

CALL of  
HORROR ROLEPLAYING  
CTHULHU

john Wick  
aaron Acevedo



Curse of the Yellow Sign  
Act 2: Calling The King



# Curse of the Yellow Sign

## Act 2: Calling the King

Written by John Wick

Illustrations, Graphics and Layout by Aaron Acevedo

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### **Playtesting & Feedback**

Fabien Badilla, Jessica, Ben Woerner, Emily Woerner, Nick Watts, Rochelle Watts, Ken, Sureena P, Chris Carlson, Lee, and Michael.

### **Inspiration**

*The King in Yellow* and the Yellow Sign are creations of Robert W. Chambers.

The Yellow Sign depicted here was designed by Kevin Ross.

A tip of the mask to Shirley Jackson, Stephen King and Stanley Kubrick.



Act I.

Tuxedos and gowns find their places  
But the program gives no warning  
The lights dim and the play begins  
The violet of morning

In Carcosa

The sun bleeds in the East  
The Hyades sing their dying throes  
The stars rise to claim their prize  
The Queen's song still echoes

In Carcosa

Songs of sorrow songs of pain  
Masked and disguised  
All hope has fled The Queen in Red  
Her Fate is crystallized

In Carcosa

The Queen grows weary of wordy games  
Her daughter dances delusioned  
Her son sings her songs but her heart belongs  
To the mists and illusions

Of Carcosa

The audience shifts uncertain  
What is rhyme and what is reason  
Uneasy in their seats but the play is not complete  
They begin to suspect treason

In Carcosa

At midnight a Stranger calls  
The Queen is unsurprised  
O King in Tatters the clock is shattered  
He turns to us with his awful eyes

Act II.

I am the last and terrible King

*Have you found the Yellow Sign?*

*(Yhtill! Yhtill! Yhtill!)*

The damning wisdom that I bring

*Have you found the Yellow Sign?*

*(Yhtill! Yhtill! Yhtill!)*

The Phantom of Truth dispels

*Have you found the Yellow Sign?*

*(Yhtill! Yhtill! Yhtill!)*

All the Heavens and all the Hells

*Have you found the Yellow Sign?*

*(Yhtill! Yhtill! Yhtill!)*

Peel away the mask, the pale facade

*Have you found the Yellow Sign?*

*(Yhtill! Yhtill! Yhtill!)*

And fall into the hands of the Living God



## Overture

In the early 1980's, Richard and Sylvia Brennan were the talk of Hollywood. The husband/wife team created three films together: all three nominated for multiple awards, all three blockbusters. Anything they touched turned to gold.

Then, the couple suddenly divorced. While the press speculated on a cause, the couple confirmed nothing. Since then, Sylvia's career has degenerated to support roles in mediocre romantic comedies. Her life has been a whirlwind of alcohol, drugs and failed affairs while Richard's last two films were commercial and critical successes.

Now, ten years after their divorce, Richard has begun a new project. Keeping with tradition, he has invited his usual crew of actors to a secluded location for a read-through of his new script. One of those actors is his ex-wife, Sylvia Brennan.

Alone in the Colorado wilderness, they begin to read through the script... an adaptation of the infamous play, *The King in Yellow*.

*Calling the King* is a one-night scenario for *Call of Cthulhu*. The scenario itself is almost bereft of rules. We have a rough map of the abandoned hotel where Brennan holds his reading and the character stats, but other than those essentials, the entire event is in the hands of the players. The psychodrama that's about to unfold will keep the players quite busy.

As with other *Curse of the Yellow Sign* scenarios, there are no monsters, no Library Use rolls, no archeology, no clues to find, no spells and no cultists. There is only one blasphemous book and that's the cursed play itself. As the actors and director read through the play, a doorway begins to open between our own universe and... another place. A dangerous place. The characters—and players—are about to come face-to-face with an ancient and powerful idea. An idea with teeth. An idea with an endless hunger.

*Calling the King* is not a linear adventure. Instead, it is more like a sandbox game: you have characters and an environment and certain events that occur, but there is no step-by-step, clue-by-

clue progress. I'll give you all the information you need to play in the sandbox (including Locations, NPCs, etc.), but once the scenario gets started, it's really up to you and the players to move the plot forward.

## A Friendly Warning

This is an incredibly demanding scenario, both on the players and on the Keeper. On the other hand, when it works, your players will come away with an experience they won't forget.

I'm going to do my best to give you every tool you need to make it work. I've run the scenario a few times, found some really effective techniques. You'll find them all over this book.

## Background

Richard and Sylvia's divorce, while very private, was also very painful. It wasn't an ugly, screaming affair. Instead, the couple simply drifted apart. While they still loved each other, they were no longer in love. They tried to maintain the bond, but slowly, their marriage simply failed. Eventually, Sylvia asked for a divorce. Because he loved her, and did not want to cause her any more pain, Richard relented.

Since then, Sylvia's life has become a self-destructive mess. Still wounded by what she saw as a betrayal of the marriage, she has driven herself into a dark spiral of drugs, alcohol and sex. Richard, on the other hand, has used that same energy to create two of his darkest and most emotional films. His ex-wife's fall has not gone unnoticed. He still cares for her, still hopes for her. He watches her waste her talent and wants to bring her back from the edge of the abyss. That's why he's called for this read-through. And that will be his last mistake.

It is now December 10, 1999.

Richard has arranged with his regular crew of actors to put on a kind of psychodrama. He knows his wife is close to suicide and he hopes to create a scenario that will shock her out of her depression. All the actors—except Sylvia—are in



on the plan. Richard has arranged for a copy of *The King in Yellow* to be delivered to an abandoned Colorado hotel. He will tell the actors he wants to make a horror film based on the play. They will read through the pages—something no-one has done for over one hundred years—and create the greatest horror film ever produced.

He has also arranged for a special effects crew to create an atmosphere of horror and dread... and murder. The play is known to drive men mad—superstitious nonsense that Richard does not believe—and as they read through the play, actors will slowly “go mad.” One of them will even turn into a raging psychopath and “murder” the other actors. Richard hopes this scenario will break Sylvia’s depression, remind her of the passion she once had, and return her to the woman he remembers... and still loves.

Of course, you and I know what’s wrong with Richard’s plan. The play really *will* drive the actors insane. One of them even to the point of the darkest madness. And, in reading the play, the actors and director will open a portal to a realm where fiction and reality are not so clearly defined. They will *become* the characters they portray and allow other things to pass through the gate as well.

### Scenario vs. Adventure

*Calling the King is not an “adventure.” That word has a particular connotation I’m trying to avoid.*

*Most people think of Call of Cthulhu adventures as mysterious monster hunts full of clues, blasphemous books, unspeakable monsters, cultists and desperate violence. This series of scenarios has none of that. Instead, we are using isolated locations and small groups of people thrown into situations they are unprepared to deal with. In Digging for a Dead God, we had a small group of soldiers dealing with an ancient and powerful entity bent on driving them mad. In Calling the King, we’ll be dealing with a similar situation, but the circumstances are very different.*

## What’s Going to Happen?

Putting six highly emotional and sensitive human beings in a place as haunted and dangerous as the Glennwood Grand Hotel is bad enough. But we’re also going to expose them to *The King in Yellow*. That makes everything worse.

As the actors read through the play, a doorway opens: a doorway between the “imaginary” world of the play and our own “real” world. Slowly, the actors and the characters begin to merge together. The Hotel transforms into the Queen’s castle in Alar and the desolate halls begin to fill with unearthly, masked revelers. At midnight, the Queen commands all remove their masks...

We’ll look at the details below.

## Preparation

For most roleplaying adventures, the characters usually take a back seat to the plot. *Calling the King* is different: it is *entirely* character driven. Not only that, but the characters’ backgrounds and motivations are *heavily* intertwined.

*Preparation* is essential to making this scenario work. I *highly* suggest giving your players the sheets a few days before you play so they can go over their character backgrounds and roleplaying notes and get a good feel who they will be playing.

I’m not being cute about this. The better prepared your players are before going into this thing, the more rewarding the result will be.

Also, make sure each person has a name card. Nothing kills the atmosphere more than the questions, “What’s your character’s name?” and “Who are you again?” I’ve provided name cards in the back of the book. Make sure your players use them.



## The Return of the Man in Black

As in the previous Curse scenario, the Man in Black is an omnipresent figure. In *Digging for a Dead God*, he was an entity that exists because conscious thought exists. The ancient race discovered in that scenario had a name for him, but his name has changed here. Tonight, he shall be called the Phantom of Truth. The Dreaded King. The Last King. He who brings the End of the World.

Again, I wore my black suit (black tie, black shirt, black everything) and my Yellow Sign pin. (You can find a link on [www.johnwickpresents.com/yellow](http://www.johnwickpresents.com/yellow) for the place I got mine. And no, I don't get any money from their site. They just make a kick ass Yellow Sign pin and I wanted to throw some eyes their way.) When the MiB showed up, I also wore a black veil and a white harlequin mask. In the dim light, the mask took on a life of its own, seemingly floating in the darkness.

He arrived on the scene after the reading of the play's overture (see *The King in Yellow Excerpts*, below). I've put a whole section on using the MiB in the *Advice* section at the end of this book.

## Themes

I have two big themes running through this adventure. We will explore these themes through the characters we portray. The conclusions we draw from the questions presented are up to us.

### The Fragility of Love

Like other manmade concepts, love is a misunderstanding of the true nature of the universe. At least, in a universe where Lovecraft's concepts are alive and well. Love isn't just an illusion, it's a *delusion*. An emotion brought on by chemicals in our brains that causes us to see the world through a distorted filter. Nothing else, nothing more.

All too often, we reinforce this delusion with stories that are no more sophisticated than children's tales. Hollywood spews out romantic comedies, re-assuring us that "love conquers all." Love does not conquer all. Love is just as fragile



as any other human emotion, any other human concept. As soon as we encounter the true nature of the universe, we understand how weak and pathetic our concepts are. And "true love" is no exception.

Love isn't magical. Love isn't special. It's just like any other emotion. You feel jealous, you feel hatred, you feel anger, you feel afraid... you feel love. All of these things fade with time. Why is hatred less "magical" than love? Why is jealousy less important than love? All of them are nothing more than chemical reactions in our biological brains.

Nothing more, nothing less.



## Reality vs. Fiction

Who is more real: you or Sherlock Holmes?

Think about it. If we define “real” as “the ability to affect reality,” then Sherlock Holmes is more real than you. So is Darth Vader. So is Harry Potter. These characters have profound impacts on countless lives. And just because they are ideas doesn’t make them any less real than you or I. Communism is an idea. Democracy is an idea. The First Amendment to the Constitution is an idea. Tell me those things don’t have real power in the world.

You and I, we’re both made of the same stuff. We’re made from the cosmic radiation left over from the Big Bang a few billion years ago. We’re made of particles, electrons, carbon. The ideas in our heads—the electricity running between our neurons—are just as real as you and I. And just as powerful. Sometimes, even more powerful.

People live their entire lives inside of lies. Some people can’t live without their lies. Beautiful lies, but lies, nonetheless. Anyone who knows anything about self-image knows this. How we see ourselves is wrapped up in lies. We’re too fat. We’re too skinny. We’re ugly. We’re dumb. We’re brilliant. We’re sexy. We’re talented.

## The End of the World

Mankind has a treacherous view of the world. He believes he stands at the center and the apex. Without him, the world would not go on. So is it so with all “end of the world” scenarios. Think about it. Whenever you see an “end of the world” movie, the threat never actually endangers the world; what it endangers is *humanity*. The world will go on without us, but we always think of the end of humanity as the end of the world.

Whether it be the Christian Apocalypse or the Zombie Armageddon, we think of the End of the World only in terms of ourselves. The End of the World arrives when mankind is wiped out. But, the world will go on. Even when our own Sun finally implodes and devours the galaxy, the universe will still exist. There will always be something here... even if we are gone.

The Last King, the Phantom of Truth, brings this knowledge. The End of the World is not the end. It is just the End of Us. Small, tiny, insignificant *us*.

## The King in Yellow

It is best we talk about the play now.

Robert W. Chambers created the play as a kind of link for a series of short stories in his book, *The King in Yellow*. He also created the Yellow Sign: an ambiguous symbol associated with the play. In those stories, anyone who read the play went mad. Chambers himself gives only clues to the content or plot of the play. Here’s a quote from “The Repairer of Reputations”:

*He mentioned the establishment of the Dynasty in Carcosa, the lakes which connected Hastur, Aldebaran and the mystery of the Hyades. He spoke of Cassilda and Camilla, and sounded the cloudy depths of Demhe, and the Lake of Hali. “The scalloped tatters of the King in Yellow must hide Yhtill forever,” he muttered, but I do not believe Vance heard him. Then by degrees he led Vance along the ramifications of the Imperial family, to Uoht and Thale, from Naotalba and Phantom of Truth, to Aldones, and then tossing aside his manuscript and notes, he began the wonderful story of the Last King.*

He mentioned only a few details, quotes a few lines from it, and gave us three characters: Camilla, Cassilda and the King in Yellow himself. We know the play has two acts and, “(t)he very banality and innocence of the first act only allowed the blow to fall afterward with more awful effect.”

The play has a reputation: the first and last time it was performed, the audience rioted resulting in deaths of cast, crew and audience members. The theater burned to the ground and the author shot himself in the head.

## The Mercurial Pages

Like Lovecraft’s dreaded *Necronomicon*, many authors have tried their hand at creating their own version of *The King in Yellow*. So many in fact, I’m willing to propose there are many copies,



all a little differently dreadful than the last.

Or, a more horrifying choice, the play itself is *fluid* and *ever changing*, adapting itself to the reader. If you and I were to read *The King in Yellow*, we would both come away with different experiences. Both equally maddening.

Now, imagine an audience sitting together, trying to watch such a thing. No wonder they all went insane.

As I said, many authors have attempted to create their own version of the play, and while it is tempting to try something myself, this is not such an attempt. What we will do is recreate the experience of *reading* the play, rather than give the players a line-by-line copy. I've given you excerpts to use as well as a summation of the events. There's the beginning of a plot, but they won't get too far.

This is because the play itself is a key to a very dangerous gate. It opens the doorway between our world and the world of Camilla, Cassilda and the King in Yellow. A world, quite literally, at its own end. And the parallels between the world of *The King in Yellow* and the world of Richard Brannan and his Crew will merge together and destroy each other.

### The Characters

CASSILDA, *a mad Queen of Alar*

CAMILLA, *Princess and scheming daughter*

UOHT, *the Elder, first-born twin and eldest heir*

Uoht, *the Younger, second-born twin and younger heir*

Naotalba, *the Queen's Wise Man*

Thale, *the missing son (shown only in flashbacks)*

Aldones, *the dead king and husband of Cassilda*

The Phantom of Truth

The King in Yellow

### The Plot

Cassilda, Queen of Alar, distracted by a phantom city on the far side of Lake Hali, stands by a window and stares out across the lake, waiting to catch a glimpse of the city, Carcosa. Her daughter, Camilla, and her two sons, Uoht the Elder and Uoht the Younger, fear the Queen mad and plot to kill her so they may steal the throne.

Princess Camilla and Uoht the Younger are incestuous lovers while Uoht the Elder appears completely mad himself. Meanwhile, the people of the City begin to riot on the night the black stars streak across the sky. A fever has broken out in the City and while the common people suffer, the Queen has decided to throw a masked ball to celebrate the death of her King.

The Queen can also see a ghostly figure dressed all in black calling himself "the Phantom of Truth." He claims he can bring Cassilda's beloved husband back to her, but only for a price. The mad Queen contemplates his offer while he visits her children. He speaks directly to the audience—a kind of sinister Greek chorus—and says horrible things. He whispers things to the characters. Sometimes they repeat what he says and sometimes they do not, making us wonder if they can consciously hear the Phantom or if his words are only echoes of their own thoughts.

At the end of Act 1, while the masked ball is in full swing, the Queen accepts the Phantom's offer and makes a dreadful sacrifice to bring back her dead King. She finally sees Carcosa rise up from the mists across the lake and a tattered figure dressed all in yellow, wearing a Pallid Mask, appears at the doorway of the party.

That's the end of Act 1. None of my playtest groups got any further than that. In fact, none of them ever got to the end of Act 1.

That's because there really only is a single Act in the play: what happens to the characters as they read the play is Act 2.



## The Glennwood Grand Hotel

All of this takes place in the massive Glennwood Grand Hotel located in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. It has everything you'd expect from a winter getaway. At least, it did when it was still open.

The Glennwood Grand has seen better days. The decadent decades was when it saw its pinnacle, but so many scandals—deaths and murders—closed the place down. Now, with no funds to keep it open, it sits like the corpse of a dead giant in the middle of the winter.

Built in the 1890's, it was modeled after the great palaces of Europe. She was quickly dubbed, "The Great Lady of the West" by the men and women who vacationed there. The rooms were extravagant. She boasted hot spas, pools, luxurious walks in the mountains, skiing, fishing and hunting. She also hosted some of the most decadent parties resulting in three notable deaths: two (apparent) suicides and a murder. Since then, rumors flew that the hotel was either haunted or cursed or both. The owner shot himself in 1910, closing the place for nearly half a century.

In 1960, the hotel opened again, but only shortly. On its opening weekend, a famous starlet—Bridget DiVicar—was found strangled in her room. All the doors and windows were locked from the inside. The autopsy report also showed she had bites on the inside of her thighs that were not human. Police tried to keep the details quiet, but word got out. The Hotel was closed again, but this time, it would remain closed.

Since then, the Glennwood Grand has slowly deteriorated. The Colorado winter has not been kind to her. Most of the building is inaccessible: the stairs are too fragile, the floors weak. Rotted wood everywhere.

I have more advice on how to use the Hotel in the Advice section near the end of this book.

## Brennan's Preparations

Richard arranged for space heaters and generators to be placed in the hotel. The place has no electricity of its own, so gasoline generators are used. This makes the temperature of the place highly mercurial. One room is close to boiling and another is near frozen.

Each of the actors has a room to themselves, but he has isolated them to different floors. Isolation, isolation, isolation. Together, yet alone.

The characters can also find the kitchen up and working; the old gas stoves and refrigerators are also on generators. The whole setup looks like a patchwork of cables and cords. The actors should be used to this—sidestepping power cables on movie sets is one of the first skills an actor learns.

## Maps and Locations

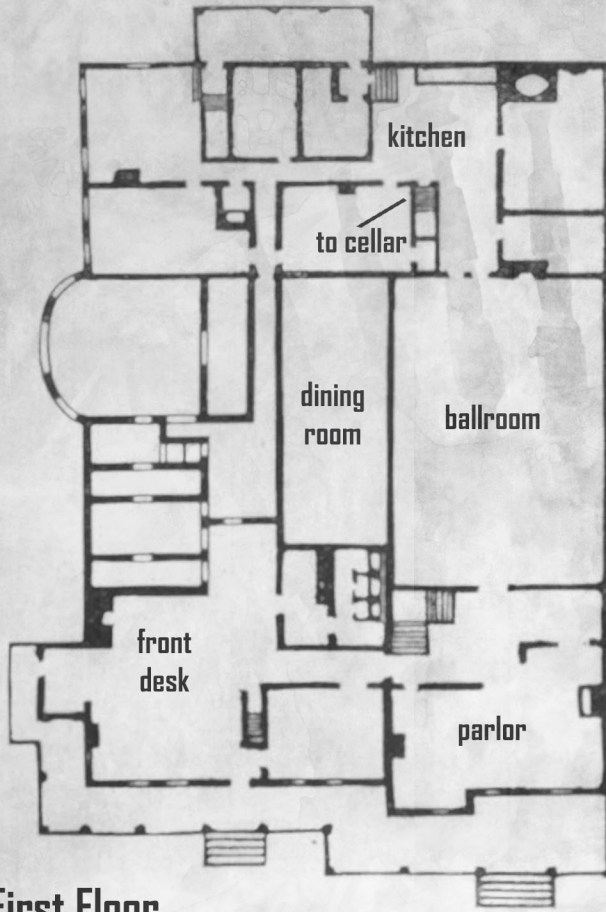
I've provided a rough map for the Hotel, but you should be able to identify it by its major rooms. (There should be little or no need for miniatures.)

Think of this entire experience more from the point of view of a film or a play. The locations themselves are important, but their relative locations to each other are not. How long does it take to get from one location to another? Think in terms of time rather than space. Like driving in the city: we think in terms of time rather than distance. If a player asks, "How long does it take?" tell them, "A few minutes." Then, have the character arrive when it is convenient.

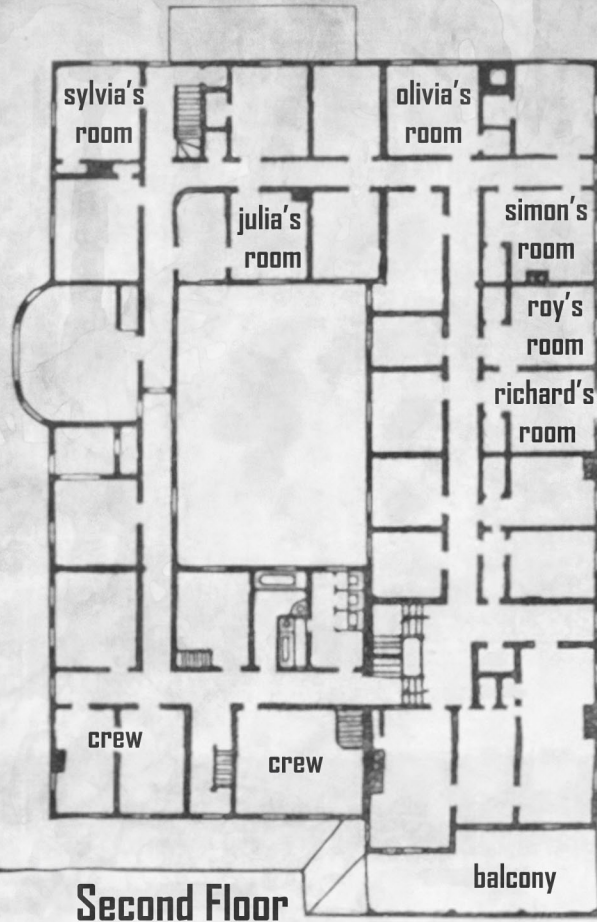
Besides, the geography of the hotel is about to become as mercurial as the play. Getting from one place to another will be very difficult—not because the Hotel is big, but because time and space don't mean anything anymore.



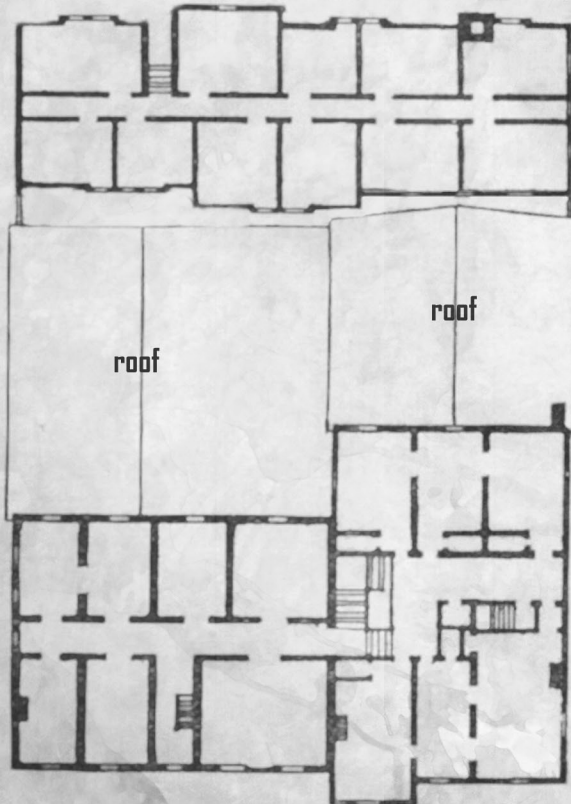
# The Glennwood Grand Hotel



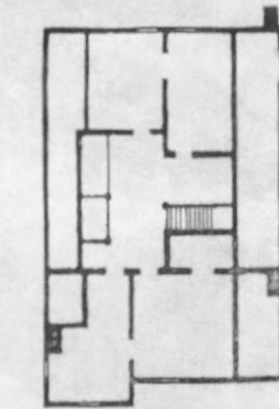
First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor



Cellar



## Everything Falls Apart

*The Hotel itself is a symbol of man's short-sighted self-importance. For Americans, what happened in the previous decade is nostalgia. (Exactly how long did it take bell-bottoms and hair metal to make a comeback?) The Hotel was built at the turn of the last century, a monument to decadence. In less than one hundred years, it was a rotting corpse.*

*The ghosts of the place are not physical manifestations of souls. The place has a ghost of its own. The reminder that everything man makes eventually fails, eventually dies, eventually falls apart.*

### Stairways

Most of the stairways are rotted out. Old wood does not survive extreme temperatures and moisture, expanding and contracting, expanding and contracting. When they walk on the stairways, they can feel the weakness of the wood and the danger of putting too much pressure on the stairs. Walking gingerly is dangerous. Running is fatal.

### The Bedrooms

The Hotel provides luxurious rooms for all its residents. King-sized bed, a bathroom with a shower and bathtub as big as the bed. The rooms have hot and cold running water thanks to a temporary jury rig provided by Brennan's production crew. The mattresses and sheets are new, but the bed frames are still very old. And the mirrors have not been polished in more than a decade. Most are cracked, leaving sharp, silver teeth in the frames and on the floors.

### The Kitchen

Only one of the four kitchens is in any way functional. Fully stocked with four working refrigerators and two stovetop ovens. And a huge meat freezer. But no liquor. Brennan made sure of that.

### The Ballroom

The room is nearly empty save a large round table and chairs. In front of each chair is a copy of the play. The west wall is a series of tall windows—

reaching all the way to the ceiling—overlooking the frozen lake and mountains. What's the name of the lake? Nobody knows. "I didn't know there was a lake here."

### Hallways

Long and silent. Many, many doors. You can hear and feel wind racing down them, chilling the marrow in your bones. Doors ache on their hinges. There are no lights—only the dim winter sun from distant windows. And sometimes, you swear you can hear voices behind the closed doors. Laughing. Crying. Whimpering. Begging for help. Most of the doors are locked... but not all of them.

### The Front Desk

Once a masterpiece of woodcarving and metalwork, the front desk is now a skeletal ruin of what it once was. Behind the desk is a large metal box with a set of master keys to every lock in the building.

### The Cellar

Getting down to the cellar is a real task: most of the stairways are treacherous at best. The boiler room is down here. The boiler itself is non-functional. Empty wine racks. Old boxes of rotting linens. But no mice. No spiders. No cockroaches. Not a single form of life. The longer anyone stays down here, the longer they realize the place feels like a tomb. A giant grave. And, of course, there are no lights. And try getting back up the stairs.

### Other Amenities

Obviously, the Hotel is a huge place and your players can explore it to their content. However, if you ever need to block off an area because you aren't prepared for it, you can control their movements by putting environmental damage in their way. They don't have any tools and lifting heavy rubble is no way to spend a winter.

Once the power goes out, everything stops. The lights, the refrigerators, the ovens, everything. And that leaves them completely in the dark. They may have lighters, but nobody carries matches anymore and there are no candles.



## The Actors

Listed below are the six characters provided with this scenario. Read through them carefully: understanding their backgrounds and motivations are important for a successful run of this scenario.

I suggest making Richard Brennan an NPC. You can run it either way—I did it with both successfully—but Richard is such a crucial element to the plot, you may want him in your hands. If you have a player you trust, let him or her play Richard. You may even want to make that player a confidant. Let them read the entire scenario so they know exactly what's going on. Or, you may want the player to go in completely blind. Again, I had equal success with both choices.

**Richard Brennan**  
(director, genius)

**Sylvia Brennan**  
(lead actress, ex-wife)

**Simon Carter**  
(supporting actor,  
wise ass)

**Roy Phillips**  
(character actor,  
bad boy)

**Julia Chancellor**  
(supporting actress,  
power dater)

**Olivia Long**  
(supporting actress,  
ingénue)



## Richard Brennan

(director, genius)

### Characteristics

Str 12	Dex 11	Int 18
Con 12	App 17	Pow 16
Siz 10	San 79	Edu 20

### Skills

Acting 80, Cthulhu Mythos 01\*, Dodge 22, Directing 80, Fast Talk 70, Listen 60, Psychology 40, Spot Hidden 60, Writing 80

\* Richard has skimmed some of *The King in Yellow* pages, giving him a passing glimpse at the horror that awaits them.

Richard is Hollywood's latest actor/artist/writer/director wunderkind. He emigrated from England when he was nineteen, already famous for two smash hits on the London stage. His first book, *Nom de Guerre*, was purchased by a Hollywood producer, giving Richard his foot in the door. Since then, he has written, directed and starred in five films and appeared in many others. As far as Hollywood is concerned, Brennan can do no wrong.

He met Sylvia on the set of his first film. She was already married, but the two fell in love and she filed for divorce when filming was done. The two were married within two months. Together, they produced three films that have been both critically and commercially successful (to various degrees). Their biggest hit, *The Damaged*, was written by Sylvia and directed by Richard.

Their marriage lasted ten years and then abruptly ended. Sylvia filed the divorce papers. She told Richard she could no longer be in a marriage with him. His work was more important than their relationship. "You widowed me," she told him before she left.

Since then, Richard has produced three more films, each more successful than the last. Each *darker* than the last. He hasn't spoken to Sylvia in ten years. But Richard has a plan. (See *The Plan*, below.)

### The Play

*The King in Yellow* is a play you heard about when you were younger. In fact, most actors have heard of it. "The Cursed Play." You found a copy in an auction. You were the only bidder. You are not certain if the play is a forgery or not. You had a great deal of trouble making copies of it. The pages came out smeared, the photocopier died, the pages came out black. Eventually, you hired a typist, but she quit after typing the first page of the second act. You only have the first act with you. That should give you sufficient time to pull off your scheme.

### The Plan

**This is a secret. You should not talk about it unless Sylvia (or Sylvia's player) is out of hearing range. Keep it quiet. The other players have this same text and are reading it now. Everyone is in on the plan except Sylvia. Again, keep it quiet.**

The *real* reason you are here is to help Sylvia. Richard came to you for your help. He came up with the "cursed play" and the read through scheme to cover his true intention. He knows Sylvia is completely dependant on drugs and he wants to help her. He's arranged this scenario as a kind of psychodrama intervention.

The premise is simple. The play is cursed and causes those who read it to go mad. Richard has arranged for the evening. He has rigged the hotel with special effects to create the illusion that the play is having a maddening effect on all of you. Go along with everything you see. Richard has arranged for each of you—one-by-one—to be "murdered" by an invisible psychopath.

He hopes—beyond hope—that the illusion will force Sylvia out of her depression. It is an insane plan, but he's tried more conventional treatments and they've all failed. If this doesn't work... Sylvia is lost forever.

### Roleplaying Richard

There's no way to say this in a humble way: you are a creative genius. You know this because of your success and the public's confirmation. Make fun of your own reputation. When people try to remind you of your brilliance, play it off. You do not dabble in art: you are consumed by it. Obsessed by it. Richard



makes popular films, but each film has a deep sense of humanity. “Art is about people,” you often say. If it doesn’t say anything about the human condition, if it doesn’t challenge comfort zones, you aren’t interested.

You are still in love with Sylvia. You’ve never stopped loving her. You recognize that you cannot be with her, but you have to do something to save her from herself. Since she left, you’ve started a new relationship with the actress Olivia Long. You have fallen completely in love with Olivia but are terrified the relationship will go the down the same path. Olivia has agreed to help you save Sylvia, but you suspect she harbors a secret jealousy. She may even try to sabotage the project. You’ll have to keep your eye on her.

You heard about *The King in Yellow* when you were still a boy in London. You’ve spent your entire life looking for a copy. You finally have one. In fact, you have the English translation. You went through three photocopiers making scripts for your crew. Funny coincidence you can share with them to push the “cursed” legend. You don’t believe the legend, of course. A cursed play? Utter nonsense.

Your current obsession (saving Sylvia) is everything. Anything else—including consoling or addressing Olivia’s jealousy—is secondary. When all this is over, Olivia will see that you still love her. You’ll prove it to her. Make it up to her someday.

### Relationships

**Sylvia** is your primary concern. Your love for her has not diminished, nor will it ever.

**Simon Carter** is a good friend, but was a better friend of Sylvia’s. You haven’t spoken to him much since the break up. The last time you really spent time with him was during your last production. As usual, you cast him in a small but important role and he stole every scene he was in. Simon is a natural wit and comedian. And a good man.



**Roy Phillips** is an Australian with whom you have struck a fast friendship. He is a brilliant actor, but a bit reckless. His addictions, not his performances, made him famous. You don’t entirely trust Roy, but when he’s on the stage, he shines.

**Julia Chancellor** is a woman you met in Hollywood. The two of you became particularly close after the divorce. You suspect Julia’s “power dating” is responsible for your current relationship with her. You are not sleeping together, but she has made it clear that she would be open to such a suggestion.

Your relationship with **Olivia Long** is... complicated. She’s young, beautiful and married. And the two of you have been sleeping together for three months. You’ve been able to keep the secret from the tabloids, but your friends are beginning to suspect. You’ve asked her to marry you. She declined. She says she isn’t ready yet.



# Sylvia Brennan

(lead actress, ex-wife)

## Characteristics

Str 9	Dex 12	Int 15
Con 8	App 17	Pow 10
Siz 9	San 50	Edu 18

## Skills

Acting 80, Bargain 70, Dodge 24, Fast Talk 60, Persuade 80,

Pharmacy 70, Seduce 80, Writing 80

Sylvia Brennan is an actress and writer who married the only man she considered more talented than herself. She wrote and starred in two movies before she met Richard. She was already married before she became an actress but the stress of Hollywood life tore that marriage apart. When she met Richard, she was ready to end her marriage. Meeting him confirmed her doubts. Richard was not just a temptation: he was what she always wanted. Young, charismatic, brilliant. The two fell in love on the set of his first film after he emigrated from Britain. She divorced her husband during the shoot and she and Richard were married two months after shooting was over.

But marriage to Richard was not what she expected. He was completely consumed by his work. They didn't go to parties. Didn't go dancing. He worked on plays, movies, books. He worked and worked and worked. They planned on traveling, but he had to work. They planned on having a child, but he had to work. "I'm not ready yet," he told her. She eventually decided he would never be ready. And while she still loved him deeply, she needed a man who was obsessed with their relationship and not the next project. When she left him, she said, "You widowed me."

Since then, the tabloids have well-documented her dramatic decline. She has been in and out of relationships, never staying too long in one place. Recreational drug use and alcohol abuse have escalated to dangerous levels. So dangerous, in

fact, she is on the top ten of many Hollywood dead pools. Her recklessness has cost her roles, friendships and nearly her sanity. She is close to the edge. Ready to fall.

When Richard offered her a role in his latest film, Sylvia's agent accepted the job without consulting her.

## Roleplaying Sylvia

You carry a gun with you wherever you go. It's a small pistol: a .22. Small enough to hide and small enough to put against your head when the time comes. Your cocaine use has driven you to extreme paranoia and the alcohol has pushed you down into deep depression. This combination gives you two motives for the gun: protection and suicide. Sooner or later, you'll use the gun for one or both motives.

You hide your emotions well. Always have. Perhaps that was one of the reasons your marriage failed. You never let emotion boil to the surface, so when it does, it explodes. Drugs and alcohol have made this even worse.

You brought enough cocaine with you to last three weekends. You also have enough alcohol to last a week. You should go through both in the first night.

Once, you were in love with Richard. Now, you hate him. You hate his success. You hate his genius. You hate his happiness. And you love him. You love him. You love him. Why did he force you to leave? He didn't give you any choice. And this new role he's offering you is just another way to hurt you. To show you he succeeded without you. But you'll play along. You'll play along for now. You don't know what you are going to do this weekend, but you want to hurt him. Hurt him so he understands how much he needs you.

And if he brings that bitch Olivia? She's going to pay.

**Richard Brennan** is a complicated man and your relationship with him is not simple. You love him for his brilliance and hate him for it as well. He overshadows everyone he is with. It is the kind of arrogance that comes with naked genius. He leaves victims in his wake, his projects more important



than the people involved. You were one of those people. Make sure he remembers that.

**Simon Carter** was your best friend before the divorce and then, he betrayed you. He sided with Richard. Sided with the talent. He's a career opportunist and dumped you as soon as he perceived you as poison.

**Julia Chancellor** is a bitch. A manipulative, conniving, power dating bitch. The woman was waiting in the wings, just waiting for you and Richard to split. When you did, she became his "best friend." You know the two of them are sleeping together—although she denies it. She can keep on denying it. Lying bitch.

**Roy Phillips** is a young, reckless talent who will sleep with anything. He's also your current lover. He insists on keeping the affair secret and you've obliged him. He should also have cocaine with him.

**Olivia Long** is his current lover. You know this because you pay the maid in Richard's house to keep tabs on him. Richard left you for her. You are sure of it. He tricked you into the divorce so he could be with a younger woman. Or was it you who left him? You can't remember anymore. Either way, "Hollywood's most promising ingénue" will find a deadly ending here.





## Simon Carter

(supporting actor, wise ass)

### Characteristics

Str 12	Dex 16	Int 14
Con 13	App 15	Pow 14
Siz 12	San 70	Edu 14

### Skills

Acting 70, Dodge 50, Fast Talk 80, Persuade 75,  
Pharmacy 30, Psychology 75, Writing 70

For years, Simon Carter was an A-list actor stuck in B-list films. His talent—unnoticed by most of Hollywood—had not gone unnoticed by his rabid fan base. Content to be a B movie actor, Simon milked the prestige of being a big fish in a small pond. But then, Richard Brennan gave him a call: an opportunity in one of his smaller productions. As usual, Carter stole every scene he was in. His quick wit and easy humor earned him a part in the Crew.

Sylvia Brennan was, at one time, Simon's best friend. She had a quick wit and a sense of humor that was as rarified and sophisticated (and vulgar!) as his. She was also a raging flirt with those she felt comfortable with and she felt most comfortable with Simon. He was safe: a happily married man. And he could cross verbal swords with the best of them. For that, and his homespun kindness, Sylvia adored Simon. But then the divorce...

Simon saw little of her after that. What you did see frightened him. She was a terrifying vision. Her wit turned from clever to cynical and cruel. Sylvia could always swear like a sailor, but this... this was something different. Simon was polite when he cut himself from her life, but he cut himself out, nonetheless. She never forgave him.

Simon acts as the conscience of the Crew. He prides himself on being a simple man. A family man (married with two daughters). His wife's name is Betty. His two daughters are Shannon and Margaret. He has never had a problem with drinking or drugs. He's never cheated on his wife.

But Simon does have one dark secret. Something he's hid from everyone who knows him. Simon has Early-Onset Alzheimer's Disease. The condition is a rare form of the disease; it strikes in the 40's rather than later in life. The disease has affected Simon's vocal skills, giving him a slight stutter. He also gets lost easily: he cannot keep track of directions. His symptoms are still small and difficult for a layman to spot, but Simon notices them. And he knows he doesn't have much time left.

Simon is here because he was offered a job. And Simon Carter never says "no" to a job. Work is work. And with what little time he has left, every moment counts.

### The Plan

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He hopes—beyond hope—that the illusion will force Sylvia out of her depression. It is an insane plan, but he's tried more conventional treatments and they've all failed. If this doesn't work... Sylvia is lost forever.

### Roleplaying Simon

When he's on, Simon is a master of wit and self-degradation. When he's off, he's a quiet family



man who accepts even the worst job offers to pay his bills and put his two daughters through college. Richard called him, "The Man with No Shame." Simon has done his best to live up to that reputation.

But the recent discovery of his condition has given Simon a bit of a serious edge. Life should be fun, but there's a difference between fun and trivial. He reads a lot. He avoids television. He never touched liquor or drugs before, but now he sees them as a complete waste of time. A phrase he's adopted lately is, "It's later than you think." It's a subtle reminder to himself of everything he has left to do.

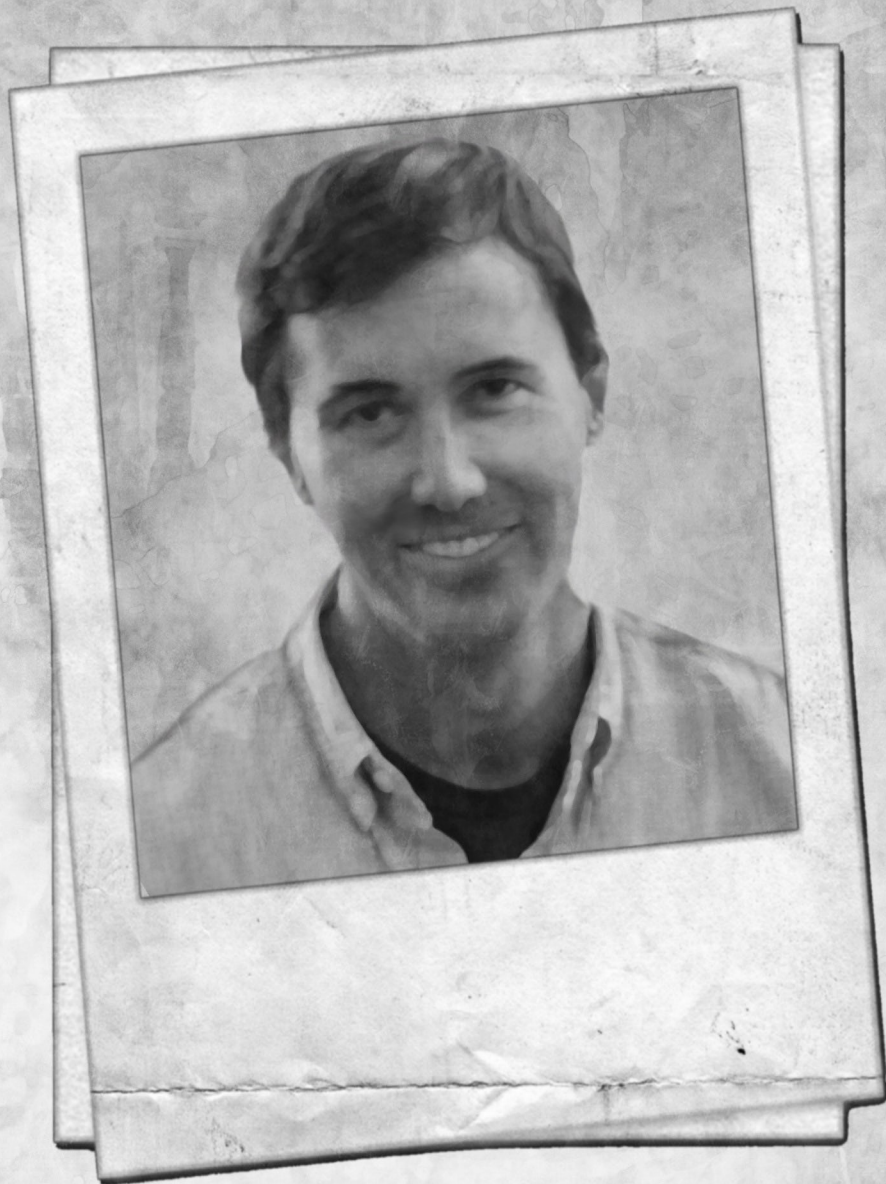
### Relationships

You've always thought of **Richard Brennan** as that really smart kid in class who saw the nuance in your humor while everybody else just laughed at the fart jokes. He's the guy who gets it. You like him because of that. And you respect his talent.

**Sylvia Brennan**... Oh, Sylvia. Try to maintain a friendly face. Whatever happens, you still remember her the way she was.

**Julia Chancellor** is one of those women you never trusted in high school who grew up to be one of those women you never trusted in college who grew up to be one of those women you never trusted in Hollywood. Her talent is undeniable, but why Richard trusts her, you'll never know.

**Roy Phillips** is a bully and a blowhard. A bully and a blowhard with real talent, that is. As long as you keep Roy away from the booze, everything will be okay. Just don't try to keep it from him yourself or he'll probably break your arm.



**Olivia Long** is a beautiful and talented girl. Key word: "girl." She's here because Richard sees something in her. Perhaps more than what's there. The kid has some growing up to do. Maybe this weekend retreat will be the opportunity to do that.



## Julia Chancellor

(supporting actress, power dater)

### Characteristics

Str 9	Dex 10	Int 16
Con 14	App 18	Pow 15
Siz 9	San 75	Edu 13

### Skills

Acting 80, Bargain 70, Dodge 20, Fast Talk 70, Persuade 80, Seduce 90

Julia spent most of her childhood an ugly duckling. Picked on by bullies because she was too tall and too thin, by the time she reached high school, she hated boys and swore she'd never fall in love. Then, something happened in her senior year. Her body filled out. Her hair thinned. Her acne went away. Julia Chancellor became the beauty she despised.

And she used it like a weapon.

Julia Chancellor used her beauty to achieve status and position. Denied it for so long, she knew exactly how valuable it was. She achieved everything she ever wanted. Money. Fame. Power. Influence. All with her mind and her beauty. She could not have done it with only one; she needed both. She became a model. And she spent all her time and money making herself an accomplished actress. She got the attention of Richard Brannan who saw more than most. He was also one of the first men who did not treat her like a prize or possession to be won or taken. For that, he earned her respect.

She doesn't like mirrors. She turns them away from herself or toward the wall. This stems from a horrifying incident when she was a girl playing "Bloody Mary" with two friends. She didn't speak for days after the incident and doesn't quite remember the details. She just knows she doesn't like mirrors—especially when alone.

Julia is always seen with the most beautiful men, whom she calls "opportunity jewelry." She refuses to allow herself tied to a single opportunity. Of course, she never saw Richard as an opportunity... all right, maybe she did. But she never took advantage of his trust in her. Not even when the divorce drove him to solitude and loneliness. She had the opportunity, but she did not take it. But once Sylvia was gone, she and Richard became much closer. Now, she considers Richard one of her dearest and most trusted friends.

And she never liked Sylvia that much, anyway.

### The Plan

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He hopes—beyond hope—that the illusion will force Sylvia out of her depression. It is an insane plan, but he's tried more conventional treatments and they've all failed. If this doesn't work... Sylvia is lost forever.

**Of course, you don't care. In fact, if you could sabotage the plan some way—without losing favor with Richard—do it.**

### Rolepaying Julia

Sex. Men want sex. And if you can make them think they can get it from you, they'll do anything



for you. You don't even have to deliver. They just have to believe they have a chance. But don't overdo it: Sylvia is an intelligent woman. She knows there's an appropriate time and place for everything... especially pulling out a weapon.

She's not very sure about Richard's plan. He should know better. He should leave the past in the past. But you are willing to help him—even if you hate Sylvia. Although, if his plan were to fail... sabotaging Brennan's plan is a quiet little thought in your mind, but it may work. Instead of breaking Sylvia's addictions, perhaps you can break Richard's addiction to his past.

### Relationships

**Richard Brennan** is the only man you trust. His childish infatuation with Sylvia is something you never understood. You love him, but you won't let his past get in the way of your—you mean, *his* future.

**Sylvia Brennan** is a woman who never deserved Richard in the first place. She's a spent, used up piece of trash that he should have thrown away a long time ago. Instead, he kept hold of her, even after she left him. She's worthless.

**Roy Phillips** is a macho jerk who doesn't know his pants are down around his ankles. He's made so many drunken passes at you, even God couldn't keep track of them. Other than his talent, he has no redeeming features at all. He's the classic cliché of a man.

**Simon Carter** is a mystery to you. You just can't get over how *true* everything is about him. He's everything he appears to be. He's funny, honest and faithful to his wife and children. He must have a secret. Everybody does. Perhaps if you hint that you know what it is, he might just tell you. More leverage.



Now, let's talk about **Olivia Long**. Another woman unworthy of Richard's adorations. The girl is half his age. What does he see in these women? Perhaps he's afraid of a *real* woman. Other than her youth and beauty, you really don't know anything about her. No leverage there. Find some.



# Roy Phillips

(character actor, bad boy)

## Characteristics

Str 17	Dex 17	Int 11
Con 15	App 17	Pow 13
Siz 15	San 65	Edu 10

## Skills

Acting 60, Dodge 70, Fast Talk 60, Fist 80, Grapple 70, Hunting 70, Navigation 60, Persuade 50, Pharmacy 70, Pistol 60, Spot Hidden 70

Roy was born in Australia and lived there most of his life. He spent many of those years living in the outback with his grandfather. He never knew his parents. He didn't learn to read until he was twenty-five. Then, he discovered acting.

He had what the trade papers call "an overnight success." He was cast in a small budget Australian film that caught Richard Brennan's attention. Brennan immediately cast you as the lead in his next production and you had what Hollywood likes to call "an overnight success."

"Overnight excess" was more like it. Since then, the rush of fame appeared to go straight to Roy's head. None can deny his credentials, but his off-screen persona has eclipsed any of his thespian accomplishments. He's brash, outspoken and completely full of himself. Convinced of his own press. At least, that's what the papers and TV say. Still, any movie he is in receives unprecedented laurels and box office. He must be doing something right.

The press has linked Roy with almost every one of his female co-stars—whether it was true or not. But in recent months, he's been seeing Sylvia Brannan: Richard's ex-wife. Despite his friendship with Richard—or perhaps because of it—Roy hasn't said anything to his friend. Whether or not he's ashamed of what he's done or frightened of the consequences, Roy is a bit too proud to admit... even to himself.

## The Plan

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He hopes—beyond hope—that the illusion will force Sylvia out of her depression. It is an insane plan, but he's tried more conventional treatments and they've all failed. If this doesn't work... Sylvia is lost forever.

## Roleplaying Roy

Roy isn't just confident of his talent, he's convinced. Drugs and alcohol are constant companions, but Roy is on the upswing right now. He hasn't quite hit the downside of excess. The cocaine makes him powerful. In a few months, it will make him powerless. But not just yet. He'll quit by then. He's man enough to know when to quit.

He's not afraid of confrontation. In fact, he thrives on it. He *likes* arguments. He feels arguments get things done. Negotiation leads to compromise and art is about never compromising. When he's wrong, he admits it quickly and respectfully. That's how a man—a *real man*—does things: he never compromises, but when he's wrong, he let's the better argument have its day.



And that's really what Roy is about. He's a man. A real man. Not like the sissies in Hollywood. He's an artist and there's nothing fake or feminine about it. Acting is art. It's reaching into your soul and pulling out the emotions that are already there. And anyone who says differently deserves a thump on the head. Maybe two. Three, just to be sure.

### Relationships

**Richard Brennan** is the man who got you here. You respect Richard because the man knows what he wants and knows how to get it. You don't know what happened with the divorce, but a real man doesn't just let his woman walk away. That you don't respect. And the plan Richard has to "rescue" his wife? This whole thing is a bit too complicated. Just walk up to her and tell her you still love her. What's wrong with that?

**Sylvia Brennan** is a wounded woman. Richard hurt her somehow and that's unforgivable. You never hurt a woman. She needed a real man in her life and that's why she came to you. If Richard was too self-centered to see that, then it's his loss. The fact that you define your relationship with Sylvia through Richard should tell you something.

**Simon Carter** is a sissy. He's a loud mouth who always gets what he wants because he's a clown. He makes people laugh. Big deal.

**Julia Chancellor** is a slut. She slept her way to the top. She must have been sleeping with Richard behind Sylvia's back, although Sylvia says that isn't why she left him. Sure, she's got talent: talent playing sluts. That's why Richard casts her in the roles she gets. She'll fuck anything to get what she wants. Maybe you respect that a little bit. But she hasn't fucked you yet, so what's her problem?



**Olivia Long** is young, hot and ready to pop. You've never met her before, but when you heard she was going to be here, you gave a big, big smile. She's going to love you.



## Olivia Long

(supporting actress, ingénue)

### Characteristics

Str 8	Dex 10	Int 13
Con 10	App 18	Pow 12
Siz 8	San 60	Edu 12

### Skills

Acting 70, Bargain 50, Persuade 70

Young, beautiful and full of promise. That's what the trades say about Olivia Long. A true ingénue. She's only been in one film—a supporting role in an independent project that showed at Cannes. She doesn't know anyone here except for Richard... and she's been sleeping with him for three months.

It started off as something dangerous. She was in Cannes—alone—and knew no-one. She met Richard at the showing. He was handsome and witty... and a little sad. She flirted, just a little. The next thing she knew, they spent the rest of the week together in France. He proposed marriage only three weeks ago. She declined, saying she wasn't ready yet. Although, to be honest, his passion for the romance far eclipses hers. Olivia sees Richard as a fling with strong potential, but asking about marriage is premature.

Now, he's asked her here. She knows no one. Only Richard. She's young and terrified. But she can't let Richard see that. She has to put on a brave face.

### The Plan

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He hopes—beyond hope—that the illusion will force Sylvia out of her depression. It is an insane plan, but he's tried more conventional treatments and they've all failed. If this doesn't work... Sylvia is lost forever.

**Of course, you don't care. In fact, if you could sabotage the plan some way—without losing favor with Richard—do it.**

### Roleplaying Olivia

Young, frightened, but brave. Don't let anyone intimidate you. You are good at making friends. Make as many as possible. You've heard stories about Richard's “Crew” and how crazy they get during a read through. You have to admit... this all sounds rather melodramatic. But you may just love Richard... and if he's gone to such lengths to save his ex-wife, imagine what lengths he would go to for someone else he loved.

### Relationships

Olivia doesn't have a relationship with anyone here, but she knows a little bit about the actors.

She knows about **Sylvia Brennan** from both the press and Richard. She knows Sylvia is an alcoholic and a drug addict. When Richard speaks of her, he does so with respect and sadness.



**Simon Carter** is an actor you admire. You may even call yourself a fan. He's a brilliant actor who shows up in... not so brilliant movies. His comedic timing is a beauty to behold.

**Roy Phillips** is Hollywood's newest bad boy. A hard drinking Australian who can switch identities in a heartbeat. You will have to watch out for him.

It's tough to say whether **Julia Chancellor's** success came from her talent or her ability to seduce directors and leading men. Probably a little of both.





## Excerpts from *The King in Yellow*

A few notes. First, Richard has never seen “The Overture.” He doesn’t know how it got into the play. He also doesn’t know why there are scenes missing.

When I had people read through the pages of the play, something happened that always happens with a readthrough. It’s a strange phenomenon, but you are more than likely to see it yourself.

People don’t say what they read. They’ll misread words and phrases. There’s no trick to this, it will just happen. Others will usually not point out the error, but allow the read through to go on. This will create a sense of disjointedness with the readers. Allow it to happen. They’ll think they are reading different versions of the play. Of course, if this doesn’t happen, don’t worry. But if it does... enjoy it.

You can download these pages as PDFs at the Curse of the Yellow Sign website: [www.johnwickpresents.com/yellow](http://www.johnwickpresents.com/yellow). Also, on the website, I’ve provided *six different versions* of the play to print out, each assigned to a specific character. That means, some folks will have some phrases and others will have different pages. Again, it’s all about disorienting the players.

The character of “THE PHANTOM” also makes appearances in the play. Remember: Richard does not remember seeing any such character when he photocopied the play. When the lines for the Phantom of Truth appear, whisper them from the darkness. Tell the players they all heard the voice, but they are uncertain where it came from. Then, watch the actors blame Richard for setting the whole thing up.

Here’s one version of Act 1. At least, *some* of it.

## Overture

*(A figure all in black wearing a white mask stands on the stage. No lights.)*

### PHANTOM OF TRUTH

This is how it ends. This is how it ends.

You have called me and I am here. I am the gateway between what is true and what you wish was true. The doorway between fantasy and fact. It is only a little step between your lies and me. But I will lead you there. All you need do is take my hand. For I am the Phantom of Truth. I am the Last King. Come to wed the Last Queen. The King in Yellow and the Queen in Red. And I wear no mask.

This is how it ends. This is how it ends.

### Act I, Scene I

*(The stage is empty save for three tall windows.*

*Outside, the sky shows the constellation of Aldeberan. Walking on the stage, QUEEN CASSILDA approaches the window closest STAGE RIGHT.)*

#### CASSILDA

I can almost see Carcosa.

*(PRINCESS CAMILLA enters.)*

#### CAMILLA

Mother, what dress do you think I should wear?

#### CASSILDA

I can almost see Carcosa.

#### CAMILLA

The blue is lovely, but Tosha so does love the green. And I just do not know which of them I wish to please tonight.

#### CASSILDA

Its towers, rising from the mists.

#### CAMILLA

And the red. I love the red. If I was thinking only of myself I would wear the red.

#### CASSILDA

Its gables touching the sky.

#### CAMILLA

The red, then. I shall be selfish tonight. Tosha and Vren can do their best to please me for a change!

*(beat)*



Mother? Are you listening to me?

CASSILDA

The King in Yellow and the Queen in Red.

The Phantom

Sing your song, my Queen

CASSILDA

Along the shore the cloud waves break,

The twin suns sink beneath the lake,

The shadows lengthen

In Carcosa

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 thou, unsung, as tears unshed

Shall dry and die in

Lost Carcosa.

CAMILLA

*(disgusted)*

You never listen to me!

*(Exaunt CAMILLA)*

CASSILDA

I can almost see...

### Act 1, Scene 3

*(Uoht the Younger and Uoht the Elder approach the castle at the gate. The wind and snow blow around them.)*

ELDER

Have you seen Mother? She looks as close to death as a corpse.

YOUNGER

Closer to a corpse puts us closer to the Throne.

ELDER

Your ambition is tasteless, brother.

Younger

It tastes sweet to Camilla.

ELDER

Her tastes are just as bitter as yours.

Younger

How would you know, brother? Tasted her often?

ELDER

You disgust me. Listening to your plots makes me wonder if I should be so concerned when I sit on the Throne.

Younger

Be silent! Someone approaches!

*(ENTER Camilla)*

CAMILLA

*(CAMILLA hugs the Elder and kisses the Younger)*

My brothers! And why home so soon? Is the war over?

ELDER

Alas, no. It seems it has only begun.

YOUNGER

Our armies did not fare well against the Enemy, sister.

CAMILLA

When news reaches the streets, the streets shall not be silent.

YOUNGER

They will want blood.

ELDER

They can find it in the veins of our Enemy.

CAMILLA

They will find it in the walking corpse that sits on our Throne.

YOUNGER

Aye, if that corpse has any blood left in her.

ELDER

That is our mother you speak of, brother. You will keep your tongue civil in your head or I will cut it out for you.



YOUNGER

*(to CAMILLA)*

Our brother has not taken well to the defeats our Enemy has given us.

ELDER

You speak as if they were gifts.

CAMILLA

They are gifts, brother. Do you not see? We can use the defeats and the risk of revolt to restore sanity to the Throne.

ELDER

Sister...

CAMILLA

She says she can see Carcosa on the lake.

ELDER

No...

CAMILLA

Every day, she stares out the window. Every night, she walks the halls. Sleepless. Afraid to sleep. The apothecary has given her a powder to keep her safe from dreams. She says she is eager to call the King.

ELDER

You will be silent, now! If this is true, I shall see it for myself!

CAMILLA

You shall, Uoht. You shall.

### Act 1, Scene 5

*(CASSILDA and Naotalba in the Queen's Chambers)*

NAOTALBA

What is it you seek, my Queen?

CASSILDA

Have you found the Yellow Sign?

NAOTALBA

No, my Queen. I have not. The libraries lend no clues.

CASSILDA

Then, we are truly doomed.

NAOTALBA

My Queen looks across the Lake. What is it you seek?

CASSILDA

Have you found the Yellow Sign?

NAOTALBA

My Queen already knows the answer to that question.

CASSILDA

Then, we are truly doomed.

NAOTALBA

Your Highness, my spies report your children are preparing for a coup.

CASSILDA

*(looking out the window again)*

It is no matter.

NAOTALBA

The people are restless. If they attempt to usurp your throne, the streets will revolt. There will be no leadership.

CASSILDA

If they do not attempt it, the people will revolt. Either way, the end is here.

THE PHANTOM

This is how it ends...

CASSILDA

*(looking at the PHANTOM)*

This is how it ends...

naotalba

My Queen? Do you speak to me?

CASSILDA

*(looking out the window)*

Have you found the Yellow Sign?

naotalba

My scribes and I shall look again.

CASSILDA

*(looking at the PHANTOM)*

You shall not find it.

NAOTALBA

*(aside)*



Then it is true. The Queen is mad. Perhaps a poison? Perhaps grief. She will not allow me to investigate. If the Queen be mad, then the children are to sit on the Throne. But which one? They are decadent fools. Ah, but decadent fools are too busy with their pleasures to be masters of state. And that leaves only Naotalba to run it for them. Let the old Queen die so a new one may rule. A Queen is still a Queen regardless of whether or not she sits in the throne... or stands behind it.

### Act 1, Scene 6

*(CASSILDA and UOHT, THE YOUNGER in the THRONE ROOM.)*

CASSILDA

It is almost ready, my brother.

YOUNGER

Do you know there are times when your ambition frightens me?

CASSILDA

Is that all it does?

YOUNGER

No.

CASSILDA

Show me what it does to you.

*(the two kiss passionately)*

YOUNGER

What shall we do with our brother?

CASSILDA

The same we do to our mother, silly. Both stand in our way. It shall be you and I, King and Queen, as it was with the Old Ways.

YOUNGER

The King in Yellow...

CASSILDA

... and the Queen in Red.

YOUNGER

Magician and Harlot.

CASSILDA

As it was, as it is, as it always should be.

*(the two kiss passionately again)*

YOUNGER

Where should we go?

CASSILDA

*(gesturing toward the Throne)*

There.

YOUNGER

Our brother is right. You have no shame.

CASSILDA

My ambition murdered my shame. Now kiss me. And let us be harlot and magician upon the throne that will soon be ours!

### Act 1, Scene 8

*(The ballroom, full of masked figures and music.*

*CASSILDA enters wearing a red and white mask. CAMILLA enters wearing the same dress and mask. They speak the same, it is difficult to identify which is which as CAMILLA mimicks CASSILDA.)*

CASSILDA

Is that a mirror I see?

CAMILLA

Or perhaps a ghost?

CASSILDA

Not a ghost.

CAMILLA

Can you be so sure?

CASSILDA

My ghosts sing to me. I hear no such song from you.

CAMILLA

A mirror, then. A mirror of yourself.

CASSILDA

It cannot be.

CAMILLA

*(looking out the window)*

I can almost see Carcosa.

CASSILDA

You dare mock the Queen?

CAMILLA

If you are the Queen.



CASSILDA & CAMILLA

*(in unison)*

I am the Queen!

CAMILLA

You see? How can you be so certain? Perhaps you are the ghost. Old dead woman.

CASSILDA

I am no ghost.

CAMILLA

You haunt these halls. You speak with the dead. You see the dead city on the edge of the lake. Who else could you be?

CASSILDA

I am no ghost.

CAMILLA

You are what has been. I am what will be. I am tomorrow. You are the grave.

CASSILDA

*(falling to her knees)*

I am no ghost.

CAMILLA

Die, old woman! Die and take yesterday with you!

*(the bell tolls midnight)*

CAMILLA

And now it is time! Time to lay aside all disguises! Look upon me you all! Look upon me and see the true Queen of Alar! And look upon the corpse that writhes and weeps on the floor! Look upon her! She is the past. And I am the future.

*(ENTER a STRANGER)*

CAMILLA

Who are you?

STRANGER

A herald.

CAMILLA

A herald who dares interrupt the true Queen of Alar?

STRANGER

I am.

CAMILLA

Then you shall die! Die with her! Buried in the same patch of land, your bones crushed and your skin burned!

STRANGER

I have no bones to be crushed and I have no skin to be burned.

CAMILLA

What are you then?

STRANGER

I am he who you called. To remind you that there can be no Queen in Alar without a King.

CAMILLA

I need no King.

STRANGER

I am the Herald of the King.

CASSILDA

*(looking to the window)*

It is there! It is there!

CAMILLA

*(to the STRANGER)*

You, sir, should unmask.

STRANGER

Indeed?

CASSILDA

Indeed, it is time. We have all laid aside disguise but you.

STRANGER

I wear no mask.

CASSILDA

*(terrified, aside to Cassilda)*

No mask? No mask!



## Transmogrification

As the night progresses, and as the actors read through more of the play, the world around them begins to change. The Hotel seems to take on a life of its own, changing before their very eyes.

A corridor that was there a moment ago is gone now, replaced with an archway that makes no sense in the current architecture.

They see men and women walking around corners in masks.

They hear laughter and music behind closed doors.

They see figures appearing behind them in mirrors.

They see the other actors as the characters they are supposed to portray in the play.

And they see the Phantom of Truth.

The Hotel is becoming Alar. The actors are becoming the Queen and her court. The line between reality and fantasy isn't just blurring; it's being wiped away.

And an unspeakable terror approaches. It will arrive at midnight when the Stranger arrives.

(Yes, the Stranger is not listed in the cast. The play itself is transforming: becoming what it needs to be or what it always was meant to be.)

This particular event affects the actors differently. Roy—with his Alzheimer's—is convinced he's hallucinating. Sylvia and Roy are also hallucinating, but for different reasons. Did Richard put something in the water? Something in the food? Plant that thought in their heads.

With most of the actors in on the plan, they may begin to suspect Richard has some other motives. If he's going to "trick" Sylvia this way, why not trick the rest of them as well. He is a practical joker, after all. But would he go this far?

As the night progresses, the Hotel begins transforming into the Castle Alar. The darkened hallways, bereft of electricity, begin glowing red with torchlight. The doorways become archways. And darting between the shadows, the actors can see costumed figures wearing masks.

## Brennan's Casting

*Sylvia Brennan: Queen Cassilda*

*Oliva Long: Princess Camilla*

*Simon Carter: Uoht, the Elder*

*Roy Phillips: Uoth, the Younger*

*Julia Chancellor: Naotalba, the Queen's Advisor*

## The Plan

Richard has a plan. Here's how it goes.

He's the first to die. He'll excuse himself sometime during the evening and prep himself up. He's going to be a bloody mess. Knife wounds to the chest and a cut throat. Then, he'll wait. Eventually, the rest of them will wonder where he's gone.

If Richard is a PC, hand him the note in the nearby sidebar. This will kick start Richard's plan. Then, as time permits, employ the rest of the Plan notes.

I've never needed more than four dead cast members. You may need more, but by this time, it should be painfully obvious that something has gone terribly wrong with Brennan's plan.





### Brennan's Plan, Part 1

#### GIVE THIS NOTE TO RICHARD BRENNAN

*Excuse yourself and head off to your room. Make sure you announce where you are going. There, you have prosthetics prepared for the event. You will have a cut throat and multiple stab wounds to the chest as well as defensive wounds on the arms. Allow the others to wonder where you went.*

*After your body is found, you will appear as a ghost haunting Sylvia. Do as you will.*

### Brennan's Plan, Part 2

#### GIVE THIS NOTE TO OLIVIA LONG

*Wait until Richard has been found dead. Then, at a time you find appropriate, break into tears. It's too much. You can't take any more. Rush off alone somewhere. Richard has arranged a secret panel for you to slip into. Once you are secured, apply the makeup there he has provided. You will also appear to have been murdered: stabbed in the chest and throat cut.*

*After your body is found, you will appear as a ghost haunting Sylvia. Do as you will.*

### Brennan's Plan, Part 3

#### GIVE THIS NOTE TO SIMON CARTER

*Wait until Richard and Olivia have been found dead. Then, at a time you find appropriate, burst into a nonsensical rage. It's too much. You can't take any more. Rush off alone somewhere. Richard has arranged a secret panel for you to slip into. Once you are secured, apply the makeup there he has provided. You will also appear to have been murdered: stabbed in the chest and throat cut.*

*After your body is found, you will appear as a ghost haunting Sylvia. Do as you will.*

## Insanity

In Act I, I gave a series of flashbacks to make Sanity loss a little bit more dramatic. For me, while Sanity has always been one of the most innovative mechanics of *Call of Cthulhu*, I've also found it to be one of the easiest ways for the Keeper to cheat. Going insane should not be just a roll of the dice and a consultation on the Psychosis Chart.

No.

It should be a dramatic and horrifying experience. This is a *horror* game. The players buy their ticket so they can sit in a darkened room and have their wits scared out of them. That's what they want. Let's give it to them.

## Unmasking the King

When I was playing the Man in Black, at least two people got to see what was under the veil. Take Fabien for example. When Fabien got to see under the veil, I positioned myself him so nobody else could see what was going to happen. When the veil got lifted, I whispered, "SCREAM!" at him. Fabien is a big *CoC* fan, so he knew what to do. He screamed and fell into a puddle of tears and twitches.

Now, I didn't scare Fabien, but it sure as hell scared the rest of the players. And that was the key. What they *didn't see*. They saw Fabien's *reaction*. And that was enough to creep them out.

## Grand Finale

These are the key factors in reaching a satisfying ending to the scenario. And trust me, this thing can go a lot of different ways. You can direct the finale with subtle hints and pushes to the players. I should also add that "satisfying" does not mean "happy." This is not a story that ends well.

More often than not, after everything that has happened, I usually have a few accidental deaths along the way. People are mistaken for "the mad killer" who has gotten into the Hotel. Once the actors start seeing things, they assume someone else is in the Hotel with them. Richard's death



proves it to Sylvia. When Richard *really* gets himself killed—through all manner of ways—the rest of the actors begin to wonder what’s going on.

I had Richard die by his own hand once. He saw how everything he heard about the play was true and after losing his Sanity, took his own life by throwing himself out a window. Of course, he impaled himself on the iron gates outside the Hotel. Once that happened, Richard’s “ghost” started wandering around driving everyone else mad.

Don’t show the face; show the showing of the face.

## Keeper Techniques

I ran this scenario with no dice, no character sheets and no rules. I used a ton of tricks to keep this one going. I also put on a black suit, stuck my Yellow Sign pin on my lapel and walked around as the Man in Black. I put a veil over my face when I was the Man in Black and took it off when I was Just John. I made sure only to whisper as the MiB. If I was speaking out loud, players knew I was Just John.

By the end of it, I was exhausted, but my players were greatly satisfied.

This section is not intended to show you how to be a good GM/Keeper, but what I did to maintain the atmosphere and horror of my own sessions. These worked for me. They may work for you. I hope they do. Good luck.

### Light and Darkness

For me, the key to the atmosphere of this scenario was light and darkness. I purchased a small light I could hold in the palm of my hand. This was the only source of light in the room. I turned off all the other lights and shut the window shades.

When the generators were working, I flashed the light at the floor. When the generators went out, I turned it off and let the players sit in complete darkness.

(If they lit a match, I turned the light on and flashed my fingers under it. You may want to use real matches if you like, but I preferred staying away from fire.)

I also used the little light for “spotlight.” This is an indie game term for “it’s your turn.” When I turned my attention to a particular player, I moved the light to their feet. This indicated to the other players that the point-of-view was currently on *this* player and they should remain silent or assist with that player’s scene.

Flashing light in other people’s faces is an effective technique for disorientation as well. (There’s a reason it’s such a cliché in crime movies.) I used the light to disorient the players when reality was shifting back and forth between the Hotel and Carcosa. I also used it as a kind of transition piece: changing from one perspective to another.

### Banality

*“The very banality and innocence of the first act only allowed the blow to fall afterward with more awful effect.”*

— Robert W. Chambers, *The Repairer of Reputations*

The first hour or so of the scenario (real time, now) should be an exercise in the slow, creeping banality of the situation. Nothing happens. People arrive, comment on the cold, comment on the food, comment on the company... a lot of chit chat. Let that happen. Let the players get accustomed to their characters. Let them talk. Complain. In fact, sit back and say nothing. Allow uncomfortable silences to set in. And linger. Don’t worry; human nature dictates that *someone* will break the silence.

And slowly—very slowly—let that unnatural calm turn into quiet discord. Kill the lights at appropriate times. Whisper things. Just below a whisper. Doesn’t really matter what you say as long as they can’t understand what you said. If they ask for clarification, tell them, “That’s what you heard.”





This is tricky. Too much banality turns to boredom. You've got to time it right. Make sure the players aren't frustrated. Start small and build.

### The Hotel

The obvious reference here is Kubrick's film *The Shining*. Trust me, it's deliberate. Use it. In fact, feed a thought to one of the characters: Brennan must be entering his "Kubrick Phase."

I chose a haunted hotel because the images are so ingrained in American culture that they are easy for a Keeper to use. Exploit that. But remember: Kubrick and King weren't the first to write haunted house stories. This scenario uses as much of the energy from *The Shining* as it does from *The Haunting of Hill House*.

The goal here is terror: the awful dread that proceeds the reveal. As Shirley Jackson knew, watching a doorknob turn on a locked door is far more terrifying than what is actually on the

other side. Use the hotel to provide these kinds of events. In moments of pure darkness, describe the sound of something moving toward and away from the players.

For example, put one of the characters alone in a pitch black room. The generators have failed—again—and they sit alone in the dark, trying to make their way toward the door. Halfway through the room, they hear the sound of the door opening... and then closing. No footsteps. Just opening... and closing. Is someone in the room? Dare they ask? And if there is no answer?

Then, the lights come back on. Nobody is there.

The dread of being in the darkened room is far more powerful than any reveal. Use it. The hotel provides a perfect environment for this kind of play. Hotels are designed to be comforting and welcoming. Even familiar. But they are still alien environments full of strangeness and strangers.

You can also use the hotel's size as a weapon. Kubrick did. He almost always shoot the characters from a distance, showing us the enormity of the hotel. You have to do the same thing here. Ballrooms as big as football fields. Bathrooms bigger than apartments. Everything echoes in here. Even the smallest whisper. But the Man in Black's whispers don't echo. They stay right in your ear.

The place is a labyrinth and it is easy to get lost. The set Kubrick used was built from scratch (contrary to popular belief; even the exteriors were built on soundstages) and he used its layout to disorient the viewer. For example, he used windows to fool the viewer into thinking one room was overlooking the outside, when in fact, it was closed in by other rooms. You don't consciously notice it, but your mind still picks it up, gets confused, and can't sort out the geography.

I assume that once the actors begin reading the play, the hotel's geography is up for grabs. Going from one place to another is never the same way twice. The maze changes itself for its own purposes.



Of course, this can get annoying if you handle it like a hammer. Don't prevent characters getting one place to another. Instead, make their journey the piece of horror. How many times will you have to go through *that room* again. The place where you saw the naked man standing in front of the mirror? He's not there now, but he was, and I must *keep running through the room* with the understanding that at any time... he may be there again.

### Temperature

It's freezing. January in Colorado. Everything is cold, cold, cold. Look out the window and it is endless white. You can't see where the sky meets the land. It's just white.

Of course, the cold is a red herring. I emphasized the cold to get the players thinking this would be a survival game. The generators would die and they'd have to find ways from freezing to death. That wasn't where we were going at all, but I planted some ideas in their heads. "If these generators go out..." I'd tell one of them.

At the same time, the space heaters are making everything *hot*. Like walking from a movie theater into a July afternoon in Arizona. Extreme cool to extreme heat. I used that as well. When two of them moved from the hallway into a bedroom, the cold gave way to a hot-hot-hot room. They stripped off their coats and... well, actors are actors. And this crew has enough sexual tension to fry a whole carton of eggs.

### Reading the Play

When the characters sat down to read the play for the first time, I read the part of the Phantom. I told Brennan's player that he did not remember photocopying this page and does not remember it in the play at all. Then, when I was done with the soliloquy, the lights went out.

I told Richard that he should have different actors read different parts. Switch them up. I left it up to the player to cast the roles. However, I also slipped him a note that Sylvia and Julia should both be reading Queen Cassilda's part. Let them switch off between scenes and see how the actresses interpret the role. Let the girls fight.

### The Man in Black

As you isolate characters, introduce them to the Man in Black's latest incarnation, the Phantom of Truth.

When I ran this scenario, I wore my black suit and brought a veil to wear over my head when the Phantom of Truth (Man in Black) showed up. He spoke only in whispers, never letting his voice get too loud. I could remove the veil when the Phantom disappeared, changing between Keeper John and the MiB quickly.

Why is love any different than any other emotion? Hatred fades. Fear fades.

I focused the Man in Black's appearances when the characters were alone, but like the play, he showed up to whisper in their ears. Since the players were familiar with the gimmick in the play, they were familiar with it as their characters as well. If I whispered to them (loud enough for others to hear), they knew their characters were being addressed by him and responded accordingly.

### "This is how it ends..."

This really was the chorus of the piece.

At any appropriate moment, either as Keeper John or the Phantom, the whispered words, "This is how it ends..." were the punctuation of the scene.

When Sylvia snorted the cocaine up her nose...

*This is how it ends...*

When Simon got lost in the halls of the Hotel, hearing the screaming pleas for help from his friends and he could not find his way to help them...

*This is how it ends...*

When Sylvia overdosed and was kicking and thrashing in Roy's arms, blood pouring from her nose, her pulse quickening and weakening...

*This is how it ends...*

And when Sylvia discovered the entire plot was to "save her." A trick. Nothing but a trick to humiliate and deceive her. And she felt the gun in her pocket. Felt its strength. Felt its lethal power as she looked into Richard's eyes...

*This is how it ends...*



## Under Their Skin

Here are the techniques I used for each character, isolating and exploiting their own weaknesses and foibles.

### Richard

*Look at them. Look at them scramble. Look at them tremble. Look at them crumble apart. Your friends. You had such confidence in them. But they are weak. Just bundles of flesh and bone. Just like you. Your plan failed, Richard. You cannot save her. You cannot save her. She is the mad Queen. Looking across the lake to lost Carcosa. And she can see it, Richard. She can see it...*

### Sylvia

When attacking a chain, start with the weakest link.

The coincidences and correspondences with Sylvia and Queen Camilla are not mere chance. Sylvia begins to lose the division between reality and fantasy. She sees the other actors as their roles and addresses them appropriately.

Simon is the Elder.

Roy is the Younger.

Olivia is Camilla.

Julia is her advisor, Naotalba.

And Richard is the ghost of the dead king. Gone. Lost.

Soon enough, if she looks out across the lake, in the rising mists, she can see Carcosa.

The Phantom of Truth (you in a black suit wearing a black veil) make the promise to return her King. But first, she has to be willing to make a sacrifice. You can determine whatever that sacrifice may be. It could be the other actors, it could be Richard himself. The scenario can go many, many ways so exploit the weaknesses your player chooses to emphasize in Sylvia.

### Simon

Simon knows how fragile human beings are. He knows how easily memory can be damaged. Hell, how damaged memory is to begin with. The people around him trivialize their lives with petty minutia. They have no idea how precious life is.

How precious life is. Yes, that's exactly where you hit Simon.

Simon has convinced himself that life is precious and fleeting. Well, he's right about half of that. Precious? How so? Sylvia's lust and drug abuse? Roy's petty indulgences? Julia's peacock preening? These are precious? It's all futile in the end. Show him visions of what happens when he's gone. Show him his wife and his children and how they struggle without him. When the government comes to collect on back taxes. When all of his "friends" ignore them because they were really only interested in being Simon's friends and only tolerated his wife. Poor Betty. Poor Margaret. Poor Shannon. Everything gets taken away. They have no source of income. He's gone and their lives are in ruin. And it's all his fault.

Show him thousands and thousands of lives equally ruined. And then show him the baby in Africa who dies before it is two months old because it has no water to drink. And show him the forty thousand babies who die the same way every year. Forty thousand every year. Because they don't have access to the world's most common resource.

How precious life is.

### Roy

Roy is already decadent and nihilistic; you don't need to push him too far. I use Roy as an example for other characters. In other words, the Man in Black seldom speaks to Roy, but shows Roy's actions to the other actors as an example. Roy will probably be hitting on Olivia, so I show that to Sylvia. And I show Richard the night Roy spent with Sylvia. And I show Julia just what's going through Roy's head when he speaks to her.

This makes Roy the victim of spite, hatred and (often) violence. He's also one of the only actors here who can really take care of himself. Usually, Roy will get himself into trouble with Sylvia and she'll use the gun on him first. Kind of a test case to see if she can really do it when it comes time to pull the trigger on Richard.



## Julia

One of the playtesters had an insight into Julia's character that was so perfect, I wrote it into her background here.

Julia doesn't like mirrors. She drew that from Julia's "ugly duckling" past. She spent her first few minutes in her room turning all the mirrors away. Later, when she chased Sylvia into the bathroom, I shut off the hand light in the middle of their conversation. I then reminded Julia about the game they used to play. You know the one. "Bloody Mary."

Very slowly, I described the memory from childhood. Alone in the dark with two friends, you closed your eyes and said the words over and over again. "I believe in Bloody Mary. I believe in Bloody Mary. I believe in Bloody Mary." I had the player shut her eyes and say the words. Then, I crept up on her, shone the light on my face and made the most unnatural features I could. The effect was very satisfying.

Using mirrors with Julia is an opportunity for all kinds of horror and creepiness. Seeing people behind her that are not there. Seeing people standing next to her looking at her with their "true faces." Holding knives. Bleeding from wounds. Exploit them as you will.

## Olivia

When Olivia was alone in her bedroom (getting towels to wipe up the blood), she exited the bathroom into the bedroom and saw a naked man lying on her bed. His beauty was almost inhuman. He smiled at her and said, "Sister. Come back to bed. It is getting cold."

Just that scene alone was enough to creep out Olivia's player. Just being that close to incest made her skin crawl.

## I'm Dead. Now What?

*Just because a character is dead doesn't mean they're out of the picture. Take the player aside and explain what's going on. From this moment on, they really are the character they're supposed to be portraying in the play. It's their job to freak out and frighten the other players.*

## Colorado Weekly

### ACTORS AND DIRECTOR REPORTEDLY FOUND DEAD IN INFAMOUS HOTEL

CARLSON, Colo. — Richard Brennan, director, actor and star, and many others may have been found dead in the Glennwood Grand Hotel last night. Police reported to the scene early in the morning after hunters reported strange sounds and lights coming from the hotel.

Thomas Donnelly, a local hunter, said he and his brother Jeff were in the area hunting deer when they heard the sound of gunshots coming from the direction of the hotel. The two hunters approached and saw what they believed to be a fire in the windows. They said they also heard many people screaming. They notified police using their cellular phones.

Hours later, emergency crews removed what appeared to be bodies from the hotel. How many bodies and exactly who was involved in the incident is still uncertain, but contacts within the police department confirm that famous director Richard Brennan was involved and may be dead.

Another victim may be his ex-wife Sylvia Brennan (nee Silver) and other actors associated with Brennan's work. Details are still forthcoming. Brennan's publicist would not comment on the tragedy.



ARCHIMEDES 7  
THIS IS HOUSTON  
PLEASE RESPOND.

LAST  
TRANSMISSION  
GARBLED PLEASE  
VERIFY.

PLEASE VERIFY  
YELLOW SIGN?

ARCHIMEDES 7  
THIS IS HOUSTON  
PLEASE RESPOND.



At the turn of the century  
In an abandoned hotel  
In the dead darkness of winter  
Six sit to read a cursed play

One thinks of murder  
Another thinks of power  
One thinks of hope  
Another thinks of sex  
One is losing his mind  
And the last just wants to end  
her pain

None of them are prepared.

They are about to call the King...

Calling the King is a *Call of  
Cthulhu* scenario for six players.

It will remove all your illusions.  
About life.  
About love.  
About hope.

You are not prepared.

