

CALL of CTHULHU®

DOES LOVE? FORGIVE ♡

ONE-TO-ONE SCENARIOS FOR CALL OF CTHULHU



Lynne Hardy, Airis Kamińska,
Anna Maria Mazur, and Friends



DOES LOVE? FORGIVE ♥

TWO ONE-TO-ONE SCENARIOS FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Lynne Hardy,
Airis Kamińska,
Anna Maria Mazur,
and Friends



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Clear Credit

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This supplement is best used with the *Call of Cthulhu* (7th Edition) roleplaying game, with either the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set* or the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, both available separately.

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KEY FOR SCENARIO RATINGS

Difficulty Level

Very easy ★, Easy ★★, Medium ★★★, Hard ★★★★, Very hard ★★★★★

Estimated number of game sessions: ①②③④

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Does Love Forgive?* This is a collection of one-to-one scenarios for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. Usually, *Call of Cthulhu* is played with one Keeper and between two to six investigators. Sometimes, though, it can be hard to get a group of players together, so the scenarios in this collection have been specifically designed for just two people: one Keeper and one player-investigator.

Each of the scenarios can be played over the course of one session, although the Keeper may wish to expand the adventures (based on the investigator's actions), or create their own follow on adventures. While the first scenario, *Love You to Death*, is tied to a historical Valentine's Day event in Chicago, the other scenario, *Mask of Desire*, can be moved to a different location and, potentially, a different time period other than the one specified, and advice is provided for how to handle such moves.

The scenarios are one-shot standalones and not designed to be linked together in a mini-campaign or to be used as sidetracks in an ongoing campaign. A determined Keeper could do so if they wished, although this would require some work on their part to make the scenarios fit together.

In terms of rules, the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set* or the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook* can be used to run these adventures. Both are suitable for Keepers and players of any level of experience, and guidance is provided throughout to help less experienced Keepers support their player during each game. The scenarios build in complexity, as indicated by the number of stars each one has been assigned: 1 star (*Love You to Death*) means that it's a straightforward scenario, while two stars (*Mask of Desire*) means it's a bit more complex and the Keeper will need to improvise more around the basic plot. Advice and guidance is given on creating investigators for each scenario, as well as how existing investigators might be adapted to fit.

LOVE STORY?

Originally, these scenarios were released in Poland by Black Monk Games for February 14th, 2020. Unsurprisingly, the loose connecting motif is love, in one form or another. By their very nature, one-to-one scenarios tend to be a more intense experience than games involving larger groups, so there are some extra considerations to take into account when running and playing them, especially with that underlying theme.

Depending on the nature of their out-of-character relationship, the player may feel uncomfortable roleplaying romantic or highly emotionally-charged scenes with their Keeper, and vice versa. The Keeper should discuss any potentially problematical plot elements with their player as, depending on their own or their player's personal past experiences, one or other of them may not be comfortable with the nature of some of the non-player characters' (NPCs') behavior toward the investigator, or certain elements of the plot in general. Regardless of the reason, the Keeper and player should discuss any concerns they have before the game session begins in earnest to establish boundaries and consent for each scenario. Even if the player doesn't raise any concerns, it is the Keeper's duty of care throughout each game to make sure that the player still agrees with the way the story is progressing.

If the player is not comfortable with any aspect of their investigator's relationships with the various NPCs, or how those relationships are used in the plot, the Keeper should work with them until they are. If the player is uncomfortable with any plot element, for whatever reason, either before or during the game, the Keeper must respect their wishes and, as necessary, change or draw a veil over a particular scene. It works the other way, too—the player should not insist on focusing on elements that are uncomfortable or distressing for their Keeper. The idea of the game is to have fun and respecting each other's wishes is key to that experience.

SUPPORT NETWORK

One of the main differences in one-to-one play is that the investigator has a relatively limited range of skills at their disposal for investigating the mystery at the heart of each scenario. In games with multiple players, an investigator without a particular skill isn't necessarily a problem, as someone else in the group will (most likely) be able to cover that shortfall. Combat is also more fraught with danger in a one-to-one game, as the investigator is the sole focus of an aggressor's attention and can easily be outnumbered if there is more than one assailant involved.

Even though these are both one-to-one scenarios, it's important to remember that the investigator is not alone. Each scenario has NPCs the investigator can call on for support as the story progresses, be that in terms of specialist expertise—such as Prof. Nienart in *Mask of Desire*—or just in terms of muscle power—such as Officer Cicharski in *Love You to Death*. How helpful each NPC may be depends on the investigator's relationship with them. Hints and advice are provided in the roleplaying hooks section of each character's Dramatis Personae entry.

There should always be someone who can help the investigator, though, as it's no fun for either the player or the Keeper to have the story flounder for want of the right skill or some much needed back up. Of course, there might be a price for asking for that assistance, one the investigator may or may not end up regretting in the end.

USING LUCK

Advice is given in the **Creating the Investigator** sections of each scenario about how to build or adapt an investigator so they "fit" the story being played. One of the last things the player will need to do before a scenario begins is to determine their investigator's Luck value. To do so, have them roll 3D6 and multiply the result by 5, and then circle the appropriate number in the Luck box on their investigator sheet.

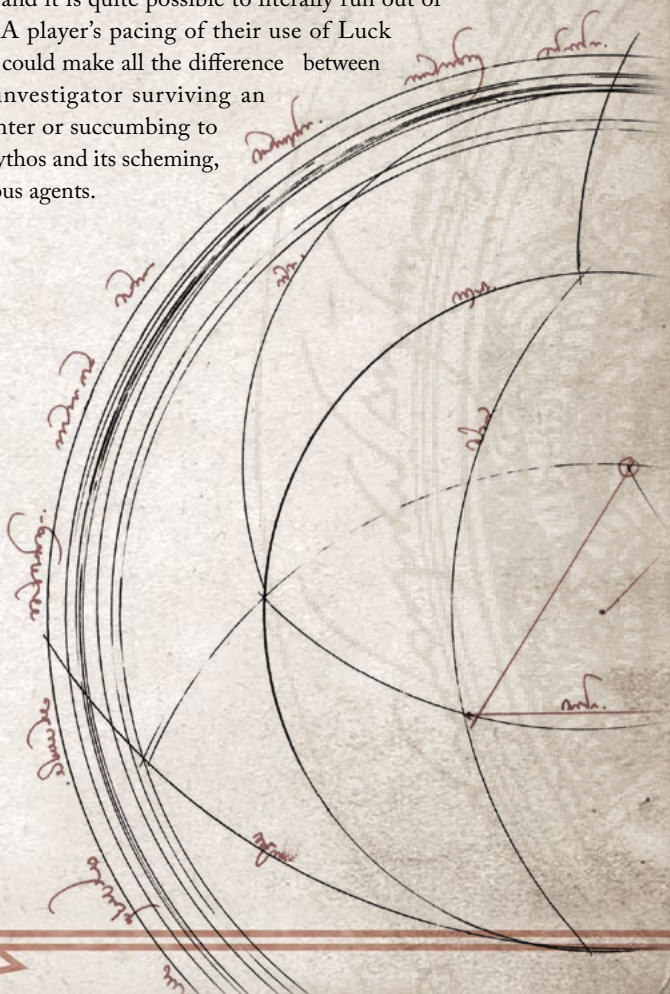
We recommend using the optional **Spending Luck** rules (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 99) when running the two scenarios in *Does Love Forgive?* Not only do they help to overcome poor dice rolls but they also help to keep up the story's forward momentum—especially important if you have only a single investigator and plan on playing each scenario through in a single session. We've briefly outlined these rules below for those using the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*, if you'd like to give them a try.

So, besides the Keeper calling for a Luck roll to determine if the investigator is affected by the fickle hand of fate, when using the Luck spending rules, the player can also cash in their Luck points to adjust certain dice rolls. Most commonly, Luck points are used to change a failure into a success, but they can also be spent to alter the degree of success as well (from a Regular to a Hard success, or from a Hard to an Extreme

success). To adjust a skill roll (but not a Sanity roll or Luck roll), the player "burns" Luck points, spending the amount necessary to turn that unfortunate failure into a success (or an increased level of success). For example, if an investigator has Spot Hidden 45% but rolls 49 (a failure), their player could spend 4 Luck points to adjust the roll to 45 (making it a success). Whatever it was, be it a crucial clue or someone trying to sneak up on them, they've now spotted it and can act accordingly.

The only limit on Luck spending is the amount of current Luck held by the investigator—a player should always be aware that if they're asked to make a Luck roll later in the game, they'll be rolling against that new lower value, not the original one! Depending on the circumstances, a player may decide to take the bad roll and save their Luck for a later, potentially more crucial, encounter. The Keeper should also be kind and advise the player whether it's worth spending Luck or not to improve a particular roll's degree of success. As these are one-off scenarios, the rules for regenerating Luck don't apply as each new investigator starts afresh with their own independent Luck score.

Finally, Luck points cannot be used to adjust a pushed or fumbled roll, a weapon malfunction, damage rolls, Sanity rolls (or rolls to determine how much Sanity is lost), or, obviously, Luck rolls! Spending Luck to adjust rolls is a double-edged sword and it is quite possible to literally run out of Luck. A player's pacing of their use of Luck points could make all the difference between their investigator surviving an encounter or succumbing to the Mythos and its scheming, nefarious agents.





LOVE YOU TO DEATH

In which the investigator must deal with a difficult relationship from their past

Designed for a Keeper and a single player. Set in Chicago on February 15th, 1929—one day after the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre—this is a story about true friendship, unrequited love, and gangsters, where not everything is what it seems. The investigator is a private detective who has connections with both the police and the local underworld. Unlike the other scenario in this book, this one would be difficult to move to another time or place, so we suggest leaving it where it is.

KEEPER INFORMATION

The following sections provide some guidance on helping the player create their investigator for this scenario, as well as full background details on the nefarious plot their childhood friend, Hattie May, is about to become the victim of.

CREATING THE INVESTIGATOR

The investigator should be a private investigator based in Chicago, and between 23 and 26 years of age. If using the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*, the Private Investigator occupation template can be found on page 9 of **Book Two**. If using the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, the occupation template is on page 41. The investigator can be any gender of the player's choosing. Three key skills for the player to invest points in for this scenario are a social skill (particularly Charm, Persuade, or Intimidate), Psychology, and Spot Hidden. Other useful skills include Listen and Stealth.

You could also use a pre-existing investigator, as long as their background hasn't been too rigidly defined—otherwise it might be difficult to link them to Hattie May (née James) and give them a reason to become involved in the events that are to follow.

The Investigator's Childhood

The details of the investigator's childhood and their relationship with Hattie May and Ellen O'Sullivan are described in **Handout: Love 1**, which should be given to the player as soon as they reach the backstory part of character creation. They should also be given **Handout: Love 2** once they've had the opportunity to read over the first handout and made any notes they want to on their investigator sheet. Later in the investigation, this second handout provides a clue to where the ritual is taking place, as well as what that ritual might be (see **The Last Witchcraft Meeting**, page 19).

Keeper note: the nature of Ellen O'Sullivan's behavior toward the investigator may be uncomfortable for either the Keeper or the player (or both) to deal with and should be discussed before play begins as described in the **Love Story?** section on page 4. Only when both sides are happy with the way this relationship will be handled should play proceed any further.

Keeper note: Ellen is convinced that the investigator's relationship with Hattie was the reason the investigator rejected her all those years ago. This may, indeed, be the case, depending on the player's wishes. Perhaps the investigator was in love with Hattie at the time, and perhaps the pair did have a romantic relationship after Ellen left that subsequently faded prior to Hattie's marriage to John May. Or, were the investigator's feeling for Hattie also unrequited? Did Hattie even know about the investigator's love for her, or was it something they kept secret, fearing they would be rejected the same way they'd rejected Ellen? Then again, perhaps the pair's friendship has always been purely platonic, with the deep bond between them more like the one often shared by siblings.

CHAPTER I

Handout: Love 1

You grew up in an orphanage. It was a tough life but one you managed to survive, in large part due to your friendship with another of the orphans: a young girl called Hattie James. Whenever you got yourself into a scrape, Hattie was always there to stand up for you, be it against the staff or your fellow orphans—as she is older than you, she had more respect among the other children than you did. In your eyes, Hattie was always brave and self-confident, and you looked up to her.

One of your favorite games when you were younger was playing “riddles,” word games that you used to write down and hide behind a loose tile near the bathtub. Hattie was always better at this game than you, and always used to tease you about it. In a kind-hearted way, of course—Hattie was never mean to you.

You remember the day Hattie shared her big secret with you—she'd found a litter of puppies in an abandoned building near the orphanage and was taking care of them. This shared confidence brought you even closer together, and you would sneak off to see the puppies whenever you got the chance. One day, however, you weren't careful enough, and without you realizing, one of the orphanage's staff members noticed you going out and followed you. Luckily, another orphan, Ellen O'Sullivan, got ahead of you and warned you of the danger. Ellen was an Irish girl, younger than both of you, who always stuck close to you and Hattie, but up until then had always been too shy to make friends with you both. Thanks to her intervention, the staff member didn't learn about the puppies and you avoided any consequences for your illicit trips. From that moment, the three of you became practically inseparable.

However, all good things must come to an end, and as you grew older, Ellen fell in love with you, but you could not reciprocate that love. Heartbroken by your rejection, she told you that she never wanted to see you or Hattie (who she seemed to blame, too, for some reason) ever again. Soon Ellen was adopted, which made the situation less awkward for you and Hattie, as Ellen had refused all attempts to repair your broken friendship. Not long after her adoption, Ellen started writing letters to you, but did not give a return address. In fact, she still writes to you every now and again, with the latest letter arriving a couple of weeks ago. You're not sure how she knows where you live, but presumably she looked you up in the city's directory.

You still have a faded photograph of the three of you, taken when you were around 12 or 13 years old, in pride of place in your office. Although you haven't seen or spoken to Ellen since she left the orphanage, your friendship with Hattie stood the test of time, even after she married her sweetheart, John May. You see her as often as you can, work permitting.

LOVE YOU TO DEATH

Handout: Love 2

January 12th, 1929

My Love!

This time I'm writing to you from Chicago. I know you still live here and I hope we will be able to meet one day. I can see that famous old water tower from the windows of my apartment and I admire how it's lit up by the setting sun.

Today was a cloudless and beautiful day, so I could even spot part of the shore from my special high perch up on the roof. No one (but you) knows I come up here. The janitor wouldn't be pleased if he did, he's such a fussbudget—just like our old Director at the orphanage! Do you remember him?

Someday, I would like to share every sunrise and sunset with you. Our lives would then be filled with all the splendid colors of the sky and our love would become everlasting.

Be sure I think about you every day, and know that I plan our next meeting every chance I get. I think I'll be able to make our paths not only cross very soon but also lead in the same direction! You may no longer recognize me as the woman I was, but deep down, it will still be me.

Look forward to more news from me, my Darling.

*Forever yours,
Ellen*



MEMORIES

If the player is comfortable with their investigator's unrequited or lapsed romantic relationship with Hattie (if relevant) and/or Ellen's twisted romantic infatuation with them, then the Keeper might wish—with the player's consent—to involve the investigator in a “flashback” scene to illustrate their past relationship with either—or both—of the women. Such scenes could, potentially, include their care of the puppies, a memory of Hattie and the investigator standing up for Ellen against bullies, or the two girls helping the investigator face some sort of childhood challenge.



The Investigator's Connections

There are two other very useful people the player needs to add to their investigator's backstory before they finish character creation: Officer Bart Cicharski of the Chicago Police Department and Billy “Little Comb” Brock, a baby-faced member of Chicago's criminal fraternity. **Handout:** **Love 3** gives the player the brief details they need. For more information on both characters, see the **Dramatis Personae** section (page 11).

ELLEN'S SCHEME

Ellen O'Sullivan never forgot that the investigator rejected her teenaged declaration of undying love. After she was spurned, Ellen brooded over it for years, her feelings slowly but surely shifting from love to an unhealthy infatuation. Even now, she writes letters to the investigator to make sure they don't forget

her, and has developed a plan she is convinced will allow her to win their heart once and for all.

Ellen was always interested in the supernatural and was convinced that she possessed genuine magical powers. After she was adopted, Ellen started exploring various occult tomes and even managed to successfully teach herself a spell or two. This brought her to the attention of Yvonne LaCour—a diviner and close friend of Ellen's adopted family—who recognized Ellen's burgeoning talents.

LaCour took Ellen under her wing and taught her not only genuine occult practices but also how to make a good living from the bored and wealthy ladies that were LaCour's main clientele. These women enjoyed LaCour's divinations and treated them as an exotic form of entertainment; for her part, LaCour considered them easy money. Ellen adopted the pseudonym “Máiréad” and started to call herself a mystic, establishing her own customer base, although on a far smaller scale than her mentor.

After several years, when LaCour became dissatisfied with her aging body, she decided to transfer her mind to a younger vessel: Ellen. Not realizing that she was the intended target of LaCour's scheme, Ellen dutifully set about helping her mentor set up the ritual. When the truth finally dawned on Ellen, she proved more than a match for the older woman, and succeeded in fighting off LaCour's spirit and casting it adrift in the endless void.

Once she had recovered from the shock of LaCour's betrayal, Ellen realized that the mind transferal ritual could be the very thing she needed to secure the investigator's affections. Burning with renewed energy, she hunted through LaCour's tomes of occult lore until she found the spell she needed—Mind Transfer (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 260). Ellen plans to use the ritual to relocate her mind into the body which, according to her twisted logic, will help her conquer the investigator's heart: Hattie's.

The Divination Sessions

In order to execute her plan, Ellen moved back to Chicago and set about getting close to Hattie. Knowing that Hattie had

Officer Bart Cicharski: you've known Bart ever since you began working as a private eye. For all his rough edges, Cicharski is a good and honest cop—something of a rarity in Chicago. You've helped each other out many times in the past, and you know you can rely on him.

Billy “Little Comb” Brock: you meet all sorts in your line of work, some good, some bad. Billy's not a bad apple at heart, but he got in with the wrong crowd at a young age and bought into the whole “romance” of being a hoodlum. It would've gotten him killed if you hadn't been there to pull him out of the fire, so he owes you. Billy seems to know everyone in the Chicago underworld, which makes him a very useful contact.

married John May, an associate of the North Side Gang (see **The Saint Valentine's Day Massacre**, page 13), Ellen organized numerous divination sessions, mainly inviting women connected to the city's mobsters. Aware that Hattie might recognize her, even after all this time, Ellen dyed her red hair black and wore a finely woven veil over her face during the meetings, completing her transformation into "the mystic Máiréad." This change of appearance also had the added benefit of making her look even more mysterious for her clientele.

The mobsters' wives who attended the divination sessions treated them as a curiosity. They reveled in the mysterious atmosphere and the feeling that they were taking part in something magical and possibly risqué. Through her alter ego, Ellen earned the women's trust by employing real magic (using the **Augury** spell, page 23) to foretell several minor events, and so her reputation spread. Hattie, who was trying to fit in with the gangsters' wives for her husband's sake, eventually felt she could no longer refuse an invitation to a "fortune telling" session, even though it wasn't something she was normally interested in.

Initially, the mystic intended to bide her time and worm her way closer to the unsuspecting Hattie before attempting to use the **Mental Suggestion** spell (page 23) to coerce her into coming to the apartment building on Michigan Avenue (where she planned to carry out the mind transfer ritual). However, it was clear to Ellen after their first meeting that Hattie was reluctant and not that interested in the fortune telling. Not knowing how many more opportunities she might have left before Hattie stopped coming, Ellen decided to make her move at the next divination session, casting the Mental Suggestion spell at Hattie. Somehow, though, Hattie managed to resist, and left the meeting feeling very unsettled and with a pounding headache. Thus, Hattie vowed never to attend again.

A Friend in Need

While Ellen tried to influence Hattie, someone else at that meeting also noticed that all was not what it seemed. Lucille Moran, wife of John May's boss, George "Bugs" Moran, realized that Ellen had attempted to exert a malign influence over Hattie, although for what purpose, she couldn't begin to guess. Regardless, it couldn't be good. Concerned for her friend's safety, Lucille visited Hattie the next day and brought her a gift: a small, pure silver ankh pendant, which she claimed had protective powers. She also gave Hattie a magical dagger—a *khanjar* (**Meeting Lucille Moran**, page 17).

Lucille warned Hattie that she feared someone had designs on her life, and that she should wear the amulet at all times and keep the dagger close at hand. "*You can use it to protect yourself not only against people,*" she added, somewhat cryptically. Hattie thanked her friend, but didn't take the matter too seriously. Yes, she'd had misgivings after that second divination session, but, following a good night's rest, she'd convinced herself she'd just been letting her imagination run riot. After all, who could possibly want to harm her?

After Lucille left, Hattie attached the amulet to her pet dog, Highball's, collar. The German shepherd seemed pleased with his collar's new ornament and, in the event that she really did need a good luck charm, then it would at least be close by as she rarely went anywhere during the day without her beloved pet by her side (and he slept at the foot of her bed every night).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Hattie May (née James), age 27, close friend since childhood

The investigator's oldest friend. Hattie married John May when she was still quite young—it was love at first sight and they didn't want to wait. John is—sorry, was—a car mechanic working for "the Mob." Hattie was determined to be a good wife and, for John's sake, tried to fit in with the other gangsters' wives. She and John never had kids, but John, knowing her love of dogs, bought her a German shepherd puppy six years ago. They named him Highball.

- **Description:** formerly a good-looking brunette with a sparkle in her green eyes. Now, following her husband's death, she seems much older and that sparkle is gone.
- **Traits:** supportive, brave, and loyal, but her former self-confidence has evaporated overnight.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** she appeals to the investigator for help in retrieving her pet dog, Highball—an event that brings the investigator into the scenario.

Highball, age 6, faithful companion

Hattie's beloved pet dog, currently incarcerated by the Chicago Police Department.

- **Description:** a robust German shepherd, with brown and black coloring and soulful brown eyes, Highball wears a wide leather collar that bears a metal plate inscribed with his name. A silver ankh dangles from a metal ring on the collar.
- **Traits:** intelligent, loyal, and a good judge of character.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** as with most dogs, Highball can use his keen sense of smell to detect something interesting, which can lead the investigator to somewhere important to the plot if they are struggling to uncover the clues. Due to the protective effects of the amulet he wears, Highball may also be able to keep the investigator safe from accidents or attacks, if they are close enough (with a successful **Luck** roll). Once the investigator rescues Highball, the dog does everything he can to stay with the investigator, until finally returning to his mistress.

Officer Bart Cicharski, age 32, honest cop

Cicharski is one of only a handful of incorruptible cops in Chicago; he doesn't compromise when it comes to dealing with the moral aspects of his job. The investigator and Officer Cicharski have exchanged numerous tips and leads in the past, and both know that their relationship is mutually beneficial for their work. Besides which, they simply happen to like each other.

- **Description:** average size and build, with a grizzled, careworn appearance, despite his relative youth. Cicharski has a rough goatee and mustache and wears thick-rimmed spectacles.
- **Traits:** Cicharski may seem a little coarse and bitter on first acquaintance, but he's actually a decent guy who appreciates life's little ironies.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** one of the police officers working on the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre case right from the outset, Cicharski interrogated Frank Gusenberg before his death in hospital, so he can fill the investigator in on the details (**Handout: Love 4**). If the investigator asks for help, Cicharski is willing to support them and, with a little convincing (a successful social skill roll or simply pointing out that a dear friend is in danger), he will even accompany them to the site of Ellen's ritual (**The Last Witchcraft Meeting**, page 19).

Billy "Little Comb" Brock, age 15, baby-faced tough guy

Billy is a friendly young gangster who owes his life to the investigator, so is more than happy to repay them with the odd favor now and again. The young crook is a regular at **Dorothy's Diner** (page 17), a place with decent coffee and delicious cakes. Looking at Billy, it's easy to tell how much he loves eating them.

- **Description:** a plump young fellow with a round face and blue eyes. His blond curly hair completes the image of a little cherub. Billy constantly tries to comb his unmanageable curls back with brilliantine; that's how he got himself the nickname "Little Comb."
- **Traits:** flirty and cheerful, but not afraid to do what has to be done.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** although young, Billy already has good connections in the Chicago underworld, meaning he can get the investigator a meeting with Lucille Moran, should they want one. He is also willing to accompany the investigator to rescue Hattie, as long as Officer Cicharski isn't there as well.

Lucille Moran, age 29, mobster's wife

Of Turkish descent, Lucille is the second wife of North Side Gang leader, George "Bugs" Moran, and mother of his eight-year old son, John George Moran. Like many of the other

mobsters' wives, she considers her husband to be a good man and tries not to think too hard about his illegal activities.

- **Description:** average height and build, with fashionably-styled dark hair. She is always immaculately dressed, as befits her high-ranking status.
- **Traits:** cautious with strangers, prone to impatience, and very concerned about not only her husband's life, but also Hattie's.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Lucille is worried about the potential use of magic against her friend, Hattie, hence her protective gifts (**A Friend in Need**, page 11). If the investigator goes to see Lucille, she can provide them with the final clues they need to track down Ellen and, hopefully, save Hattie's life. But, they'll have to go through Billy Brock first, as Lucille is widely known not to encourage visits from strangers.

Ellen O'Sullivan (aka Mystic Máiréad), age 23, a woman scorned

The investigator's former childhood friend, now masquerading as a mystic for the wives of Chicago's gangsters.

- **Description:** slightly built and quite attractive. Like Hattie, she has sparkling green eyes, but the glint in them is frequently cold and malicious. Her former red hair has been dyed black to help disguise her identity.
- **Traits:** deluded, determined, and dangerous.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Ellen's refusal to accept the investigator's rejection when they were teenagers sets off the chain of events that leads them to a difficult reunion.

START: A PLEA FOR HELP

Keeper note: it's Friday, February 15th, 1929. Yesterday, seven men, most of them members of the notorious North Side Gang, were gunned down in a garage on North Clark Street (**The Saint Valentine's Day Massacre**, page 13). The gory details of the murders are splashed across the city's newspapers, and rumors abound as to who carried out the hit. There's even some suspicion that the police might have been involved.

It is a calm, wintry morning in Chicago. Suddenly, there is a knock on the investigator's office door. When the door opens, a tearful Hattie May stands before the investigator and asks if she can speak to them on a matter of some urgency. Provided the investigator lets her in, the moment the door closes behind her, a heartbroken and very emotional Hattie pours her heart out to her oldest friend.

Although the investigator has undoubtedly heard or read about the murders on North Clark Street, the names of the victims haven't yet been released by the press, so Hattie's revelation that her husband, John, is among the dead comes as something of a shock. Hattie knew about his connections to the North Side Gang, but, as he was not a full gang member, she

had believed he was not in deep enough to attract undesirable attention.

That's not all, though—not only was her husband shot dead, but her beloved German shepherd Highball was taken from the scene by the police. If the investigator asks, it was unusual for her husband to take Highball to the garage but, that day, for some reason, the dog wouldn't let John out of his sight. The Chicago Police Department are refusing to give Hattie her pet back because, when the real police arrived after the shooting, Highball became aggressive and attempted to bite several of the responding officers. Hattie can't understand the dog's sudden change of behavior—for the most part, he's always been such a friendly animal, even with strangers. When she went to the station to collect Highball, the desk clerk refused to let her see the dog and told her they were planning on putting him down very soon.

Hattie is desperate to get Highball back and begs for the investigator's help. She knows they have connections to local law enforcement (Officer Bart Cicharski; **Dramatis Personae**, page 12), which she hopes they'll be able to use to return her pet to her. As soon as the investigator agrees to help, she takes off her silk scarf and gives it to them, saying to take it to Highball so he can sniff it and be comforted by her smell. She also gives the investigator a photograph of her and Highball, in case the police want proof they're not just trying to steal the dog; his name plate is clearly visible in the picture.

Satisfied that the investigator has the matter in hand, Hattie tells them she has to go back to her apartment (1144 West Belmont Avenue, apartment No 5.) to gather the necessary documents to complete the formalities regarding John's death. She says she will wait for them there.

Hattie's Secret

A successful **Psychology** roll during their meeting reveals that Hattie is hiding something from the investigator. Of course, it might just be the trauma of John's violent death, but if pressed, Hattie claims she's afraid that she won't be able to cope if she should lose both her husband and her dog in such short order. She reminds the investigator that they know how much she's always loved dogs (**Handout: Love 1**), and Highball is all she really has left to remind her of her husband. Besides, he's good company—and good protection, which she feels she needs, now she's on her own.

The underlying reason for Hattie's fear, one she will not divulge to the investigator, is that she's become convinced somebody's watching her, meaning Lucille might have been right about someone wishing her harm. And, if Lucille was right about that, there may also be some truth in the amulet being able to protect against harm, especially as Highball escaped the shooting completely uninjured. While Hattie is worried that involving the investigator might risk their safety, she hopes their role will end when she gets Highball back, so there's really no need for them to know about her, or Lucille's, suspicions.



THE SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

The Cause

The attack was aimed at George "Bugs" Moran, the leader of the Irish criminal North Side Gang. Although never proved, the killers were, in all probability, sent by Al Capone (of the Italian South Side Gang) to eliminate his main rival. Unfortunately, the assassins failed to carry out their task. Due to a similarity in build and clothing, the shooters mistook fellow North Sider Albert Weinshank for Moran and attacked before their main target entered the garage at 2122 North Clark Street.

The Victims


Five of the victims were fully-paid up members of the North Side Gang: Albert Kachellek, Adam Heyer, Albert Weinshank, Peter Gusenberg, and Frank Gusenberg—the only person to survive the shooting; he was transported to hospital but died three hours later without giving the police any useful information. There were two other people in the garage that day: Reinhardt Schwimmer (an optician who, although a known gang associate, was possibly an innocent victim) and John May (a young car mechanic working for the gang).

The Killers

There is still some doubt as to the killers' actual identities, but one thing is known: there were four men, two of whom were dressed as policemen, while the other two were wearing plain clothes. Among the suspects were gunmen Fred Burke, Gus Winkler, Fred Goetz, and Ray Nugent (**Handout: Love 5**).

The Massacre

Lulled into a false sense of security by the police uniforms worn by two of the killers, "Bugs" Moran's people offered no resistance—the gangsters expected to be arrested and released on bail the next day, as had happened many times before; however, after being lined up facing the wall, they were shot dead by the gunmen with two Tommy guns and a rifle. Then, the two men dressed as the policemen led their accomplices out in handcuffs, so it looked as if the police had managed to arrest someone after a shoot-out. The whole thing had been carefully staged to look, from a distance, like another police action aimed at bootlegging mobsters.



CHAPTER I

Keeper note: if the investigator insists on taking Hattie home before going to the **Police Station** (following) to retrieve Highball, Ellen waits until they've left to launch her attack (**Hattie's Disappearance**, page 16).

The Low Down

The key points for the investigator to note from Hattie's visit are:

- Hattie was widowed as a result of the gang-related shoot-out yesterday.
- Her much-loved pet dog, Highball, is going to be put down by the Chicago Police Department if the investigator doesn't help.
- Highball is usually a very friendly animal.
- Hattie is afraid for some reason, which might be linked to her husband's death and her missing dog.
- The investigator should return Highball to Hattie at her apartment on West Belmont Avenue as soon as they've retrieved the dog.

cheap cigarettes, and old papers. Among the many familiar faces, they see their friend, Officer Cicharski (**Dramatis Personae**, page 12). Cicharski knows Highball is being kept in one of the holding cells downstairs, so he can take the investigator to the right place when asked.

Cicharski also has the low down on the circumstances surrounding John May's death. If the investigator asks their friend what he knows about the killings, a successful **Charm** or **Persuade** roll convinces Cicharski to share both Frank Gusenberg's statement (**Handout: Love 4**) and a list of massacre victims and current suspects (**Handout: Love 5**).

Releasing Highball

As Officer Cicharski said, Highball is currently locked in a cage in one of the station's holding cells. He is very agitated and growls aggressively whenever a uniformed police officer comes too close. The dog reacts to the investigator with great excitement as soon as they enter the room—he can smell Hattie's scent on them and on the silk scarf she gave them. After a good sniff of the scarf, the dog calm down and obeys the investigator.

Cicharski clearly doesn't want Highball to be put down and gladly gives him to the investigator if they can prove they're acting on the owner's behalf—the photograph Hattie gave the investigator is more than enough evidence for him.

Keeper note: Hattie is right about Highball being a very friendly animal, a fact which becomes obvious once the investigator removes him from the police station. Understandably, having witnessed his master being gunned down and been shot at himself by men in police uniforms, the dog reacted badly when yet more police officers arrived at the garage and tried to haul him away.



THE POLICE STATION

The investigator's main objective is to get Highball back from the police. Fortunately, the investigator is a frequent visitor to this particular station house, so they know their way around. When they arrive at the station, they can smell the all too familiar scents of burned coffee,

Handout: Love 5

Victims: Frank Gusenberg, Peter Gusenberg, Adam Heyer, Albert Kachellek, John May, Reinhardt Schwimmer, Albert Weinsbank.

Suspects: Al Capone, Jack "Machine Gun" McGurn, Fred Burke, Gus Winkler, Fred Goetz (aka "Shotgun" George Ziegler), Ray Nugent, Claude Maddox.

LOVE YOU TO DEATH

Handout: Love 4

Statement taken by: B. Cicharski
Witness: Frank Gusenberg
Place: Provident Hospital of Cook County,
room No. 27
Date: February 14th, 1929

Despite suffering from 14 gunshot wounds, Mr. Gusenberg initially claimed that no one had opened fire on him. When his level of painkillers was reduced, it was possible to gain limited information concerning the course of events. The victims were in the buildings at 2122 North Clark Street. Two men dressed in police uniforms and armed with submachine guns entered the property and ordered the occupants to line up facing the wall, under the pretext of arresting them. The witness many times emphasized that a German shepherd dog, also present in the building, started to bark as soon as the killers entered the garage. He claimed that the attackers took several shots at the dog. The animal initially appeared to have been killed, but "revived" after the gunmen left the building, and was apparently unharmed. The witness did not give any information that could be helpful during the investigation.

Signed by
Officer Bartholomew Cicharski, Chicago P.D.



HATTIE'S DISAPPEARANCE

Having secured Highball's release, the investigator undoubtedly heads off toward Hattie's apartment, keen to reunite her with her pet. When the investigator reaches Hattie's apartment, they find that her front door is ajar. There's no sign of Hattie inside, but no apparent evidence of a break in. While it's possible Hattie might have headed out again, depending on how long it took the investigator to fetch Highball, the fact that there's no note saying where she's gone and how long she'll be is a little odd, especially as she was expecting them.

Hattie's purse lies open on the floor beside a writing desk. Sticking out of the purse is a dagger of some sort. A successful **Appraise**, **History**, or **Hard Know** roll identifies the dagger as an Ottoman *khanjar* with a 6-inch (15-cm) curved blade; its hilt is decorated with floral designs, and a large ruby is embedded in the pommel. The *khanjar*'s sheath is made of leather—fine work but lacking any embellishments. A successful **Occult** roll reveals that such blades are often enchanted for use against demons and otherworldly creatures.

If the investigator decides to search Hattie's apartment, a successful **Spot Hidden** roll leads them to a loose tile near the bathtub—this should prompt childhood memories of the riddles game they used to play with Hattie (**Handout: Love 1**). Removing the tile reveals there is a folded piece of paper hidden behind it (**Handout: Love 6**), which contains two riddles written by Hattie for the investigator, and left for them in case Lucille's concerns proved to be well-founded.

If the investigator doesn't begin to search the apartment after finding the *khanjar*, then Highball sniffs around in search of his mistress and, after a little while, starts to bark. If the investigator ignores him, the dog gently but firmly pulls them toward the bathroom by grasping an appropriate

article of clothing in his teeth (e.g. a trouser leg, skirt hem, or jacket sleeve). As soon as he reaches the bathtub, Highball lies down and looks expectantly up at the investigator. If the investigator tries to walk away without searching the room, Highball tries to stop them. Hopefully, the dog's fascination with the bathtub brings to mind their childhood games (if needed, a successful **INT** roll recalls the memory), and a **Spot Hidden** roll with a bonus die (thanks to Highball's fixed staring) should hopefully now lead them to the loose tile and the hidden riddles.

The investigator immediately recognizes Hattie's handwriting, rushed and messy though it is. If the player has difficulty figuring out the answers for themselves, the Keeper can ask them to make an **INT** roll with a bonus die—remember, the investigator was always quite good at puzzling out riddles, just not as good as Hattie. The answer to the first riddle is, of course, “echo,” while the answer to the second is “book.”

Keeper note: while some players enjoy solving riddles and puzzles for themselves in game, other players do not. If your player isn't interested in working out the answers to the riddles, permit them to make the **INT** roll with a bonus die straight away, and tell them the solutions if the roll is successful. If they fail, Highball can point them in the right direction (**An Echo**, following).

AN ECHO

A book entitled *Echo* can be found on the bookshelf in the main room. Highball, having lost interest in the bathroom once the riddles were found, sits nearby, fidgeting and whining softly. He draws the investigator's attention to the bookshelf if they had difficulty solving Hattie's riddles; however, once found, it turns out that the book isn't a novel—it's Hattie's diary (**Handout: Love 7**), which contains details of the divination sessions

Handout: Love 6

1. Even without being asked, it will answer willingly.
And it can speak any and all languages fluently.
Although, bashfully, it will not speak first.
It will repeat after you the things most versed.

2. It has no bones but has a spine.
And while its leaves turn, they do not change color.
It cannot speak,
Yet is never short of tales to tell.

(“witchcraft meetings”). Hattie also describes her meeting with Lucille Moran and her gift of the amulet and *khanjar*.

If the investigator wishes to talk with Hattie’s neighbors, an elderly gentleman called Mr. Brodie (who lives next door) and Mrs. Massler (a young mother of three who lives a few doors down the hall) can tell them that she left the apartment with a dark-haired woman. Hattie seemed distracted and didn’t reply when Mrs. Massler wished her “Good day!”—something she’s never done before. Mr. Brodie can give the investigator a description of the woman with Hattie—she was below average height, of slender build, and had the most piercing green eyes he’d ever seen.

Keeper note: Ellen has been keeping watch on Hattie’s apartment ever since the divination session on February 11th, waiting for an opportunity to cast the Mental Suggestion spell on her again. Thanks to Highball’s presence, she had, so far, been unsuccessful. Even an attempt yesterday evening (February 14th), when the dog was absent, failed due to Hattie’s neighbors visiting her to offer their condolences. The following morning, after Hattie got back from seeing the investigator, Ellen walked up to the apartment, knocked on the door, and finally succeeded in magically coercing Hattie to leave with her.

What Next?

The investigator now has two options: attempt to find Hattie or visit Lucille Moran to gather more information about why she thought her friend was in mortal danger. If the investigator wishes to search for Hattie straightaway, perhaps they recognize the description of the mystery woman’s green eyes (a successfully Extreme INT roll) and put two and two together with the letter from Ellen (**Handout: Love 2**) to work out where Hattie has been taken. Or, perhaps they use Hattie’s silk scarf and get Highball to track his mistress (a successful Hard **Track** roll on Highball’s part)—or a combination of both strategies. If so, the scenario continues with **The Last Witchcraft Meeting** (page 20).

Alternatively, if the investigator decides they want to talk to Lucille Moran, they’ll need to speak to their friend Billy “Little Comb” Brock first (**Handout: Love 3**). As the wife of one Chicago’s most important mobsters, it’s common knowledge that Lucille doesn’t take any chances meeting with people she doesn’t know—especially hard on the heels of a bungled assassination attempt on her husband. A word from Billy should get the investigator the audience they seek. And Billy, as the investigator knows, can usually be found hanging around **Dorothy’s Diner** (following).

DOROTHY’S DINER

It’s not the first time the investigator has come to Dorothy’s Diner to find Billy eating his blueberry pie and flirting with the waitresses. Located not far from the Children’s Memorial

Hospital, the place is warm and cozy, and smells delicious. The light from the big stained-glass lamps hanging from the ceiling illuminate the counter and its large glass case full of tempting pastries, as well as the diner’s glass-topped tables with their artistically curved legs.

Providing Highball is with the investigator, he sniffs everything intently. After sniffing Billy, he is wary but calm. Billy babbles “puppy-talk” at the German shepherd in an attempt to ingratiate himself, but Highball just looks wearily at him with his wise brown eyes, and then politely ignores him.

When the investigator tells Billy that they’d like to arrange a meeting with Lucille Moran, the young gangster becomes serious and wants to know why. Provided the investigator tells the truth—that they think Lucille might know something about Hattie’s disappearance—Billy asks them to wait while he goes out to make some telephone calls. A short while later, Billy returns and gives the investigator the good news—they’re in luck! Lucille wants to meet today, at her apartment. He gives them her address at the Parkway Hotel (2100 N. Lincoln Park West) and a time, and warns them not to be late.

MEETING LUCILLE MORAN

Lucille is waiting for the investigator, greeting them politely but cautiously if they are on time. If they are late, for whatever reason (see **Added Complications**, page 19), her impatience is clear. As soon as the investigator mentions that Hattie has gone missing (if she doesn’t already know from Billy’s phone call), Lucille says that their friend is in mortal danger and must be found. She gladly tells the investigator what she knows.

If asked about the witchcraft meetings, Lucille expresses her disapproval at the direction they were taking, “*Where I come from, we respect magic and don’t mess with powerful forces,*” she mutters darkly. If the investigator tries to find out more about her background and occult experience, she tells them that her family comes from Turkey, but she isn’t willing to share much beyond that. A successful **Charm, Intimidate, or Persuade** roll does get her to reveal the following, though:

- The amulet she gave Hattie protects the person wearing it against evil powers and physical harm.
- The *khanjar* has been handed down through Lucille’s family for many generations. It is said that it can be used to fight beings not of this world, but is just as handy for dealing with normal, everyday folk, should the need arise.
- The knife’s loan was only meant to be temporary in nature—Lucille wanted it back once the threat was over.

A successful **Psychology** roll reveals that Lucille is holding something back from her guest. If pressed, she admits that while she doesn’t know why Máiréad would wish to harm Hattie in particular, she has discovered that Máiréad is

Handout: Love 7

February 1st, 1929

Tonight for the first time. I took part in something the other wives jokingly call their "witchcraft meetings." I admit it was quite interesting, but I can't shake the feeling that the woman who organizes them can perform real honest-to-goodness magic. Last week, apparently, she gave Irene a prediction and it actually happened!! Lucille Moran was also at the meeting, and she confirmed it quite a few of Myrtle Mirciad's predictions have come true over the last few months since these meetings started. I'm not sure I approve of or believe in any of it but this is what all the other wives are doing, then perhaps I'd better go to another one, if only to see Lucille again.

February 11th, 1929

This meeting was much more unsettling. For some reason, Myrtle Mirciad kept staring straight at me through that veil of hers when she was performing those "incantations" she claims let her see the future - not just looking but really staring. Like she was trying to get inside my head and read my thoughts. I started to get a splitting headache, so I made my excuses and left. I never want to go back to another one of those meetings ever again, even though I can't explain why. The whole thing's left me feeling really unnerved. I also have this strange feeling that I've met Mirciad before, but I can't think where or when.

February 12th, 1929

Lucille came to me this morning, and she was very disturbed. She said she's resigned from the witchcraft meetings. She also told me she had a feeling I was in danger and that somebody has designs on my life.

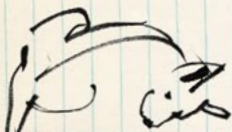
I got a silver amulet from her - she told me to wear it as it would help keep me safe. She also gave me a dagger and told me to carry it with me always, for protection. She made me put in my purse and made me swear not to part with it at any time. If she'd told me

this last night

I would have taken her a lot more seriously, but now - I don't know. Who could possibly want to harm me? I've put the amulet in an adorable silver cross thing on Highball's collar. It really suits him!

February 15th, 1929

When my hair is itchy for you, were taken from me? Could I have done something to prevent your death? I feel so lost. What if Lucille was right? Who'll protect me now you're gone? I'm sure someone's been watching me, and my head's been hurting so badly since yesterday. I hope that Highball will be returned to me. I don't know what I'd do without him now. There is someone I can go see - my very old and dear friend. I only pray they can help. I've had such a safer once Highball is back home again.



ADDED COMPLICATIONS

If the Keeper wishes to delay the investigator discovering Hattie's disappearance or reaching Lucille Moran, perhaps to trigger the ending described in **Unhappily Ever After** (page 21) or just to lengthen the scenario, then one suggestion is to bring in another contact for the investigator—this time, a reporter called Bernadette "Berny" Fuchs (**Characters and Monsters**, page 22). Like Officer Cicharski, Fuchs and the investigator have worked together in the past. And, while Berny can be a pain in the rear at times, she has a good nose for a story and her information is always reliable.

Fuchs, along with a gaggle of her compatriots, is hanging around outside the **Police Station** (page 14) trying to get the scoop on any developments in the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre case. Knowing the investigator's relationship with Officer Cicharski, and realizing that the dog that the investigator emerges from the station with is the one mentioned as having been at the scene of the crime, Fuchs attempts to buttonhole the investigator for any juicy details they might have, especially regarding the victims and any potential suspects. There are two main options the investigator has when dealing with Fuchs although the Keeper may think of others.

- Tell Fuchs something useful (any or all of the information contained in **Handouts: Love 4** and **5**), but at the risk of the leak being traced back to Cicharski (ask for a **Luck** roll: if failed, Cicharski knows the investigator leaked the information), meaning the police officer is unlikely to come to the investigator's aid later in the scenario.
- Fob Fuchs off, leading to the dogged reporter following the investigator all over town in hopes of stumbling over a good story. This is undoubtedly going to complicate matters if the investigator wants to speak with Lucille Moran. Billy "Little Comb" Brock informs the mobster's wife that the investigator is being shadowed by a reporter (if they haven't gotten rid of Fuchs by the time they get to Dorothy's Diner), and Lucille won't agree to the meeting until they do shake Fuchs. Mollifying Fuchs in some way, or losing her with a successful **Stealth** roll, is the only way to get that meeting, and the clock is ticking...

THE AMULET

The silver ankh amulet does, indeed, have protective powers for the wearer, who gains a bonus die to all Dodge rolls, can roll their Luck to avoid taking damage in combat, and is immune to any and all spells that affect the mind, including Mind Transfer.

only a pseudonym and that the mystic's real name is Ellen O'Sullivan. She hadn't mentioned it because she couldn't see how it was relevant—after all, mystics and mediums often adopt stage names.

If the investigator shares the details of their past relationship with Ellen with Lucille, along with her last letter (**Handout: Love 2**), Lucille's face becomes very pale, *"There is a spell that my nene once told me about when I was very small, a spell that allows the caster to put their mind in someone else's body, permanently. The face stays the same, but the person behind the eyes is different. I could tell Máiréad had evil intentions toward Hattie, but I never dreamed... What if this is what this Ellen of yours wants to do to Hattie?"*

If Highball is with the investigator, Lucille suddenly becomes highly distressed when she notices the ankh amulet on his collar. *"Why is she not wearing it? Without it, she has no protection against that woman's powers! You must find her and put it on her so that she will be safe. Hurry, hurry. He will be able to help you find her. Now go, go!"* And, with that, she ushers the investigator out of her home.

THE LAST WITCHCRAFT MEETING

If the investigator has been methodical in their search for Hattie, they may already know Máiréad's true identity and what she plans to do to Hattie. With this knowledge, they can find her apartment from following the clues in the letter Ellen sent them (**Handout: Love 2**) regarding the water tower. Even if they don't know who Máiréad really is, they can still find her lair by using Highball to track down his missing mistress (see **What Next?**, page 17, for further details).

Once the investigator gets near to the water tower described in Ellen's letter, Highball becomes highly alert and can easily track Hattie by her scent (no roll required). When he gets closer to the building where Ellen rents her apartment (750 Michigan Avenue), he starts to growl softly. As soon as he reaches the

them too. The investigator will need to succeed with a **STR** roll to keep a tight hold on Highball's leash the moment he spots his mistress. Failing any of these rolls, Ellen is alerted to their presence and she hurries to cast the Mind Transfer spell, if she hasn't already done so—for instance, if she's already been alerted to the investigator's presence thanks to a previous failed Luck roll.

As long as Ellen remains unaware of the investigator's presence, she continues to take the opportunity to gloat over a bound and gagged Hattie, revealing how she plans to transfer her mind into her perceived rival's body so that she can finally be with the investigator. This may be news to them, if Lucille hasn't already warned them about what's going on.

Unless the investigator intervenes, as soon as Ellen finishes outlining Hattie's fate to her, she starts performing the ritual. The only way to save Hattie once the ritual has begun is by interrupting it; as soon as the rite is completed, the mind transfer begins, and once started it cannot be stopped. If the investigator now shoots Ellen, sets Highball on her, or simply knocks her out, she will die and her soul perishes. If Ellen manages to complete the ritual, she banishes Hattie's spirit from her body, replacing it with her own. Hattie's lifeforce is lost forever.

If the investigator does intervene before the ritual begins, Ellen attempts to use the Mental Suggestion spell against them, to either distract or encourage the investigator to leave the rooftop. Possible suggestions include: “Go home and wait for me to call you,” “Go back to Hattie's apartment and take the dog with you,” or even “Shoot your friend” (if the investigator has a gun and is accompanied by either Cicharski or Billy).

At this point, the investigator has two important choices of what to do first: get the amulet to Hattie to protect her or deal directly with Ellen.

Hattie and the Amulet

Highball can be of use here: if set free, he runs straight to his mistress. All the investigator has to do then is shout to Hattie to take the amulet and keep a tight hold of it. Highball protects his mistress as best he can. Ask for a **Luck** roll: if failed, Ellen spots the amulet on the German shepherd's collar and she then attempts to kill the dog with her ritual knife before he can reach Hattie. Remember, the dog is protected by the amulet as long as he continues to wear it (**The Amulet**, page 19.) If Ellen manages to grab or kill Highball, she rips the amulet from his collar and throws it from the roof. If this is allowed to happen, any benefits the amulet provided are now lost.

Dealing with Ellen

Alternatively, the investigator can attempt to take care of Ellen first. That may involve trying to talk her down, convincing her that the ritual is pointless as the investigator isn't in love with Hattie—which may, or may not, be true, depending on what the player decided during character creation (**The Investigator's Childhood**, page 7). If the investigator tells Ellen the truth, a successful Hard **Charm** or **Persuade** roll convinces her to leave

Hattie alone. If the investigator lies, then the roll is subject to a penalty die—Ellen knows them too well to easily fall for that. If the investigator fails this roll, Ellen tries once more to use Mental Suggestion to control their actions. If she succeeds, she commands the investigator to stay and watch as punishment for lying to her.

The investigator may instead resort to physical violence to deal with Ellen, though it may be wise for the Keeper to remind the player that their investigator can also use non-lethal attacks to knock Ellen out and restrain her. If using the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*, this could be in the form of a fighting maneuver (**Book Two**, page 19); if using the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, then use the optional knock-out blows rule on page 125.

The tactics chosen by the investigator may depend on whether Officer Cicharski or Billy Brock are with them. Cicharski will not stand by and watch the investigator murder Ellen, although he is prepared to shoot her himself to protect Hattie, if all else fails. Billy, on the other hand, has no qualms about hurting people to get results, which may lead to the investigator having to make some very hard moral choices. If the investigator is struggling to deal with Ellen and has no other form of support, then Hattie orders Highball to protect her oldest and dearest friend.

Unhappily Ever After

As an alternative ending, what if the investigator arrives at Michigan Avenue too late? Did going to see Lucille Moran, or stopping to get back-up (either in the form of Officer Cicharski or Billy Brock) delay them sufficiently to allow Ellen to carry out the mind transfer and replace Hattie's spirit with her own? Or, did the investigator's clumsiness when trying to break into Ellen's apartment prompt her to get on with the ritual before anyone could intervene?

If this is the case, the investigator arrives on the rooftop to find Hattie standing over Ellen's body, a bloody knife in hand. The scene provokes a **Sanity** roll (0/1D3 Sanity loss). Hattie claims she accidentally stabbed Ellen after a struggle as she was trying to escape. A successful Hard **Psychology** roll suggests that “Hattie” is not telling the truth, although if the investigator tries to question her further, she starts to cry and begs them to take her home as it's all been too much for her.

Hattie's odd behavior and reluctance to talk might be enough to make the investigator suspicious. Highball certainly knows something is wrong, and if the dog is present, he goes berserk as soon as he gets within a few feet of his mistress, snapping and growling ferociously; the investigator needs to succeed with a Hard **STR** roll to keep control of the dog, if the roll is failed, the German shepherd launches himself at Hattie, and does not stop attacking her until suitably restrained or killed.

Even if they manage to hold onto Highball, the dog's sudden change in personality should ring alarm bells. Hattie bursts into tears in response to all the barking and growling. “Oh, no! What's wrong with him?” she sobs. “Please, take him away, he's scaring me.” The investigator's own experience with the dog up until this

point should underline that there must be something behind this transformation—after all, Hattie herself said Highball was a good judge of character. How the investigator reacts to this revelation is up to them.

If the investigator left Highball at Hattie's apartment and agrees to take Hattie home, then, on the way, she professes how much she appreciates all of the investigator's help and what her feelings toward them really are. Depending on the investigator's own feelings, this may be welcome news or it could be a highly suspicious admission. Again, as soon as Highball sees his mistress, he attacks, which may be the final clue the investigator needs to realize that Hattie is lost to them forever.

Once the investigator realizes that Ellen has succeeded in her terrible plan, they should make a **Sanity** roll (1/1D6 Sanity loss). Unless they know about the Mind Transfer spell from Lucille, this may be later rather than sooner, but something will give the game away eventually. Matters may be further complicated, of course, if the investigator doesn't realize what's going on and gives the protective amulet to "Hattie." Recognizing it for what it is, she quickly adds it to a silver chain around her neck, meaning she receives all of its benefits (**The Amulet**, page 19).

CONCLUSION

The scenario can end in several ways. Did Ellen succeed in replacing Hattie's mind with her own? Or, did the investigator manage to thwart Ellen and bring Hattie to safety? Did they do so by reaching some kind of understanding with Ellen or by bringing about her death? What about the amulet? Does someone have it or was it lost? And, what about Highball? Did he give his life to save his mistress or the investigator? Has he been reunited with a very grateful Hattie? Or, was it up to him to avenge the death of his beloved mistress?

Regardless, the final scene should provide closure for the investigator. If they died trying to save Hattie, then the player should have the opportunity to (briefly) describe how their character's death influenced the world they lived in, and what happens to any surviving characters: Hattie and Highball, Ellen—even Officer Cicharski! And, if they survived, who is left for them to pick up the pieces with?

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Hattie May (née James),
age 26, close friend since childhood

STR 55 CON 65 SIZ 60 DEX 55 INT 65
APP 55 POW 60 EDU 55 SAN 60 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 12

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Charm 40%, Credit Rating 40%, First Aid 30%, Jump 35%, Language (English) 65%, Occult 20%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 35%, Sleight of Hand 25%, Stealth 30%, Throw 45%.

Officer Bart Cicharski,
age 32, honest cop

STR 60 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 60 INT 65
APP 45 POW 65 EDU 65 SAN 60 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 9 MP: 13

Combat

Brawl 60% (30/12), damage 1D3
.35 Colt revolver 65% (32/13), damage 1D10+2
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Fast Talk 40%, History 40%, Jump 50%, Language (English) 65%, Law 70%, Library Use 40%, Listen 35%, Persuade 55%, Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 45%, Throw 50%.

Billy "Little Comb" Brock,
age 15, baby-faced tough guy

STR 65 CON 60 SIZ 70 DEX 55 INT 55
APP 50 POW 55 EDU 50 SAN 55 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 11

Combat

Brawl 50% (25/10), damage 1D3+1D4
.38 revolver 45% (22/9), damage 1D10
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Charm 55%, Credit Rating 20%, Intimidate 55%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 60%, Listen 30%, Locksmith 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 55%, Stealth 25%, Throw 60%.

Highball,
age 6, faithful companion

STR 45 CON 55 SIZ 40 DEX 70 INT —
APP — POW 35 EDU — SAN — HP 9
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 12 MP: 7

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Bite 50% (25/10), damage 1D6
Dodge 45% (22/9)

Skills

Listen 75%, Scent Something Interesting 90%, Track 70%.

Equipment: the ankh-shaped amulet.

Bernadette “Berny” Fuchs,
age 30, determined reporter

STR 60 CON 65 SIZ 65 DEX 70 INT 75
APP 60 POW 80 EDU 65 SAN 80 HP 13
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 8 MP: 16

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3+1D4
.22 Short automatic 40% (20/8), damage 1D6
Dodge 35% (17/7)

Skills

Art/Craft (Photography) 40%, Art/Craft (Writing) 60%,
Credit Rating 25%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 65%, History
45%, Language (English) 75%, Library Use 60%, Listen 50%,
Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 70%.

Lucille Moran,
age 29, mobster’s wife

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 55 DEX 60 INT 65
APP 50 POW 75 EDU 55 SAN 70 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 15

Combat

Brawl 30% (15/6), damage 1D3
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 40%, Appraise 45%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu
Mythos 3%, Drive Auto 40%, Language (English) 60%,
Language (Turkish) 35%, Listen 50%, Occult 45%, Persuade
60%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Ellen O’Sullivan (aka Mystic Máiréad),
age 23, a woman scorned

STR 50 CON 65 SIZ 55 DEX 50 INT 60
APP 65 POW 90 EDU 50 SAN 20 HP 12
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 18

Combat

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3, or knife 1D4+2
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Charm 50%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 12%,
Disguise 30%, Intimidate 40%, Language (English) 70%,
Library Use 55%, Listen 35%, Occult 85%, Persuade 40%,
Psychology 55%, Spot Hidden 55%.

Spells: Augury, Dominate, Mental Suggestion, Mind Transfer.

AUGURY (SPELL)

- **Cost:** 4 magic points; 1D2 Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 5+ minutes

Casting grants portents of the future—if the caster is enlightened enough to understand them. The tools for scrying vary and could be anything from using a scrying mirror to tarot cards, animal entrails to tealeaves, the casting of runes or watching the flight patterns of birds. Timing can vary due to the tools and nature of the scrying.

The chance of understanding an augury is a roll equal to or less than the caster’s POW. A portent may be vague, subtle, dreamlike, or in a cryptic verse—the future is not a book to be read, but rather a message or impression upon the caster’s mind. Successful use of the spell should provide at least one useful piece of information.

MENTAL SUGGESTION (SPELL)

- **Cost:** 4variable magic points and Sanity points
- **Casting time:** 3 rounds 3 rounds

The caster can command any being with human blood in its veins. A single target, who is visible to the unaided eye of the sorcerer, is affected. The victim carries out all that is commanded by the caster, even to self-destruction. The spell also works against Lengites, deep one hybrids, ghoulish changelings, Little People, serpent folk and deep ones who have interbred with humans, but doesn’t work on nonhuman entities such as shantaks or dimensional shamblers.

The caster intones the spell and relates the suggestion to the target. For the spell to take effect the caster must succeed in an opposed POW roll with the target. Extreme suggestions involving death or great harm require a second opposed POW roll just before the suggestion is implemented.

The cost for the spell varies with the suggestion. For ordinary unthreatening suggestions (drop your sword, hand over your money and leave, etc.), the cost is 5 magic points and 1D3 Sanity points. Riskier suggestions, but not ones antithetical to the target (go to Dunwich, set fire to a building, etc.), cost 10 magic points and 2D3 Sanity points. Dangerous or suicidal suggestions (kill a companion, kidnap the President, etc.) cost 15 magic points and 3D3 Sanity points.

If used on an investigator the effects lasts for 1 round for each point of INT the caster possesses. If the INT of the investigator is higher than that of the caster, the caster must win another POW roll every 10 rounds. When the caster fails the spell is broken.





MASK OF DESIRE

In which the investigator must help their friends resist dread temptation

M*ask of Desire* is designed for a Keeper and one player. There are two key themes at the heart of this story: discovering your own identity and the price you are willing to pay to achieve your goal—both played out against a backdrop of malign Mythos influence. The story takes place in New York during September 1932, but its location could easily be shifted to any large town or city that supports a vibrant musical scene, especially jazz. The investigator should possess close links to the scenario's main non-player characters (NPCs), Anna Konrad and Lucas Reston, but the investigator can be of any gender and sexual orientation of the player's choosing. The investigator may have any occupation as long as it makes sense with the shared background the player has decided upon with Anna and Lucas.

KEEPER INFORMATION

The following sections provide guidance on helping the player create an investigator for this scenario, as well as full background details on the Mask of Desire and how it impacts the investigator and their friends.

CREATING THE INVESTIGATOR

The Keeper and player should work together to create the investigator. Particularly important are the relationships between the investigator, Anna Konrad (**Dramatis Personae**, page 28), and Lucas Reston (**Dramatis Personae**, page 29). The basics of what the investigator knows about Anna and Lucas are described in **Handout: Mask 1**. The player and Keeper should start from this information and build the investigator, working backward—unusual, we know, but as these relationships are key to this scenario, it makes sense to start with them before deciding on other

things, like an occupation and skill point distribution. The handout also introduces the set up for the scenario in establishing the investigator's invitation to Madame de Tisson's party (**Start: The Party**, page 30) and the audition with Nancy Turner (**Conclusion: The Audition**, page 40).

The player may already have some ideas about their investigator's gender and sexual orientation prior to reading **Handout: Mask 1**, or they may wish to make their final decision regarding these as they define the investigator's relationships with Anna and Lucas.

From the information in **Handout: Mask 1** and elsewhere in this scenario, the Keeper should help the player establish the exact nature of their investigator's relationship with both Anna and Lucas. For example: are the investigator and Lucas siblings? Or, are Anna and the investigator close family members? Are all three unrelated to each other—friends who might have known each other since childhood? Or, did they meet at university, either through their studies or as the result of a mutual acquaintance? Is the investigator in love with Anna (meaning the investigator and Lucas are competing for Anna's affections, even if the investigator doesn't know it—yet)? Or, is Lucas the object of their desire (making Anna a potential romantic rival, even if she thinks of Lucas only as a friend)? Do Anna and/or Lucas know of the investigator's feelings, if they are romantic in nature?

Keeper note: refer to the **Love Story?** section in the **Introduction** (page 4) to establish what you and your player are comfortable with when it comes to creating a romantic relationship between the investigator and either Anna or Lucas (or both), and to set the ground rules for how those relationships will be handled during the course of the scenario. While the relationships between these three characters are at the heart of the unfolding scenario, driving the narrative forward, it doesn't have to be romantic in nature if neither you nor the player wants it to be.

Once the relationships have been established, move on to the other aspects of character creation. The investigator can choose any occupation, as long as it makes sense for the 1920s era and fits with their relationship to Anna and Lucas. Sample occupation templates can be found on page 9 of **Book Two** in the *Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*, and on pages 40–41 of the *Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*. While the investigator's age should be close to that of Lucas and Anna (early to mid-20s), their Credit Rating is not unduly important; after all, they're currently living in a brownstone owned by Lucas Reston's father and are expected to contribute only what they can afford to household expenses.

When it comes to assigning the investigator's occupational and personal interest skill points, useful skills for this scenario include: a social skill (such as Charm or Persuade), Listen, Psychology, Spot Hidden, and Stealth. Although not essential, Anthropology, Appraise, Language (Chinese), Occult, and Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy) may also be of help.

While the player could use an existing investigator, their backstory would need to be sufficiently open and flexible to include their relationships with Anna and Lucas. Perhaps the investigator met the pair during a previous brush with the Mythos? If so, there is no need for the investigator to permanently share a house with Anna and Lucas—perhaps they are simply staying with their friends on their way through New York, or while investigating another case in the Big Apple. If this is the case, adjust the scenario as necessary to best fit the circumstances.

THE MASK OF DESIRE

Famous jazz orchestra leader Nancy Turner is holding auditions in various cities across the United States to choose singers and musicians for her European tour. The day before the New York City auditions, the investigator, together with their two close friends—Anna Konrad, a young woman on the verge of a professional singing career, and Lucas Reston, a reluctant apprentice lawyer—are invited to a small party at Madame Panthea de Tisson's apartment on the Upper West Side (**Start: The Party**, page 30). Madame de Tisson is a patroness and connoisseur of the arts, and her apartment is a mecca for members of the city's artistic community.

Unbeknown to the investigator, Madame de Tisson is also a peddler of occult antiquities and paraphernalia. Afraid that Anna will ruin her big chance with Nancy Turner as a result of stress and a lack of self-confidence, during the party, Lucas enters into a deal with de Tisson for a very special mask, one possessing supernatural powers. The mask permits the wearer to alter themselves, gaining the physical and/or mental attributes they desire and which they believe will make them desirable to others. Of course, the magical mask's gifts come at a cost (**How the Mask of Desire Works**, page 28). In return for the mask, Lucas agrees to help de Tisson with certain

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT MASKS

- Masks are present in almost every culture and are as old as civilization itself, appearing in cave paintings dated to 40,000 years ago.
- Masks have been used for magical and ceremonial purposes, as well as in theatrical performances. Regardless of their use, masks tend to convey various symbolic meanings.
- A “mask” is not always a physical object—sometimes the word is used with reference to exaggerated stage makeup (such as in Chinese opera) or even a whole-body costume.
- In some cultures, people were afraid to create demon masks in case they granted power to evil spirits.
- Masks change the nature of social interactions. They can grant the wearer a new persona, allowing the wearer to take on a personality implied by the mask's appearance.
- When a person knows their face is hidden behind a mask, there is evidence to suggest that they feel a greater sense of self-confidence, can think more clearly, and are less emotionally affected by events around them, particularly if the mask they are wearing is associated with authority in some way. A mask may also make someone less inhibited if they feel the mask sufficiently shields their real identity.
- Certain features of masks are universally recognizable. For example, the sorrowful features of tragic masks from Greece, Japan, and Nigeria all share common characteristics—their message and meaning are transcultural.
- Historically, all cultures created masks with eyes. While masks have been made lacking a mouth or nose, it was considered taboo to fashion them without some kind of representation for the eyes.

legal consultations regarding her import and export of art and antiquities.

The following morning, a mysterious package addressed to Lucas arrives at the home the investigator shares with their friends, although Lucas is not home to receive it (**An Unexpected Package**, page 33). Sent by Madame de Tisson, the parcel contains a wooden box, containing what appears to be an antique mask, a piece of paper with unfamiliar symbols written on it, and an unsettling letter.

Lucas isn't the only person interested in the package. A Japanese businessman and civilian agent for the Japanese Special Higher Police, the Tokubetsu Kōtō Keisatsu (the Tokkō), Mr. Tanaka (**Dramatis Personae**, page 30),

MASKS OF DESIRE

Handout: Mask 1

About Anna Konrad

One of the things you love most about Anna is her wonderful singing voice. She knows much about music theory, art, and philosophy, and she'll happily bend your ear about these topics for hours at a time. Not that you mind, because you know it's a sign that she's comfortable around you. It's a completely different matter with strangers—with other people, Anna is hesitant, shy, and a little awkward. Sometimes this means she overcompensates and tries too hard to appear relaxed and witty, when, deep down, you know she's struggling. If she could overcome this, and her stage fright, you have no doubt she could be a big star.

Lucas Reston has hired an agent—a woman called Emily Webster—to look after Anna's professional interests. You hope she will be able to help Anna realize her dreams of becoming a professional singer. Webster's managed to line up an audition for tomorrow night with the famous jazz violinist and orchestra leader Nancy Turner. But, before the audition, you have a party at Madame de Tisson's to attend—another one of Webster's ideas to get Anna's face and voice known by the local artistic community.

About Lucas Reston

For all his family's wealth, you kind of feel a little sorry for Lucas. His life was planned out for him since the day he was born—all the best schools, all the best clubs and societies, Yale University, then joining his father's law firm—regardless of what he wanted. It's a real shame, because while he might make a good lawyer one day, you know he'd be much happier if he could be an artist; a pursuit that you feel would better suit his sensitive and superstitious temperament. He's a good artist, too—especially his charcoal sketches. If only he could have a little more faith in his own abilities, you're sure he could make a go of it. Lucas has managed to put off joining his father's law firm for the moment, largely by concentrating on helping Anna achieve her own dreams. But, he can't postpone the inevitable forever.

About Anna and Lucas

You, Anna, and Lucas share a brownstone (courtesy of Lucas' father) in New York City. You know from the hours the three of you have spent talking, and from his determination to help Anna succeed in her career, that Lucas is very fond of Anna, but you can't quite figure out in what way. Is he trying to live out his dreams through her, or is there more to it? Whatever his thoughts on the matter are, you know Anna sees him only as a good and trusted friend.

also wants it. The Imperial Japanese Army recently lost control of the mask during their campaign in Manchuria (**Manchuria and the Mask**, page 30); the Tokkō—the civilian equivalent of the feared military secret police, the Kempeitai—has managed to track down the mask's whereabouts and charged Tanaka with retrieving it. Tanaka and his subordinates have been watching Madame de Tisson, who they identified as the last person to possess the mask, and have blackmailed a local academic with an interest in the occult, Prof. Kiryl Nienart (**Dramatis Personae**, page 29), to get close to de Tisson so they can confirm its whereabouts.

The investigator meets Prof. Nienart during de Tisson's party, and may later want to speak to the professor again to learn more about the mask, an act that causes Nienart to alert the Tokkō to the investigator's involvement in the case (**Talking to Prof. Nienart**, page 36). Alternatively, the investigation may lead the investigator to speak to Madame de Tisson again (**Talking to de Tisson**, page 36), although if they waste time before getting in touch with her, they may be too late to find out anything useful (**The Murder**, page 38).

Regardless, it won't be long before Tanaka's attention falls on the investigator and their friends, which could make for a very exciting finale (**Conclusion: The Audition**, page 40), if the investigator can't find a way to deal with the undercover agent and his henchmen before the auditions take place.

How the Mask of Desire Works

The Mask of Desire is an artifact connected with the Cult of Hastur, and is several hundred years old. Simply putting on the mask is not enough to use its powers, as to activate it requires the inside of the mask to be anointed with the blood of the person wishing to use it (one drop is sufficient).

When activated, the mask changes the person wearing it, effectively making them appear as they truly wish to be seen. It might change their appearance, their personality, and their abilities, depending on what they desire. It is recommended that the Keeper imposes a cost of 1D6 Sanity points for each use of the mask, although the cost could be lowered or raised depending on how much of a change the victim seeks to make. A small adjustment—say, a change in eye color—might only incur a 1D3 Sanity point loss, while a complete change of physical appearance and abilities might cost 1D10 Sanity points (or as much as 2D10), with the wearer now appearing completely different to the person they really are.

The effect lasts for as long as the mask is worn. As soon as it is removed, the wearer reverts to their normal appearance. There is no need to remove the mask if the wearer wants to bring about a new or additional change, as alterations can be made while the mask is being worn (provided the additional Sanity cost for such new features is paid).

After the mask is put on, it merges into the wearer's face until it is no longer visible—apart from small marks along the jaw line distinguishing the mask's lower edge, although these

are easy to hide with make-up. Using the mask is addictive, and while the wearer can remove it any time they wish, the action is not that easy. In game terms, the first time a character tries to take off the mask, they must attempt a **POW** roll: if successful, they can remove the mask; however, if they fail, the mask stays on and they lose 1D4 Sanity points. The wearer can try again, but suffers the same Sanity loss if they fail the roll. Assuming the wearer succeeds in removing the mask, the next time they use it, they require a successful Hard **POW** roll to take off the mask, with failure now costing 1D6 Sanity. The time after that, a successful Extreme **POW** roll is required to take it off, with 1D8 Sanity point lost to a failure. Further use remains at this level unless the wearer dies or goes permanently insane, at which point the mask falls off of its own volition, ready for its next victim.

In between times, unless the mask's owner manages to give it away or dupes someone else into taking it from them, the mask psychically calls to them every day, encouraging them to wear it again. A successful **POW** roll is needed to resist the urge to don the mask again the first time, a Hard **POW** roll to resist the second time, and so on. Unless the wearer has a new request, the mask automatically causes the same changes as when it was last worn (for the same cost). Wearing the mask for a prolonged period causes additional Sanity losses—1D4 Sanity points for every week the mask is continuously worn.

The mask can be removed by force, but the consequences for the wearer are terrible. An Extreme **STR** roll is needed to pull the mask off a willing or unwilling victim (although an unwilling one will need to be restrained if conscious during the attempt). If successful, the act of pulling the mask free inflicts 1D4+4 damage to the wearer as their flesh is torn from their face along with the mask, triggering a **Sanity** roll (1/1D10 Sanity loss). Even with the best medical treatment money can buy, the wearer is left with permanent facial scarring. Failing the **STR** roll causes a 1/1D6 Sanity loss on a willing victim only (as they realize it isn't coming off), while an unwilling victim is not affected.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Anna Konrad, age 22, budding songstress

Anna is well-read, an expert in music theory, and likes to discuss art and philosophy. She has an amazing voice, but her lack of self-confidence is holding her back. Thus, she's always one step behind other, less talented, vocalists.

- **Description:** Anna's shoulder-length dark brown hair is arranged on her forehead in fashionable waves. She has big blue eyes, a slim figure, and an enigmatic smile—all of which add to her attractive looks.

MASKS OF DESIRE

- **Traits:** when among friends, Anna has a ravishing wit, but she is shy and awkward in front of strangers. Her stage fright is currently causing her to fall deeper into frustration and melancholy.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** the European tour with Nancy Turner is the opportunity of a lifetime for Anna; the investigator, though keen to see her succeed, may be forced to make a hard choice between allowing Anna to succumb to the mask's powers or watching her fail as a result of her almost crippling stage fright. An added complication may be the nature of the investigator's relationship with Anna, and how that is affected by Lucas' infatuation with her (**Creating the Investigator**, page 25).



Lucas Reston, age 24, frustrated artist

A talented artist, whose charcoal sketches are exquisite, Lucas graduated *summa cum laude* with a law degree from Yale University. His father owns a law firm and expects his son to take over the family business. Lucas has already reconciled himself with this fate and doesn't consider his (excellent) drawings to be "real" art or a viable means of supporting himself. Nevertheless, he has managed to

postpone taking up the job with his father's firm—which is just as well, given that there's currently no room for legal articles and paragraphs in his mind—it's too full of Anna's voice and smile.

- **Description:** always elegantly dressed, Lucas usually wears his favorite black suit, although his unfashionably long hair, over-long beard, and passionately glowing eyes don't entirely harmonize with his neat, respectable clothing.
- **Traits:** a sensitive young man who has fallen deeply in love with Anna. Unfortunately for him, she thinks of him only as a close friend. Lucas is very superstitious and believes in the supernatural.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Lucas' biggest dream is to help Anna pursue her singing career. He does not hesitate to use his connections and family money to support her, and has employed Emily Webster as Anna's agent to help get her noticed. His belief in the occult made it easy for Madame de Tisson to convince him that using the Mask of Desire would be a great idea. The dilemma he faces is whether to give the mask to Anna to help her at the upcoming audition with Nancy Turner or to use it himself, so he can become the type of man he hopes Anna would fall in love with. In the first instance, he plans to sacrifice his own happiness for Anna's, but his decision may be affected by the investigator's relationship with both Lucas and Anna, as well as the investigator's actions toward him during the scenario (**An Unexpected Package**, page 33).

Madame Panthea de Tisson, age 46, patron of the arts

They say Madame de Tisson comes from France, but no one is sure how much of that story is true and how much is an affectation. She collects oriental works of art, especially those with alleged supernatural powers, which she likes to sell to oblivious buyers, reveling in the mayhem that often follows. Her fascination with art and her subsequent descent toward insanity started after reading passages from *The King in Yellow*. That notorious play awoke in her a fascination with both masks and the Cthulhu Mythos. While able to maintain an outward appearance of normality, de Tisson's will is gradually crumbling and will, sooner or later, succumb to complete insanity.

- **Description:** a morbidly thin woman with a prominent nose, dark hair and eyes, and features too distinctive to be considered classically beautiful—a better word for them would be "intriguing." Madame de Tisson's eccentric garments, opinions, and behavior are her trademark.
- **Traits:** an advocate of complete freedom in every sphere of life, including moral, religious, legal, and sexual, to name but a few.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** as the person who supplies Lucas with the Mask of Desire, de Tisson is the catalyst that involves the investigator in the scenario. Provided the investigator gets to her in time, de Tisson can provide the information they need to figure out what is going on (**Talking to de Tisson**, page 36). If they're unlucky, they may just find her corpse rather than the answers they seek (**The Murder**, page 38).

Prof. Kiryl Nienart, age 50, philologist

A doctor of philology and an amateur Sinologist, Prof. Nienart specializes in Far Eastern languages and texts, as well as being keenly interested in the region's occult practices. Born in Lviv, Ukraine, his family fled Russia during the 1917 revolution. He now lives in New York City with his wife and their three children, and teaches at Columbia University.

- **Description:** the professor's hair is thinning and there are definite signs of gray at his temples and in his neatly groomed beard and mustache. Never physically robust, he hides his slight frame beneath comfortable tweed suits. The only sartorial concession to his sense of humor is his collection of loudly-patterned bowties.
- **Traits:** a family man, sincere, warm-hearted, and jovial. Currently under a great strain due to the Tokkō's coercion.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** although Nienart wholeheartedly supports China in their current conflict with Japan, the Tokkō has threatened to harm his family if he doesn't cooperate in their attempts to retrieve the Mask of Desire. As a result, though he is an erudite scholar and an excellent

source of knowledge for the investigator, Nienart will betray their confidences to the Japanese in return for his family's safety, up to and including handing over the mask to Tanaka Kenzaburō. Until he is sure of his family's safety, Nienart is an unreliable ally.

Tanaka Kenzaburō,
age 48, undercover agent

Mr. Tanaka is, as far as the outside world is concerned, a respectable Japanese businessman; in reality, he is also a civilian agent for the Tokkō in New York. Although proud to serve his emperor, Tanaka is well aware that he is not, at heart, an intelligence agent, but he's trying his best to deal with a task that is overwhelming him. While Tanaka has some financial resources at his disposal, his assets are limited and he has to work in secret, avoiding anything that could lead to a scandal or his exposure as a spy.

- **Description:** a middle-aged Japanese man dressed in elegant, European clothes. He is clean shaven and his black hair is kept short and oiled, though it is usually hidden beneath a fedora when out and about in public.
- **Traits:** Tanaka pines for his homeland. While he finds violence repulsive, the two trained bodyguards (**Characters and Monsters**, page 43) that accompany him have no such qualms.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Tanaka operates from the shadows through his various Japanese and American proxies. The investigator may end up meeting Tanaka, depending on how they attempt to deal with his henchmen, either at Madame de Tisson's flat (**The Murder**, page 38) or at the auditions at the Manhattan Room (**Conclusion: the Audition**, page 40).

Emily Webster,
age 24, talent agent

Emily Webster is a passionate jazz enthusiast. Born in Brooklyn to Polish immigrants, she is proud of her heritage but keen to embrace all that the American Jazz Age has to offer, so much so that she changed her surname from Tkaczyk to Webster because it was easier for her clients to pronounce. While she believes in Anna's innate talent, Lucas' financial incentives have boosted Emily's interest in working with the shy vocalist.

- **Description:** of average height and build, Emily has short, dark hair styled in the latest fashion, hazel eyes, and an eager grin. She prefers to dress in slacks, but wears a smart gown when the occasion calls for it.
- **Traits:** enthusiastic, ambitious, and unscrupulous, Emily is prepared to use devious and underhanded tactics to fulfill her current commission as Anna's agent.
- **Roleplaying hooks:** Emily has been paid handsomely by Lucas to ensure Anna is "spotted," and it was Emily who

heard about the upcoming auditions for Nancy Turner, seeing this as a way to secure Anna a moment in the spotlight. Lucas has promised Emily a substantial bonus if Anna is chosen for the European tour. Emily may prove to be a useful ally when it comes to safeguarding Anna during the scenario, although any action she takes is motivated by the need to guarantee her own reputation and the financial reward, rather through any genuine concern for her client.



MANCHURIA AND THE MASK

The Mukden Incident of September 1931 involved the Japanese military staging an alleged bomb attack by Chinese dissidents against a trainline in the South Manchuria Railway Zone. The event instigated Japan's invasion of Manchuria, with the lands seized providing resources and space to solve Japan's problem of overpopulation.

For the purposes of this scenario, a unit of Japan's Kwantung Army stumbled across the Mask of Desire during the Manchurian conflict, with the unit's commander using the mask to bolster his military prowess. The mask was, at some point during the fighting, seized by the Chinese and sent up-country, where it eventually fell into the hands of a Shanghai art dealer with an interest in the occult. From there, it was sent to America, where it became part of Madame de Tisson's collection, before falling into either the investigator's or Lucas' hands.

The Tokkō have been following the mask's trail since Shanghai, when rumors of its existence first came to their attention. Not only do they want to make sure it doesn't fall into the hands of anyone who could use it against the Imperial Japanese State, but they also feel it may prove very useful in furthering their own agenda at home and abroad.



START: THE PARTY

The investigator, Anna Konrad, and Lucas Reston have been invited to a party at Madame Panthea de Tisson's apartment as part of Emily Webster's campaign to get Anna's singing talents recognized by New York's artistic community. Madame de Tisson's apartment is located on the top floor of the Ansonia Hotel, 2109 Broadway, on the Upper West Side. When they arrive, they are—quite unusually—greeted at the door by Madame de Tisson herself, clad in the latest trend but with her own unique twist: a kimono made of golden brocade worn over her evening gown like a high-class housecoat. In her hand, instead of a cigarette holder, is a long pipe of Chinese design,

MASKS OF DESIRE

around which hovers a strange scent—a successful **Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy)** roll identifies the smell as opium.

Welcoming them to the party, de Tisson shows the friends into her apartment, which is full of paintings, sculptures, and works of art from around the world, although the collection is dominated by pieces from Asia—the Far East, in particular. There are Chinese porcelain vases, Japanese swords and paintings, and fabulously colorful furnishings made with Indian fabrics. Perhaps the most impressive display is de Tisson's collection of masks, which may catch the investigator's eye.

If the investigator wanders over to examine the masks, Madame de Tisson follows them. In the sweet mist of lingering opium smoke and the dim light from the covered lampshades, the masks' contours seem slightly blurred. Wood, stone, paper, porcelain, clay—all have distinctive faces with empty, staring eye holes, be they old men with long beards and deep wrinkles, pale-faced Asian beauties, chubby-cheeked children, horned demons, or severe-looking vengeful gods. There are Venetian masks with perfectly symmetrical, gilt embellished features; mournful death masks from Greece; long-faced African idols; Chinese opera masks splashed with streaks of bright colors (symbolizing the traits and values of the characters who wear them); Japanese Kabuki and Noh masks, with their enigmatic smiles and blackened teeth; Siamese (Thai) Khon masks with their elaborate golden crowns; and bird-like theatrical masks from Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

After permitting the investigator a few moments of contemplation, de Tisson asks which of the masks is the most interesting to them. Whatever their answer, she merely smiles and nods knowingly before making her excuses and joining another group of guests on the far side of the room. For the rest of the evening, the investigator feels as if the masks' empty eyeholes are watching their every move.

Keeper note: if your player feels confident that they know enough about the sorts of masks Madame de Tisson has in her collection, you could always ask them to describe for themselves the one that has taken their investigator's fancy. The description doesn't necessarily have to be historically accurate, and the player shouldn't be pressured into describing a mask if they don't feel able to. This is just an opportunity for the player, if they want to, to add their own details to de Tisson's collection. If the player describes a mask, perhaps it could be found in Madame de Tisson's hand when the investigator discovers her body later in the scenario (**The Murder**, page 38).

There are at least two dozen people at the party, most of whom are artists, musicians, trade agents, or arts and antiquities dealers. All seem to be enjoying de Tisson's hospitality. Most drink illicit champagne from crystal glasses, while some fill long-stemmed Japanese pipes with what at first appears to be tobacco from a large red-lacquered bowl on one of the side tables. A successful **Science (Chemistry or Pharmacy)** or

Hard **Know** roll identifies the bowl's contents as a heady mix of tobacco and opium. Madame de Tisson circulates freely around the room, keen to get to know her guests and their opinions of her impressive collection of *objets d'art*.

Among the guests are Prof. Kiryl Nienart, Emily Webster, and Mr. Tanaka (without his bodyguards). While the professor can be heard discussing the history of secret societies and occult practices in the Far East, it takes a successful **Listen** roll to overhear the strained conversation between de Tisson and Tanaka regarding the political situation in Manchuria. De Tisson appears to support China in this conflict, while Tanaka loyally defends his country's actions following the so-called Mukden Incident (**Manchuria and the Mask**, page 30).

Emily Webster, after briefly making eye contact with Lucas, gathers a circle of partygoers—almost exclusively men—around Anna, and encourages the pretty vocalist to chat with them about her favorite topics. While she seems to be holding the group's attention with her sparkling conversation, a successful **Psychology** roll reveals that Anna's light tone and rippling laughter are both forced. Once the investigator spots this, they realize that her jollity is an act, one she's using to hide her anxiety about tomorrow's performance. If a Hard success is gained with the Psychology roll, the investigator notices something else: Lucas is watching Anna intently, and seems irritated by any compliments paid to Anna by the men in the group. Could he be jealous?

Keeper note: depending on the nature of the investigator's relationship with Anna, perhaps they are also jealous of the attention she's receiving from this group of louche strangers. It may be the first time they realize that Lucas may be in love with their friend.

The Madman with a Knife

Once the investigator has had chance to chat to the main NPCs, or at least overhear their conversations, Madame de Tisson's parlor is invaded by a strange man who bursts into the room. His eyes are feverish, his hair disheveled, and his clothes caked with dirt. Before anyone can stop him, he pulls a long knife from his waistband and dashes at the hostess, screaming, "*It's speaking to me! It won't stop speaking to me!*"

If they wish, the investigator can attempt to grapple the stranger, although they may be more concerned with protecting Anna from this raving lunatic. See the man's profile (**Bewildered and Disheveled Knifeman**) on page 43. The frantic interloper is not much of an adversary if the investigator decides to tackle him—he lacks coordination and can barely stand upright, granting the investigator a bonus die on any combat-related rolls, such as fighting maneuvers (*Call of Cthulhu Starter Set*, **Book Two**, page 19) or knockout blows (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*, page 125). Getting close to the man permits the investigator to make a Hard

Spot Hidden roll: with success, they see a faint marks along the man's jawline, suggesting that he may be wearing a mask of some sort.

Keeper note: the intruder is, indeed, wearing a mask—the Mask of Desire. Madame de Tisson sold it to him a little over a week ago. Driven to the brink of insanity by its constant whisperings, the poor demented soul has returned to de Tisson's apartment, though whether he plans to kill her for selling it to him or merely force her to take it back at knife point is beyond even his comprehension at this point.

If the investigator decides not to intervene, one of the other guests attempts to take on the man, who slashes at them with his knife, inflicting a nasty-looking cut on their arm. Distracted from his original target, the man continues to scream about the terrible voices in his head while waving his bloody blade at anyone who comes near to him. Unless the investigator has specifically stated they're moving to protect Anna, the Keeper should call for a **Luck** roll: if failed, the man's attention suddenly falls on the terrified singer, who he attempts to take hostage, his knife pressed worryingly against Anna's throat. The investigator shouldn't need reminding that even a minor injury could spoil Anna's chances of performing successfully the next day.

If the investigator doesn't try to deal with the man, Madame de Tisson steps in. Her firm, calm voice seems to soothe the bewildered, sobbing knifeman, persuading him to drop his weapon. Madame de Tisson puts her arm around the man's shoulders and leads him out to her bedroom. A successful **Psychology** roll confirms that she doesn't really care about the man's welfare and is more intent on getting him out of the way of her guests; a Hard success or better reveals that she doesn't seem phased or surprised by his behavior—if anything, she's seems amused by it.

Keeper note: if applicable, a successful **Cthulhu Mythos** roll allows the investigator to realize de Tisson cast some sort of spell on the man.

Should the man be rendered unconscious at any point during the confrontation (perhaps by the investigator's knockout blow), Madame de Tisson insists he is carried into her boudoir. Even if the man is fatally injured, de Tisson demands he be taken into a side room for his final moments. In either case, once he has been moved, she closes the door, telling everyone to carry on without her—she will rejoin them shortly. If the man is unconscious, de Tisson sees the opportunity to remove the mask from him later; for now, she simply needs to secure him somewhere he can't do any harm. If mortally wounded, she wants to be able to retrieve the mask when it falls off the dead man's face.

After a few minutes, de Tisson comes back out into the parlor, telling her guests that the man is, “going to sleep it off,” whatever “it” might be, or saying that she arranged for the man to be taken to a hospital. If no one has recovered the knife, she casually picks it up from where it was dropped and places it on a side table before recirculating among her guests. If the knife has been retrieved, she asks for it so that she can put it “out of harm's way.” If the investigator wishes to take the knife, a successful **Sleight of Hand** roll acquires and secretes the weapon without anyone noticing. The knife, if later used, can inflict 1D4+2+DB damage.

Not long after her return to the parlor, the investigator sees Madame de Tisson take Lucas to one side. Their friend looks worried, an expression that quickly subsides as de Tisson talks to him. If the investigator wishes to get close enough to hear the conversation, they must succeed at a **Stealth** roll; otherwise, de Tisson notices the investigator's approach and takes Lucas into another room, firmly closing the door behind them. Alternatively, the investigator can attempt a Hard **Listen** roll to overhear the conversation over the general hubbub, but they must also succeed at a **Luck** roll to avoid being spotted or interrupted by another guest. There's no need to roll twice here—treat this as a combined Listen and Luck roll, rolling once and comparing the result to both Luck and Listen. If the investigator fails the Listen roll, they hear nothing of use; while if they succeed at the Listen roll but fail their Luck roll, then they only hear a few fragments of the conversation—the words “parcel” and “mask”—before they are disturbed. If the investigator succeeds at both, they hear Madame de Tisson tell Lucas that she can help him solve his problems: in return for a few legal favors, she will supply him with a mask that can help him gain his heart's desire. He should expect a parcel tomorrow. A successful **Psychology** roll suggests that Lucas' former anxiety has been replaced with a nervous sense of excitement.

Shortly after Lucas finishes talking to Madame de Tisson, the flamboyant hostess throws her arms in the air, declaring in a loud, tipsy-sounding voice, “Well, I don't know about you, but I'm done for the evening. Out you go, my darlings. Shoo! Shoo! Madame needs her beauty sleep.”

The investigator may wish to speak to Lucas regarding the conversation they may have overheard, perhaps as the friends make their way home or before they go to bed that evening. Lucas is shocked and angry that the investigator stooped to listening in on a private conversation and refuses to explain anything. He insists that the investigator must trust him, as he only has everyone's best interests at heart.

AN UNEXPECTED PACKAGE

The morning after the party, the investigator is woken up by urgent knocking at the brownstone's front door. Opening the door, they see a scrawny-looking delivery boy holding a box wrapped in brown paper and tied with twine. He says he was supposed deliver the package to, "*The concerned young gentleman who lives here.*" A successful social skill roll, such as **Charm** or **Persuade** (or a generous tip), reveals the parcel is from Madame de Tisson. Depending on what the investigator overheard the previous evening, they may or may not be expecting the delivery.

A successful **Psychology** roll suggests that the delivery boy is a little shaken. If asked why, he mentions that a filthy old bum wanted to know what was in his parcel. When he wouldn't tell, the man tried to snatch it, but the boy was too quick for him. If asked where this happened, the boy says it was just as he was turning into the investigator's street. If the investigator pops their head out of the door, they can locate the vagrant with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll—he's hanging around the street corner. Realizing he's been noticed, the man disappears from view. As soon as the bum is gone, the delivery boy takes his leave.

Keeper note: the down-and-out who tried to snatch the parcel was sent by Tanaka Kenzaburō. Having failed to learn the exact whereabouts of the mask at last night's party, the Japanese agent had Madame de Tisson's apartment watched for any signs of suspicious activity. Tanaka's man (disguised as a vagrant) followed the boy with the package from the Ansonia, then tried to find out what was inside it at the first opportunity that presented itself (when the boy slowed down to check the house numbers on reaching the correct street). A little later, Mrs. Lenox (see following) accosts Tanaka's man. The take home message for the investigator is that "someone" is very interested in the contents of the parcel.

Lucas and Anna are not currently at home. Anna has left a note saying she's gone for a long walk to clear her head (she didn't want to wake the investigator as they were sleeping so peacefully). Another note, this time from Lucas, explains he's been summoned to his father's law firm and won't be back before lunch. With both of their housemates absent, the investigator is all alone with the strange package. At this point, Mrs. Lenox—the house cleaner employed by Lucas' father—arrives. While she hangs up her coat and dons her apron, she makes small talk with the investigator and mentions a suspicious man she just saw loitering outside by the brownstone's basement steps. "*Some kind of hobo he was—he had the evil eye and smelled really bad. Don't you worry, though, I threatened to call the police on him. That sent him on his way.*"

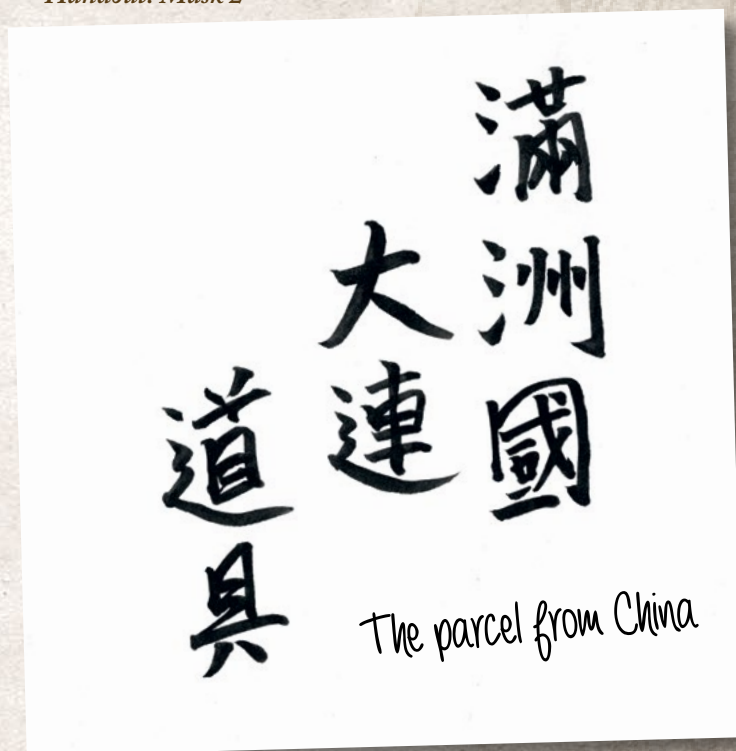
If the investigator goes to check, this time, the mysterious vagrant has well and truly vanished.

What does the investigator wish to do? Do they leave the parcel unopened or do they see what's inside? If they decide to open the parcel, ask for a **Luck** roll. The different choices and their consequences are noted in the following text.

If the Investigator Succeeds with the Luck Roll

The investigator can examine the package's contents without interruption. Beneath the brown paper they find a wooden box tied with a red silk ribbon. On the box's lid are several logograms written in black ink (native speakers and those who have invested skill points in **Language (Chinese)** can identify these as Chinese characters; no skill roll required) and a pencil-written addition in English (**Handout: Mask 2**). Inside the wooden box is a piece of paper covered with yet more Chinese characters (**Handout: Mask 3**), a short letter (**Handout: Mask 4**), and, wrapped in violet silk, a mask made of white porcelain. The mask has an oval face, half-closed eyes, and very thin lips. The lips are half-open, revealing fine black teeth. It is hard to determine whether the face is male or female. The reverse side of the mask is strangely coarse and a little sticky; there's also another symbol, this time drawn in red (**Handout: Mask 5**). If the investigator succeeds at a **Language (Chinese)** roll, give them **Handouts: Face 6–8**.

Handout: Mask 2



Handout: Mask 3

王室的孩子
 由於缺乏可能性
 成為

If the investigator wishes to find out more about the mask and the notes without waiting for Lucas to return, they have two options: talk with the Sinologist they met at the party last night (**Talking to Prof. Nienart**, page 36) or ask Madame de Tisson (**Talking to de Tisson**, page 36). Alternatively, they can wait for Lucas to come home and challenge him about the parcel. If the investigator heads off with the parcel before Lucas returns, then Lucas remains blissfully unaware of the package's arrival, as long as the investigator doesn't leave any evidence of it lying around the brownstone (for example, the brown paper wrapping). Lucas simply assumes that Madame de Tisson hasn't gotten around to sending the mask over yet.

If the Investigator Fails the Luck Roll

Part way through their examination of the mask, Lucas returns from the office earlier than expected. He angrily demands to be given the parcel and its contents, while reproaching the investigator for not minding their own business. "How dare you poke your nose into my private affairs?" he yells, before storming off to his room.

Handout: Mask 5

血

Handout: Mask 4

It is best to make decisions quickly.
 You have until tonight. The price is high,
 but it's worth it!

P.

The Investigator Waits Until Lucas Returns to Open the Parcel

If the investigator decides not to open the parcel and wait for Lucas' return, their old friend arrives home and snatches the package from their hands. Lucas then races off to his room with it. It doesn't take a Psychology roll to see that Lucas is on edge, and that his concerns relate to the parcel.

ANNA RETURNS

Regardless of the situation, Anna returns from her walk just in time to witness any exchange that takes place between Lucas and the investigator. If heated words are being spoken, Anna looks both horrified and confused. If the argument is over the investigator opening the parcel, she is dismayed by the investigator's lack of decorum and Lucas' behavior. She knows Lucas has been tense over the last few days—is it something to do with the parcel's contents?

Depending on the circumstances, the investigator may wish to follow Lucas to his room and attempt to find out what's in the package. The investigator may already suspect some or all of the truth, if they overheard part of the conversation between Lucas and Madame de Tisson at the party. Knocking on the door before entering results in a barked, "Go away! I'm busy!" from Lucas. It's up to the investigator as to whether or not they take any notice or enter anyway. Barging in without knocking reveals Lucas with the mask in hand, although he quickly tries to hide it while yelling at the investigator about their lack of manners.

The investigator can try to convince Lucas to explain what's going on, although they'll need to succeed at a Hard social skill roll (**Charm, Persuade**—even **Intimidate**) to do so; if the investigator attempts to do this through a closed door, they also suffer a penalty die on the roll. With a Hard success, Lucas admits that Madame de Tisson sent him the mask to help Anna with this evening's audition, but refuses to give further details of how exactly that would work. With an Extreme success, he also reveals that the mask supposedly grants the wearer their heart's desire—his reason for getting hold of it. Lucas insists he's only trying to do what's best for Anna and is afraid that without extra support, her stage fright might ruin this golden career opportunity.

Once the investigator knows about the mask and, potentially, what it can do, they may wish to try and convince Lucas to return the mask to Madame de Tisson, either because they don't believe in the mask's alleged supernatural properties or because they have absolute faith in Anna's abilities. Any attempt to sway Lucas into handing back the mask requires another successful social skill roll at Hard difficulty, due to Lucas' confusion over whether to use the mask or not. If the investigator succeeds in convincing Lucas to return the mask, he asks the investigator to go with him to Madame de Tisson's apartment—the Keeper should forward to **The Murder** (page 38).

Keeper note: while discovering the mask's abilities this early in the scenario may remove one element of the mystery, there's still plenty more to discover, especially if the investigator becomes embroiled with Prof. Nienart or stumbles into the murder scene in Madame de Tisson's apartment. Who wants the mask so badly they're prepared to kill for it? Does that mean it can really do everything Lucas claims it can?

If the investigator fails to convince Lucas to return the mask, he yields to temptation and attempts to wear the mask himself. The investigator can try to snatch it from him, requiring either a successful fighting maneuver on the investigator's part or a successful opposed **DEX** roll. The investigator has two rounds to grab the mask from Lucas, otherwise their friend manages to spill his blood on the mask and put it on. Provided the investigator relieves Lucas of the mask before he can wear it, he calms down, although his relationship with the investigator is now under great strain (a penalty die to any future social skill rolls involving Lucas). The investigator can, if they wish, now return the mask to Madame de Tisson themselves (**The Murder**, page 38). If Lucas succeeds at putting on the mask, see **If Lucas Dons the Mask** (page 40)—ideally, the investigator stops him, but if you want to slow things down even if Lucas puts on the mask, then he forgets that de Tisson told him to spill a drop of blood on the mask; thus, he puts the mask on but nothing happens. Perhaps later, once things have calmed down, Lucas remembers the mask needs his blood...

If the investigator knows about the mask but not what it does, even if they failed to take it from Lucas, they can still make inquiries about it with either Prof. Nienart (**Talking to Prof. Nienart**, page 36) or Madame de Tisson (**Talking to de Tisson**, page 36). It's also possible that the investigator may have taken a copy of the notes and symbols in the package, then rewrapped it and left it for Lucas (a successful **Luck** roll means Lucas fails to notice that it has already been opened); they can use these copies when interviewing the professor. Otherwise, Lucas is aware that the investigator has been prying into his affairs (the investigator now suffers a penalty die on any future social skill rolls they make involving Lucas).

Keeper note: depending on how this scene is playing out, you might also want to introduce a telephone call from Emily Webster. Emily wants to make sure that Anna is ready for her audition later today. If the vocalist was injured or traumatized during the previous evening, Emily insists she should perform anyway. The talent agent is determined to fulfill her contract with Lucas, even to the point of forcing the singer to go to the theater. Having to potentially deal with an angry Lucas and a distressed Anna increases the scenario's emotional stakes, and may make Lucas change his mind about using the mask on himself.

TALKING TO PROF. NIENART

Prof. Nienart is very eager to help. If the investigator has the mask and hands it to the professor to study, he is deeply concerned by what he sees. If the investigator brought the mask in its box, Nienart can explain that the box is from China, but the mask is Japanese in origin: a Noh theater mask.

He explains further, *“You see, once upon a time, China was actually the center of the world, at least in the East. Japan absorbed Chinese culture and tried to imitate it. They also borrowed the Chinese writing system, although the Japanese language didn’t have anything in common with the Chinese with regard to its phonetics, morphology, or syntax.*

“To write down their inflectional suffixes, the Japanese had to create two additional syllabaries: hiragana and katakana, but before they did that, they used only Chinese kanji characters written according to the Chinese order, but ‘in the Japanese manner.’ Unfortunately, I’m not an expert on matters Japanese, but I could consult with a colleague at the university on your behalf, if you wish. I should be able to give you the meaning of the characters themselves, though. It looks like some kind of maxim...”

If the investigator hasn’t already successfully translated the symbols, and can show the professor these items, he is able to translate the box lid (**Handout: Mask 6**), the piece of paper from inside the box (**Handout: Mask 7**), and the red symbol (**Handout: Mask 8**). If the investigator has already translated the symbols, Nienart confirms their findings. He is unsure what any of it means, but the mask is obviously very old and valuable, and quite possibly has occult significance. He half-heartedly jokes about this being a bad time for the investigator to get involved with anything to do with China and Japan, what with the current situation in Manchuria.

If the investigator only possesses copies of the inscriptions on the box, note, and mask, the professor can still translate them. Even without the object itself, based on the investigator’s description, Nienart says the mask sounds as if it’s a valuable antique; from his own research into such matters, it quite probably also has links to Japanese occult practices.

A successful Hard **Psychology** roll reveals that Nienart is scared and is hiding something. A Hard social skill roll (such as **Charm** or **Persuade**) convinces the professor to confide in the investigator. He says the Japanese are desperate to get hold of this mask, although he doesn’t know why, precisely. They have threatened to hurt his family if he doesn’t help them. Nienart warns the investigator to be on their guard for the Japanese to attempt to take the mask—he genuinely believes they will stop at nothing to acquire it.

Knowing that the professor’s family are in danger, it is up to the investigator if they wish to leave the mask with Nienart (or try to get it so they can bring it to him) so he can remove

the threat to their safety. Alternatively, they may wish to take it straight back to Madame de Tisson to extricate themselves and their friends from the entire mess.

If the investigator doesn’t inquire further or fails their social skill roll to get Nienart to open up, then they are aware that someone else is interested in the parcel (as the vagrant tried to snatch it), but they remain oblivious to the threat from Tanaka and his henchmen. Either way, as soon as the investigator leaves, Nienart reports everything to Tanaka. If the investigator leaves the mask with the Sinologist, either knowing his predicament or because they’ve entrusted it to him while he carries out further research for them, Nienart hands it over to the Japanese in short order. Once Tanaka has the mask, Nienart’s family are safe—at least until the next time Tanaka needs something.

Keeper note: it’s worth remembering the investigator may lose the mask at any moment to one of the NPCs: Lucas, Anna, Nienart, or Tanaka. If Lucas or Anna has the mask, the threat to their safety remains as the Tokkō attempts to retrieve it at the Hotel Pennsylvania this evening (**Conclusion: The Audition**, page 40), having confirmed that Madame de Tisson no longer has it (**The Murder**, page 38). Even if Nienart or Tanaka has the mask, the story isn’t over. Yes, the Mythos threat has effectively been dealt with by putting the mask beyond Lucas’ and Anna’s reach, but there’s still the small matter of Anna’s audition to contend with. If they wish, the Keeper may decide that the Tokkō wants to keep the mask and its supernatural abilities secret, so Tanaka sends his goons to silence those who know too much (the investigator, Lucas, and probably Anna). This final option is recommended only for combat-oriented investigators or ones who can call on sufficient levels of back up (see **Support Network**, page 5).

TALKING TO DE TISSON

If the investigator decides to visit Madame de Tisson immediately after receiving the parcel (and doesn’t make a detour to visit Prof. Nienart on the way), they have a chance to talk to her. Despite the apartment still being in a mess after last night’s party, Madame de Tisson is amused to receive the investigator and, if they haven’t already eaten, proposes a boozy breakfast. If they have eaten breakfast, she offers the investigator some “hair of the dog” to allay any suffering from the after-effects of the party (depending on their demeanor).

Once they are seated, the investigator can question de Tisson. She is reluctant to reveal too much, but readily imparts the following information, depending on whether or not the investigator knows of the mask’s existence and if they’ve brought it with them. Depending on what the investigator

MASKS OF DESIRE

Handout: Mask 6

Handout: Mask 7

滿洲國
大連
道具

Dàlián
the city
of Dalian

Mǎnzhōnguó
Manchukuo

dàojù
a prop

王室的孩子
由於缺乏可能性
成為

a royal child? a child of a king?
a child from the royal dynasty?

due to

lack

ability

possibility

to become

this character
is also used
to write down
Noh theater
No

血



Handout: Mask 8



血
blood



USING THE TOKKŌ

It is possible for the investigator to remain oblivious to what's going on around the mask, either through poor dice rolls or deliberate player choices—not listening in on Lucas' conversation with Madame de Tisson, not opening the parcel or trying to find out about its contents, and so on.

A surefire way of bringing the action to the investigator and revealing just how much danger they and their friends are in is to introduce Tanaka and his henchmen long before the final act (see *Kidnap!*, page 41). While having Tanaka snatch Anna early in the scenario works best in a pulp-style game, the threat of her abduction—or any form a harm befalling her—is certainly one the Keeper can use to draw a reluctant investigator deeper into the mystery. Having received word from the vagrant about the investigator's involvement, Tanaka tracks them down and, backed up by his goons, uses the same tactic he's currently using against Prof. Nienart: hand over the mask or your friends, particularly Anna, are in grave danger! If the investigator doesn't have the mask or doesn't really know anything much about it, they now have quite the incentive to find out what's going on. And, if the investigator drags their heels, Tanaka is more than prepared to make good on his threat.



overheard the previous evening (**Start: The Party**, page 30), they may wish to challenge some of de Tisson's claims. Use the following to help direct the conversation and illustrate de Tisson's responses.

- The package/mask is a gift from her to Lucas. It is discourteous to return a gift, so she won't take it back.
- If the investigator asks what the mask is, de Tisson comments that it is from Japan—a Noh theater mask, saying it is beautiful, full of symbolism, quite valuable, and at least 400 years old.
- A Noh mask is worn by the leading actor, the *shite*, although due to its androgynous features it's hard to say whether this mask represents a young man or woman.
- She can't read the characters on the paper herself, but she was assured by a translator that they attest to the item's authenticity (this last part is a lie, and can be detected with a successful Hard **Psychology** roll).
- The box is newer than the mask, which reduces its price on the antiques market (a successful **Appraise** roll confirms this to be true).

If the investigator succeeds with a Hard social skill roll (such as **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade**), Madame de Tisson also reveal the following:

- She knows the mask is alleged to have supernatural powers and she knows how it works. What's more, Lucas knows, too.
- Aware that she has something of an addictive personality, she decided to sell the mask on to remove the temptation of trying it out for herself.
- Anna's problems and Lucas' desire to help her were obvious to de Tisson during the party, so she approached Lucas with the offer of the mask, safe in the knowledge he would take it off her hands.

Keeper note: if the investigator is capable of holding their own in a fight, you might want to spice up the action by having one of Tanaka's bodyguards appear at the apartment just as their meeting with Madame de Tisson is ending. This is a useful option if the investigator has bypassed Prof. Nienart (**Talking to Prof. Nienart**, page 36) and has no idea about the Tokkō's involvement (see **Other Options** (page 39) for further details).

THE MURDER

If the investigator takes their time before approaching Madame de Tisson—for example, by trying to convince Lucas to return the mask or by consulting with Prof. Nienart first—they miss their opportunity to find out what she knows. If the investigator calls ahead to see if she's at home, de Tisson will not answer her telephone. Otherwise,

MASKS OF DESIRE

if going straight to her apartment, they find her front door is wide open. Inside, the parlor is in disarray, and every single mask has been knocked off the wall onto the floor. Most of the masks lie smashed on the expensive Persian carpet. It is clear the mask display was deliberately targeted, as the rest of the valuable art collection is untouched. A successful **Psychology** roll suggests the destruction was an act of frustration or spite—possibly even both.

Madame de Tisson is nowhere to be seen, and calling her name receives no reply. Maneuvering past the shattered faces on the floor, the investigator finds de Tisson's body in her boudoir—she's been stabbed to death with a single, precise knife thrust. A successful **Medicine** roll or Hard **First Aid** or **Science (Biology)** roll reveals that the murder weapon was curved and one-edged. If the investigator is aware of Mr. Tanaka's involvement, a successful **Know** roll suggests the blade involved is probably a *tantō*—a Japanese short sword traditionally used as a stabbing weapon.

Keeper note: Madame de Tisson was killed by Tanaka's bodyguards on his orders because she knew too much about the mask and wouldn't reveal where it was. Unluckily for them, Tanaka's men failed to recover the Mask of Desire and remain on the hunt for it.

Other Options

Madame de Tisson's Last Breath

If the investigator hasn't visited Prof. Nienart or if they have no idea about his involvement with the Tokkō, the Keeper may wish the investigator to find Madame de Tisson shortly before she dies. There is nothing the investigator can do to save her, but she has just enough time to warn them about the threat to Lucas, Anna, and themselves from the Japanese agents before she breathes her last.

Confrontation with Tanaka's Men

Another alternative, depending on whether or not the investigator has the necessary combat skills to survive such a confrontation, is for them to blunder into the apartment as one of Tanaka's bodyguards attempts to silence Madame de Tisson. If the investigator succeeds with a **Luck** roll, they arrive before Madame de Tisson is killed, and they may be able to save her and/or team up with her to defeat the bodyguard. Depending on whether or not they know that Tanaka is after the mask, the investigator may even wish to negotiate de Tisson's safety in return for the handing over the mask. If the Luck roll is failed, the investigator is too late and comes across the man as he's pulling the masks off the wall, searching for the one his boss wants (and smashing anything that isn't it). Any negotiations regarding handing over the mask will now be about ensuring the investigator's own continued survival.

Lucas Arrives

If neither of these options appeals and the investigator has the mask with them, then, perhaps they receive an unexpected visitor shortly after they discover Madame de Tisson's corpse: Lucas. Wondering where the mask is, Lucas comes to the Ansonia to collect it in person, only to find the investigator has it. Enraged at his friend's interference, Lucas attempts to snatch the mask, which may lead to a scuffle and/or an opportunity for the investigator to talk Lucas out of his deranged plan (see **An Unexpected Package**, page 33, for how such a conversation might play out).

Return of the Madman

In addition, if the party crusher wasn't killed during his confrontation with the investigator (**The Madman with a Knife**, page 31), Madame de Tisson's attempt to remove the mask from him (after she sent everyone home) did not go smoothly. A search of de Tisson's apartment, coupled with a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, reveals his bloody, faceless corpse stuffed into a steamer trunk in de Tisson's dressing room—the grisly discovery prompts a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4+1 loss). A successful **Medicine** or Hard **First Aid** roll suggests he died from shock and blood loss, undoubtedly due to his face having been forcibly ripped from his skull; with a Hard or better success on the Spot Hidden roll (or if the investigator makes a point of searching the corpse), they find the bloody remains of the man's face stuffed into one of his inside jacket pockets (the Keeper may, optionally, ask for another **Sanity** roll, with 0/1 loss).

The Police

If de Tisson is murdered and, rather than fleeing the scene, the investigator reports the crime to the police, they spend the rest of the day being interviewed at a nearby police station. How they are treated during this interview is influenced by their occupation, their Credit Rating, and any links they might have to law enforcement or the underworld. If the investigator thinks to call Lucas for help, he arrives to represent them, meaning they are released without charge more quickly than otherwise. If the investigator has the mask and the police know about its ties to the murder, they confiscate the mask as evidence; however, if they don't know about the mask, they hand it back to the investigator on their release. If Lucas is present, this may be the first he knows of the investigator's meddling, which may lead to a confrontation, either outside the police station or once they arrive back at the brownstone.

It is possible that the investigator "takes care" of the threat posed by Tanaka and his men through what they say to the police. If the investigator mentions Tanaka is involved, whether they have any concrete evidence of his involvement or not, the police go after Tanaka for the murder, fueled somewhat by the rising wave of anti-Japanese sentiment in America as

a result of the Manchurian Campaign. In this event, ask for a **Luck** roll: if successful, the police round up Tanaka and his men before Anna's audition, which means there is no further trouble from Tanaka—although there could still be trouble at the audition, depending on whether or not the mask is still in circulation.

If the investigator doesn't point the finger at Tanaka (because they don't know about his role in the affair or because they leave the hotel without reporting the crime), then, unless the Keeper wishes to include a confrontation with the Tokko's agents at the investigator's home, the stage is set for the final act—**Conclusion: The Audition**.

CONCLUSION: THE AUDITION

The audition takes place in the Manhattan Room, Hotel Pennsylvania, 401, Seventh Avenue (made famous on the "At The Madhattan Room" album by Benny Goodman and his Orchestra in 1937). The Manhattan Room is a spacious ballroom and has a small stage erected at one end. Seated at one side is the core of Nancy Turner's orchestra, consisting of a piano, a double bass, a cornet, and drums—all here to support the auditioning singers and musicians. Ms. Turner, an attractive African-American woman in her mid-30s, sits in the middle of a row of seats immediately in front of the stage, surrounded by her staff and regular musicians.

Another seating area has been set up at the rear of the room for those taking part in the auditions. Those seeking a place in the orchestra are issued with a number on a slip of paper; when their number is called, the hopeful makes their way to the stage to perform their audition piece. There are around three to four dozen other hopefuls beside Anna in attendance. The atmosphere in the room is one of tension and excitement.

Whether the investigator meets Anna and Lucas at the audition or travels there with them depends on what has happened up to this point. Emily Webster is also present, having called at the brownstone to collect Anna and make sure she's at the hotel in plenty of time. What happens during the rest of the auditions also depends on the investigator's actions so far. The main possibilities are discussed in the following sections. If the investigator hasn't discovered Tanaka's interest in the mask, then the auditions prove to be the perfect place for him and his bodyguards to strike in their attempt to reclaim the cursed object for the Japanese Empire (see **Kidnap!**, page 41).

If Lucas Dons the Mask

If Lucas Wears the Mask Before the Audition

If Lucas uses the mask to win Anna's heart, his actions may well ruin her chance at stardom without guaranteeing his

happiness. If he puts on the mask before Anna performs, she becomes distracted by the obvious change in Lucas' personality. During her audition, the Keeper should have the player make an **Art/Craft (Singing)** roll on Anna's behalf (she has 75%), but with a penalty die due to her inability to concentrate.

If Anna succeeds, she is hired to go on Nancy Turner's tour. Ask the investigator to make a **Luck** roll: if failed, Anna believes Lucas acted oddly on purpose to take her mind off her fears so she would give her best performance, and romance blossoms between the two (even if that requires Anna to switch her affections away from the investigator). If the investigator succeeds with the Luck roll, Anna's relationship with Lucas becomes strained—what was he thinking by acting so oddly before her big night? Such thoughts turn Anna's affections toward the investigator—if the pair weren't in a relationship before, this may now be the perfect time for the investigator to declare their feelings.

If Anna failed the Art/Craft (Singing) roll, she is devastated. If the investigator now fails a **Luck** roll, Lucas proves an incredibly sympathetic shoulder to cry on, and Anna and Lucas' relationship stops being a platonic one. If the investigator succeeds with the Luck roll, Anna turns to them for comfort (blaming Lucas for her failure), and her relationship with Lucas is irrevocably damaged. How Lucas reacts is up to the Keeper and the player to decide.

Keeper note: of course, depending on the nature of the investigator's relationship with Anna, they might not want to stop Lucas and Anna from becoming romantically entwined. If this is the case, there is no need to make the Luck rolls, other than to see if Anna turns against Lucas. Even if the investigator is in love with Anna, the player may decide the investigator should step aside if they think Anna would be happier this way.

If Lucas Wears the Mask After the Audition

If Lucas wears the mask after Anna's performance is complete, then, whether Anna passes the audition depends on an **Art/Craft (Singing)** roll, with no penalty applied. Again, the Keeper should have the player make this roll on Anna's behalf (so they contribute to how the story turns out rather than just watching the Keeper make all the important rolls). If Anna succeeds, the investigator should make a **Luck** roll: if failed, Anna credits her success to Lucas' continued faith in her abilities and his hiring Emily Webster to advise her; while, if the Luck roll is successful, Anna's relationship with Lucas and the investigator stays as it was. If Anna fails the Art/Craft (Singing) roll, she doesn't blame Lucas for her failure—but it still requires a successful **Luck** roll on the investigator's part to avoid Anna and Lucas getting together as a couple.

Even if Lucas succeeds in getting Anna to fall in love with him, his victory is tinged with constant doubt. Would her feelings for him still remain if he removed the mask? The longer Lucas waits to see if his fears are true, the more his mind slips toward insanity under Hastur's baleful influence.

If Anna Dons the Mask

If Lucas Offers the Mask to Anna

As long as the investigator has done nothing to provoke Lucas into using the mask himself, then, shortly before the audition begins, Lucas offers the mask to Anna, telling her it will make all her dreams come true. If the investigator is present and knows what the mask is, they can attempt to convince Anna that wearing it is a bad idea by winning an opposed social skill roll against Lucas (such as **Charm**, **Fast Talk**, or **Persuade**). If successful, they are able to cast doubt on Lucas' persuasive sales pitch. Alternatively, the investigator could try to **Intimidate** Anna into not wearing the mask, as a scare may be just what she needs to make her realize the seriousness of what Lucas is trying to get her to do. If the investigator succeeds, their explanation of the mask's dangers convinces Anna that any success she achieves by wearing the mask is not worth the price she will have to pay for it. If the investigator fails, Lucas sways Anna's judgment, and she immediately attempts to put the mask on, promising to remove it once her performance is over.

Even if the investigator doesn't fully understand what the mask does, they could try buoying Anna's self-confidence by pointing out that, unlike Lucas, they have faith in her—she doesn't need any artificial means to prop her up undeniable talent (this may be a particularly effective strategy if the investigator and Lucas are rivals for Anna's affections). A successful social skill roll convinces Anna, although if this roll is failed, Anna refuses to listen, takes the mask, and attempts to put it on.

Grabbing the Mask

The investigator has a final opportunity to prevent Anna from using the mask if their arguments fail, and that is to try and take the mask from her. Have the investigator make an opposed **DEX** roll against Anna—the investigator has two rounds to wrestle the mask from Anna's hands before she can activate and wear it. If the investigator fails, desperate not to mess up what she sees as her one chance at stardom, Anna pricks her finger on a hatpin and drips her blood into the mask before pressing it to her face. The investigator watches in horror as it melts into her skin until there is no further trace of it, provoking a **Sanity** roll (1/1D4 loss). If the investigator manages to grab the mask from Anna's hands, call for a **Luck** roll: if successful, the mask smashes into many pieces when it hits the floor.

Anna Auditions Wearing the Mask

If Anna dons the mask, her performance is outstanding. Ms. Turner offers her a spot on the European tour and the whole band is awestruck by her talent. In spite of any promises to the contrary, Anna refuses to take the mask off. Emily Webster completely sidelines Lucas as Anna's agent and manager (having negotiated her own, equally lucrative, terms with the singer).

As her grasp on reality slips due to Hastur's malign interference in her life, Anna becomes increasingly cold and distant toward both the investigator and Lucas, and, by the time she leaves on the tour, she no longer has anything to do with either of them. This ending is bitter-sweet, as Anna achieves her longed-for success but at a high price (at least for the investigator). On top of this, unless the investigator somehow took care of the threat posed by the Tanaka and his men, Anna becomes a great star but her success may be short-lived—Tokkō agents lurk in the shadows, intent on reclaiming the mask, which may lead to Anna's death or disfigurement. Who knows, perhaps the investigator might be willing to ask Tanaka for help getting the old Anna back?

Anna Auditions Without the Mask

If Anna performs without the mask, the Keeper should ask the player to make an **Art/Craft (Singing)** roll on Anna's behalf (75%). If the investigator convinced Anna not to wear the mask, the roll is made with a bonus die thanks to the investigator boosting Anna's belief in herself. But, if the investigator instead prevented Anna from wearing the mask, by taking it from her or by smashing it, then the roll is made with a penalty die.

If the roll is successful, Anna performs well in the audition and she is eternally grateful to the investigator for showing that she could do it all on her own; she's ecstatic to have secured a place on the tour. If the investigator has unrequited feelings toward Anna, they are unrequited no more, if both the player and the Keeper agree to this option. Otherwise, Anna and the investigator's relationship goes from strength to strength, whatever the basis of that relationship might be.

If the roll is failed, Anna performs badly and she is distraught, blaming the investigator for ruining her chances. Their relationship is permanently damaged. Anna flees the theater in tears, vowing never to speak to the investigator again.

Kidnap!

If Tanaka and his men have yet to make their presence felt (**Using the Tokkō**, page 38, and **Other Options**, page 39), the Keeper has the option of having them sneak into the Manhattan Room through a side door at a dramatically suitable moment. A successful **Spot Hidden** roll by the investigator notices their arrival. If the investigator spots the men and knows who they are, the investigator has, if they wish, the opportunity to hand over the mask to Tanaka without any major incidents—assuming they have the mask, of course.

Alternatively, if the investigator doesn't have the mask, they may need to quickly convince whoever does possess it to either leave or hand it over before anyone gets hurt.

If the investigator does not spot the men's entrance, Tanaka orders his men to grab whoever he thinks has the mask. Unless told otherwise by Prof. Nienart, Tanaka targets Lucas, thanks to the information provided by the vagrant (**An Unexpected Package**, page 33). If Nienart knows the investigator has the mask (**Talking to Prof. Nienart**, page 36), then Tanaka's henchmen go after the investigator instead.

Keeper note: if playing in a pulp style, the Keeper may wish to fall back on the old trope of "kidnapping the dame" (Anna in this case) to force whoever has the mask to hand it over. Of course, giving Tanaka the mask might not be so easy if someone is already wearing it.

There are a number of ways this encounter with Tanaka and his two goons could go, depending on who they target and when. It may lead to a confrontation in the Manhattan Room or a chase through the hotel. In the end, it could all come down to the investigator negotiating with Tanaka for Anna's safe return in exchange for the mask (requiring a successful **Hard Persuade** roll). If the police know about Tanaka but have yet to arrest him (**The Murder**, page 39), the Keeper always has the option of the police bursting in at the last minute to save the day, although the Keeper should use this ending with caution as it may remove some agency from the player.

There is another option if no one has yet donned the Mask of Desire: the investigator may choose to do so to either defeat Tanaka and his men or to rescue Anna. How that affects any dice rolls that need to be made entirely depends on the nature of the changes the investigator asks the mask for, but mechanically-speaking, these might lead to bonus dice (to a maximum of two per roll), increased SIZ and STR (potentially increasing hit points and damage bonus), or improved fighting or shooting skills.

Depending on what happens, the auditions may continue and Anna might get her chance to sing. If she does, resolve the outcome based on the guidelines in the previous sections, imposing a penalty die if Anna is injured or traumatized as a result of being kidnapped. On the other hand, Anna might miss the audition altogether and, if she does, she squarely blames both Lucas and the investigator for the mess they've created. Subsequently, Anna cuts all ties with both of them.

If the Tokkō cause a fight in the Manhattan Room, the auditions are probably cancelled. Nancy Turner, only in town for one night, leaves New York City for the next city on her recruitment drive. Again, Anna lays the blame at Lucas' and the investigator's door, refusing to speak to them ever again.

Other Possibilities

Of course, depending on what's happened prior to the audition, the Mask of Desire and Tanaka may have no direct effect on the scenario's finale. Or, the investigator may have caused an additional complication not covered here. In either case, the plot's denouement should be improvised in keeping with the storyline so far. Ideally, try to give the investigator a chance to solve the problem through their own actions, as well as acting to tie up loose threads to provide a sense of closure. Whether their relationship with Lucas and Anna survives is, ultimately, down to them.

CHARACTERS AND MONSTERS

Anna Konrad, age 22, budding songstress

STR 40	CON 45	SIZ 50	DEX 55	INT 65
APP 85	POW 50	EDU 70	SAN 50	HP 9
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 10	

Combat

Brawl	25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Art/Craft (Singing) 75%, Charm 60%, Credit Rating 40%, History (Art) 65%, Language (English) 70%, Language (French) 50%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 25%.

Lucas Reston, age 24, frustrated artist

STR 45	CON 50	SIZ 60	DEX 60	INT 80
APP 65	POW 40	EDU 75	SAN 40	HP 11
DB: 0	Build: 0	Move: 8	MP: 8	

Combat

Brawl	35% (17/7), damage 1D3
Dodge	30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 30%, Art/Craft (Sketching) 75%, Credit Rating 55%, Language (English) 75%, Language (Latin) 40%, Law 65%, Library Use 60%, Occult 20%, Persuade 30%, Psychology 50%.

MASKS OF DESIRE

Emily Webster, age 24, talent agent

STR 40 CON 45 SIZ 60 DEX 60 INT 65
APP 60 POW 50 EDU 65 SAN 50 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 8 MP: 10

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 50%, Art/Craft (Photography) 40%, Credit Rating 40%, Drive Auto 35%, Fast Talk 65%, Language (English) 65%, Language (Polish) 50%, Listen 50%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 50%.

Madame Panthea de Tisson, age 46, patron of the arts

STR 45 CON 40 SIZ 55 DEX 45 INT 80
APP 65 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 35 HP 9
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 6 MP: 12

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Appraise 75%, Charm 65%, Credit Rating 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, History 40%, Language (Chinese) 50%, Language (English) 60%, Language (French) 70%, Occult 60%, Psychology 65%.

Spells: Mental Suggestion, plus one or two others of the Keeper's choosing.

Prof. Kirył Nienart, age 50, philologist

STR 45 CON 45 SIZ 60 DEX 55 INT 85
APP 45 POW 60 EDU 90 SAN 55 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 5 MP: 12

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 40% (20/8)

Skills

Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Language (Chinese) 70%, Language (English) 65%, Language (Japanese) 30%, Language (Polish) 90%, Language (Russian) 60%, Occult 40%, Psychology 55%, Science (Linguistics) 85%, Spot Hidden 40%.

Bewildered and Disheveled Knifeman

STR 45 CON 55 SIZ 60 DEX 50 INT 55
APP 40 POW 30 EDU 65 SAN 10 HP 11
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 6

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3 or knife 1D4+2
Dodge 25% (12/5)

Skills

Appraise 40%, Art/Craft (Fine Art) 45%, Credit Rating 40%, Drive Auto 35%, Language (English) 65%, Language (French) 55%, Persuade 35%.

Tanaka Kenzaburō, age 48, undercover agent

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 50 DEX 60 INT 70
APP 45 POW 60 EDU 70 SAN 60 HP 10
DB: 0 Build: 0 Move: 7 MP: 12

Combat

Brawl 25% (12/5), damage 1D3
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Accounting 75%, Credit Rating 60%, History 30%, Language (Chinese) 30%, Language (English) 50%, Language (Japanese) 80%, Law 40%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 40%, Science (Mathematics) 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.

Japanese Bodyguards (2)

Use this profile for all of the bodyguards.

STR 60 CON 80 SIZ 65 DEX 60 INT 50
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 55 SAN 60 HP 14
DB: +1D4 Build: 1 Move: 7 MP: 12

Combat

Brawl 65% (32/13), damage 1D3+1D4
Tantō (short sword) 65% (32/13), damage 1D4+1+1D4
Nambu pistol 55% (27/11), damage 1D8
Dodge 30% (15/6)

Skills

Credit Rating 25%, Intimidate 50%, Jump 40%, Language (English) 35%, Language (Japanese) 55%, Listen 45%, Spot Hidden 50%, Throw 35%.



COLLECTED HANDOUTS

Handout: Love 3

Officer Bart Cicharski: you've known Bart ever since you began working as a private eye. For all his rough edges, Cicharski is a good and honest cop—something of a rarity in Chicago. You've helped each other out many times in the past, and you know you can rely on him.

Billy "Little Comb" Brock: you meet all sorts in your line of work, some good, some bad. Billy's not a bad apple at heart, but he got in with the wrong crowd at a young age and bought into the whole "romance" of being a hoodlum. It would've gotten him killed if you hadn't been there to pull him out of the fire, so he owes you. Billy seems to know everyone in the Chicago underworld, which makes him a very useful contact.

COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Love 1

You grew up in an orphanage. It was a tough life but one you managed to survive, in large part due to your friendship with another of the orphans: a young girl called Hattie James. Whenever you got yourself into a scrape, Hattie was always there to stand up for you, be it against the staff or your fellow orphans—as she is older than you, she had more respect among the other children than you did. In your eyes, Hattie was always brave and self-confident, and you looked up to her.

One of your favorite games when you were younger was playing “riddles,” word games that you used to write down and hide behind a loose tile near the bathtub. Hattie was always better at this game than you, and always used to tease you about it. In a kind-hearted way, of course—Hattie was never mean to you.

You remember the day Hattie shared her big secret with you—she'd found a litter of puppies in an abandoned building near the orphanage and was taking care of them. This shared confidence brought you even closer together, and you would sneak off to see the puppies whenever you got the chance. One day, however, you weren't careful enough, and without you realizing, one of the orphanage's staff members noticed you going out and followed you. Luckily, another orphan, Ellen O'Sullivan, got ahead of you and warned you of the danger. Ellen was an Irish girl, younger than both of you, who always stuck close to you and Hattie, but up until then had always been too shy to make friends with you both. Thanks to her intervention, the staff member didn't learn about the puppies and you avoided any consequences for your illicit trips. From that moment, the three of you became practically inseparable.

However, all good things must come to an end, and as you grew older, Ellen fell in love with you, but you could not reciprocate that love. Heartbroken by your rejection, she told you that she never wanted to see you or Hattie (who she seemed to blame, too, for some reason) ever again. Soon Ellen was adopted, which made the situation less awkward for you and Hattie, as Ellen had refused all attempts to repair your broken friendship. Not long after her adoption, Ellen started writing letters to you, but did not give a return address. In fact, she still writes to you every now and again, with the latest letter arriving a couple of weeks ago. You're not sure how she knows where you live, but presumably she looked you up in the city's directory.

You still have a faded photograph of the three of you, taken when you were around 12 or 13 years old, in pride of place in your office. Although you haven't seen or spoken to Ellen since she left the orphanage, your friendship with Hattie stood the test of time, even after she married her sweetheart, John May. You see her as often as you can, work permitting.

Handout: Love 2

January 12th, 1929

My Love!

This time I'm writing to you from Chicago. I know you still live here and I hope we will be able to meet one day. I can see that famous old water tower from the windows of my apartment and I admire how it's lit up by the setting sun.

Today was a cloudless and beautiful day, so I could even spot part of the shore from my special high perch up on the roof. No one (but you) knows I come up here. The janitor wouldn't be pleased if he did, he's such a fussbudget—just like our old Director at the orphanage! Do you remember him?

Someday, I would like to share every sunrise and sunset with you. Our lives would then be filled with all the splendid colors of the sky and our love would become everlasting.

Be sure I think about you every day, and know that I plan our next meeting every chance I get. I think I'll be able to make our paths not only cross very soon but also lead in the same direction! You may no longer recognize me as the woman I was, but deep down, it will still be me.

Look forward to more news from me, my Darling.

*Forever yours,
Ellen*

COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Love 4

Statement taken by: B. Cicharski
Witness: Frank Gusenberg
Place: Provident Hospital of Cook County,
room No. 27
Date: February 14th, 1929

Despite suffering from 14 gunshot wounds, Mr. Gusenberg initially claimed that no one had opened fire on him. When his level of painkillers was reduced, it was possible to gain limited information concerning the course of events. The victims were in the buildings at 2122 North Clark Street. Two men dressed in police uniforms and armed with submachine guns entered the property and ordered the occupants to line up facing the wall, under the pretext of arresting them. The witness many times emphasized that a German shepherd dog, also present in the building, started to bark as soon as the killers entered the garage. He claimed that the attackers took several shots at the dog. The animal initially appeared to have been killed, but "revived" after the gunmen left the building, and was apparently unharmed. The witness did not give any information that could be helpful during the investigation.

Signed by
Officer Bartholomew Cicharski, Chicago P.D.



COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Love 7

February 1st, 1929

Tonight for the first time. I took part in something the other wives jokingly call their "withdrawing meetings." I admit it was quite interesting, but I can't shake the feeling that the woman who organizes them can perform real, honest to goodness magic. Last week, apparently, she gave Irene a prediction and it actually happened!! Lucille Moran was also at the meeting, and she confessed to quite a few of Mystie Mayhead's predictions have come true over the last few months since these meetings started. I'm not sure I approve of or believe in any of it, but it is what it is. The other wives are doing, then perhaps I'd better go to another one, if only to see Lucille again.

February 11th, 1929

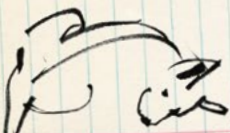
This meeting was much more uninteresting. For some reason, Mystie Mayhead kept staring straight at me through the veil of hers when she was performing those "incantations" she claims let her see the future - not just looking, but really staring. Like she was trying to get inside my head and read my thoughts. I started to get splitting headaches, so I made my excuses and left. I never want to go back to another one of these meetings ever again, even though I can't explain why. The whole thing's by the time feeling really unenjoyed. I also have this strange feeling that I've met Mayhead before, but I can't think where or when.

February 12th, 1929

Lucille came to me this morning, and she was very disturbed. She said she's resigned from the withdrawing meetings. She also told me she had a feeling I was in danger and that somebody has designs on my life. I got a silver amulet from her - she told me to wear it as it would help keep me safe. She also gave me a dagger and told me to carry it with me always for protection. She made me put in my purse and made me swear not to part with it at any time. If she'd told me this last night, I would have taken her a bit more seriously, but now - I don't know. Who could possibly want to harm me? I've put the amulet in an adorable silver cross thing on Higball's collar. It really suits him!

February 15th, 1929

John, my love, is trying to get you were taken from me. Could I have done something to prevent your death? I feel so lost. What if Lucille was right? Who'll protect me now you're gone? I'm sure someone's been watching me, and my head's been hurting, so badly since yesterday. I hope that Higball will be returned to me. I don't know what I'd do without him now. There is someone I can go see - my very old and dear friend. I only pray they can help. I'll feel much safer once Higball is back home again.



COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Love 5

Victims: Frank Gusenberg, Peter Gusenberg, Adam Heyer, Albert Kachellek, John May, Reinhardt Schwimmer, Albert Weinsbank.

Suspects: Al Capone, Jack "Machine Gun" McGurn, Fred Burke, Gus Winkler, Fred Goetz (aka "Shotgun" George Ziegler), Ray Nugent, Claude Maddox.

Handout: Love 6

1. Even without being asked, it will answer willingly.
And it can speak any and all languages fluently.
Although, bashfully, it will not speak first.
It will repeat after you the things most versed.
2. It has no bones but has a spine.
And while its leaves turn, they do not change color.
It cannot speak,
Yet is never short of tales to tell.

COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Mask 1

About Anna Konrad

One of the things you love most about Anna is her wonderful singing voice. She knows much about music theory, art, and philosophy, and she'll happily bend your ear about these topics for hours at a time. Not that you mind, because you know it's a sign that she's comfortable around you. It's a completely different matter with strangers—with other people, Anna is hesitant, shy, and a little awkward. Sometimes this means she overcompensates and tries too hard to appear relaxed and witty, when, deep down, you know she's struggling. If she could overcome this, and her stage fright, you have no doubt she could be a big star.

Lucas Reston has hired an agent—a woman called Emily Webster—to look after Anna's professional interests. You hope she will be able to help Anna realize her dreams of becoming a professional singer. Webster's managed to line up an audition for tomorrow night with the famous jazz violinist and orchestra leader Nancy Turner. But, before the audition, you have a party at Madame de Tisson's to attend—another one of Webster's ideas to get Anna's face and voice known by the local artistic community.

About Lucas Reston

For all his family's wealth, you kind of feel a little sorry for Lucas. His life was planned out for him since the day he was born—all the best schools, all the best clubs and societies, Yale University, then joining his father's law firm—regardless of what he wanted. It's a real shame, because while he might make a good lawyer one day, you know he'd be much happier if he could be an artist; a pursuit that you feel would better suit his sensitive and superstitious temperament. He's a good artist, too—especially his charcoal sketches. If only he could have a little more faith in his own abilities, you're sure he could make a go of it. Lucas has managed to put off joining his father's law firm for the moment, largely by concentrating on helping Anna achieve her own dreams. But, he can't postpone the inevitable forever.

About Anna and Lucas

You, Anna, and Lucas share a brownstone (courtesy of Lucas' father) in New York City. You know from the hours the three of you have spent talking, and from his determination to help Anna succeed in her career, that Lucas is very fond of Anna, but you can't quite figure out in what way. Is he trying to live out his dreams through her, or is there more to it? Whatever his thoughts on the matter are, you know Anna sees him only as a good and trusted friend.

Handout: Mask 2

滿洲國
大連
道具

The parcel from China

Handout: Mask 3

五室的孩子
由於缺乏可能性
成為

Handout: Mask 4

It is best to make decisions quickly.
You have until tonight. The price is high,
but it's worth it!

P.

Handout: Mask 5

A white square card with the Japanese character for blood (血) written in black ink. The character is in a stylized, calligraphic font.

Handout: Mask 8

A white square card with the Japanese character for blood (血) written in black ink. The character is in a stylized, calligraphic font.

blood

COLLECTED PLAYER HANDOUTS

Handout: Mask 6

滿洲國
Mǎnzhōngúó
Manchukuo

大連
Dàlián
the city
of Dalian

道具
dàojù
a prop

Handout: Mask 7

a royal child? a child of a king?
a child from the royal dynasty?

皇室的孩子

由於缺乏可能性
due to lack possibility

成為
to become

this character
is also used
to write down
Noh theater
No

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



LYNNE HARDY

Originally trained as a biomedical scientist, Lynne discovered roleplaying games back in the mists of time—or the early 1990s, as they're more commonly known. The second game she ever played was *Call of Cthulhu* and, after writing and editing for companies such as Nightfall Games, Cubicle 7, and Pelgrane Press, she returned to the non-Euclidian fold to act as the lead writer, editor, and line developer on the multi-award winning *Achtung! Cthulhu* Kickstarter project for Modiphius Entertainment. She is now Associate Editor at Chaosium for *Call of Cthulhu* and Line Editor for the upcoming *Rivers of London RPG*. Lynne doesn't like horror films much as they're far too scary, but she is rather fond of tea and fountain pens.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

AIRIS KAMIŃSKA

A Japanologist by training, Airis is a youth camp coordinator for the Orion Travel Agency, as well as an educator, Game Master, and tour leader for trips to Japan. She's also a member of the creative group Lans Macabre (associated with the world of games, fantasy, and science fiction). For many years now, she has been active in the roleplaying circles, running workshops, delivering lectures, preparing contests for conventions, and also engaging young people in our hobby. She's an admirer of clumsy lions, duels with melee weapons, and interesting fiction constructions.



ANNA MARIA MAZUR

Polish-English translator by education and by passion. Currently, her main occupation is translating *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game books into Polish, including *Księga Strażnika* (*Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook*), *Podręcznik Badacza* (*Investigator Handbook*) and many scenarios—and, as you can see, sometimes translating Polish scenarios into English!

Anna has been playing RPGs for almost 20 years now, both as a Game Master and player. In her free time, she likes to compose riddles and puzzles in Polish and in English, especially for her game sessions. Apart from RPGs, she loves fantasy novels, traditional archery, and cats.



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