kitchen-squatting, elder cat, Ankhu, is notorious for collecting—and possibly manufacturing—gossip and rumours amongst the temple cats. So when the obese Mau interrupts the cat investigators with a tale of a “phantom” lurking on the far side of the Nile, they are likely to dismiss such a fanciful notion. The agitated elder refuses to leave matters be, however, and demands that one (if not all) of the investigators seek out the spot where the phantom appeared. He is more than happy to lead the investigators to the River Gate where he will point out the exact spot on the shore opposite, next to a withering palm tree, where his shimmering phantom loitered and watched him with enormous, trembling eyes.

Should the cat investigators agree, or be persuaded, to explore the Nile shore, they will discover that there is some disturbing truth to Ankhu’s tale. Not only is there a set of strange prints next to the withered palm, but also a trail of dried blood leads back away from the river and into the desert. More peculiar still is a strange scent that lingers in the place, unlike anything any of the cats has ever smelled before. It carries none of the hallmarks of human smells, being at once more bestial, earthy, and, strangely, chemical.

Rather than a ghostly phantom, Ankhu appears to have discovered some monstrous living entity, its true form likely obscured by heat shimmer. If the cat investigators follow the trail heading into the desert, they will note that the sands are disturbed as though some large body moved over the hot sand. A short ways away, hidden behind a dune, they find the

blood-soaked carcass of an eight-foot Nile crocodile. Confusingly and worryingly, the crocodile appears to have been killed and half-eaten by something clearly larger than the adult crocodile and possessing great jagged teeth capable of shredding its prey’s thick hide. The peculiar track and prints leading away from the carcass and further into the desert offer only more questions, seemingly indicating a beast that walks on legs but also crawls or drags itself forward.

Should the investigators continue, they must trek deeper into the dunes, away from water, away from the safety of the temple, and likely much farther than any of them have gone before. Keepers may want to introduce additional dangers, but ultimately the cats will find the lair of Ankhu’s phantom-beast. A long sloping dune is broken up by the appearance of ancient, weathered stone. The trail they have been following leads down to a large, worn stone portal descending into cool darkness beyond. At this point, Keepers may choose to follow a purist Lovecraftian plan where the cats learn of the existence of a strange species preying on cats and humankind—through alien hieroglyphs and symbols—and must flee the thing’s underground sanctum or become its latest meal. The lumbering beast may collide with a worn column or lintel and bring down the entrance just as the cat investigators escape or perhaps they return a day later to find the desert has swallowed up all sign of the creature and its lair.

Alternatively, Keepers may decide on a more action-oriented or pulp route where the cats must use their wits and talents to defeat the nameless horror within the dark, subterranean tomb. This should be a very challenging fight for the cat investigators unless they

manage to outwit the monster in some manner. Before or after the battle, the cats may learn of the sanity-sapping truth behind the creature’s appearance: it is one of the nameless creatures from the Nameless City (although, if Keepers prefer, it could also be a sand dweller or some other Mythos creature). Again, should they choose to return to the tomb, they would find it impossible to discover, it having sunk under the ever-shifting sands.

2. THE DREAM QUEST OF MAD MEHDMIM-NIN

A few weeks after the events of “The Shadow Harvest”, the eccentric Abyssinian Mehdim-nin, who abides in the crypts beneath the Temple of Bast, is notably absent from a meeting of all the temple cats. When a junior cat is dispatched to fetch the grand dame, he returns with wild eyes and states that “Mad Mehdim-nin” is dead! Sent to investigate, the cats discover the body of Mehdim-nin lying cold and still atop the mummified corpse of a former Temple priest.

A quick examination reveals that Mehdim-nin is not, in fact, dead, but is dreaming, her body in hibernation while her mind wanders in the Dreamlands. Content to discover that Mehdim-nin is safe, the cat investigators are a moment later alarmed when a strained whisper escapes her lips. “Trapped,” she begins. “Trapped. So powerful... save me... save us... save us all. Find me. You must find me.” Her voice then falls silent and her body is wracked by a series of violent convulsions. It is horrific to watch, but finally the convulsions subside and Mehdim-nin’s body grows still once more. Barely audible, Mehdim-nin whimpers in her sleep. If the cats linger, the scene



repeats a little over five minutes later.

If the cat investigators bring the enigmatic message to their feline elders, they will be asked to do as Mehdim-nin requests: to find her in the Dreamlands. This provides Keepers with a wonderful opportunity to create a quest-path through Lovecraft's fantastic dream-world, where the cats might visit Ulthar, fight zoogs, and ultimately travel by various roads to the southwest corner of the Dreamlands. Here a powerful, nameless force—a primal Mythos entity—known by only a handful as “The Taker” has enslaved an army of dreamers.

Mehdim-nin is found here among the endless thralls of the Taker, her dreaming form frozen and inert as the Taker seeks to dominate and possess her. Amongst the sea of statue-like thralls, the cat investigators find humans, gugs, zoogs, and other cats held immobile in a black field, the cosmos wheeling above. Here the cats will be attacked and tested by the Taker who lies formless and insubstantial at the centre of the black ocean of thralls. The Taker seeks corporeal substance and existence, and is using his thralls to create a bridge between its dimension and ours. It has not yet acquired enough thralls to create an effective conduit, but when it does, it will infect the minds of all in the Dreamlands and then in the waking world.

The form of test endured by the cats should take the form of an alternate and compelling reality generated by Keepers, perhaps playing off the abilities and insecurities of the cats or the players themselves. Ideally, it should be simultaneously appealing and terrifying. For example, a cat who always avoids combat might be presented with a test in which they must defeat or outwit a great spectral hound, while one who is terrified of heights might have to find a way down from a precipitous height. In brief, they must “outwit” the Taker in his alternate reality. Overcoming his test weakens him and breaks his control over the

cats both now and in the future. Just how difficult the test is remains up to individual Keepers.

The insubstantial nature of the Taker provides the cat investigators with a challenge: how might they banish such a creature? Let the players look for plausible means of ridding the Dreamlands—and in turn the waking lands—of the Taker threat. Doing so should present an intellectual and possibly moral challenge, depending on what Keepers devise. For example, the cat adventurers might need to take on a dangerous cult who are empowering the Taker in the waking world, embark on a journey through the Dreamlands to recover an artifact that can make the Taker vulnerable to their attacks, or even visit the Great Library of Celaeno to acquire knowledge possessed only by the Great Old Ones or Elder Gods.

With the Taker dealt with, the dreamers will awaken and all be returned to their natural states. Mehdim-nin herself will rebound quickly, thanking the cat investigators for their timely intervention, before seeking out a meal. She will be eternally grateful and prove a useful ally in adventures to come.

3. THE DJINN

The momentous events of “The Shadow Harvest” are followed by a month of peculiar meteorological phenomena. Desert cyclones, lightning bursts, and finally a weeklong sandstorm cause much concern in the Temple of Bast, as does the toll the sandstorm takes on the temple's stores. With food reserves low, the temple gates are opened and servants are sent out to bring food back. But none return.

Bubastis itself is in chaos with rumours of an evil djinn rampaging through the city, killing many and causing mass destruction. In truth, the actions of the djinn are attributable to a Kushite cult worshipping Nyarlathotep. Their leader, a mad Kushite sorcerer,

is bent on revenge against the Temple of Bast and Bubastis itself for the failed Shadow Harvest. The sorcerer and his cultists have already devastated most of Bubastis's granaries and wells. They have also—during the weeklong sandstorm—killed more than three hundred city residents, leaving bodies littered throughout the streets.

Disease and famine are now rife in the city and the Kushite sorcerer has literally besieged the Temple of Bast, using vile magics to slaughter anyone who attempts to cross the bridges into the city. None in the temple are aware of the arrival of the Kushite cult and the dark machinations of the evil sorcerer and his acolytes. Successive attempts to retrieve food from the city by human agents will result in similar failures with lives lost. Keepers may wish to send out one of the temple's priests only to have him return near-dead, having encountered a summoned star vampire or other monster and been forced back.

Eventually, the cat investigators should realize that the survival of the other cats and the Temple of Bast itself is up to them. They must trek into Bubastis and find the lair of the Kushite cult. On the way, the cats will encounter ravenous dogs, plagues of rats, streets full of the dead, and eldritch creatures summoned by the mad sorcerer. They may also encounter a few cats or others who can provide them vital clues as to the cause of the devastation and the location of the Kushite cult. Finally, the cat investigators must infiltrate the lair of the cult, deal with its vengeful cultists, and find some way of dispatching the powerful sorcerer who leads them.

Having accomplished this, Bubastis can begin to build again, removing the dead from the streets, healing the wounded, refilling the granaries, and reconstructing lost buildings. The Temple of Bast, too, will be able to source food further afield and return to life as normal.



THE UNDESIRABLES

A Scenario for Cathulhu set in Cthulhu Dark Ages

BY OSCAR RIOS



INTRODUCTION

It is a dark time for Paris, for France, and all of Europe. Historians will write that these were the dark times, an age of fear and ignorance, of toil and suffering, nestled between the fall of a mighty empire and the rise of an age of enlightenment. But you know nothing of that, as you live in these dark times. The ebb and flow of history carries no meaning, for your day is filled with the struggle to fill your belly, secure a safe place to sleep, and perhaps find love and raise some children. For you, history has only one lesson to teach: it is better to be alive than dead.

Rich men take what they want, poor men struggle to survive, and the church rules through fear and faith. Days flow from one to the next with little change—until one day, that one dark and terrible day, when everything got so much worse: the day plague came to Paris and the nightmare began. The city was quickly gripped with fear, chaos, and death... especially for you, one of the thousands of cats living in Paris. The day the purge began, you found yourself fleeing for your life.

FOR THE KEEPER

At this time (750 C.E.–850 C.E.), Paris is not the capital of France, and the rulers of the Merovingian dynasty pay the city scant attention. The plague which has come to Paris is very similar to smallpox, but with a few key, and terrifying, differences. It has a 50% mortality rate, and death comes usually just a week after initial exposure. Victims usually die because their lungs fill with a foul-smelling bluish phlegm. It is not a natural plague, but an infection brought to this world through dark magic.

In order to prevent a panic, maintain order, and exploit the situation for their gain, the church has become involved. They've declared that the illness is Satan's punishment for sin and that the people of Paris must repent. Priests proclaim that witches and warlocks are responsible for bringing the plague and order that all undesirables be rounded up in an effort to root out their evil.

The scenario begins with mobs of terrified citizens, armed with clubs and torches, combing the streets of Paris to round up all such undesirables the church has accused of being in league with Satan. These "undesirable" are the homeless, drunkards, prostitutes, the physically or mentally disabled, and foreigners. These people are then imprisoned, questioned (i.e., tortured), and either released and driven from Paris or publicly executed to display before God the people's repentance and their rejection of Satan.

But for cats, it is worse. The cats of Paris have been declared to be servants of Satan and the familiars of witches by the Church. Priests have ordered the mob to hunt down and kill every cat they can find. They have even put a bounty on cats, granting a roll of bread to anyone turning in a freshly killed cat. For the desperately poor, such a boon might mean the difference between a full belly and starving to death. This makes Paris a deadly place for our feline investigators.

THE TRUE THREAT

A great evil is behind this new plague but it is not Satan. A small coven of three witches, worshipping the Great Old One Abhoth, have built a shrine to their dark god below the streets of Paris. In an abandoned Roman mine, in what will one day become the Catacombs of Paris, they dwell and worship around The Font

of Pestilence. This magical fountain connects to Abhoth's lair in the Dreamlands and spews rancid fluid, teeming with the strange disease now gripping Paris. Using magic and the Font of Pestilence, the witches have created undead infectious plague rats and set them loose in the city above. Those coming into contact with the rats or ingesting anything the rats have been in contact with are at very high risk of contracting the illness, and infected people can spread it to others as well. The witches do this as a form of mass sacrifice, offering everyone slain by the plague to their master, The Source of Uncleanliness.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

A young Egyptian girl of the Nawar people, named Tawni is hiding in Paris. She came to the city with her family, but everyone except her has been captured in the round up of undesirables. Her family has a tradition of fighting the Mythos, and they knew of a legend of a similar plague that struck Prague, in Bohemia, over a century ago. There, a brave Egyptian knight, whom they call St. Cathmere, defeated an evil Rat King with the use of a holy relic, the Eye of the Lioness. The relic, said to have been blessed by St. Bartholomew the Apostle, is a large silver pendant with a cat's eye moonstone set into it. It is endowed with the power to dispel any illness.

Tawni and her family suspected a new Rat King rising in Paris when they heard details about the plague. They "retrieved" (stole) the Eye of the Lioness from the tomb of St. Pancras of Rome (a 4th century martyr) in an attempt to use it to save the city. They hoped to keep a low profile, sneak into Paris, defeat the Rat King, and use the relic to cure the people of Paris and depart without anyone realizing they'd

even been there. Unfortunately, due to the Church's round up of undesirables, the Egyptian investigators are now sitting in prison, awaiting questioning and possible execution. Only Tawni remains free, the sole remaining hope to stop the plague, as she is in possession of The Eye of the Lioness.

But Tawni needs help, namely someone to pass her mission onto if (i.e., when) she is captured. That is where our feline investigators come in. Tawni has a secret: cats can understand everything she says. Unfortunately, she can't understand what cats might try to communicate back, aside from a vague form of empathy (e.g., she can sense things like fear, agreement, anger, hunger, confusion, or satisfaction). Tawni has this gift because she is a direct descendant of an ancient Egyptian high priestess. Every generation, one woman from this bloodline manifests this power, and may also be used as an avatar vessel for the Elder Goddess Bast.

Keeper Note: The Nawar people emigrated to Egypt from south Asia, during the Byzantine era. They keep themselves separate from traditional Egyptian culture. They are considered by outsiders to be both clever and often dishonorable. They are known to be talented singers, dancers, and musicians who are often hired to perform at weddings and similar celebrations. They are one of many branches of the Romani people present in the Middle East and Europe.

INVESTIGATOR'S OBJECTIVE

Before anything else, the investigators must evade the sweeps of their neighborhoods. They'll soon find themselves gathered in the ruins of the abandoned Synagogue de Paris, a place rumored to be so terribly haunted that the mob won't pursue the cats into it. In this temporary sanctuary, cats from across the city and one young Egyptian girl will decide the fate of Paris. Here the sometimes-rival bands of Paris' cats must agree to a truce and work together if they are to survive. They'll discover Tawni hiding there with them, and learn of her mission. The investigators must then choose between helping her complete her mission, or finding the safest route out of Paris and escaping to the countryside with the other cats while leaving the city to its fate.

THE CATS OF PARIS

Our brave feline investigators come from four different cat tribes, all fleeing their territories and arriving at the "haunted" Synagogue de Paris. Once there, they'll meet cats from several other tribes as well. While none of these tribes were currently at war, they still view one another as outsiders, "those not us". Trust will be uneasy at first, but the mutual crisis and a charismatic leader will forge a truce and bond between the scattered members of these various tribes.

THE FOUR TRIBES

The investigators come from four tribes; the Stacks, the Docks, the Warehouses, and the Basilica.

🐾 The Stacks Tribe (Nimble and Skilled Climbers): These cats live and hunt in the construction storage area of the Basilica of Saint-Denis. It is a sprawling place of piled boards, cut

stone, coiled ropes, and hundreds of workers. A small shanty town of workshops and huts has popped up here. There are many places for rats and mice to hide, and the tribe hunts them and gets handouts from the workers and their families. Most people either ignore the cats or are friendly towards them. These cats are known for being very agile and excellent climbers. **Clan Trick:** I Was Always Up Here.

🐾 The Docks Tribe (Salty and Tough): This a loose confederation of cats dwelling along the riverside docks, where goods are unloaded and daily catches are hauled in. These cats hunt rats and eat fish scraps, sometimes scavenged from or given by the humans who live and work here. Some also hunt for mice in and around the taverns and brothels. People mostly ignore

THE CAST OF "THE UNDESIRABLES"

Snowflake: A white queen of the Market Tribe, with a litter of kittens.

Cyrus: A massive old, blind grey tom, known for his wisdom.

Tawni: An Egyptian Nawar girl, descended from a high priestess of Bast, Favored of the Goddess of Cats.

Lazar: A patchwork tom, witch's familiar, liar, and a traitor.

Philbert: A sturdy stripped tom with a chipped fang, leader of the Tanner Tribe.

Josephine: A battle-scarred queen with a torn ear, leader of the Miller Tribe.

Jules: A thoughtful slinky house cat with sharp eyes, leader of the Merchant Tribe.

Renaud: A very stealthy grey street cat with a crooked tail, leader of the Market Tribe.

Precious: A young, well-groomed queen, leader of Lady Guinevere's "Darlings".

Mother Bast: An Elder Goddess, the Goddess of Cats.

Christian: A badly beaten boy, sick with plague.

Jean-Tom: A tuxedo tom, Christian's beloved "older brother", slain by the mob.

Maurice Gabolde: A rat catcher by trade, witch, and servant of Abthoth.

Coco: A raven, familiar of Maurice Gabolde.

Mathilde Carre: A seamstress by trade, witch and servant of Abthoth.

Rene: A goliath bullfrog, familiar of Mathilde Carre.

Eugene Vaultatt: An excommunicated priest, witch, leader of the coven, and servant of Abthoth.

Abthoth: Great Old One, the Source of Uncleanliness.

the cats here. Some can be hostile, swatting or even kicking a cat that gets too close. Others are friendly and generous, petting them and giving them scraps, taking them out fishing on a boat or letting them sleep inside by a fireplace on a cold and rainy night. They are known for being worldly and tough. **Clan Trick:** Bravo.

🐾 The Warehouse Tribe (Big and Strong): This tight knit group of cats lives in and around a set of four warehouses where goods are stored before being loaded onto or off of barges docked at the nearby river. They eat well, as the warehouses offer a lot of hunting opportunities, and are treated very well by the workers, drovers, and local residents. They spend a lot of time inside the warehouses, so their lives are easier than most cats in Paris. They are known for being large and healthy, almost pampered, but are sometimes considered "fat" by other tribes. **Clan Trick:** Bruiser.

🐾 The Basilica Tribe (Smart and Clean): This tribe of cats lives inside the growing Basilica of Saint-Denis. They are well treated by the architects, artisans, and clergy who live and work there, as the cats ensure that mice aren't chewing up support lines, blueprints, or food stores. These cats spend a lot of time around people, and lead fairly easy lives. This reflects in their grooming, and they are some of the cleanest cats in Paris. Most other tribes feel they're haughty and soft, but also rather intelligent, as most of them know how to read human writing. **Clan Trick:** Scholar.



PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

MARCEL OF THE DOCKS TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 3

STR 15 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 70 **POW** 55
DEX 95 **APP** 75 **EDU** 60 **SEN** 60

LUCK 55 **HP** 5 **MP** 11 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 70% (35/14); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 76% (38/15)

SKILLS: Climb 60%, Hiss 65%, Human Language: French 30%, Human Lore 15%, Jump 60%, Natural World 24%, Sense Danger 20%, Spot 35%, Stealth 60%, Swim 40%, Throw 45%, Yowl 60%.

TRICKS: Bravo (+10 to Dodge and Scratch), Brave (SEN factored at POWx1.2), Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences).

STRESS DISORDERS: Depression

NOTES: This daring, incredibly brave cat is known as the terror of the docks. His boldness and frightening hiss is enough to keep most humans at a respectable distance. This only failed him once, when a human threw him into the river. He managed to swim back to shore, find the person who hurled him into the water, and give him a nasty bite on the ankle. This made him a legend among both cats and humans. He knows the current crisis will be his greatest challenge, but somehow he always lands on his feet. Today will be no different.

MAX OF THE WAREHOUSE TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 6

STR 10 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 80
DEX 95 **APP** 95 **EDU** 85 **SEN** 80

LUCK 80 **HP** 6 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 14 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 60% (30/12); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 80% (40/16)

SKILLS: Climb 65%, Hiss 65%, Human Language: French 34%, Human Lore 17%, Insight 12%, Jump 60%, Listen 55%, Natural World 35%, Sense Danger 20%, Spot 50%, Stealth 55%, Throw 20% Yowl 60%.

TRICKS: Bruiser (Damage bonus gets 1 less penalty shift), Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Run Like The Wind (+2 to MOV, 14 vs 12).

STRESS DISORDERS: Chewing

NOTES: This large, powerfully built cat isn't the best fighter, climber, jumper, or hunter. That's just fine because when it comes to sheer speed, there is no cat faster in all of Paris,

maybe not in the world. He is also incredibly observant, noticing things most other cats fail to see (being rivaled in this ability only by the keen-eyed twins). He has a powerful personality and can yowl his way over most cats. Despite his large size, he is only an average fighter, as there was no competing with his former tribemate, the warrior Andres.

JEAN PIERRE OF THE STACKS TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 6

STR 05 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 85 **POW** 70
DEX 95 **APP** 70 **EDU** 80 **SEN** 70

LUCK 70 **HP** 5 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 30% (15/6); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 95% (47/19)

SKILLS: Climb 80%, Human Language: French 17%, Jump 60%, Natural World 32%, Sense Danger 20%, Spot 40%, Stealth 60%, Throw 20%.

TRICKS: I Was Always Up Here... (can jump to any possible height without rolling a Jump check, as long as no one is watching), Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Under The Feet (causes humans to fall on a Dodge roll).

STRESS DISORDERS: Self Mutilation

NOTES: This tom, a littermate to Juliane, is the best climber in all of Paris. He possesses almost preternatural reflexes as well, long honed from escaping surprise attacks from his sister. She claims to be a better fighter, but that's only if she can catch him. His extreme nimbleness can also be a dangerous weapon against humans, as he is quite adept at causing them to trip over him without getting kicked or landed on. He is confident in his own survival against the mob, as he is too quick to easily catch.

ANDRES OF THE WAREHOUSE TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 5

STR 15 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 75 **POW** 60
DEX 95 **APP** 80 **EDU** 75 **SEN** 60

LUCK 60 **HP** 6 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +2D6/-1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 80% (40/16); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 88% (44/17)

SKILLS: Climb 60%, Human Language: French 30%, Insight 15%, Listen 50%, Natural World 30%, Scent 60%, Stealth 70%, Track 30%

TRICKS: Bruiser (damage bonus improved 1 step), Catch Vermin, Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences).

STRESS DISORDERS: Aggression to people and other animals.

NOTES: This massive battle-scarred tom, though missing a chunk of his left ear, is the best fighter left among the cats of Paris. Confidence keeps him from being a braggart or bully, as those are signs of insecurity. He knows that the cats of Paris will need his strength in battle to survive. He is also a skilled and stealthy hunter. As a mouser, his abilities are unparalleled and no vermin ever escapes his claws. However, he knows that the current situation demands more than just strength and stealth, and he is quietly concerned about this.

JULIANE OF THE STACKS TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 6

STR 10 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 80 **POW** 65
DEX 95 **APP** 85 **EDU** 70 **SEN** 65

LUCK 65 **HP** 6 **MP** 13 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 40% (20/8); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 90% (45/18)

SKILLS: Human Language: French 32%, Human Lore 16%, Insight 30%, Jump 60%, Natural World 28%, Navigate 30%, Sense Danger 15%, Stealth 60%, Throw 50%.

TRICKS: I Was Always Up Here... (can jump to any possible height without rolling a Jump check, as long as no one is watching), Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Throw Things.

STRESS DISORDERS: Restlessness

NOTES: This queen is, like most former members of the Stacks Tribe, very nimble and a powerful jumper. Other than the twins, she is the only cat among the heroes who has knowledge of healing. While not as powerful a climber as her only surviving litter mate, Jean Pierre, she is a better fighter, a fact she does not let him forget. However, her true gift is knocking things down from high places, usually on someone's head. It's something of a specialty for her and always makes her smile.

THE TWINS: MADELINE & CORALLINE OF THE BASILICA TRIBE

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 4

STR 05 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 85 **POW** 70
DEX 95 **APP** 70 **EDU** 80 **SEN** 60

LUCK 70 **HP** 5 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 30% (15/6); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 76% (38/15)

SKILLS: Cuteness 80%, Human Language: French 55%, Human Language: Latin 55%, Human Lore 25%, Natural World 35%, Occult 20%, Spot 50%, Stealth 60%, Wash 75%.

TRICKS: Curious (reduce difficulty 1 level on

Listen, Scent, & Spot checks), Leap To The Moon (Dreamlands travel), Nine Lives (reroll one result to avoid fatal consequences), Scholar (can read and write, with difficulty, French).

STRESS DISORDERS: Excessive Grooming

NOTES: These identical twin queens are never apart. They are the most attractive and best groomed among the surviving cats of Paris. Unfortunately, they are also the two least equipped to survive on their own. The majority of their lives has been spent in the care of humans, specifically the clergymen overseeing construction on the Basilica. The only reason they escaped was that one of the priests allowed them to flee. The pair has great knowledge of people, language, and writing, and they hope to be of service to their fellow survivors.

THE FLIGHT TO THE SYNAGOGUE

All investigators begin play by fleeing from their clan area as mobs of humans driven mad with fear and whipped into a frenzy by the Church fill the streets, looking to round up undesirables and exterminate cats. Investigators with once benevolent humans and safe homes suddenly find themselves turned upon and fleeing for their lives. All investigators see at least one of their clan members killed by either the mob or a once-trusted human. Moments after the purge begins, a loud, haunting sound fills the twilight sky.

The sound is a very loud and powerful yowling coming

from the center of town. The howl is from an older, powerful sounding tom, promising sanctuary to any who come to him in this time of crisis. Investigators making a successful Know roll identify the yowler as Cyrus the Elder, an old, half-blind solitary tom who dwells in the ruins of the old Synagogue de Paris. While a mysterious loner with no ties to any one clan, he is widely respected and trusted by the cats of Paris. However, his strange ways and choice of residence, a supposedly haunted, burned-out synagogue, causes many cats to fear him.

All cats who flee towards the Synagogue de Paris have a chance of reaching safety. The majority of cats running in other directions are swept up by the mobs and killed. A few of these do reach the safety of the countryside, but only those whose clans hold territories on the outskirts of Paris. The investigators' clans are from the interior of Paris and are unable to escape at this time.

FLEEING THE MOB

All investigators have at least one encounter with the mob. They'll be chased through the streets by dozens of angry humans, armed with clubs, torches, and the occasional pitchfork or baling hook. There is no way for the investigators to defeat these mobs, only escape from them. During this mad flight, the investigators witness cats falling prey to the mob, hear their horrified cries, and in some cases, their pleas for mercy, if the attacks come from a human they knew and once trusted.

To escape unharmed, investigators must make one of

ANGRY MOB (2D8+2)

Human, Age and Gender Varies

STR 40 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 50 **POW** 50
DEX 45 **APP** 40 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 60
LUCK 30 **HP** 9 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

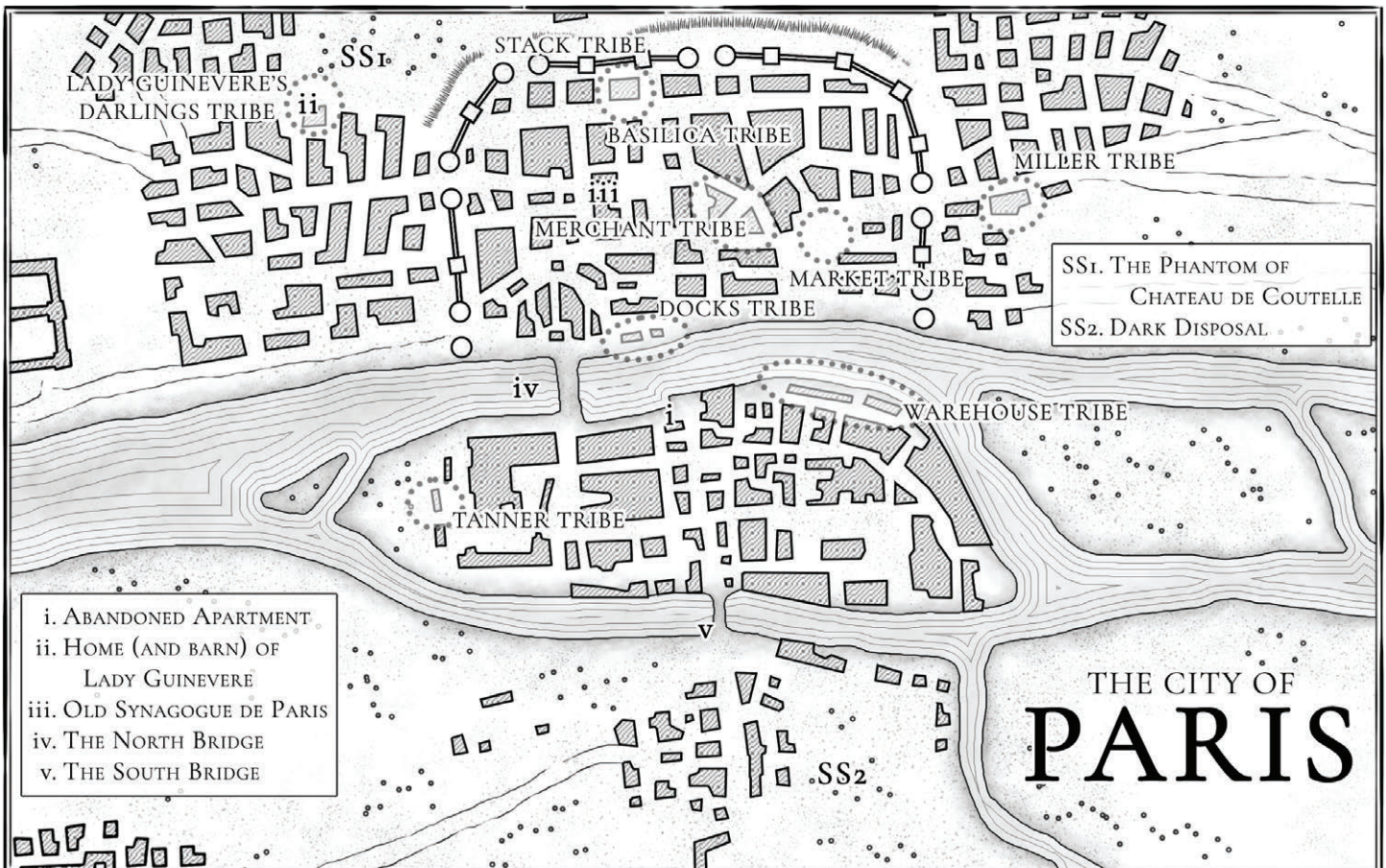
ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 35% (17/7), damage 1D3+DB; Club, torch, pitchfork, baling hook 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+DB; Dodge 22% (11/4)

SKILLS: Listen 25%, Spot Hidden 30%.

ARMOR: None.

the following rolls: A Hard Stealth check, an Extreme Cuteness check, a Hard Hiss check, or a Hard Climb check. Cats employing any of the following tricks while fleeing from the mob only need a Regular success: Cat Burglar, Fish for Tea, Fence Runner, Leap, Master Thief, Rooftop Runner, Rumblepuss, or Show Cat.

Investigators failing their rolls are attacked by a human with a random weapon (see above). Investigators may attempt to Dodge such attacks. Any cat not instantly killed has a round to escape, as the humans are too busy with their hunt to be thorough. This allows wounded investigators to play dead until the mob





passes, slink away into the shadows, or scramble away with a burst of adrenaline caused by fear.

Investigators who aren't being attacked can assist those who are (PC or NPC cat), if they are within 10 feet of the unfortunate feline. These heroic cats can interrupt an attack by running between the human's legs and knocking them off balance by making a successful DEX check. Should this check fail, the assisting cat will likely be attacked the following round.

Any cat who manages to reach the safety of the ruins of the Synagogue de Paris alive must make a SEN check for 1/1D4 SEN.

THE REFUGEES

Once inside the Synagogue de Paris, the investigators can see the place is filled with several dozen cats from various tribes. Many of the cats are wounded, limping, or singed from torches. Most are panting from exhaustion and fear; others are shaking as they struggle to maintain their sentience in the face of the horror they've endured. Some are very old, while others are very young, ranging from pampered pets to battle-hardened street warriors. Before any of the investigators can even take stock of their surroundings, a white queen with badly burned rear legs and tail races into the synagogue with a kitten in her mouth.

SAVING THE KITTENS!

The white queen is a shop cat, from the Market Tribe, by the name of Snowflake. She drops the kitten and

immediately tries to run back outside. Two other cats jump on her to stop her, thinking she's gone feral from fear, but she starts screaming, "Please, I have *three more* out there. They are hidden behind a barrel a block from here. Let me go! In the name of Mother Bast let me *go!*" Outside, the mob has reached the synagogue, but hesitates to enter out of fear. An old limping queen, also from the Market tribe, tries to comfort Snowflake saying, "It's too late, and if you go out there you'll die. You saved one, and he needs you. It will have to be enough. It's in the Goddess' paws now." Snowflake goes frantic, futilely trying to wrestle free, screaming, "*No! No!* Let me go! They're alive, they need me! I'm their mother!"

The investigators must decide quickly whether to help Snowflake or not. If they don't step forward to help save the kittens, the scene ends with Snowflake losing her sentience and going feral. She drags her kitten into a corner, and hisses at any who come near her. Outside the cries of dying cats fill the night sky for a few moments then end as despair falls over the cats gathered here. Soon Cyrus arrives (see "The Meeting with Cyrus").

If the investigators decide to help the three stranded kittens, they must rush out of safety and back through the angry mob. While only three investigators are required to carry the kittens back, more can go and assist (i.e., run interference, distract, or take over for anyone wounded or slain in the attempt). They must make two of the following rolls: A Hard Stealth check,

an Extreme Cuteness check, a Hard Hiss check, or a Hard Climb check. On the first roll, investigators receive a bonus dice, as the crowd is shocked that cats are actually running towards them. This first successful roll allows for the investigators to reach the barrel behind which Snowflake's three kittens are hidden. All the kittens are there, still safe and undetected by the mob.

The second roll is to return to the sanctuary of the synagogue, but this means running through the mob surrounding the structure. However, as soon as the investigators begin to return, terrible caterwauling roars out from high up in the ruined synagogue, frightening the mob, as they all believe the structure to be haunted. This also grants the investigators a bonus die to their rolls while attempting to return to the temple.

Should the investigators return with the kittens (even some of them), the spirit of the cats here rises considerably. It becomes a moment of hope in this terrible, nightmarish day, and those gathered here begin to feel that maybe they aren't doomed after all. Snowflake is eternally grateful, thanking the investigators and calling them heroes, as she gathers up her rescued kittens and begins frantically cleaning them.

THE SYNAGOGUE DE PARIS

This large stone building was once a mighty and grand affair, but it is now little more than a dark and dirty burned-out shell. The walls and floor are stained by soot and ash, the high rafter beams and ceiling

blackened by smoke. Half-destroyed benches, tables, and podiums are scattered here and there. The building once had a 2nd story, but that has long ago collapsed in on itself, making the place a single huge rectangle of charred stone.

THE SURVIVORS

Within are twenty-three cats from five tribes (The Tanners, The Millers, The Merchants, The Market, and Old Lady Guinevere's "Darlings" Tribe). The clans are independent, and defend their territory, so most of these cats are seeing one another for the very first time. Tensions between them begin to rise as they're crowded into this confined space. Worse still, The Tanner and the Miller tribe are bitter rivals who've been skirmishing over territory for years.

THE MEETING WITH CYRUS

None of the cats here know for certain who or what called them here, or the source of the mysterious yowling. The crowd outside seems confused and afraid, debating about what should be done, but none of them have the courage to enter the synagogue. For the moment, it's a safe haven from the mob, but not from the cats themselves.

In a far corner, two groups of cats, from the Miller Tribe and the Tanner Tribe, get too close to one another and begin hissing and growling at each other. They begin squabbling over space, with both groups claiming "this area" of the temple. Cats from other tribes begin backing away as a fight seems to be inevitable when suddenly there is a cry from the rafters above.

"*Stop!*" calls out a massive, grey tomcat. He leaps down from the high rafters with a loud thud and a clumsy couple of steps to catch his balance. But this becomes suddenly impressive as everyone realizes the aged tom is blind, with glossy grey, milky eyes. From the sound of his powerful voice, it is clear that this cat is the one who called everyone here, and the source of the frightening yowling that gave the mob pause. He goes to a central spot in the room and begins speaking.

"Your spot, my spot, my territory, your territory... Can you see, Brothers and Sisters? Can you understand? That's all gone. I am Cyrus, and this is my spot, mine alone. But I called you here, and I tell you now, this is *our* spot. The Tanners and the Millers, The Merchants and the Market, The Docks and the Stacks, the Basilica and the Warehouse, nobody needs to fight anybody, because *our* fight begins now. Our fight to survive this night and all the nights after is the only fight that matters. How do I know this? Because even without eyes I can see the situation clearly. Can you count, Brothers and Sisters? There are more of them than there are of us. I say this right now, there is only *one* clan. Look to your fellow cats, from these scattered clans, for they are your brothers and sisters now. Can you see it? *Can you see it? Can you see it?*"

Cyrus is powerfully charismatic and a brilliant orator. Many cats are deeply moved and show their support with meows and by rubbing against former rivals and strangers, sharing their scent to form a single new clan. They are now the Survivors, the Clan of Paris.

THE TWO PATHS

Cyrus continues, "Now, we need to be smart if we are going to survive. This sickness, this evil, has driven the humans mad with fear, and they have turned against not only us, but one another. Maybe it's time to go... maybe it's time to leave Paris for the countryside beyond, live wild and free in the forests and fields like our ancestors. It will be a hard and dangerous path, but we can make it if we stick together.

"Or... or... we can fight against this darkness and reclaim what is ours. There is an evil growing in Paris, like the bite of a tick, draining life and spreading disease. I have sensed it. I know it is here. If we can scratch out that tick, destroy the evil heart of this nightmare, then we can wake up to a new tomorrow. A new dawn where the people of Paris clearly see that we are not the enemy, but their saviors. Are we brave enough to be heroes? Are we strong enough to escape this dying city to make a new destiny beyond its walls?

"What shall we do? My clan, my brothers and sisters, The Survivors... I say..."

Cyrus is cut off, as death claims him, and the nightmare begins anew.



RAT TERRIERS (x3)

Dog, Age and Gender Varies

STR 25 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 15 **INT** N/A **POW** 45
DEX 65 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN/SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 8 **MP** 9 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** +5/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +4D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting 40% (20/8), damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 32% (16/6)

SKILLS: Listen 50%, Track 85%.

ARMOR: None.

THE TERRIERS ATTACK

The mob outside, too afraid to enter the “haunted” synagogue, form a new plan. A rat catcher in the mob comes forward with his three rat terriers. These small, vicious hunting dogs are bred and trained to squeeze into narrow spaces to chase down and kill rats. The mob pushes these murderous beasts through a gap in the wall of the synagogue. The first dog into the ruined temple charges straight for Cyrus, savagely biting and shaking him about. Fur and blood fly everywhere amidst the sound of snapping bones and yowls of pain. In moments, the wise and noble Cyrus the Elder is dead. All cats who witness his demise must make a SEN check for 1/1D4 SEN.

Cats scream and scatter. Many try to climb up beyond the terrier reach. Many cats are too old or wounded to climb well and stumble in a panic. Others are too young and small to reach safety. A few cats try to help Snowflake by carrying one of her litter to safety, but everything happens so fast. Not everyone is nimble or lucky enough to escape as the terriers go about their savage business. It is chaos!

The investigators must defeat two of the three terriers. These savage dogs fight until killed. Investigators can fight these creatures with tooth and claw, swarming them and delivering quick attacks to halt their killing spree. The dogs attack by biting, and with a Hard success on their attack they clamp their jaws onto a victim and do automatic damage each round until killed.

Battle Strategy / Look Out Below

There are high rafters above, which can be accessed with a successful Climb check. Once off the ground, the cats cannot be attacked by the dogs, but not every cat can manage the climb. But for those who can, there are four piles of loose bricks and timber that they can dislodge with a successful STR check. Cats notice this when one of them knocks some bricks down as he scrambles up to safety, scaring one of the dogs and ruining the terrier’s attack on one of the fleeing cats.

Cats knocking these piles down have a 25% chance of hitting a dog below. This raises to 50% chance if they make a Luck check (as the dog passes under the pile that round). However, if a dog is intentionally lured below one of the piles, say by a fleeing cat working with

a cat above, the chance to hit rises to 75%. Dogs hit by one of these falling piles suffer 2D10 points of damage. If the attack roll fails, the cat must make a Luck check, to avoid accidentally hitting a fellow cat below.

While the battle rages two newcomers sneak into the synagogue.

Lazar, The Traitor

During the battle, a cat enters the synagogue through a shadow using the Shadow Walker trick. The cat, a patchwork black, white, and striped tom, is named Lazar. He is from no tribe of Paris, but is the familiar of Eugene Vaultt, leader of the witches of the Abboth coven. Lazar has been assigned to following a certain human, who is also sneaking in to take refuge with the cats of Paris.

Lazar’s mission is to locate the Eye of the Lioness and bring it to his master. The witches have been warned by their dark god that a band of foreigners would arrive in Paris with an artifact capable of destroying their link to Abboth and ruining their plan. They were also warned that should this happen, their lives would be forfeit as punishment for their failure. When Lazar finds the refuge filled with cats, he decides to do something to gain their confidence, so he singlehandedly kills one of the terriers.

At some point in the chaos, Lazar drops down atop one of the terriers and claws out both of its eyes. This happens as the dog stops running to bite one of the cats. Lazar bites down on the back of the dog’s neck, paralyzing him, before rolling the dog over to disembowel the dog with a powerful rip attack. It is a savage display of fighting prowess, unusual because Lazar does not appear particularly strong or threatening.

If questioned Lazar explains that he “just got lucky” and was “so afraid and angry something snapped inside. I’ve never done anything like that before,” he claims (detectable as untrue with a successful Insight roll). If questioned about his origins, he says he is from Venice (which is true) and was traveling with his owner, a pilgrim, who’s come to Paris to worship

LAZAR

*Patchwork cat, witch’s familiar,
 liar, and a traitor.
 Cat, Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 5*

STR 15 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 40
DEX 90 **APP** 50 **EDU** 60 **SEN** 00
LUCK 40 **HP** 5 **MP** 8 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 50% (25/10); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

SKILLS: Fast Talk 65%, Insight 65%, Listen 50%, Occult 60%, Spot Hidden 40%, Stealth 85%.

ARMOR: None.

TRICKS: Familiar, Shadow Walker.

(also true), but they got separated when the purge began (detectable as partially true, but misleading, with a successful Insight roll).

Lazar tries to complete his mission of bringing the Eye of the Lioness to his master. Failing that he attempts to keep it far away from the Font of Pestilence for the next few days. After about three days, the plague will reach critical mass, and eventually kill 1/3rd of the city’s population (roughly 84,000 people) over about a week’s time. If his true loyalties are discovered, he fights and kills if he has to. He is not here to make friends, and he is loyal to his master Eugene. All attempts to appeal to his feline nature or species loyalty fall on deaf ears.

THE MOB WITHDRAWS

After the crowd hears the yelping, dying cries of the terriers, the mob quickly disperses in fear. They’ve become convinced the ruined synagogue is haunted, so they run to the nearest church official to report on what they’ve experienced. This buys the cats some time, but not much. In about 90 minutes, the mob returns, under the direct control of a priest. The priest has devised a plan to assault the ruins and slay every “Servant of Satan” within.

TAWNI, THE GIRL WHO TALKS TO CATS

As the battle ends, Snowflake screams, “My kitten, one of my kittens is gone! Has anyone seen her?” One of the cats calls out, “Where is old Adelaide [a very old queen with bad back legs from age]?” Suddenly the kitten and the old queen begin to meow, from high above in the rafters. They are both safe, and in the arms of a human woman of about sixteen. She is dusky-skinned, dressed in a dark grey cloak, with colorful clothing underneath, and high travel boots. She wears a single gold hoop earring, and carries a dagger with a cat’s eye topaz in it partially hidden in her right boot. This is Tawni, favored of the Goddess Bast. Tawni scooped up the cats and climbed out of reach to protect them.

Note: If the cats need help with the terriers, then, after saving Adelaide and the kitten, Tawni hurls her dagger into one of the dogs, slaying it.

The human woman speaks, and amazingly, all the cats here understand her perfectly without needing to roll Human Language. She puts the kitten and the old queen down and tries to comfort them and the other cats here. Tawni says, “I followed the call. I guess you all did too. Maybe we’ll be safe for a bit. I am sorry about the old tom. His call saved my life. You poor things! I lost my family to the mob too. This is madness... Don’t they know we’ve come to save them? I won’t hurt you, you poor dears; I’m not like those people out there. I need to rest, and think... maybe there is still some hope.”

Tawni knows she has a special, almost supernatural, connection to cats. It runs in her family. Unfortunately while cats can understand her perfectly, she cannot understand them. She possesses a sort of empathic connection with cats, allowing her to determine general feelings through their replies. This makes communication difficult, but not wholly impossible. If the PCs try to communicate with Tawni, she senses

the emotion behind their responses, but not their literal meaning.

TAWNI'S MISSION

The young woman talks to the cats, as she pets those who allow it. She does this to calm herself and sort out her thoughts, as she is lonely, sad, and afraid. The investigators gain the following information from listening to her and may try to communicate with her if they wish. However, a few cats, led by Lazar, advise everyone not to trust her, saying "She may not be one of them, but she is not one of us. She'll lead the mob straight to us if we stay anywhere near her."

TAWNI RELATES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AS SHE BABBLES TO THE CATS:

1. Her name is Tawni, and she is a Nawar Egyptian who has come to Paris with her family on a mission to stop "The Rat King".
2. She has an artifact called the Eye of the Lioness, which can end this plague and purify Paris of the Rat King's curse.
3. Her family hoped to sneak into Paris, find the Rat King's Lair, use the artifact to purify it, and sneak out before the Church realized they were there.
4. Sure, yes, they robbed the Tomb of St. Pancras to get the Eye of the Lioness, but it was for a good reason! It's not like the Pope was going to believe them. Oh, loan us this artifact so we can save Paris—we'll bring it right back. They see us and all they see are foreign thieves; no one ever see us as heroes and no one ever will.
5. The women in her family have a special connection to cats. They pass down stories that long ago their family served a goddess of cats in the land of the pharaohs, long before the time of Moses. She doesn't know if that's true, but she does know she can sense what cats are feeling, and they always seem to know what she's thinking.

DEBATE

In the short time before the mob returns, the Survivors must make a plan. The cats look to the investigators for leadership, especially if they attempted to rescue (successfully or not) Snowflake's kittens. The PCs represent the Docks, Stacks, Warehouse, and Basilica tribe, in a war council. Four other tribes send a representative to discuss matters:

1. **For the Tanner Tribe:** Philbert, a sturdy, striped tom with a chipped fang.
2. **For the Miller Tribe:** Josephine, a battle-scarred queen with a torn ear.
3. **For the Merchant Tribe:** Jules, a thoughtful, slinky house cat with sharp eyes.
4. **For the Market Tribe:** Renaud, a very stealthy grey street cat with a crooked tail.

5. For Lady Guinevere's "Darlings"

Tribe: Precious, a young well-groomed queen with bright green eyes.

Unfortunately, Lazar inserts himself into the debate, even though he is solitary and represents no one but himself (and the witches, of course).

The choice is whether the cats flee Paris or help Tawni attempt to defeat the witches and end the plague. Philbert and Renaud want to stay and defeat the cult, while Josephine and Jules think it would be best to escape Paris and make for the countryside. Lazar sides with Philbert and Renaud but says they should take the artifact from the girl and ditch her, saying "We don't need her; she'll only slow us down or turn on us as soon as she's in danger. We can't trust humans, not anymore." Precious is undecided on the matter but listens intently and offers intelligent, but compassionate opinions.

THE MAIN POINTS OF CONTENTION ARE:

- ❖ There are too many kittens and old cats to risk taking on the cult,
- ❖ No one knows a safe route out of the city,
- ❖ There is no guarantee that outside of Paris will be any safer than inside. There are bound to be cats with territories in the countryside, as well as wolves, foxes, and eagles.

THE ANSWERS TO THESE PROBLEMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- ❖ A scout team or war party should be sent out, while the other cats find a safe place to hide. Once the witches are dead, or a safe route found, that force then returns to the safe hiding place and either informs the others that the crisis is over or leads them out of Paris. Precious claims to know of such a place, the old abandoned barn of Lady Guinevere. She says this was where her tribe was headed before a mob intercepted them and forced them deeper into the city (see "The Hideout").
- ❖ While no one cat knows a safe route out of the city, together the cats of this new tribe do. Since they all controlled different territory, if they pool their knowledge they can plot a relatively safe route from their current location to a large farm on the outskirts of Paris, whose fields lead to the countryside (see "Escape Route"). It turns out that the first stop on this route would be the old barn of Lady Guinevere.
- ❖ There is no answer for this, as it is an unknown variable. No cat here, except Lazar, is from outside of Paris. It becomes the age old question: is the devil you know better than the devil you don't? Lazar says that wolves, foxes, and worse things roam outside of the city and that life for a feral cat in the countryside is both hard and short. He tries to sway the cats to stay in Paris so that Eye of the Lioness remains within reach of the witches.

A Message from Bast

Shortly before the mob returns, Tawni, exhausted from her ordeal, falls asleep. Once this happens, the

goddess Bast decides she must become directly involved. Bast manifests into Tawni's physical form as she sleeps, suddenly rising from slumber as a beautiful cat-headed woman wearing the girl's clothing. The goddess then addresses the cats, giving them her blessing. This grants every cat here, except Lazar, +40 Luck points (if the Keeper uses the optional rules for spending luck), which restore any lost luck or are bankable above Max Luck for the duration of this adventure. Lazar slips away as the Goddess appears. Bast quickly explains a few things, saying, "We don't have much time; she'll wake up soon."

1. The Rat King is actually a trio of witches who worship one of her enemies, Abhoth, the source of uncleanness.
2. The Eye of the Lioness is a powerful charm; they can use it to find the witches' lair, sever any link Abhoth has with this world, and to detect any unnatural threats.
3. If they find the source of the plague, they must drop the Eye of the Lioness into it. This not only stops the plague, but also allows those already infected to recover.
4. Tawni is precious to me. She will follow her heart, and you must do the same. When the time comes, I know you will make your mother proud, my dear children.

THE MOB RETURNS

After about 90 minutes the mob returns, augmented by a number of city watchman, a handful of plague doctors, and a priest. Many in the crowd carry torches, and others carry bundles of sticks, armfuls of hay, and small barrels of fish oil. The priest begins giving a speech about using fire to purify this den of evil and the unwholesome spirits within. After his speech, he recites a few prayers and a blessing over the crowd as they prepare to destroy the synagogue. Their plan is to use fire to block all the escape points and let the heat, flames, and smoke kill everything within the old ruined temple. Unless the Survivors break out of the temple, and quickly, they'll be trapped and exterminated. Tawni realizes this, and hastily makes a decision.

The Sacrifice of Tawni

The Nawar girl paces back and forth a few times, muttering to herself before making up her mind. She asks the gathered cats, "I need the bravest of you all to come forward." Should any PC do so, she takes out a small silver pendant coated with a dark patina and set with a cat's eye moonstone. If no one steps forward, she picks either the largest, fastest, or least injured PC. She secures it around the cat's neck with a ribbon and says, "You must carry the Eye of the Lioness to safety. If the Church gets it, then all hope for Paris is lost. Get everyone ready to run out the back; don't forget the kittens. I can't let them do this to you all. I'll find you as soon as I can... if I can... If nothing else I can save all of you."

She then goes to the front entrance, and waits for the cats to ready themselves to make their break out. At the back, there are only one or two nervous looking townsfolk, who don't seem overly alert or able-bodied.



THE EYE OF THE LIONESS

This antique silver pendant has a cat's eye moonstone mounted in the center of it, allowing the gem to be visible from the front and back. It is an enchanted item, able to act as an Elder Sign, with the power of closing pathways between dimensions. It is warded against evil, so neither Lazar nor the witches can touch it with bare skin (it burns for 1 point of damage per round of contact). Those with Bast's favor (such as Tawni's family, people who love cats, and good-hearted felines) can look through the cat's eye and see through it.

Those who see the world through the Eye of the Lioness see with the power of Bast's vision, allowing them to detect a waving shadow aura around any of Abthoth's servants. This allows the investigators to:

- 🐾 Identify the witches
- 🐾 Follow any of the undead rats back to the witches' lair and the Font of Pestilence
- 🐾 Possibly unmask Lazar's true intentions

When Tawni sees the cats are ready, she makes her move, and so too should the Survivors, if they wish to escape.

The young woman takes a deep breath and then marches outside with all the bravado she can muster. She begins shouting at the crowd, warning them that if they harm her they'll suffer the full wrath of a witch's curse! She begins muttering indecipherable words, mixing phrases from a few languages she knows as she waves her hands around as if she is casting a spell. The crowd's resolve begins to waver, and they hesitate for a few moments while the priest berates them for their cowardliness.

This grand pantomime works only so long, and soon,

members of the crowd begin hurling rocks at Tawni. One strikes her in the head and she falls to her knees as the mob rushes her. She is pummeled and kicked before being pulled away from the mob by the city watchmen. The priest orders the watchmen: "Take the witch to the inquisitors, with the rest of her filthy kind." The crowd follows in a procession, calling out, "Burn the witch! Burn the witch!" Tawni is bloody, bruised, and slipping in and out of consciousness as she is dragged off, but alive.

If the investigators lead the Survivors away during this diversion, they can reach the barn of Lady Guinevere without incident. It's a harrowing dash, down a few deserted streets and alleyways, but as the plague has hit the neighborhood hard, almost everyone here is dead. After about 15 minutes of travel, the cats reach the old barn of Lady Guinevere. Depending on casualties from the terrier attack, and taking into account the death of old Cyrus, 12–15 cats reach the hide out.

THE HIDEOUT

This large, old barn hasn't been used much over the past few years. The neighbors have borrowed the space from the elderly woman who owns it to store hay in, so there is an abundance of fairly fresh hay lying about. The barn has an old carriage in the center, lots of old rusty tools, and four empty stalls where horses once stood. The barn's door is locked, but there are at least three openings in the door and walls where something the size of a cat can enter or exit with ease. A number of cats from Lady Guinevere's Darlings are hiding here already, terrified and confused. They are quickly adopted into the Survivors, after a joyful reunion with Precious. Unfortunately, they also explain how the kind human Lady Guinevere lies dead in the house beside the barn, succumbing to the plague. This brings the number of cats in the Survivors to twenty-two (not including Lazar or the investigators).

PLAN ONE: ABANDON PARIS

Should the investigators still opt for and persuade the rest of the Survivors to go with the Abandon Paris plan, even after the appearance of Bast, there are several challenges. First, with so many cats hiding and so little to eat here, the Survivors can only remain for a couple of days. Time is not on their side. The PCs must plan their escape route, scout it out for safety, and then return to the hide out to gather the tribe. That's the plan anyway, but fate won't be so kind.

ABANDON PARIS ROUTE

Speaking with the council members, the investigators can plot a route out of Paris, as the various cats, including themselves, know something of the areas their old tribes once held. After a discussion, a rough route is planned out, marked by three landmarks. Unfortunately, the ways north, east, and west are blocked by city wall, leaving the only clear route south, across the Seine River. The route is as follows:

- 🐾 **1st Leg:** The Hideout to The North Bridge

- 🐾 **2nd Leg:** The North Bridge to The Abandoned Apartment

- 🐾 **3rd Leg:** The Abandoned Apartment to the South Bridge

- 🐾 **Final Leg:** To the first farm south of Paris

PLAN ONE, STAGE ONE: SCOUTING THE ROUTE

The first part of this plan calls for the investigators traveling this route to learn its particular dangers. It must be a route which the old and young cats can manage as well, as nobody wants to leave anyone behind.

Unfortunately, they will never get the opportunity to return to Paris and gather the others. While the investigators are gone the mob locates the cats hiding in Lady Guinevere's barn. Most are killed, a few scatter, and a single cat (Renard) sets out to deliver the grim news to the investigators.

STOP 1: THE NORTH BRIDGE

The best route here takes the investigators across a mostly deserted neighborhood. They must then sneak through a few alleyways and across a street where some people may be about, to reach a relatively safe hiding spot in a drainage pipe just under the north bridge. This requires three rolls, a Spot Hidden in the deserted neighborhood, a Stealth roll to get through the alleyways and across the street, and a Climb to get to the pipe safely.

Owl Attack: The Spot Hidden Roll

In the deserted neighborhood, a predator is watching the area. It is a very large European Eagle Owl. This bird is strong enough to kill and fly off with a fox, so a cat would be easy prey. If the cats spot it, they can wait for it to fly off and move safely. If they don't it may swoop down and try to pick off one of the PCs.

EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL

Owl

STR 35 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 25 **INT** N/A **POW** 50
DEX 90 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN/SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 7 **MP** 10 **MOVE**
 4/10 (flying) **BUILD** +7/-1

DAMAGE BONUS: +6D6/-1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Claws, Bite) 45% (20/8), damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

SKILLS: Stealth 50%, Spot Hidden 80%.

ARMOR: None.

The Stealth Roll

This area still has people in it, many of whom are armed and still conducting the sweep of the city's undesirables. However, the crowd is much smaller than before. If the cats are detected, they are chased by the small mob intent on claiming the bounty offered by the Church for dead cats. The investigators must evade the humans and lose their trail, and can do this in a number of ways

ANGRY MOB (1D8+2)

Human, Age and Gender Varies

STR 40 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 50 **POW** 50
DEX 45 **APP** 40 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 60
LUCK 30 **HP** 9 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 35% (17/7), damage 1D3+DB; Club, torch, pitchfork, baling hook 35% (17/7), damage 1D6+DB; Dodge 22% (11/4)

SKILLS: Listen 25%, Spot Hidden 30%.

ARMOR: None.

(climbing onto a roof, running away, hiding, sneaking away, having one of their number lead the pursuers away and then doubling back).

The Climb Roll

Cats who fail this run the risk of falling into the river. Any cat who fails the climb check must make a Regular DEX check; those who pass fall halfway down and catch themselves on the muddy bank, while those who fail fall into the river and are quickly swept down it. Any cat in the river must make a Swim check to avoid being swept down the river, never to be seen again. Those who catch themselves on the muddy bank must make a Climb check with a penalty dice to scramble back up and reach the hiding place, with those who fail falling into the river.

STOP 2: ABANDONED APARTMENT

Getting across the north bridge requires a Stealth roll, as armed guards patrol its length. Employing a lookout to watch the guards and help time the cats' crossing grants the cats a bonus die to their Stealth roll. Cats failing this roll must make a Luck check. Those who

RAT PACK

Rat, Age and Gender Varies

STR 35 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 35 **INT** N/A **POW** 50
DEX 70 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN/SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 9 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** -1

DAMAGE BONUS: -1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Overwhelm (mnvr): As a pack they may assault and overwhelm an individual using the maneuver rules; because of their numbers they gain one bonus die on the attack. Such an attack would involve swarming over the target, biting and scratching as they do so. Fighting (bite or scratch) 40% (20/8), damage 1D3; Overwhelm (mnvr) damage 2D6; Dodge 42% (21/8)

ARMOR: None.

succeed hear the guards cursing them and shouting, "Scat, shoo, get out of here you flea-ridden vermin", but are not attacked. Those who fail are attacked, and either slain by the guard's weapons, kicked over the side of the bridge, or manage to dodge the guards' attack and flee. The guards aren't interested in bounties or cats, so while it seems dangerous, the guards are content to ignore all but the most unlucky cats.

Reaching the abandoned apartment, the cats find it a safe place to hide from humans; however, it is overrun with (ordinary) rats. The investigators must kill or drive off the rats before they can claim this place as a hideout. The rats don't go quietly and try to swarm the investigators, killing them if possible. If wounded for half of their hit points, injured rats flee. If half of their number are slain or driven off, the entire pack of rats withdraws.

Plague Rats

After the battle the cats may realize that several of the rats in this group are unlike the others. These reek as if they have been dead for a week, and are crawling with lice. Their eyes are filled with a putrid green puss, and any cats biting such rats taste rotting flesh. These are undead plague rats created by the witches of Abhoth. Examining a plague rat costs investigators 0/1D3 SEN (+1 if they accidentally bite one).

PLAGUE RATS

Plague Rats are rats who have been drowned in the Font of Pestilence. The magic of the font gives the rats a second life as a sacred plague spreader in the service of Abhoth, The Source of Uncleanliness. There are currently more than 200 such rats in Paris. While undead and rotting inside, these rats don't act or look much different than regular rats. They can be killed just as easily as a regular rat, and do not have any special attacks or immunities. What they do have are rather dangerous passengers crawling through their undead fur.

They teem with what appear to be lice, but are actually tiny flakes of Abhoth's own flesh. If even one of these living bits of tissue comes within 5 feet of a human, there is a 50% chance it leaps through the air to land on them. Humans coming into contact with these "lice" become infected with the plague now engulfing Paris.

STOP 3: THE SOUTH BRIDGE

After leaving the abandoned apartments, the investigators have an easier time of it. The plague has hit the island in the river very hard, and many of the people here are dead or dying from it. Very few people are well enough to continue the sweep ordered by the Church. There are dead cats and people who've died from violence or plague littering the streets, with rats nibbling on corpses here and there. A few of these rats are the undead plague rats of Abhoth (detectable

through using the Eye of the Lioness).

Investigators must make a successful Stealth check to reach the south bridge undetected. Those who fail attract the attention of a mob, but the mob is so sick and weak it only gives a short chase before giving up, its members coughing up blood and collapsing into heaps with convulsions. Only investigators who fail both a Stealth and a Luck check are unable to outrun such groups of attackers, and are attacked for 1 one round (longer if they stand their ground).

SICK AND ANGRY MOB (1D6+2)

Human, Age and Gender Varies

STR 30 **CON** 35 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 50 **POW** 30
DEX 35 **APP** 35 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 30
LUCK 30 **HP** 8 **MP** 6 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** -1

DAMAGE BONUS: -1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+DB; Club, torch, pitchfork, baling hook 25% (12/5), damage 1D6+DB; Dodge 17% (8/3)

SKILLS: Listen 20%, Spot Hidden 25%.

ARMOR: None.

Christian and Jean-Tom

As the investigators move towards the south bridge they hear the sound of crying. They soon see a boy of about nine, sobbing and muttering, crumpled to his knees, half in the street. The boy is beaten and bloody, with a gash in his scalp, split lip, and blackened eye. In his arms is a large tuxedo cat, limp and dead. The boy is visibly sick, with yellow eyes and pockmarked skin, wheezing between his sobs. He mutters, "Jean-Tom, wake up... please wake up. It's me, your little brother, your Christian. I'm sorry. I tried to save you... I tried, but they hit me with a rock. But we got away, we got away... please wake up Jean-Tom... please don't be dead..." If the cats approach the boy and his cat, he weeps and tells them "I'm sorry. I tried to help him. I did. Forgive me... forgive me..."

Investigators experiencing this must make a SEN check for 1/1D3. This scene is meant to show the cats that there are good people in Paris, people who would put their life at risk to save a beloved cat. This is their last opportunity to change their minds and try to eliminate the witches and save the people of Paris.

The South Bridge

The length of this bridge is littered with the sick, the dead, and the dying. They lie here and there, in various positions; some look as if in prayer, while others clutch one another for whatever comfort they can find. The cats can avoid them by running and dodging across the bridge, or by walking along the railing. As in the streets, rats (including undead ones) nibble on corpses and on those too weak to defend themselves. The stench is horrific. Those crossing the bridge must



make a SEN check for 1/1D3 points.

Freedom and Death

At the far end of the bridge are a group of plague doctors, who are in the process of stacking corpses into a pile about nine feet high, before lighting it on fire. There is a donkey-drawn cart loaded with corpses. At the side of the road leading from the bridge are four bonfires of corpses, earlier piles set aflame by the plague doctors. These men ignore the cats as they attend to their grim duties. Investigators witnessing this must make a SEN check for 1/1D3 points.

Beyond this grisly scene, the investigators can reach a wheat field, the outer edge of a massive farm. They have arrived in the countryside, verifying a safe route by which to escape Paris. It is now time to return to the barn and lead the rest of the Survivors out of the city. But halfway back across the south bridge, they see a cat coming towards them. They quickly recognize him as Renard, the stealthy cat of the Market tribe.

THE GRIM MESSENGER

Renard is in very bad shape, walking with a shuffling limp, keeping one front paw raised whenever possible. One eye is swollen shut, and he smells of smoke. When the investigators reach him Renard collapses and begins talking. He says, "I found you... I knew the route so I came... Nothing left... the mob found us... with oil and torches... burned the barn... a few got out, but they set on us..."

If Lazar remained undiscovered when the investigators left, he'll add, "He led them right to us... slipped out through the shadows... Lazar... it was Lazar... he was a familiar... a witch's familiar...he betrayed us all."

PLAGUE DOCTORS

These physicians dress in long, dark leather coats, with tall wide-brimmed leather hats, gloves, and boots. They wear full face masks of leather with long beak-like proboscises filled with medicinal herbs and flowers in an attempt to purify the air they breathe. Most are not real doctors, or are rather unskilled ones who cannot maintain a standard practice. That usually isn't a problem because their main duty is not to heal the sick, but to tend to the aftermath of devastating outbreaks. Dozens of plague doctors are now in Paris, carting away plague victim's corpses for burning and keeping an accurate count of the dead. (Historically they don't appear until the 17th century, and certainly not as described here. We have chosen to include them here, with full knowledge of their historical inaccuracy, for the sake of dramatic description.)

Renard is dying from internal injuries. He begins coughing and sputtering in pain, muttering, "dead... all dead... only I escaped... don't go back... there's no one left... At least we made it...at least...we..." These are his last words as he passes away.

ABANDON PARIS: EPILOGUE & SANITY AWARDS

It is now too late to save Paris from the witches, as their work is now done. The coven slips away and lets the city fall into the firm grip of death over the next few weeks. In the end, over 80,000 people die, and the only cats who survive are the investigators. The only cats they have saved are themselves.

Should this outcome come to pass, the scenario ends in failure and no SEN points are awarded.

PLAN TWO: SAVE PARIS

Should the investigators choose to attempt to save Paris by defeating the cult and stopping the advance of the plague, their first step will be locating the coven's lair. Once they've located the trail leading to the lair, they must follow it into a series of old Roman limestone mines on the outskirts of the city. Deep in these mines, the witches have created their link to their master, the Font of Pestilence. If the investigators manage to purify the font, the witches' plot will be thwarted, their link to their god forever severed, and Paris will be saved.

SPLITTING THE PARTY

(or “as if Keepers didn’t have a hard enough job...”)

Some groups may insist on splitting up, despite it being such a well-documented bad idea as to nearly be comical. However, Keepers may encounter a group that assumes the investigators must do everything and sends some off to scout out an escape route while the rest move to combat the witches.

If this happens, assure them, either as Keeper or as one of the more competent NPC members of the Survivors, that others will handle scouting an escape route and protecting the rest of the cats. Bast selected the investigators for a mission, and that is their top priority. Make it clear that you are not going to penalize them for accepting the scenario’s premise. They’re on a mission from a god!

PHASE ONE, FINDING THE ENTRANCE TO THE MINES

The investigators have been told that the witches could be found by using the Eye of the Lioness, but not how. Investigators looking through the Eye of the Lioness can see a halo of shadows dancing around anything tainted by Abhoth. If the investigators look through the Eye of the Lioness, they see a dim

shadow around those infected with plague. With the streets filled with so many dead and dying, and rats (both normal and plague rats) scampering about, discovering this should be quite easy. The Eye shows a bigger shadow around a plague rat and a dim shadowy trail showing where the undead creature has traveled. The biggest shadow of all, seeming like a halo of black flame, can be seen around any of Abhoth’s servants, which includes the three witches, and their familiars (especially Lazar).

Following the Trail

Investigators who detect one of the undead plague rats (which requires a successful Luck check) can follow its trail with a successful Track roll, with a bonus dice (due to the use of the amulet). The trail of any plague rat leads back to a single location in Paris, a grated-off entrance to an ancient Roman limestone mine. However, there are still many people about and the streets are not safe for cats. While tracking the rats back to this entrance, the investigators must make a successful Stealth, Streetwise, or Navigate check to avoid attracting the attention of the mob.

If the mob spots them, they must escape a short pursuit by making a successful CON, DEX, Stealth, or Climb check. Keepers may allow for a hard success on a Hiss roll to frighten pursuers into pausing long enough for the cats to escape. By now, 1 in 3 people are infected with the plague, so any pursuit is halfhearted at best.

By now, the plague is really starting to take hold of the city. There are fewer people on the street, and many of

SICK AND ANGRY Mob (1D3+2)

Human, Age and Gender Varies

STR 30 **CON** 35 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 50 **POW** 30
DEX 35 **APP** 35 **EDU** 45 **SAN** 30
LUCK 30 **HP** 8 **MP** 6 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** -1

DAMAGE BONUS: -1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), damage 1D3+DB; Club, torch, pitchfork, baling hook 25% (12/5), damage 1D6+DB; Dodge 17% (8/3)

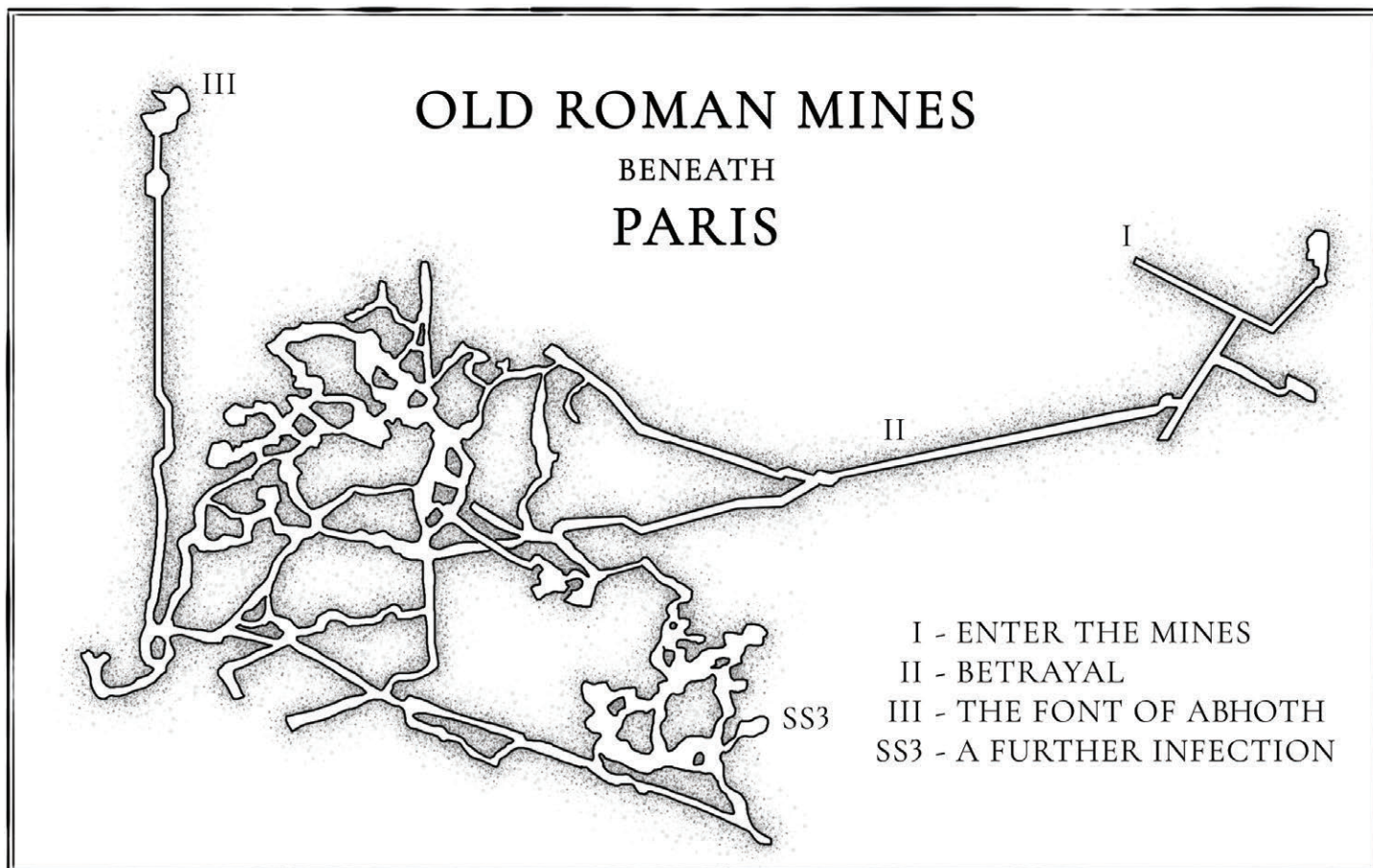
SKILLS: Listen 20%, Spot Hidden 25%.

ARMOR: None.

the people who are out are sick, dead, or dying. Rats are beginning to openly scamper about, nibbling on anything edible they can find, including the dead and the dying. The investigators encounter at least one group, a trio of plague doctors loading dead bodies onto a donkey-drawn cart.

Optional: Owl Attack

Keepers can insert the Owl Attack encounter from Plan One (see page 60) as a way to heighten tension and add a little action while the investigators are on their way to the mines.



Optional: Christian and Jean-Tom

Investigators can insert the Christian and Jean-Tom encounter as a way to convey the horror the plague has caused in Paris, drain a little of their SEN, and show that not all humans are bad.

PHASE TWO: ENTER THE MINES

The long abandoned Roman limestone mines honeycomb the area beneath the foundations of Paris. One day, centuries from now, they'll be converted into a massive cemetery, the City of the Dead, the now-famous Catacombs of Paris. However, today, they are a cold, dark, and lonely set of long deserted mines. Most Parisians have forgotten about their existence, and investigators will need to make a Streetwise or a Know roll to even realize what they are or have heard of their existence. What no one knows is that the mines aren't as abandoned as they used to be, as they have recently been occupied by a trio of witches, along with their familiars, who've constructed a shrine dedicated to Great Old One Abhoth, the Source of Uncleanliness.

While the mines have been locked away by a chained metal grate, the investigators (and rats) can easily pass between the bars. The mines twist and turn quite a bit, with many branches and passageways as they descend deeper into the earth. The temperature drops considerably from what it is on the surface, and even with a cat's superior vision, this is a dark place (as even cat's eyes need some light to function). However, a clear trail can be detected using the Eye of the Lioness, even in the darkness.

Rats usually aren't found in the mines, as there is nothing for them to eat down here. But the tunnels are filled with the tracks of rats along a well-traveled path leading to the Font of Pestilence. Investigators making a successful Track roll can identify the tracks of at least two humans moving along this same path, and those making a Hard success can also see the tracks of other animals, namely a crow, a toad... and a cat! That last set belongs to Lazar, although the investigators probably won't be able to figure that out.

PHASE TWO A: BETRAYED!

If Lazar is still with the investigators and his allegiance has not been discovered by this point, he slips away into the shadows and returns with a pack of rats. Lazar and the rats then lay an ambush between the investigators and the Font of Pestilence, positioning the vermin to surround the investigators. Once the investigators are firmly in his trap, Lazar orders the rats to move in and wipe them out. While Lazar stays out of reach as he watches the battle unfold, he gloats about how foolish and naive the investigators are, expounding upon the glory and horror that is Abhoth, and excitedly explains how his master will reward him for obtaining the Eye of the Lioness "...after I pick it off your corpses!" (A fake (or genuine) offer to switch sides will not work, as neither the witches nor their familiars are interested in recruiting anyone. The investigators are useful to them only as corpses.)

If the investigators begin gaining the upper hand, Lazar launches himself into the fray. Tactically, Lazar should run ahead and warn the witches, especially if

the ambush shows signs of failing. However, his pride and arrogance blind him to the possibility of failure; additionally, he fears punishment by his master for not retrieving the Eye of the Lioness as he was ordered to.

Keeper's Note

If Lazar has been discovered before now, this encounter can still take place. The witches may have placed rats in a defensive ring around the Font of Pestilence, and Lazar may be there as well. However, if Lazar has been discovered and eliminated, this encounter can be dropped as a reward to the investigators for their actions, if the Keeper wishes to be so generous.

RAT PACK

Rat, Age and Gender Varies

STR 35 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 35 **INT** N/A **POW** 50
DEX 70 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN/SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 9 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** -1

DAMAGE BONUS: -1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Overwhelm (mnvr): As a pack they may assault and overwhelm an individual using the maneuver rules; because of their numbers they gain one bonus die on the attack. Such an attack would involve swarming over the target, biting and scratching as they do so.

Fighting (bite or scratch) 40% (20/8), damage 1D3; Overwhelm (mnvr) damage 2D6; Dodge 42% (21/8)

ARMOR: None.

PHASE THREE: THE FONT OF ABHOTH

The trail of shadows leads to a central chamber in the mines. Long before the investigators reach it, they sense it in various ways. There are lights ahead in the tunnels, as the witches have set up a series of sconces (mounted torches) along the walls of their lair and for 20 feet along the passages leading into it. They can also hear the sounds of movement and talking, as at least one of the three witches is here at all times (possibly with their familiar).

Lastly, the stench from the Font of Pestilence is overwhelming and nearly indescribably in its horror. It is as if every corpse on earth was rotting in a pit of raw sewage baking in the hot summer sun. It is the kind of stench that feels like it clings to you and from which you will never be free, the kind that you'll somehow be tainted by for the rest of your life. Investigators smelling this for the first time must make both a CON and a SEN check for 1/1D3. Those failing the CON check are sickened and stunned by nausea for 1D6 minutes.

The massive round chamber is equal parts subterranean residence, rat catchers' shop (with dozens of rat traps), and temple. In the center of the room is a massive carved fountain, a round pool about three feet high and five feet in diameter. This is the Font of Pestilence.

The pool is filled with a thick putrid fluid of a sickly green, which roils and churns as it belches forth putrid bubbles of sulfur. One can sense an evil coming from the Font, a malevolent consciousness, a living thing of dark purpose and powerful will. The fluid is the Essence of Abhoth, a minor avatar form of the Great Old One, and those encountering the Font must make a SEN check for 1/1D6.

The Witches

There are three witches working out of the shrine in the old Roman mines. Each owns a familiar, knows several spells, and is completely dedicated to both Abhoth and the plan to sacrifice one third of the people of Paris to their dark god. They wear long robes and dark hooded cloaks to conceal their appearance when they must appear in public, and for good reason.

All three of the witches are undergoing a physical transformation, becoming rat-like, with skin covered in sores, abscesses, and pockmarks. Their ears are enlarged and round; their noses and jaws jut forward, giving the impression of a developing snout. Their front teeth are longer and protruding, and their leader has even grown a bit of a tail which hangs to the back of his knees.

One, two, or all three of the witches, along with their familiars, may be at the Shrine of Pestilence at any one time. Any investigator making an extreme success on a Luck roll is rewarded with one witch present being asleep, but only if multiple witches are present. At least one witch is awake and guarding the Font at all times. Keepers should roll 1D3 for the number of witches present, and then randomly roll to see who they are. The witches are:

MAURICE GABOLDE

*Rat catcher by trade,
with his Familiar, a raven named Coco
Witch of Abhoth, Human, Male, 28*

STR 65 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 50 **INT** 45 **POW** 65
DEX 45 **APP** 40 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 00
LUCK 60 **HP** 10 **MP** 13 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 45% (22/9), damage 1D3 + DB; Dagger (as Brawl) 45% (22/9), damage 1D4 + DB; Bite (as Brawl) 45% (22/9), damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Craft: Rat Catcher 50%, Stonemason 40%, Intimidate 30%, Listen 30%, Occult 30%, Repair/Devise 70%, Spot Hidden 40%.

ARMOR: None.

SPELLS: Cause Disease, Contact Abhoth, Dampen Light, Maggots.

DESCRIPTION: The most junior member of the cult, Maurice is the one who often goes out in public. While his appearance is grotesque, with diseased skin, large ears, and long front teeth, he can still pass for human. His skill as a rat catcher is the cornerstone of the cult's efforts. His familiar is a large black raven who loves nothing better than biting the eyes out of living creatures.



Coco

*Familiar of Maurice Gabolde
Raven, Male, 12*

STR 15 **CON** 25 **SIZ** 20 **INT** N/A **POW** 50
DEX 90 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 4 **MP** 10 **MOVE**
5/12 (flying) **BUILD** +4/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +3D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Bite) 40% (20/8),
damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

SKILLS: Spot Hidden 50%

ARMOR: None.

MATHILDA CARRE

*Seamstress by trade, with her familiar,
a large frog named Rene
Witch of Abthoth, Human, Female, 20*

STR 45 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 35 **INT** 55 **POW** 75
DEX 45 **APP** 25 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 00
LUCK 65 **HP** 8 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8),
damage 1D3 + DB; Dagger (as Brawl) 40%
(20/8), damage 1D4 + DB; Bite (as Brawl) 40%

(20/8), damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Art: Seamstress 50%, Intimidate 30%,
Listen 30%, Occult 30%, Spot Hidden 40%.

ARMOR: None.

SPELLS: Cause Disease, Contact Abthoth, Create
Plague Rat (unique), Dampen Light, Maggots.

DESCRIPTION: This short woman is the
middle in seniority. Her appearance is more
mouse-like, with rounded ears rather than
pointed, and thin patches of fur here and there
on her diseased, mottled skin. She designs and
makes the cult's clothing, making allowances
for their unique forms. Her familiar Rene is
never far from her, usually on a wall, ready to
jump at and bite any threat to his mistress.

RENE

*Familiar of Mathilda Carre
Bullfrog, Male, 30*

STR 20 **CON** 15 **SIZ** 15 **INT** N/A **POW** 50
DEX 90 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SEN** N/A
LUCK N/A **HP** 3 **MP** 10 **MOVE**
3/9 (jumping) **BUILD** +4/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +3D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Bite) 40% (20/8),
damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge: 45% (22/9)

SKILLS: Climb 40%, Jump 50%

ARMOR: None.

EUGENE VAULATT

*An excommunicated priest whose familiar is
Lazar, the traitorous cat
High Priest of Abthoth, Human, Male, 62*

STR 45 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 65 **INT** 65 **POW** 80
DEX 45 **APP** 30 **EDU** 90 **SAN** 00
LUCK 60 **HP** 11 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** 0

DAMAGE BONUS: None.

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10),
damage 1D3 + DB; Dagger (as Brawl) 50%
(25/10), damage 1D4 + DB; Bite (as Brawl) 50%
(25/10), damage 1D4 + DB; Dodge 40% (20/8)

SKILLS: Intimidate 30%, Languages:
French (Own) 90%, Languages: Latin
(Other) 60%. Listen 50%, Occult 60%,
Religion 80%, Spot Hidden 40%.

ARMOR: None.

SPELLS: Bring Pestilence (I), Cause Disease,
Contact Abthoth, Create Plague Rat (unique),
Dampen Light, Maggots, Wasting Curse.

DESCRIPTION: This tall, thin former priest
is the leader of the coven of Abthoth. His
appearance barely registers as human any more,

as he looks like a large, diseased humanoid rat, complete with snout, tail, long black nails, and sharp incisor teeth. His feet have even elongated, giving him almost another joint on his leg as he walks on his toes.

We have already met his familiar, Lazar.

Getting Past the Witches

The witches guard the Font of Pestilence, and kill anyone and anything entering this chamber that isn't under their direct control. However, the witches shouldn't be expecting an attack, especially of the feline variety. Learning that all of the "meddling foreigners" have been imprisoned by the Church has caused them to become complacent in their defense. They feel the battle is already won. A Regular successful Stealth or Throw check or a Hard DEX check (should an investigator simply wish to rush past the witches) should be all it takes for the investigators to reach the Font of Pestilence with the Eye of the Lioness. Keepers may wish to impose a penalty dice for every witch present.

Fighting the Witches

As the investigators are cats, this is a bad idea. Their goal should be to reach the Font as quickly as possible. If the cats do attack the witches directly (perhaps some of them distracting the witches from one or more of their number running to the Font), the servants of Abthoth fight with every means at their disposal to slay their feline intruders. If the fight goes on for more than three rounds, a pack of (ordinary) rats show up to reinforce the witches.

Purifying the Font of Pestilence

Any non-worshipper of Abthoth approaching the Font of Pestilence is attacked by one of a pair of stinking pseudopods. Those seeing this occur must make a SEN check for 1D2/1D10, as this is a minor avatar form of the Great Old One. The pseudopods have a 40% chance to hit for 1D10 points of damage. Those struck with a hard success are grappled and pulled into

the Font of Pestilence with a STR score of 40. Those immersed in the Font of Pestilence suffer a Deadly Attack (2D10) every round, and if killed, victims become undead plague spreaders.

The investigators can destroy the font by dropping the Eye of the Lioness into it. This destroys the font, causing the vile fluid to boil away. The fluid becomes a noxious vapor, equal to a Mild Poison, which inflicts 1D10 per round, beginning 5 minutes after the pendant makes contact with it. This cloud slowly fills all the tunnels within sixty yards of the font and lasts 3D20+12 minutes. (In other words, once the pendant goes into the font, the investigators would be wise to flee the area.) Any investigator holding the Eye of the Lioness who is grappled and drawn into the font purifies it.

Once the font is purified, the link between Abthoth and Paris is violently severed. As this happens all three of the witches, their respective familiars, and all the plague rats die screaming in agony. Their bodies quickly dissolve into pools of putrid corruption and filth. Seeing this costs viewers 1/1D3 SEN points. Abthoth does not take kindly to those who fail, and this is the price its cultists pay. Also, once the link between Abthoth and Paris is severed, those suffering from the plague caused by the Plague Rats, even those at death's door, quickly begin to recover. The threat is over and Paris is saved!

The scenario can end here, or if they so choose, the investigators can try to save Tawni.

EPILOGUE SCENES

Saving Tawni

Once the Font is destroyed, people all over Paris immediately begin to recover. All over the city, everyone witnesses rats suddenly screaming out in pain, then exploding and melting away into goo. It seems miraculous, and the Church soon begins taking credit for "saving Paris". However, this puts them in an uneasy position, as Tawni is scheduled to be burned at

the stake on charges of witchcraft. Now that the crisis is over, no one, not even those of the Church, really feels such drastic measures are necessary. However, the priests are willing to go through with the execution rather than admit their mistake.

If the investigators attempt to save her, or disrupt the execution in any way, the Church claims this as "another miracle", saying that the evil that once filled the cats of Paris has been driven out by the power of God. Tawni and nineteen other prisoners (which include some of her family) are pardoned (which may be the real miracle), but forced to leave the city by nightfall.

When Tawni sees the investigators, she recognizes them from the synagogue and greets them joyfully, crying "You made it! You're okay. The pendant, where is it? It's... but everyone is... did you?" Then she smiles, and says "You must have. It was no mistake that called me to that place. All happens according to the will of divine powers..." Then she whispers, "Especially elder ones with whiskers. You are the bravest, most heroic cats in France, and whether they know it or not all of these people, my family, and myself, owe you our lives. Thank you." Tawni then pets every cat, cuddles them, and quickly leaves Paris with her family before nightfall.

Optional Bonus Scene: The Return of Jean-Tom

As the investigators return to their territories or the hiding place of the rest of the Survivors, they see a boy and his old tuxedo cat walking home. The boy is bruised and weak, but recovering, and his cat is very much alive. As they pass, the cat nods to the investigators, as the boy talks to his beloved Jean-Tom. "I had the scariest dream. A mean man kicked you and you died, and I cried and cried, but then a beautiful lady with a cat's head came, and kissed you, and you woke up. She said a boy who loved his cat so much deserved to have him back... such a funny dream. But the nightmare's over now, let's go home Jean-Tom."

PLAN TWO: SANITY AWARDS

- 🐾 For Saving Snowflake's Kittens: 1D4 SEN
- 🐾 For Attempting to Comfort Christian: 1D3 SEN
- 🐾 For Defeating Lazar: 1D3 SEN
- 🐾 For Purifying the Font of Pestilence: 1D10 SEN
- 🐾 For Saving Tawni: 1D4 SEN



SINISTER SEEDS ♦ FURTHER ADVENTURES

1. THE PHANTOM OF CHATEAU DE COUTELLE

Shortly after the miraculous ending of the plague which gripped Paris, people in a certain neighborhood start turning up dead and insane. The victims are all killed in a variety of ways, including stabbing, strangulation, drowning (usually in a bucket, horse trough, or rain barrel), and blunt force trauma. Those turning up mad are usually thought to be witnesses to these gruesome murders, but are of no use to those investigating these crimes. They babble incoherently, start screaming in terror when questioned about what happened, or become violent, lashing out at anyone and anything within reach.

The cats of the Survivors tribe soon become embroiled in this mystery, as the epicenter of these attacks seems to be the former estate of the deceased Lady Guinevere, Chateau de Coutelle. Once home to the tribe called “Lady Guinevere’s Darlings” and a temporary safe haven for the Survivors during the “dark days”, it is now ground zero for these terrible deaths. In fact, it seems those trying to occupy the chateau, as well as those living closest to it, are the ones most commonly targeted.

The feline investigators can look into the matter in a number of ways. They can try to comfort one of the witnesses, calming them enough so that their babbling occasionally forms into a semi-coherent narrative. Alternatively, they can enter the Dreamlands and track down the dream selves of these victims, who are all invariably lost in various realms of nightmare. By watching their nightmares, speaking to their dream selves (which are sane, albeit terrified), or listening in on their waking selves’ babbling, the investigators learn both the identity of the attacker and the reason these victims were specifically targeted.

Their attacker is the vengeful ghost of Lady Guinevere! She died shortly after witnessing dozens of her cats being murdered by her neighbors, as she was too sick with the plague to take any action to defend “her darlings”. Now her once kindly spirit is tormented, unable to find rest or release into its next plane of existence due to her guilt and shame at being helpless to protect her beloved cats, as well as her undying fury and insatiable hunger for revenge. So ghostly is her appearance when she manifests that it drives people mad. Her phantom is also incredibly powerful, well able to kill her victims, almost always in the same way they murdered one of the elderly matron’s cats.

But her fury is out of control. The phantom of Lady Guinevere is starting to target family members of those who harmed her cats, those who witnessed the attacks and did nothing to stop them. Even complete strangers, who take up residence in Chateau de Coutelle or the homes once occupied by those who committed these crimes against her beloved cats, are joining her growing list of victims.

The Phantom of Chateau de Coutelle can be dealt with in a number of ways. The cats can somehow

convince the Church to do a spiritual cleansing on the property, dispelling her ghost from it. However, while this keeps her spirit from causing harm to the living, it also drives it into eternal purgatory, lost and tormented for all time. The cats can try to persuade one of the actual murderers of one of her cats to apologize, and beg forgiveness of the spirit, while they stand beside living cats. The presence of cats with these victims confuses the phantom long enough to hear their plea, accept their apology, and find rest. The spirit of Lady Guinevere is ultimately a kindly one, and would rather forgive than harm anyone.

Lastly, one of Lady Guinevere’s surviving Darlings, such as Precious, can appear before the Phantom of Chateau de Coutelle. If the ghost sees that at least some of her beloved darlings still live, she is so relieved and happy that her spirit is able to find rest. However, the former members of Lady Guinevere’s Darlings will initially refuse to help, as they feel these attacks are well deserved. They are perfectly happy to stand by and watch the Phantom eliminate those who murdered so many of their former tribe members.

2. DARK DISPOSAL

As the city slowly recovers from the plague, many of its citizens begin seeking out the bodies of their deceased loved ones, hoping to give them a proper burial. However, as the city filled with corpses, the plague doctors began hastily removing them. The dead were transported via cart to the countryside and either burned in pyres or dumped into mass graves. At least, that’s what everyone was told was happening...

In truth, the majority of the dead were never burned or buried. Many were pickled or salted in barrels, to preserve them for later consumption. The plague doctors, with their long coats, wide hats, thick gloves, and elongated beak-like masts, are actually ghouls. The funeral pyres are mostly wood and straw, with a few dead animals thrown in to give the smoke the scent of burning flesh. The mass graves are little more than piles of churned earth that contain a mere handful of corpses, typically those with very little meat on them.

The ghouls are working as fast as they can to preserve as much putrid human flesh as they can, so they can store it for leaner times. Such windfalls don’t happen often, and the ghouls are thinking of the future. They can’t just sit back and watch decades’ worth of food rot away to nothing. The ghouls have converted a couple of abandoned farms into processing centers for the dead of Paris, where they both salt and pickle human corpses.

The feline investigators can be drawn into this by the disappearances of people looking for the bodies of their loved ones. These people are being murdered by the ghouls to protect their secret. The ghouls are also buying or stealing as much salt, pickling brine, and as many barrels as they can manage. They use the salaries from the city for corpse disposal as well as the scavenged coins and trinkets from the corpses themselves. While the investigators can likely uncover the truth, they’ll need to manipulate other humans

into discovering it. While a few cats are too small a force to drive off a pack of well-organized ghouls, a mob of armed and angry villagers augmented by the city watch and members of the Church would certainly do the trick.

3. A FURTHER INFECTION

A fourth member of the cult of Abthoth, who was working behind the scenes to help them destroy Paris, was spared by the Great Old One. He has been given one final chance to redeem himself and is currently trying to construct a new, smaller, Font of Pestilence. If he manages to complete it, it may be impossible to stop him, as the Eye of the Lioness was consumed when it destroyed the last Font of Pestilence.

The fourth hidden cultist is a Catholic priest named Father Roland Gaucher. It was he who began preaching against cats and witches, creating the panic that distracted the authorities from ever becoming aware of the actual cult. Currently Father Roland is in hiding in a distant corner of the old Roman mines. There he spends his time conducting a ritual that will allow him to re-open the link to Abthoth. He is gathering the putrid drippings from the rotting limbs of a dozen captives who are slowly dying of infection. To his master, this is a form of sacred fluid, unholy water meant to consecrate a new font. The font is simply a small standing bird bath, which he paid a few street thugs to steal for him.

His plan is nearly perfect except for one thing: Bast hates Abthoth. The goddess informs the cats of Paris that their work is not yet complete. She may deliver this message to them through Jean-Tom, the tom belonging to the boy Christian, whom she restored to life as a reward for the child’s loyalty and love. Or she may deliver this message through one of Snowflake’s rescued kittens, a survivor from Lady Guinevere’s Darlings, or even Tawni, who’s snuck back into Paris. However they receive the message, the investigators are told, “Bast wants you to know that a single pest remains, and that the evil of Abthoth may return. You are to seek the stolen bird bath from the garden of Armand Azema, and follow it to the last tick infecting Paris. You must scratch it loose before all is lost.”

The feline investigators can follow the clues from the garden, realizing that the bird bath was recently stolen. From there, they can track down the thieves, and from them discover who they were working for. This leads them eventually to the horrific ritual and the final cultist. The dozen victims held captive here are all extremely sick, dying from wounds that have intentionally been allowed to fester with gangrene. The cats can either battle the final cultist themselves (a desperate measure to be sure), work to knock over the birdbath with all the gathered “unholy water”, or free the victims tied into their deathbeds. Even in their diminished state the captives still have enough fight left in them to overpower the final cultist, essentially doing the feline investigators’ work for them.

THE CAT COUNCIL OF KINGSPORT

BY OSCAR RIOS

Most cities on earth, throughout human civilization, have been secretly protected by a divinely selected group of cats. Since mankind first brought the wild cat into its life, first as a partner in pest control and later as a beloved companion, cats have been the cornerstone of human society. Whatever Mythos gods or other divine power watches over mankind that granted us this partnership with cats still helps maintain this protective bond. Some call this power Bast, but who can say? Not even the cats know for sure. However, one thing is certain: to this day, certain cats are given a divine mandate, whether they like it or not, to serve as the defenders of a specific location.

WHO IS CHOSEN

Cats who have lived eight lives gain a wisdom, bravery, and sense of loyalty far beyond those of cats who have lived fewer lifetimes. Usually, these cats are granted easy lives of comfort, but some, the truly special ones, are selected from on high to serve a special purpose. These become members of a Cat Council. They are generally informed of this through dreams shortly after reaching adulthood, although in some cases, not until they reach the age of three or four. All cats within a council's community instantly become aware of the status of new council members, and treat them with respect, rendering them whatever assistance they can when called upon.

It is an "honor" that cannot be refused. Most cats serve willingly, some reluctantly, but all chosen dedicate themselves to defending their communities against evil forces mundane, supernatural, and otherworldly. Depending on the size and importance of a location, councils usually seat three, five, or seven members, with the largest and most dangerous places having councils of nine. Members sit on the council until their deaths, after which they live on in the Dreamlands, granted certain honors and privileges by the divine power that called them to service in their ninth life (including waiving breed restrictions on Tricks). There, such cats are often leaders of feline communities, knowledgeable sages, or wise councilors or diplomats to kings and queens.

THE COUNCIL OF KINGSPORT

Although just a small seaside community in New England, Kingsport has one of the most important cat councils on Earth. Not only has the community long been plagued by wizards, cults, and more than its fair share of ghosts; it is also a weak point between realities and a major crossroads between the waking world and the Dreamlands.

As cats are natural and powerful dreamers, the Cat Council of Kingsport defends not only Kingsport, but also this gateway between realities. Evil forces on both sides of this border seek to gain power by crossing back and forth between realms. Evil Dreamlands denizens visit the waking world to hunt and cause chaos before returning to their home realm, while those from the waking world travel to the Dreamlands to live out dark fantasies and learn forbidden secrets, returning home more dangerous than before. As cats can easily travel between realms, the council of Kingsport is uniquely equipped to investigate and combat such threats.

Because of these twin responsibilities, cats serving on the Kingsport council are especially famous, both in the waking world and Dreamlands, among cats and the wisest human dreamers. They are held in reverence, as one would hold someone awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor, a Nobel Prize, or a royal knighthood. While all cats serving on councils are viewed as heroes, the cats of the Kingsport council are considered the best of the best, an elite force defending one of the most dangerous cities in the waking world.

The Kingsport council meets physically in one of three places. The first and main one is the common room of Nancy's Fireside Brews, a coffee shop in the Central Hill neighborhood. The second is the Kingsport Public Library in Downtown Kingsport. The last is a large treehouse owned by the powerful dreamer, flapper, and Kingsport Cat Lady, Melba Sutton. The treehouse is located in the backyard of her home in South Shore, and offers shelter to any stray cat during wet or cold weather. Meetings are

normally held monthly, but more often when crises arise, and all members usually keep in loose contact via Dreaming between physical meetings.

There are nine cats serving on the Cat Council of Kingsport. Unfortunately, most have only been serving a few years, due to a tragic operation in the Dreamlands in 1918, where four of the nine council members lost their lives. Since then, three others have died of natural causes and been replaced by new members, so the majority of the Council has served for less than five years. The current roster includes, in order of rank:

- 🐾 **Atticus, The Shadow Without A Tail:** A shameless and vocal black tom who seems to prefer the company of people to that of other cats.
- 🐾 **Royce, The Trickster Prince:** A lovable young tom, with boundless energy and a knack for mischief. He has a habit of "borrowing" things from people.
- 🐾 **Spunky, The Bold:** A brave and friendly, but very senior tom, who is one of the two surviving council members serving from before 1898.
- 🐾 **Shiva, Mauler of Ankles:** An affectionate queen, who can be loud and temperamental, who came to Kingsport as a kitten from far off Sweden.
- 🐾 **Vitas Varnas, The Explorer:** A tough and rugged tom, who loves to wander and explore. He has a boundless curiosity, which isn't always a good thing.
- 🐾 **Dahlia, The Hasty:** A young, free-spirited queen, new to the council and slowly learning to accept her new responsibilities.
- 🐾 **Grace, The Warrior Princess:** A fluffy, fearless queen whose instinct is to attack first and never question anything. She is the most enthusiastic council member.
- 🐾 **The Angel of Music:** Angel for short, a scrappy clever queen, who loves to explore. She is up for any adventures and backs down from nothing.



🐾 **Luna the Kind:** This small aged queen is the other member of the “Old Council”. She is a mentor to many, and she always seeks to comfort those who are troubled, feline and human alike.

Author’s Note: All of the cats of the Kingsport council are based on real cats. The Council of Kingsport backers answered questions and provided histories of the cats they wished memorialized. Many of their stories were touching and heartfelt, a few quite sad as several of these real life cats are no longer with us in the waking world. I used this information as the foundation for each cat listed here, being as true to the information provided as possible. I hope these are worthy tributes to the amazing real life cats being honored here.

ATTICUS

THE SHADOW WITHOUT A TAIL (1st Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

Just how this skittish, rather anti-social tom became appointed to the first seat of one the most important councils on earth is a mystery to every cat alive, including Atticus. Although on his ninth life, which usually means a cat is blessed with a good home and comfort, Atticus had a very tragic beginning. He has no memory of his earliest days, so he has no idea how he lost his tail, came to live in a shelter for homeless cats, or why he had a deep fear of other cats.

The truth is Atticus was the victim of the vile machinations of Nyarlathotep. Atticus had been a hero in his earlier lives, fighting against the Mythos, defending his families, protecting farms and warehouses. When he sacrificed his 8th life, saving a newborn human from rabid dog, Bast was ready to give Atticus a new life of comfort. But suddenly, he was gone, his soul hidden from the Elder Goddess’ view. She searched frantically, but her divine sight was blocked. In the end she called upon her fellow Elder God Nodens to assist her, and with their combined power, the two broke the powerful ward keeping Atticus’ soul hidden from them.

The rabid dog that attacked the child had been cursed by a cultist, to punish the boy’s parents, who had just thwarted his plans. Atticus stopped the dog and saved the child, preventing the revenge ordered by the cultist’s master, Nyarlathotep. To punish the heroic cat, the Outer God reincarnated him into a new life, one of misery and torment. He endured this life for several years, before Nodens and Bast found him. They immediately had him taken into a shelter, removed the memories of the horrors and torments of his pasts, and healed his wounds. Bast made sure he was adopted by a loving, childless couple who would have the patience to let him open up on his own. Slowly, he began letting go of his fears, learning first to trust, and then to love his owners.

Soon he was happy, begging for food, sitting in laps, yowling for attention from his doting owners. Then suddenly, unexpectedly, Bast came to him with a most unwanted gift, an unexpected and unwelcome honor. Atticus was appointed as leader of the feline defenders

of Kingsport, first seat upon its council. He begged her to reconsider, explaining that he was no hero. She assured him that he was one of the bravest and most loyal cats who had ever lived nine lives. He assured that her he was the wrong cat for this job and urged her to pick someone else.

Bast told him to have faith, and know that the cats of Kingsport, the people of Kingsport, needed him and that he had strengths that even he didn’t know. She pointed to the knitting woman and the man painting figurines, his owners, and said, “What would you do to keep them safe?” Without hesitation he said, “Anything. I would give my life to protect them.” She replied, “That’s why it’s you. Trust in that love.”

So, the black tailless cat without memory of his past became leader the council of Kingsport, and started rebuilding it. It isn’t easy for him, being around other cats, giving orders, taking risks and facing otherworldly danger. But in moments of peril, he never hesitates to act. Bravery is not the absence of fear; it is the ability to rise above it and continue to act. Atticus is always afraid, but his boundless love and loyalty makes him one of the greatest feline leaders Kingsport has ever known. Today, the once-shattered council is stronger than ever, and Atticus is viewed with deep respect by every cat in the city.

ATTICUS: THE SHADOW WITHOUT A TAIL

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 7

STR 10 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 80 **POW** 100

DEX 80 **APP** 60 **EDU** 95 **SEN** 85

LUCK 85 **HP** 5 **MP** 20 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 41%
(20/8); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch
1D3 + DB; Dodge 50% (25/10)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%,
Cuteness 30%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming
25%, Healing 20%, Hiss 50%, Human Language
(English) 32%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 41%,
Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Natural World 40%,
Navigate 25%, Occult 22%, Scent 50%, Sense
Danger 25%, Sleep 50%, Spot 50%, Status
41%, Stealth 60%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%,
Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands
travel), Rumblepuss, Under The Feet.

ROYCE

THE TRICKSTER PRINCE (2nd Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This young tom leads a life of adventure, the partner in crime to a daring and adventurous human woman who adopted him. His earlier memory is driving with her across the United States from the deserts of Arizona to the misty city of Kingsport, where she was starting a new life as an artist. Sitting in her lap as she drove, playing with her jewelry and cuddling with her, set the stage for his outlook. Life

was an adventure and his universe centered on his owner, “Mom”.

Royce was convinced that he, not Atticus, would be the leader of the council, as he is by far the most outgoing of the pair. But being number two on the council does give him more freedom to enjoy himself, which he does mostly by bird watching, sitting in boxes whenever he finds them, stealing trinkets from around the house, and storing them under furniture. However, in his time watching the world out of his window, Royce has seen things that pose a threat to “Mom”, a hidden, secret Kingsport full of peril and illusions. One of his fears is that something might one day happen to Atticus, and force him to become the leader of the council (which would cut into his time playing with his owner).

Royce is silly and playful with “Mom” and indifferent to most other cats, but when a crisis emerges, he is ready to deal with the problem head on. He enjoys making plans which the other council members usually call reckless. Many of his plans are eventually put in motion, after they are made less dangerous with some alterations by wiser council members. This usually means making plans that require a team effort, which Royce seldom thinks of because he prefers to work alone. While he can accept these alterations to his plans and include other cats in them, he always makes sure he takes “the best part of the job” (i.e. the most dangerous or fun part) for himself.

He has often been chastised by the council for acting on his own, usually by Luna and Spunky. They are the oldest and wisest cats on the council, and he respects them a great deal. He’s slowly come to accept the fact that, unless the council knows about a threat, if something bad were to happen to him while he was acting on his own, no one would know anything about it. They couldn’t come to help him, and the threat would still be there.

If there is a risky part of a plan that requires stealth, cunning, and most of all, thievery, then Royce is the one for it. If a key needs to be stolen from someone’s purse, or an amulet hidden or lifted from its owner so a ritual can’t be completed, then Royce is the cat to do it. If a cat needs to be in a dangerous place, to knock over a flower pot to distract someone at a critical moment, again, Royce is the one they send. Other cats have taken to calling him “The Trickster Prince”, a nickname he quite enjoys.

Royce also is very good at being around humans, so long as “Mom” is there. This allows him to listen in on conversations. As his owner has an active social life, Royce has learned the identity of many artists, poets, and bohemians living in Kingsport. He doesn’t really trust any of them, and for good reason. He suspects a few are Dreamers; he fears one or two might be cultists. He tries to keep tabs on these people and inform the council of everything he learns.

Royce never lets himself forget how lucky he is. He knows that his blessed life could end should anything happen to his human. He has dedicated his life to making sure no harm comes to her, and if

that means he has to keep the entire city safe, then that's what he'll do.

ROYCE: THE TRICKSTER PRINCE

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 4

STR 10 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 60 **POW** 100
DEX 125 **APP** 60 **EDU** 60 **SEN** 70
LUCK 85 **HP** 5 **MP** 20 **MOVE** 14 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 40% (20/8); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 73% (36/14)

SKILLS: Climb 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Cuteness 30%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming 25%, Healing 10%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (English) 40%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 1%, Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Natural World 30%, Navigate 25%, Occult 6%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 30%, Sleep 50%, Spot 50%, Status 16%, Stealth 80%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 20%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Cat Burglar, Open Doors.

SPUNKY THE BOLD

(3rd Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This domestic shorthair makes his forever home with a kind-hearted boy who begged his mother to keep the shaking, homeless kitten that ran up to him from under an alley dumpster. Named Spunky, for the boldness of his actions, bravery and sociability have always been the strongest parts of this cat's personality. The tortoise shell tom is a very vocal cat who enjoys the company of people. In his youth, he enjoyed toys and exploring, but now, in the twilight of his life, he enjoys being lazy with his "boy". But his "boy" is now a man who owns a hardware store, and the kitten that he once was has grown to become an aged gentletom of sixteen.

For most of his life, Spunky The Bold has been on the council of Kingsport. He is the oldest member of the council, and he has served longer than any other cat on it. Only Luna has served nearly as long, joining the council just eight months after him. Once he served as the second in command to the leader of the council, a fierce queen named Tiger, but that was a long time ago, before the disaster.

Tiger and three others died during a perilous operation crossing between the Waking World and the Dreamlands. Spunky had wanted to go on the mission, but was ordered to remain in the waking world to protect Kingsport and finish the mission if the strike team failed. Tiger's owner had just had a grandchild, and she wanted to leave the city in good hands. It was a good thing she did, as a rat-thing tried to kill the child shortly after the cult was defeated, in an act of vengeance. Spunky killed the creature in a battle that nearly cost him his life. He avenged his friend, and

through his battle scars earned a new position.

Spunky became the leader of the council, a position he carried out dutifully, but never really wanted. Over the next few years, several of the other cats on the council died peacefully, leaving only Luna and himself of those who remember the "disaster" of 1918. When Atticus arrived, and was named as first seat of the council, Spunky was relieved. While his sense of duty and desire to protect Kingsport remained, both his body and his spirit were feeling the weight of their years. Bast told him that it was now his job to teach the new council members how to do their job, and that his wisdom and experience was now his greatest strength.

The younger cats on the council, which is all of them, look to Spunky for guidance and wisdom. Of all the cats in Kingsport, he is the one who most feels that humans are basically good and kind. Many ask him how he can feel this way, after living so long and seeing so many evils perpetrated by humanity. He replies, "How can I not, having lived this long? I should have died sixteen years ago in a filthy alley, be dead beside my poor mother, but here I am. Why? Because of the kindness of a boy who took me in and made me his family. For that, I will never lose faith in humanity."

Spunky is still called "The Bold" by other cats, out of respect. He is a storehouse of tales, information, inspiration, and advice. Most other cats on the council come to him for advice when they are troubled, and he does his best to help them reach the right decisions. Spunky is something of a grandfather figure to many of the council cats, most of whom never really knew their own parents for very long. The council treasures him, but they know that his fire is burning down. The cold is creeping into the old tom's bones, and soon Bast will call him home. It is a day they know is coming, and all dread. But Spunky himself is not afraid. His boy is grown up and the council is in good hands. He has done his part and looks forward to seeing his friends who have already gone on to serve Bast in the afterlife.

SPUNKY: THE BOLD

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 17

STR 05 **CON** 25 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 90 **POW** 80
DEX 90 **APP** 55 **EDU** 105 **SEN** 80
LUCK 80 **HP** 3 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 35% (17/7); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Cuteness 28%, Dream Lore 30% Dreaming 40%, Healing 20%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (English) 60%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 31%, Jump 50%, Listen 45%, Natural World 63%, Navigate 35%, Occult 25%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 25%, Sleep 50%, Spot 25%, Status 30%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Sleep on it, Hypnotize.

SHIVA

MAULER OF ANKLES

(4th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This orange and white older queen's most unique feature is her accent. Shiva was born in Sweden and journeyed to the United States with her owner. Her original owner came to Kingsport in pursuit of romance with a local man, but that failed, and somehow Shiva came to be owned by her new "Dad". This formed a strange dichotomy within her; while she is very affectionate and attached to her owner, she can be temperamental when she feels she's not being treated "fairly". Being treated fairly means getting everything exactly her way, all the time.

If long distance travel has taught her anything, it is that the world is a scary place with lots of dangers in it. Of all the members of the council, she is the one who hates leaving her home. She hates being outside and has been known to utter loud yowls when accidentally finding herself locked out of her home. She does enjoy the typical cat things, such as playing with toys, eating, boxes, sitting in her human's lap, and sleeping.

Shiva is skittish about loud noises, sudden surprises, and strange humans. She doesn't like most humans, and is very distrustful of them. It takes a long time for her to accept anyone new, and even then, only when they are on "her turf", meaning in her human's home. When strangers are about she usually finds a hiding spot where she can listen to everything going on, in case her owner suddenly needs her help. If her human seems upset or in danger, a stranger may get an unexpected bite from one of her hiding places, which is how she got her official council title, "Mauler of Ankles".

While all these traits seem to indicate a cat ill-suited to be one of Kingsport's defenders, Shiva has two things going for her. The first is that she is incredibly loyal to those few cats and humans she has accepted into her life. Since it is hard for her to make friends, she is fiercely protective of those she has. When push comes to shove, Shiva will lash out hard against any perceived threats, with little regard to her own safety.

Shiva's second talent is her incredible skill as a dreamer. While shy and skittish in the waking world, Shiva's personality in the Dreamlands is quite different. Here she allows herself to be more free, friendly, and outgoing. She is famous far and wide for her wit, charm, and skills in conversation. In the Dreamlands, she is everyone's friend, nobody's enemy, and a fixture at any party, festival, or state function worth mentioning. To Shiva, the Dreamlands aren't as "real" as the Waking World, so she might as well do all the things she's afraid to when she's conscious. However, this doesn't mean she is reckless while in the Dreamlands; only that she is far less socially inhibited.

Shiva doesn't consider her two lives to be that directly connected. In the Dreamlands, she is known as Lady Umea. She makes sure that no one there knows either the name she uses nor anything else about her life in the waking world, although many have tried to

find out. Most assume she lives in Sweden, due to her accent, a rumor she actively promotes. Currently, there are only eight other cats alive that know Lady Umea's true waking world identity, and those are her fellow council members.

This whole second life and personality as Lady Umea makes her the council's perfect agent in the Dreamlands. She is their primary source of information about goings on there as well. If there is a rumor, legend, or crisis happening anywhere in the Dreamlands, Shiva has likely overheard details about it. Information she has provided to the council has saved Kingsport, and her owner, more than once.

SHIVA: MAULER OF ANKLES

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 10

STR 15 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 80 **POW** 75
DEX 115 **APP** 85 **EDU** 95 **SEN** 75
LUCK 75 **HP** 5 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 55%
(27/11); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch
1D3 + DB; Dodge 68% (34/13)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%,
Cuteness 43%, Dream Lore 50%, Dreaming
50%, Healing 10%, Hiss 50%, Human Language
(English) 27%, Human Language (Swedish)
24%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 26%, Jump 50%,
Listen 40%, Natural World 48%, Navigate 25%,
Occult 15%, Scent 55%, Sense Danger 20%,
Sleep 60%, Spot 35%, Status 24%, Stealth
50%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw
10%, Track 20%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands
travel), House Cat, Bravo.

VITAS VARNAS

THE EXPLORER

(5th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This strong sleek black tom is one of the youngest council members, at four years old. He is in his prime, and is the top cat of The Hollows (the neighborhood he lives in). Born a stray, he eventually allowed himself to be adopted by a professor of Ancient History who was also a Mythos investigator. The professor named Vitas after a mysterious hero appearing through dark and forbidden histories, one who battled the forces of darkness.

While a warm place to sleep, people to look after you, and a steady supply of food are great things, Vitas maintains his freedom. Of the cats on the council, young Vitas is one of the few that spends considerable time outdoors. He roams his territory daily, and comes home most afternoons to eat, nap, and then patrol the household for threats. His human family is kind and loving, so he would never abandon them for long. After all, he knows of the threats lurking in Kingsport's shadows and being close by helps him protect them.

Vitas Varnas is a bold cat who likes to wander. He

enjoys meeting other cats, but not those who unexpectedly shows up in his home territory. Vitas is not above growling or hissing a warning at cats that don't show him the proper respect. If that escalates into an all-out brawl, well, Vitas is not a tom to back down from a fight. But he doesn't hold grudges, and some of his best friends started out as cats he's had fights with. He dislikes dogs and glares at them so they'll keep their distance, but he's not foolish enough to stand his ground against one.

For all his bravado and independence, Vitas like humans, seeking out those likely to pet him. He enjoys the typical cat things like eating, sleeping, and hunting. Few mice are cunning enough to escape his fatal attention. Above all, Vitas enjoys roaming and exploring Kingsport, so long as he's home in time for his afternoon feedings.

No cat on the council, or in Kingsport, knows the city better than Vitas Varnas. Anything out of the ordinary immediately attracts his attention. He is an incredibly curious tom, which earns him the title of The Explorer. If there is a new threat to Kingsport, Vitas is the cat most likely to stumble upon it. Unfortunately, Vitas is just as likely to take immediate action against a threat as he is to back off and alert the council. This often infuriates the other members, who would rather wait and watch a threat before acting. At times, this has led to trouble, as an enemy is put on alert, making further operations against them more difficult.

But bold actions have, from time to time, yielded successful results. Vitas has singlehandedly thwarted threats to Kingsport on several occasions, before the council was even aware of them. He does eventually report everything back to the council, which typically scolds him for the rashness of his actions. While he respects the other cats on the council, he feels that many of them are "old and overly cautious." They remind him that they are old *because* they are overly cautious and that he must look before he leaps. Their wisdom has yet to sink in.

If he wants to do something dangerous which requires help, Vitas may enlist the assistance of Royce, the Trickster Prince. As the other young tom on the council, the two often get into trouble together. While Atticus tries to rein them in, and Spunky tries to educate them on the value of caution, these efforts aren't having much success. Vitas says, "Oh, my wandering may get me killed one day, but that day is not today."

VITAS VARNAS: THE EXPLORER

Domestic Shorthair, Tom (Male), 4

STR 10 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 80
DEX 120 **APP** 80 **EDU** 75 **SEN** 80
LUCK 80 **HP** 6 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 60%
(30/12); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch
1D3 + DB; Dodge 70% (35/14)

SKILLS: Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%,
Cuteness 35%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming
25%, Healing 10%, Hiss 50%, Human Language
(English) 22%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 8%,
Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Natural World 40%,
Navigate 5%, Occult 5%, Scent 50%, Sense
Danger 25%, Sleep 50%, Spot 45%, Status
21%, Stealth 70%, Streetwise 31%, Swim 10%,
Throw 10%, Track 35%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands
travel), Bites Off More, Lion Heart

DAHLIA

THE HASTY

(6th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

Yet another black cat on the Kingsport council is this young, two-year-old queen, Dahlia the Hasty. This exceedingly quick cat lives on Orchard Island, just off the coast of Kingsport's South Shore neighborhood. Dahlia doesn't consider herself a "city cat", as her home has a door that allows her to go in and out as she chooses. She spends her days roaming the open fields of Orchard Island, chasing bugs, playing with her annoying brother, and making her own rules. However, each sunset she returns to the comforts of her home, enjoying the attention of her human "owners", and trying to get extra snacks from them. Although she hates to admit it, she relies on humans for food.

Both she and her brother were adopted as kittens from an animal shelter. They have no memory of their life before the shelter and are grateful for their new home and generous owners. Dahlia is scared of most other people, and especially of dogs. Around people she doesn't know, she hides. But this timidity doesn't extend towards other cats, as she vigorously defends her territory from other strays living on Orchard Island.

One day, quite recently, she was visited in a dream by Bast, who told her that she had been selected for a very high honor, to be one of the feline defenders of Kingsport. She was confused because, like many people and cats living on Orchard Island, she didn't consider herself a part of Kingsport. Bast assured her that Orchard Island was part of Kingsport, and that she was going to be one of its defenders. While a position of high honor, Dahlia learned that being a member of the council could be a dangerous thing. There would be meetings to attend and missions to go on to keep Kingsport safe.

Dahlia, who was afraid of most people, and didn't like to follow anyone's rules but her own, refused. Bast smiled, and said that was fine, adding, "I will move on to my next choice, your brother." Dahlia knew her brother would happily accept this honor, but doubted he would be up to the task. She never considered him very smart, and the idea of him going into dangerous situations made her sick to her stomach. While he was annoying, she loved him more than any other thing on earth. Reluctantly, Dahlia told Bast she had changed her mind, and became the youngest and newest cat on the council of Kingsport.

Dahlia has learned to sneak onto and off of the many ferries that carry people between Orchard Island and Kingsport's South Shore neighborhood, to participate in council activities when necessary. She was the most reluctant member of the council, but after several successful operations, the position is growing on her. She enjoys the respect other cats show her now. However, she didn't take her responsibilities seriously until the incident with the Verdant Oak.

Last spring the Verdant Oak, a legendary ghost ship that had been seen occasionally on misty nights off Doyle's Rock, ran aground on Orchard Island. When the captain, a vengeful poltergeist, began terrorizing people, a team of ghost hunters were summoned from Arkham. This team of parapsychologists from the Mistkatonic Area Paranormal Society ran around Orchard Island for three days, doing very little to combat the ghost. However, they were enough of a distraction to the local residents for the Cat Council of Kingsport to launch its own operation, one that destroyed the poltergeist once and for all, and ended the threat.

Dahlia saw that when trouble landed in her own back yard, the council moved to quickly eliminate the threat. She now knows that dangerous things lurk in the mists around Kingsport, and that someone needs to be ready to stop them. She also knows that, most of the time, humans are just out of their league. When it comes to fighting the Mythos and protecting Kingsport, it really is a job for cats.

DAHLIA: THE HASTY

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 2

STR 10 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 50 **POW** 75
DEX 130 **APP** 70 **EDU** 65 **SEN** 75
LUCK 75 **HP** 6 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 14 **BUILD** +1/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 45% (22/9); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 65% (32/13)

SKILLS: Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Cuteness 35%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming 25%, Healing 15%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (English) 32%, Human Lore 13%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 6%, Jump 55%, Listen 50%, Natural World 43%, Navigate 40%, Occult 10%, Scent 60%, Sense Danger 20%, Sleep 50%, Spot 35%, Status 5%, Stealth 60%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 40%, Wash 50%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Farm Cat, Run Like the Wind (+2 to MOV, making it 14).

GRACE

THE WARRIOR PRINCESS

(7th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This large, white and silver queen boasts a thick coat of fluffy fur. She is a mature seven years old and well known across Kingsport and the Dreamlands as a

stalwart defender of Kingsport. She enjoys the renown she has earned in her pursuits, as by instinct, she craves attention. In the waking world, she owns a mated pair of humans, although she doesn't consider them very well trained. They do all right anticipating and meeting most of her needs, although they sometimes need a soft bite to remind them who's the boss. But she knows they love her. How could they not?

Despite her bravado, she does love her humans and the other cat that lives in her home. It's a good home, and a good life. She takes long naps in the afternoon, and falls asleep listening to the radio while lying on the warm laps of her humans or beside them on the couch. Grace enjoys exploring and playing with new things, so long as she finds them in her house. Unless working on council business, she seldom leaves her home. Why would she when everything she needs is inside of it?

In her youth, she was afraid of strangers and strange noises. However, the more people visited her home, the more she began to like them, once they proved themselves kind and trustworthy. She knows that not all humans are kind and trustworthy, and she has developed good instincts at telling those who are from those who aren't. Strange sounds, especially the rustling of bags, still do scare her (although she'd never admit to it).

Once trouble begins or when dealing with council business, Grace's demeanor changes from that of a pampered princess to that of a true warrior queen. She has proven her bravery time and time again, both in the waking world and in the Dreamlands, defending Kingsport selflessly, often against incredible odds. In battle, she can be a ferocious warrior, like a storm raging over the ocean, and there are few other cats who would ever want to do battle with her. Today few challenge her, as her reputation alone is enough to settle most contests before combat begins.

The only cat not intimidated by her is her housemate. She does her best to put them in their place, but the situation is a stalemate at best. It is all a game between them, a way for her to just be a regular cat and not some crusading hero while at home. The rest of Kingsport may treat her like a hero, but at home, she's just "one of the two cats living here". It grounds her and keeps her humble. While her housemate knows her position, she never allows them to become involved in council activities. Of all the cats she fights to protect, the one who shares her home is the dearest to her.

Grace falls squarely in between the young eager council members and the older, more cautious ones. She is not a cat to go running into danger unprepared, but she is not the sort to let a danger linger and grow while the council frets and debates. She tries to stay out of decision making, having no desire to lead the council in any way. Grace enjoys her role as a field marshal, a noble warrior, and, at times, an enforcer in the defense of Kingsport. However, her opinion does carry weight, and her views have shifted the balance one way or the other between the two camps on the council.

On the council, she is closest to Spunky The Bold, the old noble hero with a thousand war stories. She

looks up to him a great deal, and remembers when he was in his prime, during her kitten years. While she admires Vitas' boldness, she thinks he's reckless and a bad influence on Royce. She has a low opinion of the newest member, Dahlia the Hasty, feeling she is too "rural" to be a proper hero of Kingsport.

GRACE: THE WARRIOR PRINCESS

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 7

STR 15 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 65 **POW** 80
DEX 120 **APP** 75 **EDU** 70 **SEN** 80
LUCK 80 **HP** 5 **MP** 16 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: +1D6/-1

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 55% (27/11); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 65% (32/13)

SKILLS: Climb 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Cuteness 38%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming 25%, Healing 15%, Hiss 55%, Human Language (English) 22%, Human Lore 14%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 40%, Jump 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 40%, Navigate 35%, Occult 10%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 30%, Sleep 50%, Spot 45%, Status 23%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 20%, Track 25%, Wash 50%, Yowl 55%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Brave, Bruiser.

THE ANGEL OF MUSIC

(8th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

This very confident and bold queen has a tortoiseshell coat and large golden eyes. She is in her prime at four years old and only recently arrived in Kingsport. Her owners, an American composer and French born orchestra cellist, purchased a large house in the Westside neighborhood. Their favorite book is *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (*The Phantom of the Opera*), from which she gets her unusual name. The Angel of Music is a very intelligent, brave, and curious cat, but most of all she is extremely loyal to her humans, to whom she owes her very life.

As a kitten, The Angel of Music was very sick, kept in a cage, waiting to be adopted. Even at that age, she could see into the hearts of people, so she rejected most of the humans who came to see her, hissing and swatting at them. Then, as she grew weaker and started having trouble breathing, she saw a man with a pure and loving heart. This one she accepted, crawling into his arms, staring into his eyes, knowing she would be safe. Her new owner rushed her to a vet. She was treated for a severe infection and parasites, saving her life.

That first night with her human, as she fought for her life, Bast visited her in a dream and told Angel that her human and his wife were in danger. Their connection to music was quite deep, making them a target for various evil forces, including the Dreaded Last King of Carcosa. Bast said they'd soon move

to a city cloaked in mists after inheriting a haunted house. They'd need a defender, a brave and special cat to protect them and others. The Angel of Music knew she owed her humans her life and swore to do whatever was necessary to save theirs.

Since arriving in Kingsport, The Angel of Music has been busy. The new house was, as promised, haunted. Exploring it and solving its many puzzles of hidden doors, trick locks, and secret passages allowed her to nearly cleanse the house on her own. As she battled the final evil creature bound to the building in the dark catacombs of its Secret Mystery Room, several other strange cats showed up to help her. They were good fighters, climbers, and cunning warriors. It was a titanic battle, but together they defeated the monstrous horror, an undead wizard living in a body made of writhing worms.

When it was over, she thanked them, and then ordered them to leave the area. She didn't like the intrusion into her territory, even if they did help. They told her not to worry; they'd been invited by "a mutual friend" to assist her, introduce themselves, and deliver a message. A black cat without a tail, named Atticus, informed her that they were some of the members of the Cat Council of Kingsport, and that the goddess Bast herself had sent them. He informed her that Bast had selected her to join their ranks. The Angel of Music knew that if there was a fellowship of hero cat defenders of this city, then she needed to be a part of that.

She immediately accepted, and then ordered them all out of her territory.

Angel is the most territorial cat in Kingsport, growling at anything, be it cat, human, or even dog, that gets too close to her home and family. She is a good fighter, an amazing problem solver who can open most doors with ease, and is as curious as any two cats alive. But she is still a youthful cat, who loves getting her rump scratched by her "Mom", playing with toys, climbing, running, yowling for attention, and bringing her owners' toys as a signal she wants treats. She adores playing with and mothering kittens, but once they grow up, they become just other cats to be bossed around. She has quickly been making a name for herself among the felines of Kingsport.

THE ANGEL OF MUSIC

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 4

STR 10 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 75 **POW** 75
DEX 110 **APP** 75 **EDU** 75 **SEN** 85
LUCK 86 **HP** 5 **MP** 15 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1/-2
DAMAGE BONUS: +1D4/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 60% (30/12); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 60% (30/12)

SKILLS: Climb 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Cuteness 38%, Dream Lore 10%, Dreaming 25%, Healing 15%, Hiss 60%, Human Language (English) 25%, Human Lore 15%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 11%, Jump 55%, Listen 45%, Natural World 48%, Navigate 40%, Occult 20%, Scent 55%, Sense Danger 20%,

Sleep 50%, Spot 35%, Status 11%, Stealth 55%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 30%, Wash 50%, Yowl 60%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Curious, Sleuth.

LUNA

THE KIND

(9th Seat of the Council of Kingsport)

Luna, a small orange, brown, and black-striped queen, is the second longest serving cat on the council. She is stubborn, prideful, and independent most of the time, but she has a loving heart. Her personality has changed drastically during her life, which was not always an easy one. Her strength of spirit is undeniable, and she has worked hard to mentor many of the newer members of the council, including Atticus, Grace, Royce, and Dahlia.

Luna was abandoned by her first two owners, most humans considering her to be unfriendly. She sat in a cage, refusing to eat, and rejecting all human contact. The world had rejected her, so she would reject the world. Then a strange woman picked her up, and she pushed her away like all the rest. But something happened; this woman recognized a kinship with this cat, defiance in the face of a cruel world, a spirit that could not easily be broken. The human held her firmly, and Luna knew that this was someone who would not let her go... ever. She then relaxed in her arms and stared into her eyes, and Luna knew they'd be together for the rest of their lives.

It was this spiritual strength that earned Luna her place on the council. She is a stalwart companion to her owner, a teacher at Kingsport High School. They live together as equals, especially at bed time (as Luna claims half of the mattress). During the day, she enjoys sleeping and looking out the window, running around and trying to sneak out of the house to hide under bushes. Her owner doesn't like for her to go out.

Throughout her life, she has learned to love both people and other cats, as her owner brought in kittens which she helped raise. Her "brothers" opened up a new side of Luna, that of a mentor and a mother. She would also greet her owner's human friends, never lashing out or hissing at them. She was a small cat, not an adventurer or a warrior in most respects, but her role on the council is very important. Luna comforts others, listening to their problems and calming them with her presence. To younger cats, she gives advice and support, as a mother would. When a traumatized cat is near to losing its sense of self through terror, Luna's calm, soothing energy helps them regain control and peace. Luna's true value to the council comes not from her going on missions, but from her supporting those who do, especially after, when they're dealing with the memory of the horrors they have faced.

For a cat the world had seemingly rejected, Luna embodies the true spirit of Bast, a mother protector of all that is good and noble, a defender of civilization. She inspires other cats, with her strong spirit in her

diminutive frame. But Luna has a secret, which only Spunky knows.

Luna appears much older than she actually is. This is because she is unwell, and has been since her last field operation. After the disastrous Dreamlands mission in 1918, the council was very short staffed. As they struggled to replace their fallen members, Luna began going on missions. The whole council was summoned to go on a very dangerous mission, to defeat an undead wizard made of worms. This was the mission in which they recruited The Angel of Music, gaining a young, strong cat in their depleted ranks.

However, the wizard uttered a curse that fell squarely on Luna, and has been slowly weakening her ever since. The curse was meant for Grace, the youngest council member, but Luna rushed into the curse's path to save her. She knows that there is no way to lift the curse and that it will soon claim her life. Spunky, her oldest friend, knows, but she's sworn him to secrecy. She does not want others to worry, as she has had a good life. She intends to work at healing the sorrow in others until the goddess Bast calls her to her final rest.

LUNA THE KIND

Domestic Shorthair, Queen (Female), 8

STR 05 **CON** 15 **SIZ** 05 **INT** 85 **POW** 50
DEX 95 **APP** 70 **EDU** 100 **SEN** 50
LUCK 50 **HP** 2 **MP** 10 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** 0/-2

DAMAGE BONUS: 0/-2

ATTACKS PER ROUND: 1

ATTACKS: Fighting (Feline): 25% (12/2); Bite 1D4; Rip 2D3 + DB; Scratch 1D3 + DB; Dodge 48% (24/9)

SKILLS: Climb 50%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Cuteness 40%, Dream Lore 25%, Dreaming 30%, Healing 20%, Hiss 50%, Human Language (English) 32%, Human Language (Swedish) 26%, Hypnotize 10%, Insight 41%, Jump 50%, Listen 55%, Natural World 50%, Navigate 25%, Occult 25%, Scent 50%, Sense Danger 25%, Sleep 50%, Spot 50%, Status 41%, Stealth 50%, Streetwise 1%, Swim 10%, Throw 10%, Track 20%, Wash 60%, Yowl 50%.

TRICKS: Leap to the Moon (Dreamlands travel), Housecat, Scholar





The Kingsport Council (Seats 1–4, Going from top to bottom, clockwise):

Shiva, Mauler of Ankles (4th Seat on the Council of Kingsport / Backer #55 - Emanuele Lillo); Royce, The Trickster Prince (2nd Seat on the Kingsport Council / Backer #16 - Jeffrey Heroux); Atticus: The Shadow Without A Tail (1st Seat on the Council of Kingsport / Backer #3 - Bill Adcock); Spunky, The Bold (3rd Seat on the Council of Kingsport / Backer #42 - Andrew Fattorusso)



The Kingsport Council (Seats 5–9, Going from top to bottom, clockwise):

Dahlia, The Hasty (6th Seat on the Council of Kingsport / Backer #66 - Guest 1398430724); Grace, The Warrior Princess (7th Seat of the Council of Kingsport / Backer #99 - Joerg Sterner); Luna, The Kind (9th Seat of the Council of Kingsport - Backer #33 Regina Ramos, aka Jazz Hands); Vitas Varnas: The Explorer (5th Seat of the Council of Kingsport / Backer #57 - Vitas Varnas); The Angel of Music (8th Seat on the Council of Kingsport / Backer #31 - Alexander Lucard)



Bengal Level Backers I—Listed in clockwise order:

Backer #11 / Joe Kontor; Backer #47 / Dreaming Comics; Backer #72 / Harry; Backer #29 / Michael Bowman; Backer #36 / Sven "Doc" Berglowe; Backer #14 / Patrick McGrath



Bengal Level Backers II—Listed in top to bottom:

Backer #96 / Anthony; Backer #199 / Kristoffer Ray; Backer #119 / Leigh Candalino; Backer #81 / Crissy Syversen; Backer #148 / Guest 898067932; Backer #149 / Rod Meek



*Abyssinian Level Backers—Listed right to left:
Backer # 223 / Robert McCue; Backer #214 / Guest 1614960220*



Zeddicus

Graymalkin

Player _____
Referee _____
Campaign _____

*Velvet Paws
against the
Mythos*



Daily Name _____
Particular Name _____
Secret Name _____
Breed _____
Sex _____ Age _____
Birthplace _____ Turf _____
Stress Disorders _____
Favorite Food _____

SENTIENCE POINTS

Feral 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 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
Starting SEN _____ 99-Cthulhu Mythos _____

CHARACTERISTICS & ROLLS

STR ☐ ☐ DEX ☐ ☐ INT ☐ ☐
CON ☐ ☐ APP ☐ ☐ POW ☐ ☐
SIZ ☐ ☐ EDU ☐ ☐ Luck ☐ ☐
Know
Damage Bonus _____ / _____ Build _____ / _____

MAGIC POINTS

Unconscious 0 1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

HIT POINTS

Dead -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22
23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

SKILL TICKS

Unspent _____ Spent _____

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

- ☐ Climb (50%)
Cthulhu Mythos (0%)
- ☐ Cuteness ($APP \div 2$)%
- ☐ Dodge ($DEX \div 2$)%
- ☐ Dream Lore (10%)
- ☐ Dreaming (25%)
- ☐ Fighting (Feline) (25%)
- ☐ Hiss (50%)
- Human Language ($INT \div 3$)%
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ Human Lore ($EDU \div 5$)%
- ☐ Hypnotize (10%)
- ☐ Insight (01%)
- ☐ Jump (50%)
- ☐ Listen (40%)
- ☐ Natural World ($EDU \div 2$)%
- ☐ Navigate (25%)

- ☐ Occult (05%)
- ☐ Scent (50%)
- ☐ Sense Danger (10%)
- ☐ Sleep (50%)
- ☐ Spot (25%)
- ☐ Status (01%)
- ☐ Stealth (50%)
- ☐ Streetwise (01%)
- ☐ Swim (10%)
- ☐ Throw (10%)
- ☐ Track (20%)
- ☐ Wash (50%)
- ☐ Yowl (50%)

ENVIRONMENTS

Desert/Arid ☐ ☐ Farmland ☐ ☐ Forest/Jungle ☐ ☐
Lunar ☐ ☐ Snowy ☐ ☐ Urban ☐ ☐

TRICKS

Name _____ Description _____
Leap to the Moon Travel in the Dreamlands
Nine Lives Reroll one result with fatal consequences

FIGHTING ATTACKS

Attk/Man'vre	Regular	Hard	Extreme	Damage	Rng	#Att
<input type="checkbox"/> Bite (Fighting)	_____	_____	_____	1d4+db	touch	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Grapple (Fighting)	_____	_____	_____	man'vre	touch	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Rip (Fighting)	_____	_____	_____	2d3+db	touch	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Scratch (Fighting)	_____	_____	_____	1d3+db	touch	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Deadly Cat Attack	_____	_____	_____	man'vre	touch	1
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____





CAT ATTRIBUTES



Current Abode _____ Episodes of Insanity _____

Personal Description _____ Wounds & Injuries _____

Marks & Scars _____

HISTORY OF NOBLE FELINE ENDEAVOURS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

RESOURCES & FAVORS

Main Can-Opener _____

Personal Territory _____

Favors Owed _____

Favors Promised _____

ADVENTURING GEAR

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

MYTHOS TOMES CONSULTED

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

FELINE FOES & ALLIES

Foes _____ Allies _____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

MAGICAL ARTIFACTS & SPELLS

Artifacts _____ Spells _____

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

CAN-OPENERS TOLERATED



TAILS OF VALOR

Three adventures for Cathulhu set in Ancient Egypt, Ancient Rome, & Dark Ages France

HORROR AND ADVENTURE IN THE WORLD OF CATHULHU

From “The Cats of Ulthar” to those owned by Delapore in “The Rats in the Walls,” cats have held a special place of honor in the heart of H. P. Lovecraft. They are deeply embedded into the lore of the Cthulhu Mythos. We hope you’ll join us on our journey into the world of Cathulhu, cats battling Mythos horrors. *Cathulhu—Velvet Paws on Cthulhu’s Trail* is a horror role playing game by Sixtystone Press, an offshoot of the Call of Cthulhu RPG where the players portray cats investigating the Cthulhu Mythos.

Tails of Valor is the first collection of scenarios produced for Cathulhu using the 7th edition rule system, a compilation of three adventures set in ancient times by *Ennie Award* winning authors. They are:

TRIUMPHUS FELIS FRAE (SET IN 41 C.E. ROME) BY JEFFREY MOELLER

First the vermin became scarce, and then kittens and cats began wandering off, never to be seen again. Later, people began acting strangely, disobeying the Praetorian Guards and attempting to enter the Imperial Palace. Then the Emperor Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (known to later history as Caligula) himself vanishes, leaving the city teetering on the edge of utter chaos. Can a band of brave and proud Roman street cats solve this mystery, and restore order to the Empire?

Triumphus Felis Frae is Latin for “the triumph (all march) of the wild cat” or more simply, Stray Cat Strut.

SHADOW HARVEST (SET IN 5TH DYNASTY EGYPT) BY STUART BOON

As harvest approaches, strange things are happening in the Temple of Bast outside of the city of Bubastis. Two of the oldest and wisest

cats have disappeared, and a kitten has been found murdered on temple grounds. Can a group of heroic and cunning cats of the temple discover what has befallen their kin, and uncover the dark secrets and blasphemous horrors that threaten all of Egypt?

THE UNDESIRABLES (SET IN DARK AGES FRANCE) BY OSCAR RIOS

The cats of Paris struggle to survive in a city driven mad with fear. The streets are filled with the dead, the dying, and the terrified as a deadly and mysterious plague runs rampant. The church places the blame on Satan, black magic, witches, and their familiars... namely cats. As a purge of such undesirables begins, will the cats put a stop to the actual witches spreading this vile pestilence, or seek to escape the city and reach the countryside?

SINISTER SEEDS

Nine scenario plots, three set in each of the above historical periods, are included as well, so Keepers can continue on to further Cathulhu adventures.

THE COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA

One sole cat defends the Great Library of Alexandria—and sometimes defends humanity and civilization from the books contained therein!

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This council is a body of nine cats living their ninth lives, revered for their wisdom, bravery, and leadership. These cats are defenders of the city of Kingsport in both the waking world and in the Dreamlands.

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