

Quick Start Cthulhu



Quick Start Rules for the
CALL OF CTHULHU Role-Playing Game
Includes the popular adventure
“The Haunting!”



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Role-Playing Game
Includes the popular adventure “The Haunting!”

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Interested in Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu? You're not alone!

Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium's classic roleplaying game of Lovecraftian horror in which ordinary people are confronted by the terrifying and alien forces of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Over 225,000 copies of Call of Cthulhu have been sold since its release in 1981. Over 90 supplements have been printed for a total of more than 400,000 books sold over the last 23 years. Call of Cthulhu has won over 40 gaming awards including Best RPG of all time by readers of the Arcane magazine. In 1996, Call of Cthulhu was the second RPG to be inducted into the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design Hall of Fame.

Call of Cthulhu is recognized as a true classic. This game continues to delight players after 23 years in a field where many games disappear within three to five years after their initial release.

Call of Cthulhu is published by Chaosium Inc. Chaosium is one of the original publishers of paper role-playing games and has been in business for well over 25 years. Chaosium is famous for the excellence of its game designs, and has won many Adventure Gaming Industry awards.

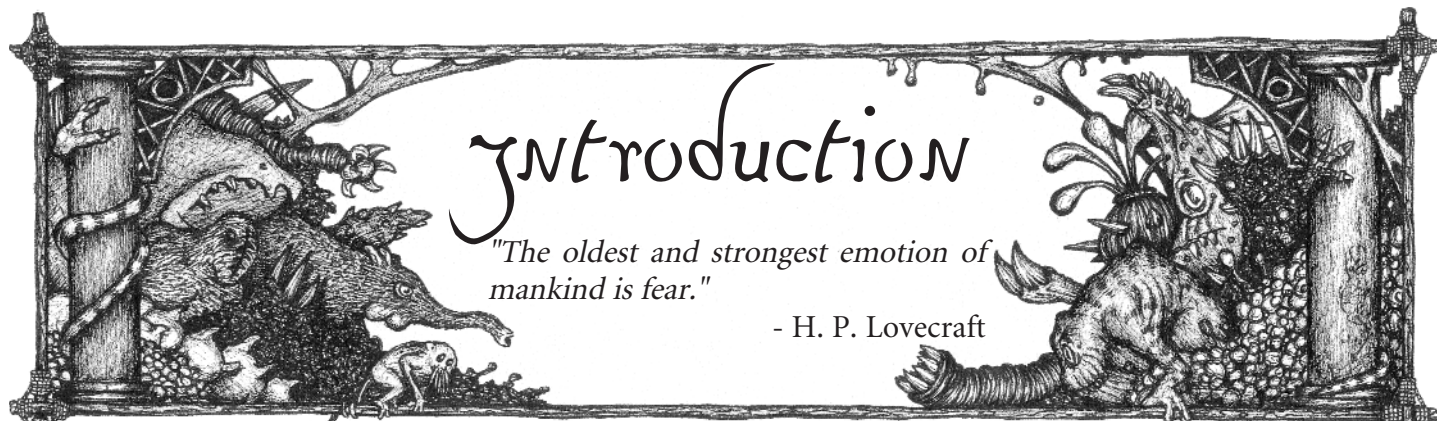
All you need to play Call of Cthulhu for the first time is this book, some dice, plenty of imagination, and your friends.

Welcome to the Worlds of Call of Cthulhu!

Fergie, Charlie Krank, Lynn Willis, and Dustin Wright.
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Horror. Terror. Fear is at the core of our existence. Horror stories are a catharsis for the dread we hold in our souls on a day-to-day level. Call of Cthulhu is a game that lets you explore that fear, bringing monsters and terrors out into the daylight, and fighting against them for the sake of soul and sanity.

If you've played other roleplaying games (RPGs) before, then you have an idea of how it works: A group of players sit around a table and describe the actions of their characters, while one player (the game master, or "keeper" as he is known in Call of Cthulhu) guides the story along. It is like an interactive novel where one person tells the story, and the players take part in the story. However, Call of Cthulhu is different from most other RPGs. In Call of Cthulhu, the players portray ordinary people cast into extraordinary circumstances. You have no magic weapons with which to assault the dark things of the world. You cannot count on the local king sending armies of minions to your aid. You simply have your wits, your courage and your skill to fight the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos. In its simplest form, Call of Cthulhu is a game about heroes. The heroes who realize that the world is crawling with alien terrors bent on the destruction of humanity, and who take that fight back to the abyss itself.

The simplest metaphor for a game of Call of Cthulhu can be likened to the fairy tale of the Little Dutch Boy. The dam had a crack and the Little Dutch Boy had to stand there with his finger in the hole to keep the water from flooding out and destroying the nearby town. However, instead of how the original tale played out, imagine that on the other side of that dam is a bloodthirsty shark, which is gnawing away at the Dutch Boy. He loses one finger, so he must put another one in. Then he

loses another finger, and another. The hole is getting bigger, and he must stick his entire arm in, and the shark keeps biting. But if he fails, if he leaves his post, the dam will collapse, and many lives will be lost. And so he stays, resolute in his convictions. He may die, but humanity will live because of him.

The booklet you now hold in your hands gives you all the information you will need to create a character for the Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game, as well as a brief overview of how to play the game. Many of the game's details are glossed over here

What's a Cthulhu?

The Call of Cthulhu game is inspired by the "Cthulhu Mythos" stories of Depression-era author H.P. Lovecraft and his imitators. Cthulhu is the name of a tremendously evil, alien priest/god/monster which features in many of Lovecraft's works, most notably, "The Call of Cthulhu." Countless stories have been written over the years expanding on his creations. Pulp authors such as Robert E. Howard and Robert Bloch extrapolated Lovecraft's ideas into their own. Current horror writers such as Clive Barker, Stephen King, Kathe Koja and Caitlin R. Kiernan show a clear influence from Lovecraft.

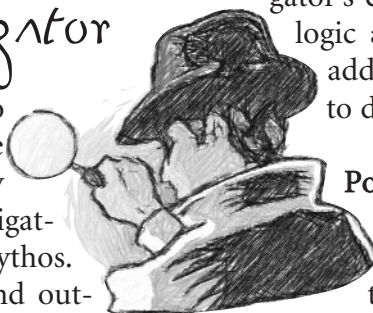
If you've never read any of Lovecraft's work before, you have missed out. Penguin Books has two collections of his work that should get you started. "The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Tales" and "The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Tales" should give you a good introduction to his work.

simply because Call of Cthulhu is a game of mystery. Often, if the players understand too much of the goings-on behind the rules, it can break the atmosphere of tension necessary for a good mystery.

Once you've played a game or two, you will probably want to take a look at the full rules for Call of Cthulhu which are available from any good game store, most large bookstores, or directly from us at www.chaosium.com. To create your character, you will only need four ordinary 6-sided dice. To play the game, you should invest in a full set of polyhedral dice. At least one each 4, 8, 10, 12 and 20-sided dice are needed to play the game.

Creating An Investigator

To play Call of Cthulhu you need to create a character. Characters in the game are called "investigators" as they primarily spend their play time investigating the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos. Creating your character is simple, and outlined below. It will be helpful for you to have a piece of scratch paper handy, or ideally a Call of Cthulhu character sheet. There is one located on page 19 or you can download one for free at www.chaosium.com. Click on "Free Downloads" then "Character Sheets, Keeper Forms, and more."



The Primary Attributes

To begin, a Call of Cthulhu character has seven primary attributes. Each of these attributes is described below, as well as noting how many dice you roll to determine the value of each attribute.

Strength (STR) measures the raw physical power your investigator can bring to bear. It influences the amount of damage he can deliver with a punch or kick, as well as his grip, or ability to lift heavy items. Roll 3 six-sided dice and add them together to determine the value for STR.

Constitution (CON) is a measure of the hardiness of your investigator. It influences the amount of damage you can take before going unconscious or dying as well as how resistant you are to diseases and poison. Roll 3 six-sided dice and add them

together to determine the value for CON.

Dexterity (DEX) is a measure of your investigator's agility and speed. Roll 3 six-sided dice and add them together to determine the value for DEX.

Size (SIZ) is a measure of your investigator's physical mass. It influences how much damage you can take, as well as how much you can deliver. Also, as a measure of your Investigator's weight, it influences the ability of horrible monsters to pick him up and toss him around the room. Roll 2 six-sided dice, add them together and add 6 to that total to determine the value for SIZ.

Intelligence (INT) is a rough guide to your investigator's cunning and ability to make leaps of logic and intuition. Roll 2 six-sided dice, add them together and add 6 to that total to determine the value for INT.

Power (POW) is a combination of personal magnetism, spirit, and mental stability. It influences your character's ability to cast magical spells, as well as his resistance to the sanity-blasting horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos. Roll 3 six-sided dice and add them together to determine the value for POW.

Appearance (APP) measures the charm and physical appeal of your character. Roll 3 six-sided dice and add them together to determine the value for APP.

Education (EDU) is a measure of the knowledge which your investigator has accumulated through formal education, or the venerated "School of Hard Knocks." Roll 3 six-sided dice, add them together and add 3 to the total to determine the value for EDU.

Note, that before play begins, you may swap around any attributes which use the same dice to determine their value. In other words, you could swap any of the values for Strength, Constitution, Dexterity, Appearance or Power with each other. You could only swap Size and Intelligence with each other. Education remains static. If the rolls you get for your investigator are abysmal, you should consider rerolling a few. The average attrib-

utes should be around 10-11, if you have too many lower than that, you should pick one or two to reroll. Note that often playing a character with sub-standard attributes can be just as satisfying as playing one with exceptionally high attributes. It all comes down to creating a character with which you are comfortable.

The Secondary Attributes

There are a number of attributes which are determined after you have figured the attributes above. These are *Idea*, *Knowledge*, *Luck*, *Damage Bonus*, *Magic Points*, *Hit Points*, and *Sanity*.

Idea is simply your INT score multiplied by 5. This score is used as a percentile roll to give your investigator information, or to make leaps of deduction in certain situations. Percentile rolls will be explained later in the "Game Systems" chapter.

Knowledge is your EDU score multiplied by 5. This score is used as a percentile roll to show how your investigator's education and training gives insight certain situations.

Luck is your POW score multiplied by 5. This score is used as a percentile roll to give your character gleans of insight in certain situations. The Luck roll is often used to give your character a last chance in a crisis situation, or to cause bad things to happen to the only investigator in the group to fail the roll.

Damage Bonus is how much extra damage your investigator does with a successful close-combat attack. Add your STR and SIZ and consult the Damage Bonus Table to find your damage bonus.

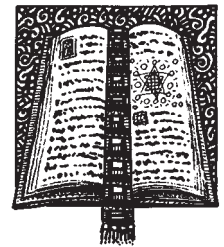
Magic Points are equal to your POW. MPs fluctuate up and down as you cast spells or activate arcane alien devices. If your investigator's MPs ever

fall below 0, he goes unconscious until he can recover them.

Hit Points are figured by adding SIZ and CON together, then dividing the total by two and rounding up. As your investigator takes damage from combat or other events, your HPs will drop. If you drop to only 2 HPs, your investigator goes unconscious. If he hits -2 or lower, he is dead.

Sanity (SAN) begins at a level equal to your POW score multiplied by 5. Circle the value that corresponds to this number on the character sheet. This score is used as a percentile roll that presents your investigator's ability to remain stoic in the face of horrors. As you face the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos your SAN score fluctuates. It can raise above it's starting level, but can never be higher than 99 minus the value of your Cthulhu Mythos skill (q.v.).

Occupation and Skills



At this point, you should have an idea of what your investigator does for a living. This choice of occupation will influence the selection of skills for your character. To begin with, choose an occupation. Anything you think would be interesting to play is valid, but you should confirm this with your keeper. Some favorite occupations in Call of Cthulhu are Professor, Treasure Seeker, Occultist, and Archeologist. However, the occupations are only limited by your imagination.

Once you have select the occupation, you should look at the list of skills on you character sheet. Choose 8 skills which are appropriate for your character's chosen occupation. These are your "Occupation Skills."

You now have to assign percentile points to the skills on the character sheet. Before you do so, please note that no skill can start play with a rating higher than 75. Additionally no character can add points to the Cthulhu Mythos skill during character creation. It is assumed that all beginning characters are ignorant of the threat of the Mythos.

You multiply your EDU score by 15 to get the number of points to spread amongst your Occupation Skills. Add any number of these points to the eight skills you chose. Each skill on the character sheet also has a number in parenthesis next to it. This is the "Base Chance" that every investigator

Damage Bonus Table	
STR + SIZ	DB
2 to 12	-1D6
13 to 16	-1D4
17 to 24	+0
25 to 32	+1D4
33 to 40	+1D6

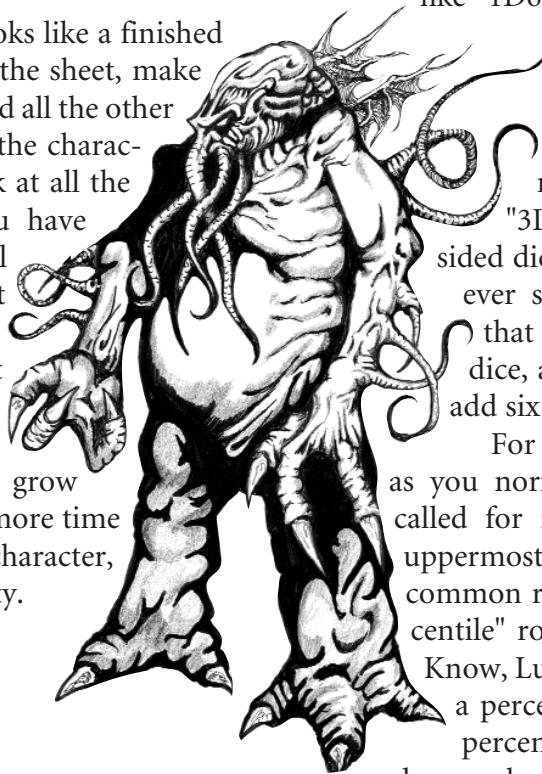
has with that skill. Any points you add to a skill stack with its Base Chance. For example, if you add 15 points to the "Conceal" skill (Base Chance of 15) you would have "Conceal: 30".

After selecting the Occupation Skills, select your Hobby Skills. These are skills that your character has acquired over the course of his life. To determine how many points you have to spend on them, multiply your INT score by 10. Divide those points amongst any skills on the sheet you would like (again, you can't put points into Cthulhu Mythos). Note that you may wish to save a few skill points to buy combat skills such as "Gun," "Sword," etc.

Final Touches

You now have something that looks like a finished character. Go back to the top of the sheet, make sure you have a name, sex, age, and all the other information filled in. Look over the character sheet and taking one last look at all the skills, attributes, etc. which you have generated. From looking over all this material, you will begin to get an idea of who this character is.

You might want to fill out some notes on your investigator's background and personality. Who is he really? Where did he grow up? What is his family like? The more time you spend thinking about your character, the more he develops a personality.



The Game System

Playing the Game

In a roleplaying game, there is no winner or loser. You all win if everyone tells a good story and is moved by the drama of the tale. You lose if nobody has fun. However, to keep things moving along during the course of the game you will be called on to roll dice to determine the outcome of critical events. Generally, "Skill Checks" may be called for in stressful situations. Walking down a clear hallway is not a stressful situation. Running down a rubble-strewn corridor while being chased by

howling, slaving ghouls is.

The following section outlines the basics of playing a game of Call of Cthulhu.

Dice Rolling & Skill Checks

Different types of polyhedral dice are used to determine the outcome of events in a Call of Cthulhu session. You should be able to purchase a set of these dice in any good game store. You will want at least one each of 4-, 6-, 8-, 10-, 12-, and 20-sided die. You will also want to pick up dice referred to as "percentage" dice. These dice will have ten sides numbered "10, 20, 30, etc." Dice notation in the game is simple. You will always know what type and number of dice to roll when you see something

like "1D6" or "3D10." The first number is the quantity of dice to roll. The second number (after the "D") tells you what type. So, "1D6" means to roll a single 6-sided die. "3D10" tells you to roll 3 ten-sided dice and add the values. If you ever see something like "2D6+6" that means to roll 2 six-sided dice, add them together, and then add six to that sum.

For the most part, dice are rolled as you normally would. Roll the dice called for in the rules, and read the uppermost number. One of the most common rolls you will make is a "percentile" roll. All skills, as well as Idea, Know, Luck and Sanity rolls start with a percentile roll. To do this, roll a percentile die as described above, and a regular ten-sided die. Then simply add the two numbers together. If the number you rolled is equal to or under the skill listed on your character sheet, you have succeeded.

Example: Jane is rolling to see if her character spots a zombie sneaking up on her in a dark graveyard. She has a "Spot Hidden" skill of 45%. She rolls the two dice, getting a "60" on the percentile die, and "3" on the ten-sided die. Adding them together, she gets a total of 63, well over her skill of 45%. She never sees the zombie coming.

Generally, the Keeper for your game tells you when you can attempt a skill roll.

Additionally, when you successfully roll a given

skill, put a check mark in the box next to it on your sheet. You can only get one check per skill at a time. At the end of the scenario, your Keeper will tell you to "roll for skill increases." At this time, roll percentile dice against any checked skills. If you roll over the value of the skill, you can then add 1D6 points to the skill's value. In other words, the more you know about something, the harder it is to learn anything new, or get any better.

The Resistance Table

On occasion, you may need to roll a test that's not covered by the skills on your sheet. In this instance, you will look at your characteristics and determine which is best to use, and then match them against a value set by the Keeper on the resistance table below.

For example, let's say your character with a STR score of 13 is arm-wrestling with Burly Bob, who has a STR of 18. You look up your STR of 13 on the Resistance Table as the "Active Characteristic" then look up Burly Bob's as the "Passive Characteristic." The value that meets on both axes of the graph shows you the number you have to hit. If you roll equal or under that number, you have succeeded. However, in a case of two people or a person and a monster resisting each other, the other character gets a chance to roll as well. In a case such as this, ties extend the action, and the first character to roll a success when the opponent rolls a failure wins.

However, let's say your character is barreling down a rubble-strewn hallway in a musty tomb. A pack of ghouls are running behind him, hungry for his tasty flesh and organs. The Keeper might tell you that you have to make a resisted DEX test against a difficulty of 14 or you trip and fall. In this case, match your DEX as the active characteristic against the passive value of 14. If you succeed, you keep running. If you fail, you fall, and are probably doomed.

Again, the Keeper could also call for a test of your DEX against the DEX of the ghouls to see if they overcome you. In this case, you'd roll just as when facing off against Burly Bob, but using DEX instead of STR.

Sanity

The horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos threaten the mind as much as the body. The psychic shock from

encountering the alien terrors of the Mythos is one of the primary dangers that characters in the game will endure. Investigating mysteries in a Call of Cthulhu game take a dreadful toll on the sanity of the investigators, and eventually lead to madness.

Whenever you encounter the horrors of the Mythos, or come across something mundane yet horrific (such as stumbling across your best friend's mutilated corpse) you make a percentile roll against your current Sanity score. If you roll over your current Sanity, you lose a greater amount of Sanity points. If you roll under, you will lose less, or none. The Sanity loss is generally described for an event as something like "0/1D6" or "2/1D10." The number before the slash mark tells you how much Sanity your character loses if he rolls under his current SAN score; the number after the slash is how much your character loses if you roll over your current SAN.

When confronted with sanity-blasting events, your Keeper will ask you to roll the percentile dice and then let you know how much SAN you lose depending on if you succeed or fail.

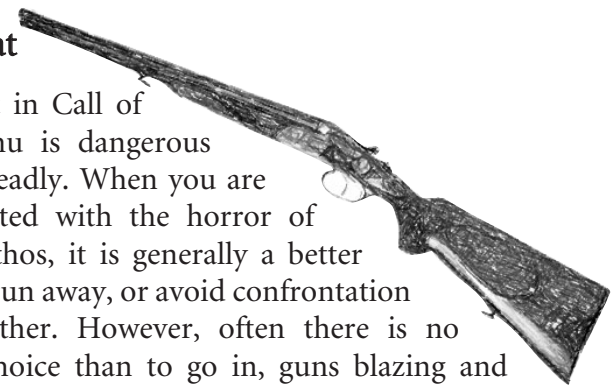
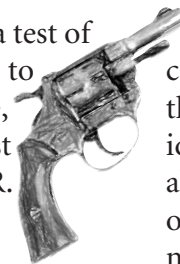
Unfortunately, regaining lost Sanity is a long, arduous process. You may have to check your character into an asylum, or seek other forms of psychotherapy to get those points back. Generally, at the successful end of each scenario you should get a few points back as a reward. Additionally, when you raise a skill above 90% through experience, you get a few points added to your Sanity as well.

As your SAN score slips lower, your character becomes less and less stable and his ability to function decreases. Full rules for Sanity are not included here, but your keeper will let you know the effects of this degradation when you play the game.

Combat

Combat in Call of Cthulhu is dangerous and deadly. When you are confronted with the horror of the Mythos, it is generally a better idea to run away, or avoid confrontation all together. However, often there is no other choice than to go in, guns blazing and make the best of it.

The rules for combat in Call of Cthulhu are simple. When a combat occurs, all investigators, as well as characters and monsters controlled by the



The Resistance Table

		Active Characteristic																															
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Passive Characteristic	1	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
	2	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
	3	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
	4	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	5	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	6	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	7	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	8	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	9	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	10	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	11	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	12	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	13	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	14	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	15	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—	—
	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—	—
	19	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—	—
	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—	—
	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—	—
	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	—
	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	—
	24	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	—
	25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	—
	26	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	—
	27	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	—
	28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	—
	29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
	30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55
	31	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	05	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50

For success, roll 1D100 equal to or less than the indicated number.

Weapon Table		
Weapon %	Damage	Base
Small Knife	1D4+db	25
Sword	1D6+1+db	10
Handgun	1D10	20
Shotgun	4D6	30
Rifle	2D6+4	25

keeper act in order of their DEX scores. The highest DEX goes first, and they go in descending order from there.

A combat round in Call of Cthulhu is timed vaguely, and is best described as "long enough for everyone to do one or two interesting things." The flow of the round is best controlled by the keeper, and hard and fast rules for movement and actions are not part of the game. The keeper should simply give everyone a chance to do something quickly while being aware of the narrative flow.

When it comes time for you to attack, you simply choose a target and roll the appropriate skill. If you are shooting with a gun, you might have "Rifle 50%" and you would use that skill. If you are trying to punch or kick, you use the appropriately named skill. As with all skill rolls, you roll percentile dice

and try to roll equal to or less than the designated value on your character sheet.

If you succeed in the roll, you hit your opponent and do damage appropriate to the weapon you are using. The Weapon Table gives some sample damage values. Note that most "melee" weapons (i.e.: a weapon you use in close combat such as a knife, brass knuckles, or even your fists) also adds your character's "Damage Bonus" to the listed damage.

When a target is hit, roll the damage dice and subtract the total value from its total Hit Points. Some targets have armor, or resistances that reduces the value of the damage, causing them to lose fewer Hit Points. This is rare for investigators in a modern setting, but most monsters you will face probably have some sort of armor.

If your investigator is taking damage, note that as soon as he is reduced to 2 or less Hit Points, he falls unconscious. If the investigator drops below - 2 Hit Points, he dies.

Recommended Books & Movies

The following books and films should get you in the proper mindset to play a game of Call of Cthulhu. Obviously, you do not have to be familiar with any of these before playing the game, but if you are so inspired, so much the better.

Books and Stories		
H.P. Lovecraft	Caitlin R. Kiernan	Clive Barker
The Dunwich Horror	Silk	The Books of Blood (series)
The Shadow Over Innsmouth	Threshold	The Hellbound Heart
At The Mountains of Madness	Low Red Moon	
The Thing on the Doorstep	Kathe Koja	Ramsey Campbell
Herbert West: Re-Animator	The Cipher	Cold Print
	Strange Angels	
films		
Alien	The Haunting	The Ring
Dagon	In the Mouth of Madness	The Thing
Dawn of the Dead	Re-Animator	



Keeper Information

More people have played this *Call of Cthulhu* scenario than any other. Under the title "The Haunted House" it has been included with the game since the beginning. For many it was their first Cthulhu adventure. Most people familiar with the game remember being baffled by it. Its title has changed to avoid confusion with another scenario in another book, and to encourage long-time keepers to give it a fresh look.

"The Haunting" is recommended for beginning investigators. Keepers can darken or lighten its tone by adjusting damages and Corbitt's motive: it offers genuine challenge, and one or more investigators easily can die at Corbitt's hand.

The nominal year is 1920. It could be any era. The nominal location is Boston, Massachusetts, but wherever the keeper desires will do.

Call of Cthulhu maps are usually sketched free-hand, rather than drawn out precisely. The relationships shown are important, but exact distances and angles are not. Partly this is in expectation that the keeper or a player will sketch out larger free-hand versions of the plans on the spot, and partly because traps in *Call of Cthulhu* are intellectual or emotional ones which the keeper can describe, rather than physical traps which are camouflaged and waiting to be sprung by some unlucky movement.

To lengthen play, increase the front part of this scenario, characterize the landlord, the negotiations with the investigators, and the process of uncovering the clues. To shorten the length of play, bring the investigators directly to the Corbitt house. Nearly all Cthulhu scenarios begin with the accumulation of evidence. The keeper may want to caution novice investigators about this if they do

not get a chance to collect clues and conduct interviews. This adventure should take a few hours to complete.

Study Corbitt's powers, and play them keenly. Most of the keeper's fun in this scenario comes from the baffling events in upstairs room #3.

The Keeper's Secret

The body of Walter Corbitt is buried in the basement of a house. The mind of Walter Corbitt still lives, is still aware of events within the house, and still has influence in particular parts of the house. Corbitt knows Mythos magic that preserves his identity and enables him to animate his body after death. He sometimes vampirizes or otherwise preys upon the current residents of the house, and drives away or slays those who learn his secret. To solve the mystery posed to them, the investigators must learn about Corbitt. Corbitt will be aware of the investigators and will try to mislead them concerning the house. Failing that, he tries to murder them.

The Problem

A landlord asks the investigators to examine the old Corbitt house in central Boston. The former tenants were involved in a tragedy, and the owner wishes to understand the mysterious happenings at the house and set matters straight. He offers to reimburse the player-characters for their time and trouble.

How the landlord learns about the investigators, what he will pay, and even what he says he wants done can be negotiated by keeper and players.

Failing other ideas, try the following. (1) The landlord's cousin was friendly with one of the investigators at the university - whichever investigator had some interest in the mysterious and the

occult. The cousin made the recommendation. (2) The landlord offers the investigators \$20 per day total, with a bonus of \$100 dollars when they can give his property a clean bill of health. (3) He wants their assurance that he can rent out the property again without provoking some new tragedy.

The landlord gives the investigators the keys, the address, and \$50 cash in advance. The rest is up to them.

What Tragedy Ensued

The Macario family moved into the house in 1918. A year after moving in, the father had a serious accident and shortly thereafter went violently insane. He was committed. Within the last month, the mother also went insane. Both babbled of a haunting form with burning eyes. They told of inexplicable events in the house. Neither would enter one particular upstairs bedroom. The landlord knew the house was rumored to be haunted before he bought the place, but the property was too good a bargain to resist. The landlord wants the investigators to put the rumors and his mind at rest or else to exorcise the haunts.

Player Information

Now the players can do what they want. Acting as the landlord, the keeper should answer enough questions to give them lines for inquiry, but the landlord has never seen a haunting or strange event at the house, nor does he know what the Macarios saw. If the players cannot agree about what to do, they can roll dice to resolve the conflict. The evidence in the rest of this subsection is arranged in the most likely order of investigator encounter.

If the players immediately send the investigators to the Corbitt house, caution them but let them have their way.

The Macario Family

Husband and wife were committed to Roxbury Sanitarium, a few miles from Boston. Vittorio is still quite mad, and an interview with the mumbling, huddled man uncovers nothing. Gabriela is conscious and approachable, though the keeper

should end the interview quickly since the questions greatly upset her.

Mrs. Macario has little to say. An evil presence lives in the house, one of which she hates to think. At night she would sometimes wake to find it leaning over her. When it was angry, the thing might cause dishes or other objects to fly around the room. Mostly, it hated her husband, Vittorio, and concentrated on him. The keeper can answer more questions, but she is unable to give specific information. After the investigators have visited the house, the keeper might let her be more precise and forthcoming.

*While at the sanitarium, the investigators learn that the Macarios' doctor is out of town. Filling in for him is a visiting doctor from Arkham Sanitarium, Doctor Hardstrom. While speaking with the investigators, Doctor Hardstrom mentions that he has a similarly traumatized patient at Arkham Sanitarium. The keeper should note that this is an adventure hook that leads to the Chaosium supplement **Arkham** (CHA 2342).*

The two young Macario boys are being cared for by relatives in Baltimore. The investigators can visit them, but they know nothing except that they miss their parents and that in their former home they often dreamed of a strange man with burning eyes.

Newspaper Accounts

With a successful **Idea** roll, one of the investigators suggests using the morgue (the clippings files) at the *Boston Globe*, a daily newspaper of good repute. Coming as a group, the investigators need a successful **Fast Talk** or **Persuade** roll to get in, a letter of reference from the Mayor's office, or an authorizing telephone call from any editor on the paper.

The pertinent clippings are filed by street address. The stories concerning the Macarios are brief and uninformative: the *Globe* reported the facts as the investigators already know them.

Also present is a 1918 feature story, which was never published. It states that in 1880, a family of French immigrants moved into the house but fled after a series of violent accidents left the parents dead and three children crippled. The house long stood vacant.

Sometimes facsimiles of newspaper accounts are supplied in adventures.

In 1909 another family moved in, and immediately fell prey to illnesses. In 1914, the oldest brother went mad and killed himself with a kitchen knife, and the heartbroken family moved out. In 1917, a third family rented the house, but they left almost immediately, after they all became ill at the same time.

If an investigator successfully flirts with the librarian (**APP x3** or less or successful **Credit Rating** roll), he or she happens to remark that the *Globe* files go back no further than a fire in 1878. The Corbitt House may be mentioned earlier than that.

Keepers can include additional information about the house from other sources, such as deeds or journals written by previous occupants.

The Main Library

This worthy institution has several interesting items tucked away, but the investigators need a separate successful **Library Use** roll to find each of the following items:

- ❑ In 1835, a prosperous merchant builds the house, but immediately falls ill and sells it to a Mr. Walter Corbitt, esquire.
- ❑ In 1852, Walter Corbitt is sued by neighbors, who petition to force him to leave the area "in consequence of his surious [sic] habits and unuspicious demeanor."
- ❑ Evidently Corbitt wins the lawsuit. His obituary in 1866 states that he still lived in the same place. It also states that a second lawsuit was being waged to prevent Corbitt from being buried in his basement, as provided by his will.
- ❑ No outcome to the second lawsuit is recorded.

Each item is in a different newspaper and takes four hours to find.

Hall of Records

With a successful **Library Use** roll, civil court records show that the executor of Walter Corbitt's will was Reverend Michael Thomas, pastor of the

Chapel of Contemplation & Church of Our Lord Granter of Secrets. The register of churches (also available in the Hall or Records) notes the closure of the Chapel of Contemplation in 1912.

If the investigators think to look up the Chapel of Contemplation in criminal court records, they find references to actions taken in 1912, but the actual records are not present. If the investigators have been courteous to the clerk, he points out that serious crimes would be handled in the county, commonwealth, or federal courts. A successful **Law** roll can indicate the same thing. The records of city officers participating in arrests or seizures are filed at Central Police Station.

Higher Courts; Central Police Station

Use a **Law**, **Credit Rating**, or **Fast Talk** roll to get access to the records. They concern a secret raid on the Chapel of Contemplation. The police raid was occasioned by affidavits swearing that members of the church were responsible for the disappearances of neighborhood children. During the raid, three policemen and seventeen cult members were killed by gunplay or fire. Autopsy reports are singularly undetailed and uninformative, as though the coroner had not actually performed examinations.

Though 54 members of the church were arrested, all but eight were released. The records hint of illegal intervention in the proceedings by important local official, offering an explanation of shy stories of the battle - the biggest criminal action in the city's history - never appeared in print.

Pastor Michael Thomas was arrested and sentenced to 40 years in prison on five counts of second-degree murder. He escaped from prison in 1917 and fled the state.

*While investigators are prowling through the clippings morgue, they discover a clipping that describes a raid that took place on the Congregational Church in Kingsport, 1731. Although this event is unrelated, the similarity should attract the investigators' attention. The keeper should note this information leads to an adventure in the Chaosium Supplement **Kingsport** (CHA 8804).*

The Neighborhood

Most of the people who lived in the area before WWI have moved away or died. New offices and businesses have replaced the nineteenth-century homes, and the Corbitt place with its overgrown

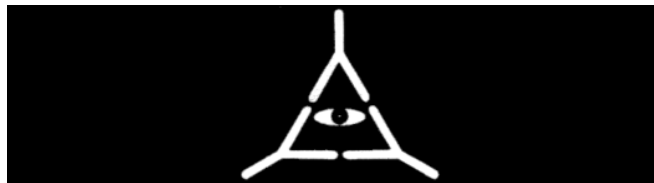
front yard is now the only private residence on the block. The investigators do find a Mr. Dooley, a vendor of cigars and newspapers, who remembers the area vaguely. He is able to point out where the Chapel of Contemplation stood, a few blocks distant.

The Chapel of Contemplation

What is left of it stands at the end of a crooked, dingy street. The ruins of it are so weathered and so overgrown with greenery that the gray stone rubble seems more like natural stone than former walls and foundation. The investigators pass a slumping wall bearing white-painted symbols, apparently freshly swabbed -- three Y's arranged in a triangle so that the top elements of each Y touch the other two Y's. In the center so-created is painted a staring eye. When the investigators near the signs, they begin to feel irritated tingles in their foreheads, like headaches but not quite. While they remain near the chapel, they continue to feel this, and finally cannot wait to get away from the area. When they leave, the irritation stops.

The nearby player aid is an image of this symbol. Show it to the players.

Player Aid: Symbol in the Chapel

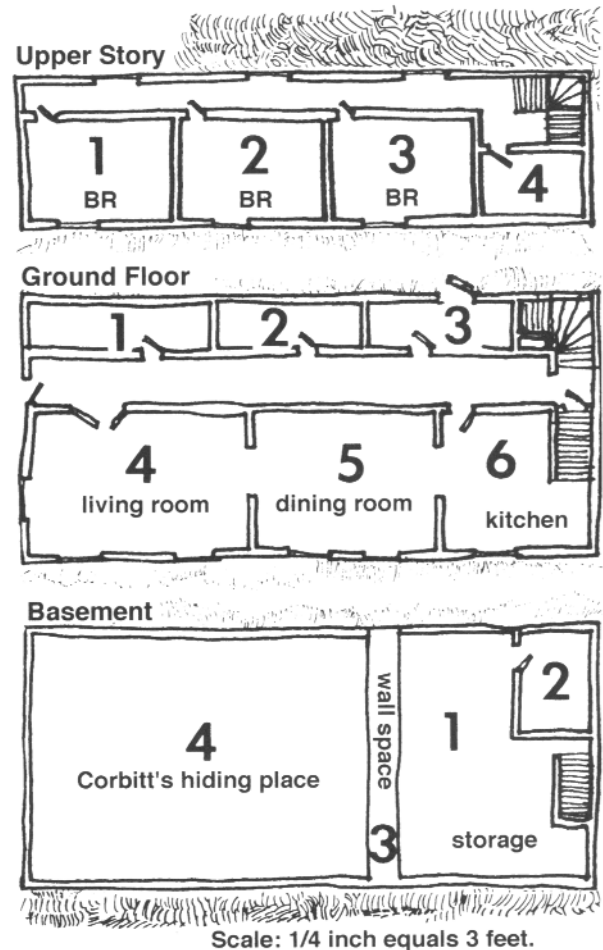


Prowling the chapel, they find mostly blocks of granite, half-burnt rotted timbers, and ancient rubbish. At some point they become aware that the earth they stand on is covering weakened floorboards: call for D100 rolls equal to or less than **DEX x4**. Those who get failing rolls are unable to grab something secure when they feel the floor give way. They fall ten feet into the basement. Each falling investigator loses 1D6 hit points.

This part of the basement was sealed off from the rest, reached by separate stairs now buried under tons of rubble. Within the this room are two skeletons dressed in fragment or silk robes, perhaps cultists who hid from the police and then perished in the fire.

Also in the room are cabinets of moldering church records. At one point (successful **Library Use** roll to find this) a journal of cult activities

Corbitt's House



states that Walter Corbitt was buried in the basement of Corbitt's house "in accordance with his wishes and with the wishes of that one who waits in the dark."

Chained to a rotting desk is an enormous volume bound in animal hide, handwritten in Latin, but so rotten and worm-eaten that nothing can be made of it except occasional phrases or letters - unless the keeper chooses otherwise.

The Old Corbitt Place

HOUSE AND GROUNDS: The brick bungalow is overshadowed by taller, newer office buildings on either side. The house fronts the street. In the rear are overgrown plantings and a half-collapsed arbor. Access to the rear exists on either side of the residence.

Studying the house, the observer is impressed by the way the house seems to withdraw into the shadows cast by the flanking buildings, and how the blank curtained windows hide all understanding of what lies within.

Investigators who have already undergone mysterious or occult events in their lives sense something ominous within, but can point to no evidence to support their feelings.

The front door is secured with a single lock. Four additional bolts seem to have been added within the last year or two. If the investigators think to test the ground floor windows, they find that all of them have been nailed shut from the inside.

Study the plan provided. Sketch out each floor as the investigators explore it.

Ground Floor Interior

ROOM 1: a storage room, filled with boxes and such junk as rusted water tanks and old bicycles. At the right end of the room is a cupboard, boarded shut. If it is wrenched open, three bound books are found within, the diaries of a certain W. Corbitt, a former inhabitant of the house, as the address on the flyleaf of volume one testifies.

The Corbitt Diaries are in plain English, though sometimes strangely phrased. The three volumes take a total of two days to read, add +4 to Cthulhu Mythos, and cost 1D4 Sanity points. They describe Corbitt's various occult experiments, including a summoning and other magic, and clearly describe the technique for Summon / Bind Dimensional Shambler (see the spells in this book for that particular one). No other spells exist in the diaries. This spell takes 2D6 weeks to learn after the diaries are read, likely too long to be useful in this adventure.

*Also located in this room is a book about demonology. The title is faded and indiscernable, but the majority of the pages remain legible. Several of the pages are dog-eared in a section about the Knights of the Silver Twilight. The keeper should note that this leads to an adventure in Chaosium's supplement **Shadows of Yog-Sothoth** (CHA 2397).*

ROOM 2: a second storage room, this one mostly devoted to broken furniture and other items which might be broken up to burn in a wood stove.

ROOM 3: the mud room, where hang overcoats, galoshes, hats, and umbrellas. Several backs of coal for the living room's free-standing stove are here. A successful **Idea** roll notices that the side door is secured with three bolts and two locks.

ROOM 4: the living room. It contains convention-

al furnishings such as a radio, couch, stuffed chairs, and shelves laden with gewgaws. A successful **Idea** roll notices the unusual quantities of crosses, images of the Virgin, and other Catholic religious artifacts.

*On the wall in this room is a bizarre painting. Investigators who observe it feel inexplicably unsettled. The artist's name is Nelson Blakeley. The keeper should note that this picture leads to an adventure in Chaosium's supplement **Dreamlands**.*

ROOM 5: the dining room, complete with a long mahogany table, a built-in sideboard, and seven chairs. Three places are set, and unused. Scraps of rice soup rots in a tureen.

ROOM 6: a conventional kitchen, with icebox, wood-fed stove and oven, and a meager larder. Some of the foodstuffs are edible year - there is canned soup and meat, rice kernels, several pastas, a few bottles of homemade wine. The produce which did not spoil has been eaten by rats, judging by the spoor left behind.

Upper Floor

ROOM 1: an ordinary bedroom, with a double bed, bookshelf, and window view, apparently the room of Vittorio and Gabriela. More crosses and many candles are here, and a rosary and breviary rest on a table beside the bed.

ROOM 2: two small beds, toys, dressers, and pictures of aircraft and cowboys mark this as the children's bedroom.

ROOM 3: it contains a bed frame, bare bed springs, and a dresser.

Though unused, this room looks like the other two bedrooms. It was once the room of old Corbitt himself. He stayed here so long that his psychic influence lingers on, and he is able to will certain deeds to happen in this room. Whenever he does, a horrible smell manifests - a sure sign of the Mythos.

*Snooping investigators will find a business card inside one of the dresser drawers. It bears the name of Doctor Henry Armitage, and on the back is a telephone number. The keeper should note that this leads to an adventure in Chaosium's supplement **Dunwich** (CHA 8802).*

- ❑ He can cause loud thumping noises to emanate from this room. These noises can be heard from anywhere in the house.
- ❑ He can form a pool of blood (taken from rats he slaughters) on the floor, or to drip down from the ceiling or walls.
- ❑ He can make a rattling, scratching sound on the windowpane or door.
- ❑ He can impel the bed at good speed, fast enough to strike a strong blow against anything in the room.

Though Corbitt lays low at first, if the investigators seem determined to learn the secrets of the house, then Corbitt tries to convince them that this room is the center of the psychic disturbance. To this end, he uses the pools of blood and the thumping.

If an investigator is unconvinced, Corbitt tries to lure him into this room and kill him, first attracting the investigator to the window by making it rattle, then causing the bed to move rapidly, hitting the investigator and throwing him through the window. The broken glass and fall costs the victim 2D6 hit points.

ROOM 4: sink, bathtub, and a water closet with an overhead tank. Towels and other possessions are still here typical to a family of four. A brackish pool of water has collected in the bathtub, fed by a dripping faucets which cannot quite be closed.

The Basement

ROOM 1: the door to the basement has a lock and three bolts, able to open from the upstairs side only. Below is the main basement storage room. The stairs are in poor repair, and Corbitt has turned off the electricity to the basement at the fuse box upstairs in the kitchen. Each investigator must receive a **DEX x7** or less roll, or lose 1D6 points from falling down the rickety stairs.

In the smallish room are scattered tools, pipe, lumber, nails, screws, and so forth. The side walls are of brick. The facing wall (#3) is of wood, as are the walls of the room under the stairs (#2).

THE FLOATING KNIFE: in Room #1, if an investigator searches through the mess and receives a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, he or she finds an old knife with an ornate hilt whose blade is coated with oddly-thick rust. This is Corbitt's magic dagger, and the rust is actually the dried blood of victims. Corbitt can make this knife float in the air and try to stab someone. Each such attempt costs Corbitt 1 magic point; he can make one attack per round, and his chance to hit the target equals Corbitt's current magic points x5 or less on D100. Because the knife moves magically, and does not partake of Corbitt's STR, do not add his damage bonus to a successful attack.

An investigator can try to parry the knife with a garbage can lid (base chance 30%) - nothing else suitable is in the room. Seeing the knife attack in this manner costs each investigator 1/1D4 Sanity points.

The investigator can try to parry the knife out of the air (he or she must receive a D100 roll of DEX or less). If the investigator gets hold, match his or her STR against Corbitt's current magic points. If Corbitt wins, the knife is wrested free and the investigator loses 1 hit point for sliced hands.

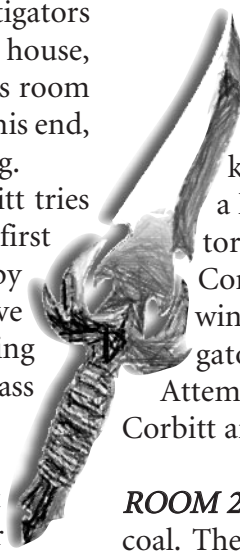
Attempting to wrench the knife away costs Corbitt another magic point.

ROOM 2: an empty storage bin, once intended for coal. The door to the outside coal chute has been nailed shut firmly.

ROOM 3: the wall opposite the stairs is made of closely fitted boards. If they are broken through or removed, a crawl space is visible between two wooden walls. Foul odors emanate from the rats who nest here. If the investigators do not give the rats room to escape, they attack whoever tries to explore this space. There are six rat-packs.

Carved into the inner wall are the words "Chapel of Contemplation," but the irregular, scratchy carving takes a successful **Spot Hidden** roll to notice. If the investigators break through this wall, they find themselves in Room 4.

ROOM 4: this is Corbitt's hiding place. He lies motionless and seemingly dead on a pallet in the center of the room. He is described a little later, in "About W. Corbitt." The floor is earthen, and there is a table in the southwest corner with some curled



Rat Packs, *Rattus norvegicus*.

Individual rats are not worthy opponents, but an infestation of rats can be daunting. Assume ten rats per pack, and per round damage of 1D3 hit points. Choose the number of rat packs in the attack, multiply that by 5, and use the product of these numbers as the percentage chance of the packs to attack successfully. A successful attack by an investigator kills one rat and chases away the rest of that pack, lowering the general effectiveness of the rat pack attacks. Rat packs exist only for the purposes of gaming.

papers on it. They crumble to dust if touched. What the investigators can see looks like a horoscope.

If they retrieve or photograph this material, the keeper should disclose its true nature in some later adventure.

Corbitt needs 2 magic points to move his body for five combat rounds, so he is reluctant to move at all unless threatened. Then he rises from his pallet, costing all viewers 1/1D8 Sanity points each, and attacks.

While still on the pallet, he may decide to cast spells, if he has not already done so.

Conclusion

If the investigators have solved the mystery and overthrown Corbitt, the landlord pays off promptly and happily. If they report to him that nothing was wrong, he spends a night in the house to make sure, and is stabbed to death in the basement by Corbitt's magic dagger. The investigators then must prove the house is haunted to escape murder charges by the police.

Rewards

If Corbitt is conquered and destroyed, each participating investigator gains 1D6 Sanity points.

Around Corbitt's neck is a black gem fastened

on a chain. If the stone is fished out of his dust by an investigator, the stone dissolves in the investigator's hand and adds 1 POW to his characteristic. This magical stone helped fuel Corbitt's undead might.

The investigators can claim for their own the worthless worm-eaten book from the Chapel.

Finally, the landlord gladly pays their fee and bonus.

Extension

Keepers will have noticed the freshly-painted sign on the rubble at the Chapel, as well as the evidence of the cover-up following the raid in 1912. Connections to what may be a great conspiracy are available and might be returned to at some later time.

About W. Corbitt, Esq

He is a drawn, wooden-looking, wizened figure of some six feet, skinny and naked, with ghastly wide-flaring, saucer-like eyes and a nose like a knife blade. He has lost all hair, and his shrunken gums make his teeth look very long. From him comes a sharp, sweet, churning scent, like rotten corn. He might be silent at first, but at some point it will be more convincing to have him growl, screech, cackle, or mock. He does not breathe at all.

Corbitt is not truly a vampire, nor any recognizable monster - he is a sorcerer in the process of

Temporary Insanity

If an investigator loses 5 or more Sanity points as the consequence of a single Sanity roll, he or she has suffered major emotional trauma. The player must roll D100. If the result is equal to or less than INT X5, the investigator fully understands what has been seen, and goes insane for a number of minutes or hours.

If this happens, the keeper may select whether the player faints, has a screaming fit, or flees in panic. This effect will last 1D10+4 combat rounds.

transforming himself into something entirely inhuman.

Sunlight causes him pain and is too bright for him to see in comfortably. It might kill him, but whether it does is for the keeper to determine.

And though he drinks blood for food, he could also eat carrots - drinking blood is just more fun.

His Flesh Ward spell operates as described, but characterize its effect like this: bullets and blows only chip off pieces of his body, making him look even more horrific than he already does. Other

Flesh Ward spells might work in ways which appear to be different.

His dried, iron-hard flesh is invulnerable so long as the spell holds. If damage exceeds the armor, his hit points reduce normally. He never heals. Reaching zero hit points, Corbitt crumbles into dust and never returns.

With his version of the Dominate spell, Corbitt can mentally cloud the mind of one investigator at a time, as long as the target is physically in the house. This costs Corbitt 1 magic point, and he must overcome the target's POW with his own on the Resistance Table. If Corbitt succeeds, the target is in a daze for 2D3 combat rounds (keepers, note that this amount differs from the Dominate spell in the rules). While in this dazed state, the victim is subject to telepathic commands from Corbitt. He or she will not commit suicidal acts, though homicidal ones or idiotic, reckless ones (such as trying to swallow a butcher's knife), might be attempted. Waking, the victim cannot recall what happened.

A Mythos Grimoire

DOMINATE: bends the will of the target to the caster's will. Dominate costs 1 magic point and 1 Sanity point. Match caster and target POW on the Resistance Table: with a success, the target obeys the commands of the caster until the next combat round concludes.

The spell affects one individual at a time and has a maximum of 10 yards. Obviously, the command or commands must be intelligible to the target, and the spell may be broken if a command contradicts the target's basic nature. Dominate can be cast and recast as many times as the caster finds possible, allowing a target to be controlled without interruption for several minutes. Each cast of the spell has the same costs and limits. Recasting is almost instantaneous: Dominate can be cast once per round.

FLESH WARD: grants protection against physical attack. The spell costs 1D4 Sanity points and a varying amount of magic points. Each magic point spent gives the caster (or the chosen target) 1D6 points of armor against non magical attacks. This protection wears off as it blocks damage. If a character had 12 points of Flesh Ward as armor, and was hit for 8 points of damage, his Flesh Ward would be reduced to 4 points, but he or she would take no damage.

The spell takes five rounds to cast, and lasts 24 hours or until the protection is used up. Once cast, the spell may not be reinforced with further magic points, nor recast until the old spell's protection has been used up.

WALTER CORBITT, Immortal So Far, Undead Fiend

STR 18 CON 22 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 18
DEX 07 APP 01 EDU 16 SAN 0 HP 17

Damage bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Floating Magical Dagger, magic points x5%, damage 1D4+2 (no db)

Claws* 50%, damage 2D3 +db

* Being wounded by these talons risks serious disease. A day later, the victim becomes delirious and remains so for 30-CON days recovering at the end of that time with a D100 roll of CON x5 or less. Failing, he or she loses 1D3 CON, and continues in delirium for another 30-CON days, and the procedure repeats until the investigator recovers or dies. CON lost does not regenerate.

Spells: Dominate, Flesh Ward, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler.

Magical Artifact: floating dagger.

Skills: Conceal 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 17%, Lie Motionless 72%, Listen 60%, Mislead 64%, Sneak 80%.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see him move.

Personal Data

Investigator Name _____	Episodes of Insanity _____
Residence _____	_____
Personal Description _____	_____
_____	Wounds & Injuries _____
_____	_____
Family & Friends _____	_____
_____	Marks & Scars _____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Investigator History

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____

Income & Savings

Income _____
Cash on Hand _____
Savings _____
Personal Property _____

Real Estate _____

Adventuring Gear & Possessions

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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Mythos Tomes Read

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Entities Encountered



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_____	_____
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_____	_____
_____	_____

Magical Artifacts / Spells Known

Artifacts _____	Spells _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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