

TATTERDEMALLION

~ an experience in fear ~



~ By: ~
Richard Watts
Penelope Love



A Scenario for Call of Cthulhu

Tatterdemallion: cf. A ragged man

Along the shore the cloud waves break,
The twin suns sink behind the lake, The
shadows lengthen

In Carcase.

Strange is the night where black stars rise,
And strange moons circle through the skies,
But stranger still is

Lost Carcosa.

Songs that the Hyades shall sing, Where
flap the tatters of the King, Must die
unheard in

Dim Carcosa.

Song of my soul, my voice is dead,
Die though, unsung, as tears unshed
Shall dry and die in

Lost Carcosa.

Cassilda's Song in *The King In Yellow*
(Act I, Scene ii) Castaigne (1893), trans.
R. Chambers

TATTERDEMALLION

A Play In Two Acts

Act One: ALLEMONDE

In which the characters receive invitations to Anthony Carmichael's Masked Ball. Whilst preparing for the gala event of the Season, they may investigate his past and speculate upon his future. Anthony Carmichael is throwing a party, and Death is playing host.

Act Two: RAGTIME

At a somewhat more frenetic pace than the previous Act. The Investigators find themselves by the shore of the Lake of Hali. Some exploration, including a trip to the city of Carcosa, where it is distinctly unpleasant to be. Investigation uncovers only fear and loathing, culminating in the final horror of the Pallid Mask. There follows a return to Earth where a Play is in progress.

"TATTERDEMALLION"

1988 Richard Watts & Penelope Love

A Call of Cthulhu tournament in two acts, originally run at Arcanacon VI, July 7th - 10th 1988, Melbourne, Australia.

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Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium's name for its game of fantasy roleplaying in the worlds of H.P. Lovecraft.

Correspondence concerning Tatterdemallion and other dark and eerie matters can be directed to: Box Hill, Victoria, Australia.

Act One
ALLEMONDE

Keeper's Introduction

At some stage of their lives, each of the characters have come into contact with Anthony Carmichael, the gifted but undeniably decadent playwright. Unbeknownst to them, and the world at large, Carmichael, whilst recovering from a recent nervous breakdown (caused by a series of theatrical disasters almost leading to financial ruin) obtained and read one of the few extant copies of a play called "The King in Yellow".

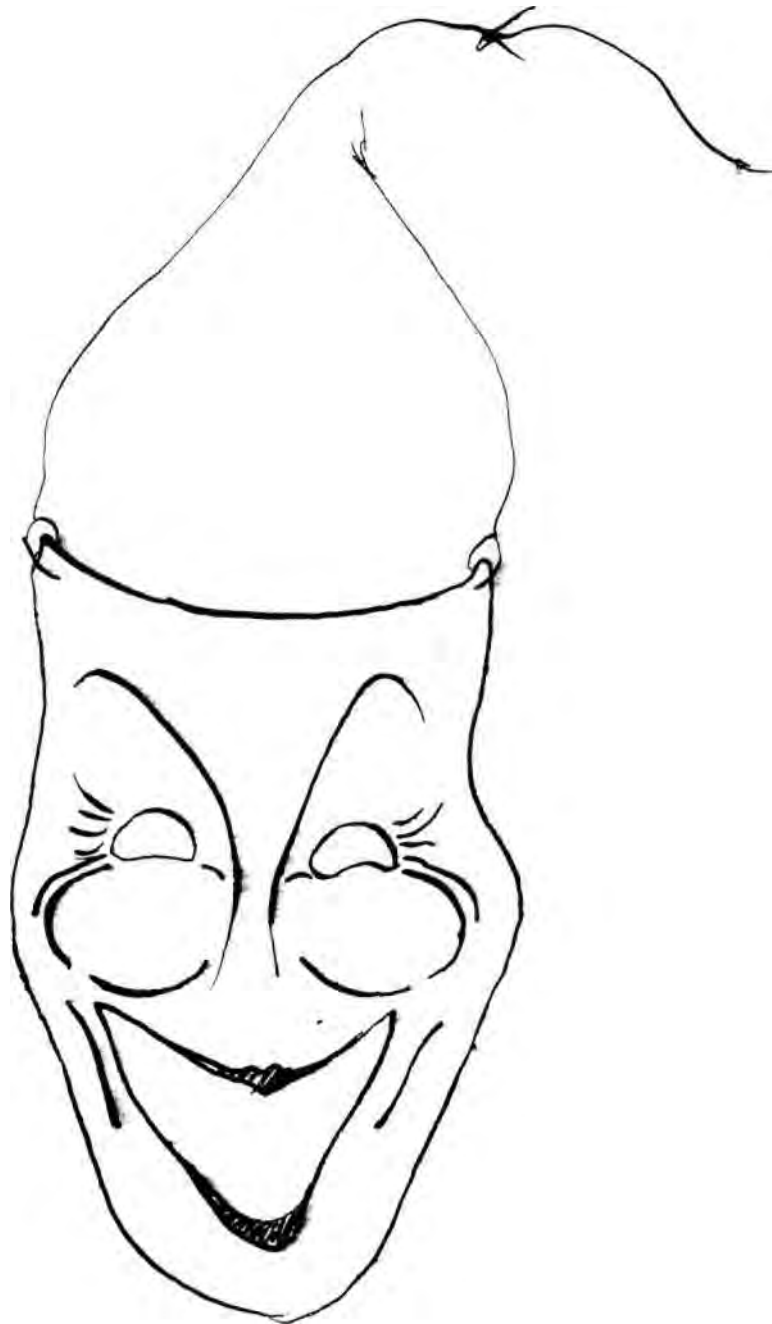
This work, written by an otherwise unknown French playwright, Castaigne, was first published in Paris in 1893. It was immediately banned by every civilized Government in the world. Merely reading "The King in Yellow" drove the reader to unutterable despair of spirit, leading to moral stupor, and suicidal and homicidal outbursts. Governments, appalled by the miasma of horror that the play spread amongst its readers, rushed to impound and destroy any stocks of it which reached their shores.

The copy that Carmichael read inspired him to strike back at the artistic world which had first feted and then humiliated him. To this end he has invited the brightest and the best of the literary, artistic and theatrical circles of New York and London to what has been dubbed "the Social Event of the Season"; a gorgeously costumed Masked Ball. A premiere performance of his new play is figured as the height of the evening's gaiety. He has also invited many lesser known lights against whom he holds a grudge (including all of the Investigators).

The play is, of course, "The King in Yellow". To witness the performance of such a play would drive the people who mocked Carmichael into that bleak and nullifying torment which has long tortured him. The black abyss of madness would engulf their souls. They in their turn, would spread the blight across the entire American seaboard and beyond through the medium of their art, like a foul and nameless cancer.

Having worked upon the play to the point of being able to perform it, Carmichael and the three actors he chose to fill the remaining parts have fallen into their roles more truly than they can know. They have almost become mindless puppets of the King in Yellow, the being whose baleful and poisonously beautiful influence permeates the entire play. Almost but not quite, for the King in Yellow seeks not to enslave, but corrupt. From his realm in the far distant constellation of the Hyades (beneath whose malevolent gaze the party guests arrive), the King in Yellow, the Tatterdemallion King, has opened up a gateway to madness, which influences the entire house and all within it.

Strange things happen and then stranger still. From a simple party, the night degenerates into blood-soaked chaos. The Investigators must seek out the root of the madness - travel beyond our world to those distant, coldly burning stars - and attempt to overcome the influence of the Tatterdemallion King before it overcomes them . . .



CALL of CTHULHU

Name MISS JESSICA BARNFIELD
 Occupation Actress Sex Female Age 24
 Nationality U.S.A. Residence New York

INVESTIGATOR STATISTICS

STR. 11 DEX 8 INT 13 Idea 65
 CON 13 APP 17 POW 15 Luck 75
 SIZ 9 SAN 99 EDU 15 Know 75
 Schools New York School of the Arts
 Degrees —
 Damage Bonus Nil

MAGJC POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<u>15</u>	16	17	18	19	20	21

HIT POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	<u>11</u>	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

SANITY POINTS

(Insanity) 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

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

Accounting (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology (05)	<u>27</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anthropology (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hide (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write Eng. (EDU x5)	<u>85</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	History (20)	<u>20</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write. (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astronomy (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jump (25)	<u>35</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write. (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bargain (05)	<u>23</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Law (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write. (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Botany (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library Use (25)	<u>06</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ride (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camouflage (25)	<u>25</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linguist (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sing (05)	<u>28</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemistry (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen (25)	<u>59</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sneak (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climb (40)	<u>40</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Maps (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Rating (15)	<u>15</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical Repair (20)	<u>20</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cthulhu Mythos (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occult (05)	<u>33</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot Hidden (25)	<u>25</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debate (10)	<u>47</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operate Hv. Machine (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swim (25)	<u>25</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnose Disease (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oratory (05)	<u>39</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throw (25)	<u>25</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dodge (DEX x2)	<u>21</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive Automobile (20)	<u>20</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Disease (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical Repair (10)	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pick Pocket (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Poison (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast Talk (05)	<u>05</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pilot Aircraft (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoology (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid (30)	<u>30</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychoanalysis (00)	<u>—</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Acting</u> (10)	<u>58</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Attk%	Damage	Impale	Parry%	Hit Points
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SPELLS KNOWN, OTHER SKILLS, NOTES

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Character One: Miss Jessica Barnfield

With the death of her parents when she was six, Jessica was reared by her Grandfather on a small farm in upstate Massachusetts. A fervent "fire and brimstone" Catholic, he brought the girl up with a strong awareness of good and bad, sin and righteousness. However, after his passing his effect wore off a little, as the world proved itself not to be as cut-and-dried as he would have her believe. The best vow that Jessica could make was to maintain her own scruples.

Creditors claimed the farm, and for a climactic change of scenery she moved to New York. After many trials, she began work as a typist. Being in the city though gave her the chance to try out something she'd always wanted to do: appear on the stage. Ever mindful of her promise, and in memory of her Grampaw, she took care to only take part in productions which were good and proper. She loved it, and happily and steadily worked her way from the chorus to minor speaking parts. The excitement of rehearsal contrasted with her quiet home life.

Last year, in what was in fact her last production, she caught the eye of Anthony Carmichael. Coming backstage afterwards, he offered her a fair-sized part in his new work, Sodom. Imagining it to be some sort of religious piece, Jessica accepted.

A reading was arranged soon after, but to her horror, she discovered that Sodom was extremely immoral, positively oozing with licentiousness. She quit of course, and the play itself was punished with failure; but this revenge was too late for Jessica, who was so upset that since then she hasn't had the courage to seek out another part. So for her nowadays it's five days in the office, and back home to sit by the fire and dream of the footlights

CALL OF CTHULHU

Name Mr. Algerton Chambers
 Occupation Critic Sex Male Age 43
 Nationality U.S.A. Residence New York

INVESTIGATOR STATISTICS

STR. 14 DEX 11 INT. 16 Idea. 80
 CON 12 APP. 11 POW 12 Luck 60
 SIZ 12 SAN 99 EDU 15 Know 75
 Schools
 Degrees
 Damage Bonus +1d4

MAGJC POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

HIT POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

SANITY POINTS

(Insanity) 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

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

Accounting (10)	.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anthropology (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hide (10)	.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write Eng. (EDU x5)	.96	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	History (20)	.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write <u>French</u> (00)	.40	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astronomy (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jump (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write <u>Latin</u> (00)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bargain (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Law (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>
Botany (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library Use (25)	.60	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ride (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camouflage (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linguist (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sing (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemistry (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen (25)	.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sneak (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climb (40)	.40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Maps (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak <u>French</u> (00)	.40	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Rating (15)	.45	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical Repair (20)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak <u>Latin</u> (00)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cthulhu Mythos (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occult (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot Hidden (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debate (10)	.64	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operate Hv. Machine (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swim (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnose Disease (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oratory (05)	.15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throw (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dodge (DEX x2)	.46	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive Automobile (20)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Disease (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical Repair (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pick Pocket (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Poison (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast Talk (05)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pilot Aircraft (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoology (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid (30)	.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychoanalysis (00)	...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Acting</u> (10).....	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Attk%	Damage	Impale	Parry%	Hit Points
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SPELLS KNOWN, OTHER SKILLS, NOTES

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Character Two: Mr Algernon Chambers

As a young man, Algernon burned to write a Great American Novel. He honed his skills, studied the work of others, and geared himself up for the task. However, when he actually embarked on the project, he found that he had raised his standards to such a point that it was impossible for his own writing to match up to them; disillusioned, he gave up.

However, his years at college doing literature had left him with a pretty mean capability to assess other people's work, and so he turned this skill into his career. By and by he drifted into the most lucrative and glamorous area of the field: Theatre Criticism!

His savage, vitriolic, yet insightful style proved popular with the readers, and before long he was writing for The New York Times. Through the column, he made the acquaintance of many of the rich and famous; actors, directors and playwrights flattered him with gifts. One of the few who sincerely enjoyed his company, rather than merely toadying to him, was Anthony Carmichael. Algernon followed the plays Carmichael wrote and produced with interest, managing to see past the superficial decadence to the true genius beneath. Beloved Dead was first, shocking the crowds with its tender coverage of necrophilia. His Master's Voice dealt with Satanism ("an inspired work, rising above its tawdry subject matter"), and was followed by Heart's Blood ("lushly pagan"), then Poison'd Love, and most recently (last year) Sodom. This last play however Algernon found banal and tiresome.

- Carmichael, it seemed, had lost his touch, and Sodom closed after less than a week. With the failure of the play, his friendship with the man broke up, and he has heard nothing of him but rumor since then. But there are plenty more theatrical fish out there to be fried

CALL OF CTHULHU

Name *Sigiorina Bianca Vindici*
 Occupation *Prima Donna* Sex *Female* Age *51*
 Nationality *Italian* .. Residence *New York*

INVESTIGATOR STATISTICS

STR. *14*. DEX *10*. INT *12*. Idea *60* ..
 CON *15*. APP. *12*. POW *9*. Luck *45* ..
 SIZ *15*. SAN *99*. EDU *11*. Know *55* ..
 Schools
 Degrees
 Damage Bonus *+1d4*

MAGIC POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

HIT POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

SANITY POINTS

(Insanity) 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

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

Accounting (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anthropology (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hide (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write Eng	<i>55</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	History (20)	<i>20</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write <i>Italian</i> (00)	<i>60</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astronomy (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jump (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write..... (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bargain (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Law (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write..... (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Botany (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library Use (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ride (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camouflage (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linguist (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sing (05)	<i>75</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemistry (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen (25)	<i>35</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sneak (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climb (40)	<i>40</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Maps (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak <i>English</i> (00)	<i>60</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Rating (15)	<i>15</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical Repair (20)	<i>20</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak <i>Italian</i> (00)	<i>70</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cthulhu Mythos (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occult (05)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot Hidden (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debate (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operate Hv. Machine (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swim (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnose Disease (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oratory (05)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throw (25)	<i>25</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dodge (DEX x2)	<i>20</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive Automobile (20)	<i>20</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Disease (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical Repair (10)	<i>10</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pick Pocket (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Poison (05)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast Talk (05)	<i>15</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pilot Aircraft (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoology (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid (30)	<i>30</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychoanalysis (00)	<i>05</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Acting</i> (10).....	<i>30</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Attk%	Damage	Impale	Parry%	Hit Points
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SPELLS KNOWN, OTHER SKILLS, NOTES

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Character Three: Signorina Bianca Vindici

Descended from an old and noble Italian lineage, the Signorina was forced to emigrate to America when the political upheaval in her country did not favour her family's standing. To survive, she began to sing with the New York Opera Company. Her rise to fame was rapid, not because of her actual skill, but because none could sing the Italian operas with such conviction as a true speaker of the language. Within a few short years Bianca was prima donna of the Company; and heaven help anyone who got in her way.

The strain of fighting to keep her position at the top has taken its toll on her though, and her voice, never good, is starting to show the effects of age. Rather than be pushed out by some up-and-coming young starlet, she has decided to step down while the going is good. In May she began her "Final Farewell Tour". This proved such a success that she staged another in July, and plans for a third are already underway. Nobody said she had to step down quietly!

One of the many ways in which Bianca maintains her standing is to keep both ears to the ground; she collects rumours, and isn't adverse to spreading a few of her own devising. With a network of trusted friends always ready to talk (rather than physically search out information, this character uses Library Use to find out gossip), Bianca combs the theatrical world for any snippets she can find, and keeps a fat filing cabinet full of enough tasty titbits to ensure she can always get the better of just about everybody. One never knows when they will be useful, to help a friend, or crush a rival; for example, there's that irksome little playwright, Anthony Carmichael. More than anything else, Bianca hates being upstaged.

CALL OF CTHULHU

Name: Mr. Volkmar Rheingart
 Occupation: Artist Sex: Male Age: 29
 Nationality: German Residence: New York

INVESTIGATOR STATISTICS

STR. 12 DEX 10 INT 14 Idea 70
 CON 13 APP 18 POW 13 Luck 65
 SIZ 14 SAN 99 EDU 17 Know 85
 Schools: Paris School of Fine Art
 Degrees: —
 Damage Bonus: +1d4

MAGIC POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	<u>13</u>	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

HIT POINTS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	<u>14</u>
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

SANITY POINTS

(Insanity)

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	<u>65</u>	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

INVESTIGATOR SKILLS

Accounting (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Geology (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychology (05)	.15	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anthropology (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hide (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write English	.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Archaeology (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	History (20)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write German (00)	.85	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astronomy (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jump (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write..... (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bargain (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Law (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Read/Write..... (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>
Botany (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library Use (25)	.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ride (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Camouflage (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Linguist (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sing (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chemistry (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sneak (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climb (40)	.40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make Maps (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak German (00)	.85	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit Rating (15)	.15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mechanical Repair (20)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Speak English (00)	.70	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cthulhu Mythos (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occult (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spot Hidden (25)	.65	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debate (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Operate Hv. Machine (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swim (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diagnose Disease (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oratory (05)	.35	<input type="checkbox"/>	Throw (25)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dodge (DEX x2)	.25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacy (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Track (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive Automobile (20)	.20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Disease (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical Repair (10)	.10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pick Pocket (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Treat Poison (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fast Talk (05)	.05	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pilot Aircraft (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoology (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid (30)	.30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychoanalysis (00)	..	<input type="checkbox"/>	Painting (05).....	.65	<input type="checkbox"/>

WEAPONS

Weapon	Attk%	Damage	Impale	Parry%	Hit Points

SPELLS KNOWN, OTHER SKILLS, NOTES

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Character Four: Herr Volkmar Rheingart

A German-born artist living in New York, Volkmar paints moody and emotion-laden canvases in the Expressionist style. Or rather, he did. Since coming to America, Volkmar has been forced to prostitute his Art, painting "pretty" portraits and landscapes in order to make any money - food is, alas, a habit which has proved a necessity.

His hoped-for 'big break' came last year, when the playwright Anthony Carmichael commissioned painted sets for his latest play, Sodom. Hoping the play's assured success would bring him fame, Volkmar painted out his soul. Unfortunately, the play bombed, and he was instead ignored.

After weeks of brooding in his spartan garret he began to paint again; the popular way, the successful way. A hateful way. At least Carmichael, with his hauntingly perverse style of writing, stayed true to himself in the face of failure. Now Volkmar hopes to find a new patron similar to Carmichael (or even the man himself, should things get better for him), and escape the bastardized corner which he has painted himself into.

Players' Introduction

It is September 26th, 1926. Despite an unseasonal cold snap, the weather on this. Autumn morning is fine and warm; balmy one might say. Perhaps the weather is changing for the better? The characters are all busily at work.

KEEPER: Ask the players what they are doing.

Regardless of what they are doing, they are all interrupted by the delivery of the morning mail. In amongst the circulars and the advertisements, the bills and the letters, is a stiff white envelope, delivered via First Class- mail- It is addressed in a cramped and spidery hand, and bears the Investigator's name. Inside is a gilt-edged card. It is handwritten (by Eustace Fishe, secretary to Anthony Carmichael), and signed in Carmichael's distinctive bold, flourishing hand.

As each character sees Carmichael's signature, they will have a flashback of the last time that they saw him.

FLASHBACK

JESSICA: Carmichael stands before you, a cold rage burning ire his eyes. Angered by your refusal to degrade yourself by appearing in his latest play, his previous charm has turned to ice. "Your morals will cause you trouble my dear." His sarcasm cuts like a knife. "But it is entirely your choice. Go then. I can always find someone to replace you. An actress of your quality is never hard to find!"

ALGERNON: The throng of theatre-goers mills around the foyer, witicisms drifting about like butterflies - or perhaps wasps would be more appropriate. Towards you staggers a well-known figure, that of Anthony Carmichael. He brings his blood-shot eyes to bear upon you, and a convulsion of fury twists his handsome features. As his female escort tries to calm him down, a stinging stream of vitriol assails your ears. "Thought "Sodom" was banal did you, you little bastard? Worm! Filth! I see it all now! You've always hated me, haven't you, hated my success?" He is dragged off towards the door by a guard, kicking as he goes. His screams drift across the now hushed room. "I'll get you for this! You'll see! see! Bastarrrrrd....."

VOLKMAR: Slipping through the stage door, you enter the theatre to recover your painted sets for "Sodom", a play expected to do so well. Who could have guessed that it would have closed after a mere three performances. To your surprise, Carmichael himself is here, slumped head in hands at the edge of the stage. As he raises his pale, tear-streaked face to you, you are overcome with mortal embarrassment. That failure could do this to a man! Explaining why you have come takes no time. "You want your canvasses? Take them. Take them all. I have no need for them, now." He helps you carry the backdrops to your apartment, but when you turn to thank him, he is gone. Going to the stairwell, you hear running footsteps. You never even had a chance to say goodbye . . .

BIANCA: The assembled guests convulse with laughter. Carmichael, sitting at the head of the long table is once again entertaining all with his amusing anecdotes. Despite the fact that you invited him, you are rapidly beginning to wish that he had never been born. This is supposed to be a party in your honour, and this cad is stealing your limelight. At the high point of his next tale, you deliberately drop a crystal goblet. Taking advantage of the stunned silence, you begin to tell a story of your own. If looks could kill, Carmichael would have you dead on the spot!

OMENS

As each of the four Investigators finish their flashback & come out of their reverie, they notice that something minor, yet ominous has happened while they were thinking of other things.

For example:

JESSICA: In the midst of opening a can of beans, she has gashed her thumb on the jagged lid. Blood trickles across the invitation, turning black when it hits the ink.

ALGERNON: Continuing with your typing of your latest critique, you glance down and notice that instead of writing "breath", you have typed "death".

VOLKMAR: In your distraction you have splashed a vivid smear of crimson across your almost completed painting.

BIANCA: Continuing with your singing practice with your mind still on other things, you hit a sour note, and the mirror you are standing before cracks. Before you can stop yourself you glance at your own cracked reflection. The Evil Eye is surely upon you!

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Personal Knowledge

Apart from the information presented upon their character sheets, each of the Investigators has other information about Carmichael, which they must succeed at a 1/2 Know roll to recall. These are as follows:

JESSICA: Immoral as it may seem, when Carmichael and members of his casts are working towards a production, they become extremely close, to the point where sexual liaisons between them are considered quite normal. He seems to inspire near obsession in the cast members, both towards the play itself and him personally.

ALGERNON: Knows that Carmichael has an excellent collection of rare 17th and 18th Century works, including plays, books, pornographic pamphlets and other publications of a less salubrious nature.

VOLKMAR: Although his contacts with Carmichael have been few, Volkmar knows that the man is dedicated to perfection. Carmichael's temperament is uncertain. At the same incident he may lash out with frustrated fury, or laugh an upset off with the most delicious wit.

BIANCA: Having sifted through reams of gossip about Carmichael (and countless, others come to that), two facts stand out. He was treated in a private asylum in Madison Avenue, New York, six months ago. There is, however, very good business sense behind Carmichael's flamboyant and decadent lifestyle, something which most of "that set" lack. Either the man is not as foolish as he seems or more probably, it comes from his secretary, Eustace Fishe.

If players ask for more information, or do not succeed at their 1/2 know rolls, feed them as much gossip as you wish - royal lovers; a dealer and user of drugs; orgies; arranging abortions; dogs and cats lying down together. . .

Newspaper Reports

The following articles may be found by succeeding in Library Use rolls in the appropriate places. In Bianca's case, this could be her network of informants and gossipers just as well as old newspapers.

New York Times, Friday September 18th, 1926.

. . .England. Meanwhile, both here and overseas, everybody who is anybody is preparing for next weekend's party, to be held at the country estate of Anthony Carmichael. Despite rumors which indicated Anthony would never write again, we are told that guests will see the performance of his new play. Blonde twins Faith and Sylvia Prescott-Morgenstone, who have been seen with Anthony around town in recent weeks may be lined up for parts, but all concerned are keeping mum. Over in Hollywood. . .

New York Truth, May 15th, 1926.

. . . Seen again! Playwright, playboy and gad-about-town Tony Carmichael recently returned to the public scene for a brief appearance at the premiere screening of "The Student of Prague". Only recently recovered from his nervous collapse (which was, close sources say bought about by a little too much "iced tea"), Tony is following his stay in a private clinic with a time of quiet isolation at his country home, where he is said to be writing furiously. Dull, dull, dull! Failure to...

New York Times, Saturday December 26th, 1925.

. . . Guess who's another victim of the post-Christmas Blues? Anthony Carmichael does have a lot to be blue about, with the latest in his series, of "masterpieces" going down due to public demand. Seems the poor dear has had enough of us unappreciative theater-goers. Good thing he's gone. If I'd had to sit through another of those plays, I would have gone as wooden as the characters on stage! Anthony seems to think that purple eye-makeup and significant pauses make up for any form of meaningful dialogue, acting or plot. Seriously though, we wish him well in his temporary retirement, and hope for his speedy recovery.

Madison Clinic

This is the Private Clinic of Dr. Frederick Archer, the physician who treated Carmichael. This man would not know an insanity if it slapped him across the face with a wet fish. Naturally, the good Doctor will not disclose information about his private patients to just anyone, so the Investigators will have to succeed at Communication rolls, or steal files to gain anything of use. They will be reassured by what the Doctor says. Carmichael's nervous breakdown was caused by a combination of stress, overwork, and drug abuse. He signed himself out six months ago, completely cured, but still in need of rest. He had been in the Clinic for six months, from 26/12/25 to 13/5/26.

The Madison Clinic is not for serious cases, but is more a rest home for the over-weight, addicted or stressed out. The clientele are uniformly wealthy, as is Doctor Archer.

Doctor Archer will several times refer to Carmichael's secretary in the most glowing terms. Eustace Fische has stood by his employer at all times, and is even now taking most of the work of running the estate on his own shoulders, to ensure that Carmichael gets plenty of rest.

Yes, of course Doctor Archer has been invited to this weekend's party. Why, he has the invitation just over here. So saying, he goes over to get it, and in doing so, knocks over a bottle of thick, syrupy crimson fluid. The bottle shatters, spattering the invitation and badly cutting Archer's hand.

Putting On Our Top Hats

The best costumer in New York is, as everybody knows, the costumer attached to the New York Theatre Company. For a \$40 fee, the characters- can clothe themselves in the stuff of fantasy.

The Place

The costume department is a cavernous, drafty place, its echoes muffled by the profusion of costumes and props that it houses. Rain drums on the roof, dimming the interior, except where pools of light illuminate the gold and silver of the mirrors, and drown the tiered racks of costumes (of all ages and nations, thrown together in unholy confusion) in a rich and enthralling golden light. Rows and racks of costumes; the lush, rich fabrics of the bygone ages; tier on tier, rack on rack, over which the occasional wooden dummy broods like a lonely sentinel against the gathering dusk.

The People

The first person Investigators are likely to meet at the costume department is the costumer him/herself; a bustling limp-wristed person of indeterminate sex who chats incessantly. The best way to get round them is to speak in glowing terms of any one of their seven children.

. . .my, but then anybody who is anybody is going to be there, don't you know? All I want to know is, where is all the money coming from? I mean, everyone knows how disastrous all Carmicheal's recent plays have been, I mean, total financial failures. Something fishy going on if you ask me - what was that dear, the hem is too low? Nonsense, the hem is perfect - Oh my! Fishy - ha, ha, ha!"

It is also possible for Investigators to meet their fellows. Aside from them, each Investigator will meet one NPC bound on the same mission as themselves in the costumers. Assign them as you see fit. They are as follows:

LAWRENCE HOLDEN: Superficial and pretentious poet. Will be ch-ar-ming to ladies; nice but a tad snobbish to men. Thirty-ish. Lawrence has a reputation as a wit and bon vivant, which he has several times polished at Carmichael's expense.

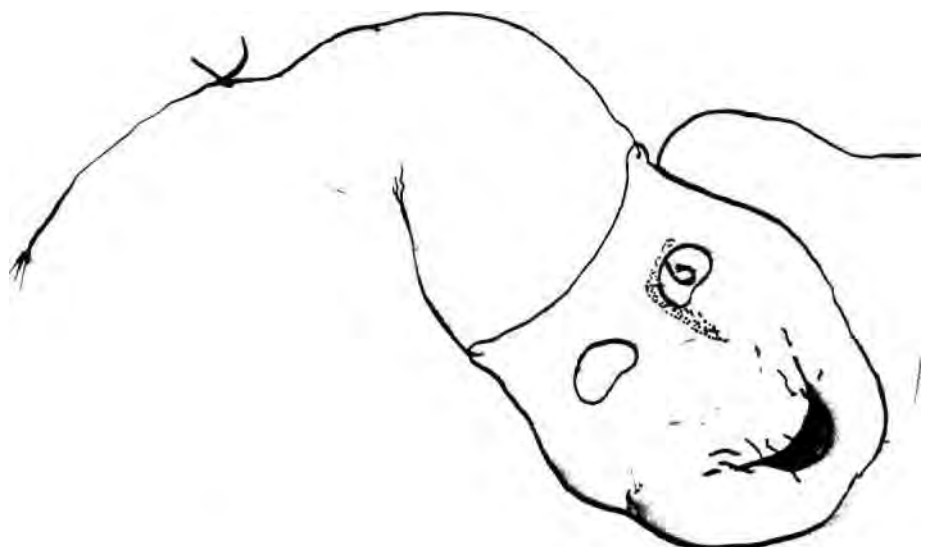
CHARLOTTE ("Call me Lottie, all my friends do . . .") **CARRUTHERS:** A social climbing B.Y.T. Will be in a dither about what to wear and will ask for advice. Imparts inanities with an air of confidence. Charlotte will choose a costume very similar to the Investigators own.

SERGEI AND NATASHA VLADMIR: Now these people are really lovely; a decent down to earth pair of Russian émigrés. She pots and he critics; his critiques of Carmichael's last play, "Sodom" were particularly damaging. There are sweet and sincere; know where the best black market vodka can be got in town; and are slightly sheepish? About the whole affair.

HOWARD J. SMITH: What can we say about the Howards of this world that has. Not already been said? He is a theatrical agent and a jerk. A sample of his conversation should suffice: "Gee! What an awful hat. Oh ya mean it's yours? I'm sorry; I thought it was a costume."

By the end of this section of the scenario, players should know a little of Carmichael's background. They could have met each other, and up to six NPCs bound for the party. Unbeknownst to the players, these NPCs are all due to be wiped out before the curtain rises on Carmichael's new play. Silence all critics is Carmichael's motto - literally.

Investigators should be filled with the sort of nervous expectation which with people look forward to momentous occasions; a mixture of excitement, and the suspicion that they are



THE NIGHT

How are the Investigators traveling? If by train, then there is a charabanc waiting for them at the station. The exhilaration of traveling is mingled with sudden fits of anxiety. Have they got their invitations? Are the female characters' slips showing? Are the male characters' stiff shirt fronts adequately concealing their braces?

Outside the warm womb of their traveling vehicle, the cold stars shine balefully down from a clear night sky. The air is crisp and brisk; not unpleasant for traveling. A thin ground mist swirls around the bases of trees, fences and buildings, so that they seem to soar upwards towards the sky. The moon rolls along beside them, bloated, luminous and orange. The autumn moon. It seems to follow them. Finally their vehicle turns into the wrought iron gates of the Carmichael country estate, two hours east of New York.

THE GROUNDS

Japanese lanterns bedeck the trees lining the drive and surrounding the house, hundreds of lanterns spilling their yellow light on the misty ground. Their vehicle's headlights sweep through the mist, illuminating the solid shapes of the trees. What was that strange form scuttling from the glare of the headlights, as though seeking shelter in the friendly night? Probably just a groundhog. The trees have shed all but a few of their leaves, so that the Japanese lanterns hang off their branches like some strange fruit, or like the rings on the clutching fingers of a drowning man.

Their vehicle roars up the gravel drive towards the wide open front doors of the house, to join the merry throng of revelers alighting from their cars and entering the warmth, and light. As it does so, Investigators can catch a glimpse of an ornamental lake to the side of the house, out of whose icy, black surface the reflected shape of the moon gazes like a drowned and bloated face.

THE HOUSE

Investigators arrive at the door. Bustling, cheerful servants take bags and coats, and they are ushered into a well-lit hallway. The blast of hot air hits like a furnace. Peoples' cries and greetings ring out around them. Somewhere in the house a lively jazz band strikes up.

Investigators are taken to their rooms to freshen up, or to change into their costumes. Their rooms are pokey, little ones, right up the back of the house, on the third storey. At first the rooms are rich and grand. The works of modern Expressionists line the walls. Their rooms are reached through seemingly endless stretches of dark, shadowed passageways and narrow stairs. Portraits of less well-known and definitely less cheerful members of the family make their appearance, gaze sombrely from their age-blackened frames.

Having been shown their little guest rooms by a young and inexperienced person, who lights the way with a single guttering candle, Investigators will doubtless be pleased to return to the warmth and light of the lower rooms.

THE PARTY

Eustace Fish, Secretary to Anthony Carmichael, is standing in the entrance to the ballroom. He is costumed as Death, with a scythe, a long list and a distracted air.

EUSTACE FISHE: A husky young man with red hair, which has given him his nickname, "Red" Fishe. Currently he could also be called "Red" Death. Eustace is obviously carrying the entire party on his shoulders. He is a nice young man, whom players should feel sorry for when the shit hits the fan.

Eustace ticks names off his list, and then passes the invitations on to the butler. As Eustace is totally distracted with all the party arrangements, he could get Bianca's name confused with the number of banana's he needs for the punch.

IMPRESSIONS

Investigatory will need to pause for a moment to adjust to the glittering gaiety of the ballroom. Gorgeously costumed and arrayed people are dancing to the music of a frenetic 16 piece jazz band. Ornate chandeliers refract their glaring light, splintering it into a thousand glassy reflections against the gilt framed mirrors which line the satin walls.

A Black Cat embraces an Arab, and is swallowed by the flowing robes; Tutankhamen passes the time with Mary Antoinette. A green person, trying to be a frog, dances with a laughing harlequin.

Investigators can spot all the people they had met previously; including each other. Dr Archer is a portly Red Indian, identifiable by his ludicrously bandaged hand. But is the noise of the band a little too frenetic? Are the masked dancers laughing, a little too hard, as though forcing themselves to have a good time? The heat and the babble of people's conversations, shouted over the noise of the music, rise and mingle about the player's ears.

As the music ends, the dancers scatter across the room, laughing, talking, mingling, seeing and being seen. Wild beasts - a lion drinks punch beside them. Glinting eyes, flashing teeth. As Investigators stand and wonder, a masked figure in fool's motley leaps from the throng and strikes them with a bladder on a stick - BIF!WOP! It is Carmichael; he is exuberant and clearly delighted to see them.

CARMICHAEL

ANTHONY CARMICHAEL: Is so obviously the lynch pin of the entire plot that you should have your work cut out for you diverting player suspicion (while keeping them on edge) till it is too late. Remember first and foremost that Carmichael is a walking tragedy; an artist whose art was insufficient to stave off madness. The Investigators are all failed or incomplete artists. By the end of the scenario they should recognize how perilously close their own failure is to Carmichaels.

A successful Psychology roll on Carmichael at this stage will reveal that he is in an extremely high strung, excitable state. This could be put down to a combination of first night and party host nerves. However it is evidently Eustace who is doing all the hosting for this party.

Carmichael should dazzle the players a bit with the full beam of his magnetic personality (Yeah, I know it is hard to role-play isn't it!). He introduces those Investigators who have not yet met each other with "You people just have to meet. You have so much in common." Any attempt to compare notes should reveal that the only things the Investigators have in common is artistic problems, and that the last time they saw Carmichael, they did not leave on the best of terms.

While the spotlight of Carmichael's charm is pretty blinding, players should also be aware that Carmichael does not really have time for them; he is too busy welcoming everybody. As player(s) are talking to him, two identical masked blonde women come up to him, and take either arm. One has her hair loose, flowing to her waist; the other has hers piled on top of her head. Their costumes are white robes; their masks are full-faced and on sticks. One is tragedy, one comedy. This gives their costumes a vaguely classical slant. They take Carmichael's arms and obviously bored by the player(s), take him away. As Carmichael is dragged away, laughing, he introduces the women as two of the three other cast members in his new play. He refuses to be drawn on the play otherwise.

THE HAPPENINGS

During the evening's festivities;

VOLKMAR: With the end of a dance, people swirl around you, shrilling greetings, and perhaps too anxious to be seen to be having a good time. A dark figure is visible, rapidly vanishing, towards the back of the motley throng, A hunched figure in a hood and cloak. The figure's back is towards you. Does the merry crowd give way before it? Do their fixed masks of mirth momentarily dissolve into something more sinister, perhaps even fear? The figure is gone. You are no longer sure.

ALGERNON: A small dog is sitting by the food table, licking up crumbs, almost lost in the hanging folds of the richly ornamented table cloth. Closer inspection (successful Spot Hidden) reveals that the animal is not a dog but a rat. It bares its teeth if disturbed, and then scuttles for a rat-sized hole gnawed in the gilded wainscoting.,

BIANCA: Through a momentary rift in the crowd you see someone dressed in a costume which is to all intents and purposes, identical to yours. What do you do? The person is in fact wearing, an almost identical costume, and when they see you they look extremely embarrassed, cover it with a smile and attempt to melt into the background in the opposite direction. Beneath the mask, you recognize Lottie Carruthers.

JESSICA: A white rabbit offers to partner you for the next dance.

If Jessica accepts, the white rabbit sleazes all over her, and proves difficult to escape from.

Servants circulate with champagne glasses (the size of soup bowls!) and canapés. Superb food and drink is everywhere perhaps the Investigators overindulge?" The evening wears on, a pageant of pleasure disturbed by only the occasional jarring note. Investigators wishing to escape the crowds can seek solace in their rooms, in one of the other main rooms (such as the library) or in the gardens. The gardens are a cool retreat, lit by Japanese lanterns. A tiny fountain trickle disturbs the still surface of the lake. What is that splashing sound? A duck. That noise in the bushes? A courting couple. And the light mist drifts ghostly through the trees.

HIDE AND SEEK

Just prior to 11:00 pm, a successful Spot Hidden allows player(s) to see Carmichael gesturing sharply to several dark, foreign looking servants, who immediately leave the room.

At 11:00 pm precisely, Carmichael leaps in front of the band, stick raised for attention. The noisy throng hushes. The hunched gentleman, face still away from the Investigators, steps out from behind one of the floor length velvet curtains and makes his way to a door on the opposite side, through the crowd which again gives way before him. There is no window behind the curtain, and no other exit from the room apart from a closed skylight, the only evidence of habitation is a single black cloak collapsed on the floor.

Meanwhile, Carmichael is making a speech to the assembled party-goers:

THE SPEECH

(Please insert comments from crowd at appropriate intervals) Carmichael plays the crowd as he used to play to audiences.

Esteemed guests, I am so honored that you could make it here tonight. I hope that you are all enjoying yourselves as much as I am. Well, it is but an hour to the unveiling of my *new* play, an event to which I have been looking forward to no less-than: the least of you gathered here tonight. But before the performance begins I thought that we might burn off a little of that first night nervous energy with a short game of hide and seek. You shall all hide, and my friends and I [Gestures to the rest of the cast members - the two women seen earlier and a man in a vaguely military uniform] shall seek. In the meantime the servants will be setting up the buffet in anticipation of your safe [he rolls the word around his tongue like a relish] return. So, in the greatest of all theatrical traditions, lights OUT . . . [And they are immediately extinguished] Hide yourselves! . . . [A pause] . . . We shall count to one hundred. [Four voices chant out of the darkness, in ragged unison] ONE TWO THREE . . . [Two women and two men] FOUR FIVE SIX [Around you in the darkness, figures scatter, giggling] SEVEN EIGHT NINE [What are you going to do?]

Psychology: A carefully prepared speech.

Note that anyone who has left the party will be alone in the dark when the lights go out.

THE GAME BEGINS

The lights have been shut off at the mains. Within five minutes they will be vandalized beyond the skill of the Investigators to repair.

The game begins; hide and seek, Carmichael said. But in reality, it is a game of cat and mouse, and selected party guests, including the Investigators, are prey. At first the hunters are human, and the hidiers numerous. But as the night wears on, in that brief but seemingly endless span of time between 11:00 pm and midnight, the Investigators will find themselves in less frequented parts of the house. The hunters will become less well defined, until the players are not sure whether their pursuers are human or not. At times it may even seem that it is not individuals which hunt them, but the house itself. This is an effect of the strong link which has been forged between The King in Yellow and our world, owing to Carmichaels' activities.

GROUND FLOOR: Main rooms (ballroom, dining and morning rooms), servant's quarters behind the green baize door; hallways; smoking rooms; guest rooms and bedrooms in both wings. The main rooms are not good for hiding in, being too exposed.

BASEMENT: Cold storage pantry for meat and perishables; wine and coal cellars; oil storage.

SECOND FLOOR: Library; master bedroom; games (billiards) room; guest rooms and bathrooms in both wings; lots of side passageways with doors opening off into cupboards and store-rooms; a single empty room within which an empty wardrobe stands, from which the sound of muffled hoof beats momentarily sounds; lots of. Back stairs for the servants.

THIRD FLOOR: More guest rooms (this is where the Investigators are); servants quarters; big dusty empty echoing attics filled with the junk of ages; winding: narrow stairs; back rooms; dead ends; attic trapdoors leading to the bleak and starry night; low ceilings; the second floor of the library, access to library is possible by balcony levels; bare floorboards; dust; and somber portraits.

HAPPENING THINGS

An Investigator or Investigator(s):

- * Heads for a hiding place only to find it already occupied.
- * Catches sight of a stealthy movement on the other side of a dark room; their own reflection in a mirror.
- * Are scared by someone already hidden (eg. BOO!)
- * Are stalked by a human seeker. At the last moment, someone else is pounced on and carted away, laughing. This should be "giggly scary". The laughter turns to a scream in the distance.
- * Followed, no matter where they go. They cannot shake the follower off.
- * Glimpses of movement at the bottom of the stairs as Investigators are halfway up.
- * Glimpse shadowy shapes crossing open windows or doors. The hunched gentleman flits by, silhouetted in the open doorway, vanishing by the time the Investigator reaches it.
- * Hears a flapping sound from behind a closed door, as of vast, membranous wings. The door is opened to curtains flapping, in the wind, and a wide open window.
- * Hears scratching from behind closed curtains on the second or third storey. There are no trees outside.

BODY THE FIRST

Investigators hear a muffled giggling from behind a closed door. If they investigate, they find their first corpse. Within is a sitting room with floor length curtains. There is no light except to the extent the Investigators eyes have adjusted to the dark, or if they are carrying some form of light. A successful Spot Hidden roll spots a pair of shoes poking out from underneath the curtains. Behind the curtains is Lawrence Holden, Supercilious Poet. He is hanging from the curtain rod; his face is blue and his swollen tongue lolls from his mouth. He is beyond resuscitation. His feet dangle a foot off the floor. His shoes have been neatly arranged beneath his hanging body. SAN: 1/1d3.

THE FINDING OF BODY THE FIRST SHOULD CHANGE THE TONE OF PLAY FROM GIGGLY SCAREY TO TRUE HORROR.

Investigators are expected to run for help. They find none. All servants are mysteriously absent, or when found, deep in a drugged sleep. The most of the other guests that they see are of giggling people running away, drunk and not listening to their frantic pleas. The most they hear are cries of "Pull the other one."

A sumptuous banquet has been set up in the deserted ballroom. Coiled streamers litter the floor of the main corridors and skitter along the polished boards and carpets in draughts. The fuse box, as mentioned earlier, is vandalized, damaged beyond Investigator skills to repair. Muffled, distant laughter taunts them.

BODY THE SECOND

As they desperately search, they can spot someone hiding huddled behind the sofa in one of the main rooms. Investigators who helped Charlotte Carruthers choose her costume will recognise the top of her hat, peeping from over the top. As they approach Spot Hidden will notice the big grin Charlotte has on her face. Actually, she is smiling wetly from a second mouth which has opened up just beneath her chin.... Grinning from ear to ear, in fact. And the red stuff staining the carpet isn't port wine.

SAN 1/1d3. Bianca must lose 1/1d6 as she realises that, in all probability that was, meant for her!

BODY THE THIRD

If at any stage the Investigators seek to flee the horrors of the house for the shadow-haunted safety of the gardens, they will stumble across the third body of the evening. As they stagger along the overgrown paths, past pale statues who smile with marbled perfection, they may hear faint flapping above them; or is it just the wind in the trees? A glance upwards will show that is not in fact the wind, that there is indeed a body, poised above them, ready to pounce! Except it cannot be - the body has no head, and has been impaled upon the bare branches. SAN 1/1d3. If this is not enough to drive them back inside, and nor are the howls, gusts of ice-cold wind and thick curls of fog, then you may be forced to do something a little more dramatic. Perhaps the hunched gentleman appears at the end of a path, an inky blot of shadow in the moonlight, gesturing. The head itself remains unfound.

BODY THE FOURTH

As the characters stagger vainly along, the twisting corridors in search of some signs of life, they will approach a section, of the house which seems better lit than most From a half-open door at the end of a corridor spills a soft, pink, light, reassuring after the cold

and alien glow of the moon. When they enter the room, a sparsely furnished bedroom similar to their own, a cold breeze ruffles their hair bearing with it a rich, coppery scent. The night air is blowing through a window. But not an open one. It has been shattered; long jagged spears of glass thrust upwards from the warped frame. Impaled upon what is left of the window, their still-steaming blood staining the glass crimson, is the body of Howard J; Smith. _ He has evidently been a jerk one time too many...

Closer examination of the corpse will reveal several deep slashes in its yet warm flesh. Whether caused by the glass or by claws, none can rightly say. Turning to leave, the Investigators will see several long shards of glass, imbedded in the opposite wall. This body was thrown against the glass from the outside. . .

CARMICHAEL'S RETURN

Only now do the characters hear the sounds they have longed for; footsteps and laughing voices coming towards them. Enter Carmichael, accompanied by 12 or so people whom he has managed to catch. All, with the exception of Carmichael are roaring drunk - laughing and giggling, incapable of standing unaided, the shock of seeing a corpse, however, tends to sober them up. Carmichael's face blanches white when he sees it, and he will hastily usher all present out of the room. Taking the Investigators aside, he will ask them who else knows of the death. If told there are more he will be visibly shocked, and beg them to tell no-one else. Carmichael will quickly take charge of the situation, escorting the characters to a room with a telephone. When the phone proves to be dead, none is more stunned than the host (He is, after all, a brilliant actor. Of course, Carmichael cut all the phone lines himself). Pulling open a drawer, he pulls out a revolver, and tells them to stay put, "so that I know where you are."

If the Investigators attempt to accompany him, Carmichael agrees, saying that there is indeed safety in numbers. No matter how close they stay to him however, between one shadow and the next he is soon gone.

A Psychology roll on their host at any stage during the above events will reveal Carmichael to be shocked, surprised and worried. He is - the Investigators present an unforeseen problem, after all.

TARGET PRACTICE

Minutes after Carmichael has left them, two pistol shots ring out in rapid succession, from somewhere quite close by. Carmichael has just shot that nice young Russian couple. If the Investigators seek to track the noise to its source, via Listen rolls, they will come across their bodies, huddled pitifully together. This sight will earn the characters a 1d3 SAN loss automatically, as they receive positive proof of Carmichael's complicity. A Know roll with

regard to the late Sergei will enable an Investigator to recall reading a particularly vitriolic review of "Sodom" he once wrote.

If the Investigators turn the next corner, Carmichael, standing in the gloom at the other end of the corridor, will fire at them. In the gloom he has only a 50% chance to hit, doing 1d6 points of damage if successful; five shots in the gun chamber. If someone is hit, or cries out, a perfectly calm, flat voice - Carmichael's - floats out of the dark. "You'll all die you know."

Regardless of any further actions, if and when Investigators arrive upon the spot, only a single cartridge, still warm, remains to show that he ever stood there.

ANYBODY HOME?

If the characters stay in the telephone ante room, regardless of having heard shots, then a very quiet, hesitant tap on the door is heard. Opening the door reveals only an empty corridor, and a further, hesitant tap is heard from further down.

The door swings shut unless held open. If Investigators remain inside, then once shut, there is another soft, hesitant tap. Then another, and another. Then the taps turn to brushing sounds, as though someone were stroking the door and frame, with soft, swift, tentative taps. The sounds grow louder, echoing to and fro in the small, bare, room, ghastly and tentative, a la "The Haunting of Hill House". SAN 1/1d4. Just as it all grows unbearable (or if they fling open the door), everything stops and the Investigators are alone with their fears.

If at any stage they have the nerve to open the door and confront the thing which waits outside, they will realize that the sounds are coming from the next door down the hallway, and not their own at all. As each door is approached, the sounds retreat, leading them along dark corridors to the centre of the madness. Everyone who lost SAN initially loses another point for each repeat performance necessary to guide them; those who did not lose SAN have presumably come up with some kind of explanation for events satisfactory to themselves.

As they trail through the corridors, they have a second opportunity to discover BODIES THE FIFTH & SIXTH.

THE HORROR

As Investigators stalk or retreat from Carmichael, or follow the tappings, those pursuers whom they have never been able to shake off, close in. Shadowy shapes, horribly ill-defined,

and as tenuous as breathe, close in from all sides, maddeningly close but always just out of full vision. Shadows hunch close, doors and windows start to open and close randomly; a breeze shivers across their faces, rifling their flimsy clothing. The shadows hunch closer and closer still, breathing the Investigators air. Gusts of air, warm and fetid, which in no way relieve the Investigators feelings of suffocation, blow against their faces. Murmuring, inviting voices, mutter from adjoining rooms, or from the very shadows themselves? A female voice whispers seductively, "Along the shores the cloud waves break." Something winged and faceless flaps in the pine trees outside the windows. There is no air, no air anywhere.

Then in their quest, they are flung into the library. Immediately shadows cease; Investigators can breathe again. As they stand panting in the still centre of the library, the full horror of their situation strikes them; are they asleep? Fevered? If waking, can such things be? SAN 1/1d3.

Should Investigators seek to keep searching, then it rapidly becomes clear to them that there is no escape. It is as though all the miles and twists and turns of corridors, rooms and stairs in the house are simply a maze, which convulses, despite all their frantic efforts, to disgorge them, confused and losing SAN (0/1d2 until convinced) back into the library again, at different doors and levels. Finally, it seems that even as they throw open the doors to the library, to leave that terrible place, they are confronting themselves, standing in the doorway of the library again, their faces contorted in an endless scream. There is no escape.

THE LIBRARY

The library stretches upwards two storey's, forming the solid core to the centre of the house. Many doors on both levels lead off into the rest of the house. Iron balustrades and balcony's; wooden steps and ladders; and books, above all books; a profusion of leather covers stuffed full with the thoughts of dead men.

The library is dark but there are squat oil lamps waiting on the oak tables in the centre of the room; waiting to shed an inviting glow over the mellow piles of books. Brass bound cabinets filled with theatrical curiosities, and glass cases enclosing costumes, stand at intervals amid the shelves.

Dust is piled thick on the less accessible shelves, and dust furs the thick, velvet length of the curtains (curtains to latticed windows stretching themselves the height of the room). The smell of leather and print, and a certain, stale odor is almost overpowering, although the light is welcome to eyes used to staring wildly into the dark.

If the Investigators have candles, then when they enter the library in those dreadful, final moments, their flames will all flicker in one direction, and will go out, unless players make candle protection movements or noises.

The stale odor can be traced to the PLAYS section of the library, and indeed, to one particular book, a roughly bound, untitled tome with a horrible, blank, yellow cover. As someone reaches out to take the book, the stench thickens, to become almost overpowering, and the shadows make a brief, menacing return, accompanied by a brief (surely imagined!) bout of high pitched, animal giggling. Once again candle flames become almost horizontal in some strong draught; a successful INT roll allows players the sickening realization that the draught is coming from the book they hold in their hands (lose 2 points of SAN!).

THE KING IN YELLOW

The book is THE KING IN YELLOW; a play of such compelling madness that its very existence casts a pall of despair upon the Earth. A play of such fascination that few who start to read it can stop themselves from eagerly devouring the printed page,, until it is far, far too late.

A some stage in most Call of Cthulhu scenarios, Investigators stumble across a book which they must read for some vital clue or other. Try and make this book seem a "clue" as well. As indeed it is. Read them "Cassilda's Song" (reprinted on p.2 of this book) to wet their appetites. Once they have read this far, Investigators are hooked; it is practically impossible for them to stop themselves reading. It requires a successful INT X 1 roll for someone to successfully realize the play's insidious influence while they are still reading it, and another successful INT X 1 roll to successfully wrench themselves away from it. Investigators will have ample time to realize the pure literary poison they have digested after reading the play. By that time it is rather too late.

The first thing that Investigators notice as they peruse the text, is that it is obviously much read; parts are marked out; names are given. Carmichael's name figures prominently. If Investigators cannot figure it out for themselves, a successful Idea roll is all that is needed to realize that THE KING IN YELLOW must be Carmichael's much heralded new play (SAN 1/1d4).

Investigators who break free from the snare of the play can try to stop their companions reading. Make their efforts as exciting as they are fruitless. As Investigators continue to read, must read on, the surrounding shadows grow deeper, the library and the book they hold in their hands grows dimmer, and the baleful, beautiful brightness of Carcosa grows stronger. For reading a work of such power, this close to the place where the minds of

the Tatterdemallion King broods upon our world is surely dangerous. And as the First Act closes, the Investigators find themselves not in the library; not in the house; not even on Earth.

Things fall apart; the centre cannot
hold, Mere anarchy is loosed upon
the world.

CAMILLA: You sir, should unmask.

STRANGER: Indeed?

CASSILDA: Indeed it's time. We all have laid aside disguise but you.

STRANGER: I wear no mask.

CAMILLA (Terrified, aside to Cassilda): No mask? No mask!

"The King In Yellow"

Act I - Scene II



Act Two
RAGTIME

STRANGE ARE THE SKIES

As the Second Act opens, the Investigators find themselves lying upon the cracked and worn flagstones of an ancient courtyard. The walls around them are not what they should be; instead of rows of books, only rows of crumbled, yellow stone can be seen. The book is gone, the library is gone, the house is gone. They are Somewhere Else.

In the centre of the courtyard stands a broken fountain, topped by a winged figure carved from stone; face decayed and worn by time to a hideous, suggestive blankness. The mouth which spurted water now gapes open as if to deliver an obscene benediction; lips crumbling sideways to devour one cheek. The ruin of the fountain is echoed in the remains of the buildings which surround it. Blocks of sandy coloured stone lie tumbled amongst the dead and withered grasses which grow across the barren rocks like a cancerous growth. An icy wind moans through the gaps in the walls, but it is the world beyond them which attracts the Investigators' frighten eyes.

They are perched upon the edge of a jagged cliff, whose pitted face plunges a hundred feet down, to a rocky shore where lap the oily waters of a vast black lake. Some miles away, crouching by the shore is a city, its many spires silhouetted by the setting sun. No. Not sun. Suns. One a vast and bloated red, filling half the sky with its dim light. Its companion is far smaller, but shining with an intolerable blue glare. As the Investigators watch, the twin suns sink beneath the horizon, not truly setting, but almost pouring themselves out of the sky. But it is not the suns which are the worst. More terrible than the alien suns is the sky; for it is nothing like the sky of Earth. Rolling and heaving like a restless beast, its tattered substance flies into countless scraps, only to form again in a swollen cyanotic mass; a totally alien parody of all that skies should be.

But a glimpse is all that is allowed of the wonders of Carcosa (for Carcosa it is). Even as the Investigators' senses cry out at trying to comprehend the horror they see, the twin suns sink, and dark shadows lengthen from the city, and from the cloaked and cowled figure which capers and dances upon the beach below. Investigators will recognize the hunched gentleman, last seen on Earth. He is making his way towards the shadow-haunted city. And then the darkness comes. Like grasping talons it comes: the shadows of Mans' evils. The lake's waters heave sluggishly in the last of the light, as if beneath it something woke. Then, swift as thought and jerky as a sped-up film, the stars come out. Black stars, illuminating the sickly grey expanse of the sky, shining with an indescribable light.

While strange moons creep into the heavens, and a cold, directionless wind blows, the full force of their surrounds hits them.

EVERYONE LOSES 1d4/1d10 SAN. THEY HAVE LOST ALL THEIR MAGIC POINTS IN COMING TO THIS PLACE. EVEN IF THEY KNEW HOW TO RETURN THEY COULD NOT.

From the highest tower of the far-off city, they will see a flickering light of an unwholesome shade (which bears only the most tenuous resemblance to the colour blue). It is the only sign of any life that they can see anywhere in this desolate land.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

If they so choose, the Investigators may examine the place where they stand; an abandoned and decayed tenement, but with one jarring note. The courtyard slowly turns in an anti-clockwise direction; this movement is not visible to the naked eye, (except over long periods of time), but it is felt. It is as though the building turned upon an invisible axis. Walking inwards, towards the dry fountain, causes an increase in the sensation of movement, as though water was swirling downwards to an unknown destination "Going with the flow" causes pain, but walking away from the center is agony-free. This is because the fountain is the place where Earth and Carcosa lie closest; the only point of return. But to breach the fabric between the worlds, Investigators must expend Magic Points (wittingly or unwittingly) and they have none. As there is no power to draw from, the fountain takes flesh instead; tearing from the Investigators' bodies (1d3 damage per attempt), until players realize that they cannot yet return. Their Magic Points will return at a rate of 1d3 per hour.

A MOONLIT STROLL

The climb down the cliff is not hard; so soft is the rock that hand and footholds can be easily made. Once or twice however, fragments of stone and pieces of shale will crawl out from underneath the Investigators' hands, animated by unnatural life. SAN 0/1. Eventually, they will reach the bottom, resting their feet upon the colourless grey pebbles of the beach.

The landscape around them is flat and featureless; mile upon mile of cracked rock, interrupted only by the Cliff, the City and the Lake.

As they journey towards the strange and distant city (their only conceivable, meaningful destination) Investigators may well choose to walk along the shores of the lake. After all, at least it will mean that they can only be attacked from one side. From the distant tower, they can catch glimpses of the light, which sometimes flickers and blinks, as though mocking their antlike efforts. Progress is somewhat more difficult than expected, as the loose stones make walking difficult. Occasional DEX x 5 and Jump rolls are required, to avoid sprawling upon the rough ground.

The lake, once reached, is even worse than suspected when first sighted from a distance. Whatever strange substance it is composed of, it is certainly not water. A black mist broods over it, a sluggish spray which refuses to settle. The viscous waves swell and roll heavily, soaking nauseatingly into the pebble beach. It sucks and slurps at the stones; the waves seeming to move with the Investigators, as though trying to follow them unawares.

On odd occasions giant tadpole-like things are thrown up by the waves. Giant tadpole-like things with teeth. They swarm in the surf-wracked foam, devouring one another, and devoured in turn by a thick, sentient gelled ooze, which, crawls, up out of the waves. SAN: 1/1d3. They flop, squirm and die at the edge,, helpless.

After what seems like hours, the Investigators will at last reach a broad, black road, running, from the megalithic remains, of what could once have been a wharf, to the huge and rusted gates of the nameless city. Ahead, entering the city itself is a crooked, cloaked figure; the form of the mysterious "hunched gentleman".

CARCOSA (pop. 5)

The city is built of some black and pitted stone, emanating antiquity. Its bulk towers over the Investigators, dwarfing them as a flea is dwarfed by its human host; a host who can crush their life with a careless flick of a finger. The streets wind with undoubtedly malevolent intent and the somehow horribly blank openings of the empty buildings leer soullessly as they pass. To describe Carcosa is impossible. From the moment the Investigators breach the gates, their mortal souls, undefended and alone, venture where nothing sane should tread.

The atmosphere of the city conveys its taint; its stench is not just physical. As they breathe the air of Carcosa, Investigators ace being tarred with the same brush of madness that has already engulfed Carmichael and his consorts.

High overhead the tallest towers and buildings of the city loom, grotesque and Gothic; multi-turreted and strange. Buildings on all sides not built for human habitation; steps too shallow and too wide to be built for the human foot. Entrances too narrow and too high; rooms too low and wide - angles from which the wondering wanderer flees, driven by the disturbing tenor of their thoughts to abandon all speculations on the origins of this place. Neither the human body nor the human mind fit comfortably here.

Things flap over the highest towers of the city, but do not come close enough for players to ascertain whether they are birds, or bats, or . . . worse. They conspicuously veer from that sinister, high, tower, which periodically stabs the darkness with its baleful, bluish beam.

The city is built on a rise. Or . . . it is built on previous cities, plunging those early - Unthinkably early - remnants into perceptual, poisonous darkness, in which foul things stir, and nameless creatures skitter fearfully across the dank, lightless stone. Necropolis piled upon necropolis, with no beginning and no end, and no escape. And the city above them all. And while Investigators tread its paved streets, who knows what grim and vengeful dead stir in the eon-buried catacombs below.

Water has undermined the city walls on one side; what tunnels and steps lead to and from that sinister lake? What creature dares to tread its mist shrouded environs?

But these questions, like many others, must remain unanswered, for at first the Investigators see no other living, creature save themselves, and those distant, horribly flapping, and flying creatures. They do however, hear them - scratching, scabbling, running, tittering

- And see the effects of their presence - things fallen or falling, stones moved with intent to fall on Investigators; things indicating motiveless malice, or perhaps hatred of all that is sane and normal. Sometimes they see their shadows. These little, unexplainable happenings cost 0/1d3 SAN for each nasty shock they give the Investigators.

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

As Investigators attempt to approach that lone and fateful tower, they often lose sight of it amongst the alien buildings it hides amongst, like the heart of an elaborate Chinese puzzle box. The very paths, steps and buildings through which they must laboriously trace a course (Make Map) seem alive to the Investigators' dilemma and take delight in obstructing their path.

The tittering, absent inhabitant's bay with scornful laughter from the inaccessible storeys of those terrible and horror-haunted buildings.

The only other inhabitant of the city is the hunched gentleman, whose form is occasionally visible ahead, just turning a corner or vanishing up a stairwell, the wind fluttering his cape in a hideously suggestive manner.

Eventually, when the Investigators feel that their unease and fear are about to unseat their very reason, they stumble upon the tower as they round a corner. It is unforeseen, although certainly not unexpected. It looms gaunt and threatening, a black bulk blocking the dreadful gaze of those glaring, ebon stars. The tower leans at an angle, reaching a height which forbids rational contemplation of its structure, or how deep its stone roots stretch into the unclean earth.

KEEPERS: It is assumed that by the end of their harrowing experiences in the tower, the Investigators will have regained enough Magic Points to get them, home via the Fountain.

THE LONG AND WINDING STAIR

Once the Investigators have screwed up their courage enough to step through the door, they find only a single winding stair, which clings desperately to the dank stone walls of the tower. Far above can be heard the clatter of running footsteps, and the faintest echo of breathless laughter. To confront the hunched gentleman, they must climb. Up and up the torturous steps, their panting breath echoing about their ears, bouncing. To and fro across the yawning gulf beneath them. The smallest stumble could send an Investigator screaming to their death on the hard stone floor hundreds of feet below.

On and on they go, until it seems as if they have been climbing for all eternity. Surely the tower was not this high? Finally, after endless spirals which leaves the blood pounding in their ears, the Investigators find themselves before a door. So sudden is the change, that it is some moments before their legs cease their reflexive upward movement.

THE YELLOW SIGN

Slick and glistening, the door is fashioned of no known substance - at least, no substance known on Earth. Carved deep within it is a hideous sign, an evil glyph whose very lines evoke madness, nausea and despair. Even as they gaze upon it, the shape twists and writhes before their eyes, creating new and more abominable configurations. SAN 1/1d6.

If the Investigators do not open the door of their own accord, it will eventually open by itself; slowly, quietly, but its every movement laden with a pregnant suggestiveness of something terrible. Beyond, is a room?

THE KING IN YELLOW

Vast and echoing, its far corners obscured by shadows, this room is too vast, too high, too wrong to exist at the top of the tower. Perspective is all wrong; the Investigators will be unable to tell whether the windows that they see set into the stone walls are tiny windows close up, or vast windows made tiny by their distance from the floor. Shapes move at the edge of vision, the hideous titter and chuckle of things in the night can, be heard. All around is wrong. Horribly, hideously, totally wrong. SAN 1/1d3.

The blue light which the Investigators have seen fills the room with its fitful glow; it is without a source. Pale light streams in through the windows, turning all it touches the colour of bone, while a directionless wind blows, stirring the tattered robes of the King in Yellow.

At the far end of the room front where the Investigators stand is a throne, carved from black and featureless stone. It is perhaps the only, thing in the room of normal scale; that, and the being who lies slumped in it. Clad in a thousand hues of tattered yellow cloth, the figure seems to sleep. As they approach, it does not stir. It does not even breathe.

Of the being's face, nothing can be seen, for it wears a pallid mask, pale as the belly of a fish. And not once does it move, or breath, or stir upon its throne as the Investigators approach.

Not even a Spot Hidden can determine whether the being beneath is male, or female, or even if it is human at all. Indeed, one can hardly tell where body leaves off and the robes begin. Perhaps robes and body are all one?

If Investigators are brave or foolish enough to remove the being's mask, beneath is horror. His eyes will flick open; two living eyes in a suppurating sea of maggots. Squirming tumourous flesh, flowing and reforming even as the Investigators watch. SAN: 1d6/1d20.

If the Investigators resist the temptation to remove the Pallid Mask, after an infinity of moments, the King will slowly arise, and step towards them. The King in Yellow is like Cthulhu; their bodies are plastic and capable of enormous distortion, and their actions and motives are incomprehensible to the human mind. So what are the Investigators to think, when the Tatterdemallion King starts to dance, a fantastic and effortlessly ecstatic dance*

A dance which goes far beyond mere humanity and into the glorious art of madness. And the tattered filaments of his body take life with the razor sharp movements of the dance, and whirl with the body of the dancer, creating a maelstrom of yellow, razor sharp edges, which engulf the Investigators as the dancer moves fluidly and with inhuman grace toward them. The yellow material has a strange quality - both material and immaterial - blinding and slicing at those who seek the dancer, until Investigators are pushed out of the room by the dance.

If players remove the mask, flight is almost inevitable. If any look back, or do not flee, the King in Yellow explodes out of his face in pustulant spray of psuedopods. The King In Yellow has an automatic chance of hitting, slamming into the face of any Investigator who pauses, and burrowing into their flesh, skull, brain and spirit. They lose 1d6 Hit Points, and are drained 1d6 points of POW per round. Alone, the person has no chance of breaking free; if helped by his or her companions, the attempt will be automatically successful. If they linger, terrible, nameless, things happen. Flight is the only viable alternative; and if taken, the Investigators will not be chased- Not by the King In Yellow, anyway.

HELL FOR LEATHER

Now the true night of madness descends on their minds. Unhinged, chased by countless assailants, the Investigators hopefully run pell mell across Carcosa back towards their only possible escape route - the Fountain. Sickening noises echo; their balance is precarious; their brains spin in their fevered skulls. Make them make Jump rolls; Dex rolls; Dodge rolls. Buildings open their doorway mouths to howl at them. They are completely gone, running with the wind gusts which eddy about them. Far behind them, flying things can be seen, growing closer, converging overhead and behind is a nightmare pack of hybrid, monstrous beasts, while out in the centre of the lake, vast sluggish bubbles rise and burst.

The decaying rocks of the cliff yield to their desperately clawing hands, almost as if the stones themselves wished to see them leave. Far above, the sky swirls and boils, the strange moons swinging giddily from horizon to horizon. Once at the top of the cliff, a final glance down the dizzying drop to the beach below reveals it shuddering like a vast beast stretching. As the Investigators stagger towards the fountain, all begins to spin, as a flute strikes up a wild melody. Everything begins to blur, and they are whirled breathless from one world to another, flung against the book shelved walls of the library. Yellow tatters gust towards them down the corridor; a blowing army of yellow handbills.

Any Investigators who have gone to 0 or less SAN while in Carcosa should be drawn aside (or passed a note) informing them that they now understand the true and terrible beauty of the King in Yellow, and will do their utmost to ensure that the play continues. Their friends are no longer friends but obstacles in the path of the Dancer; obstacles to be brushed aside.

FINALE

At first, as the countless sheets of yellow paper billow about them, Investigators may fear that the King has followed them to this place from far Carcosa. But examining the pages reveals them to be handbills, advertising the first performance of a new place "The King in Yellow". Performed by the Carmichael Players; Prepared for the Stage by Anthony Carmichael. Even as the Investigators pause they hear the sounds of voices, beautiful voices, tolling through the house.

Following the sounds to their source; the ballroom. It has been transformed. Yellow velvet drapes much of the walls, while rows of plush chairs are lined like soldiers across the floor polished for dancing. In then are the party guests, some sprawled like broken dolls, some bolt upright, frozen stiff by the caressing fingers of fear. They face the bandstand, doing duty as a stage.

Upon the stand, Carmichael and three others, the three performers introduced earlier posture and declaim, like puppets themselves. Waves of worlds spill from their mouths, words which burrow squirming into the Investigators minds, settling into pools of horror-haunted blackness; stirring up all their memories of humiliation, defeat and artistic despair.

On the far side of the room stands the hunched gentleman. For the first time they can see his face, for he is turned towards them, bowing as if in acknowledgement to unheard applause. He wears a baroque and gothic mask of hideous countenance. And then, the mask smiles. SAN 1/1d4.

The people in the ballroom - actors and audience - ignore the Investigators entrance, too caught up in the evil, agonizing brilliance of the play to notice anything apart from the loathly spectacle on stage. If they do not act quickly the Investigators will be caught up in it also; already they can feel the words weaving their spell-binding, sickening, entrancing web about them.

Attempting to stop the play by resorting to violence is useless, apart from very probably being wildly out of character. The pert is mightier than the sword. The actors will fall, mortal, but the voices will continue, gaining in strength, alien and silibant. Covering their ears does not block those voices out; they vibrate through the Investigators bodies to their soul.

Only by combating the play with their art can the Investigators succeed. Bianca must sing; sing as she has never sung before. Sing with true conviction in the real beauty to be found in any singer's voice. Algernon must test the voice of carping reason - the voice of the critic - against the oratory of madness. Jessica must shout other words over these words; dragging lines of previous plays from her memory lest the lines of the play she is listening to destroy her. Volkmar can make one last appeal to his one-time friend. Orate, Debate (not Fast Talk), Sing, Act, all these skills must be used.

SOME ATTEMPT AT ROLE-PLAYING IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS!!!!!!

All must try. Once at least four successful Skill rolls have been made collectively, the voices falter a little.

For each successful skill roll an Investigator makes, roughly a quarter of the audience manages to focus, upon them. Gradually their faces lose the dazed voyeuristic look; panic, self-loathing and finally, rationality dawn again. Pandemonium starts to break out, as in clumps, or singly, people flee the hall. Flee not a physical menace, but a threat to their sanity. Flee the mind-destroying numbness of fear.

Once three-quarters of the audience have fled, the actors lose their force and start to hesitate. Bewilderment, and the same self-loathing as appeared in the eyes of the fleeing audience, appears on their faces. The strong force which was building in the room, loses momentum, tilts, and blurs. A terrible sound comes; a loss echoing out from all the cold, still, places between the stars. Then for one terrible moment, in the rapidly emptying ballroom, the King In Yellow becomes visible, his TATTERDEMALLION rags flapping Insanely in a gale no-one else can feel.

Outside Investigators can hear screams, the starting of car engines; screaming of tyres, and people. Confusion reigns with everyone's thoughts bent, pell-mell on flight - the same instinct of flight which seized the Investigators on Carcosa. The knowledge that to stay in this place is wrongs terribly wrong, and can only be harmful to whatever part of ourselves is human and rational*

A riot rapidly develops over available transport. Terror and pandemonium. Wrap it up and send the Investigators fleeing into the night.

EPILOGUE

For the remainder of their lives, Investigators must work with whatever talent they have. They must constantly be on their guard, unable to act false or untrue to their respective arts, fighting all the while for their sanity's sake. They may never again come up for air. For the King In Yellow is waiting. Always.

CASSILDA: I tell you, I am lost! Utterly lost!

CAMILLA (terrified herself): You have seen the King. . . .?

CASSILDA: And he has taken from me the power to direct or to escape my dreams.

"The King In Yellow"

Act II - Scene VI

