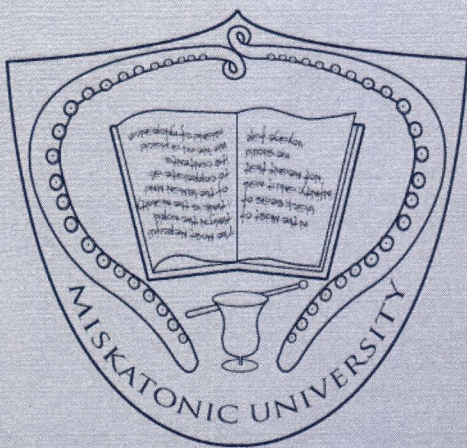
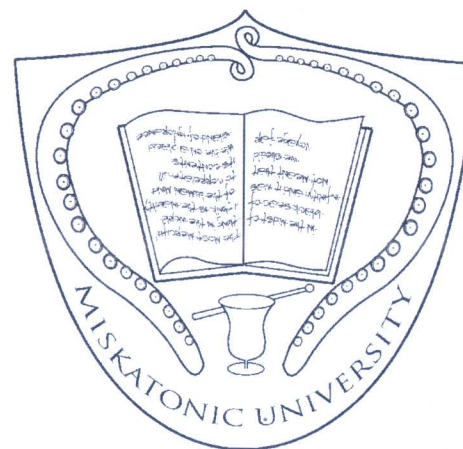


Cthulhu Live's 'Mysteries of the Mythos' Murder at Miskatonic



*By Greg Agostini
and the Skirmisher Game Development Group*

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If you would like to try running or playing scenarios like this with rules for things like combat, skill resolution, sanity checks, and monsters, be sure to check out the *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition* live-action horror role-playing game! Skirmisher products are available in hard copy from game stores, Amazon.com, and directly from the company, and in PDF format from a variety of sources, including DriveThruRPG.com (http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=2132).

Introduction

"Miskatonic University, that ivy league institution of higher learning that has produced many a fine young adult ready to shape the world the way they see fit. With diverse courses such as Peruvian Basket Weaving, Modern Occult Legends, and Ancient Languages, Miskatonic has a class for any student. And with the award-winning sports team, the Fighting Cephalopods, even the athletic scholar can find his path to a brighter future among these hallowed halls.

There is, however, a class not in the curriculum that one person on campus is about to earn a masters in. That class is Murder 101. This class has only one test, but the final is a real killer.

Who will pass this course? Will it be the jock? What about the bookworm? And let us not forget about the professional rival! Only time and your sleuthing skills will uncover who the culprit is in *Murder at Miskatonic*. So get ready to uncover secrets and things that man was not meant to know as you ferret out the murderer. Fail and they go free, succeed and be the savior of the campus. The choice is yours!"

Playing This Scenario

Murder at Miskatonic is a self-contained sleuthing game. It is based on the popular *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition* live-action role-playing game but does not contain any complex rules or game mechanics and is instead based almost entirely on player interaction. It is very easy to run and will usually take about two hours to complete. This time is dependent, of course, on how fast or slow the game master — called the Mystery Keeper here — intends to pace the phases of the event.

As the Mystery Keeper, it is your duty to assign characters to players, prepare the evidence, and help answer any questions that might come up in the course of the event. It is recommended that the Mystery Keeper take on the roles of either Professor Paul Peterson and Officer Justin Case. This is not required and, if desired, you may assign these characters to players. With Professor Peterson being murdered and Officer Case not coming into play until after the murder, however, their roles are limited.

What is Sleuthing?

This game is based on character interaction and using your very own sleuthing skills. Unlike a traditional LARP or RPG, players do not have character stats or a set list of skills. Instead, it is more akin to improv acting and how well players can bluff each other.

What Do You Need To Play?

1. This booklet
2. Imagination
3. About two hours
4. A place to play

Event Preparation

As Mystery Keeper, it is your job to assign characters to the players. Before the event starts, be sure to hand the players their character background. In addition, the innocent characters should get their Alibis and the one player you choose to be the murderer his Deed. And, because any of the players can be the murderer, you can run the event several times with different outcomes.

The players may read their character backgrounds but not their Alibis or Deeds until after the murder occurs, after which they may refer to them. At this point, campus police officer Justin Case examines the Evidence and presents it to the players. During the interview process, Officer Case grills the players and uses the evidence to try and ferret out the guilty party.

After the interrogations, either the Mystery Keeper or Justin Case hands the players a small slip of paper on which they have written down who they think has committed the crime and why. They should then return these to the Mystery Keeper who, once he has collected them all, should read them aloud to the group.

Conclusion

As he readers each solution to the group, the Mystery Keeper notes which are correct and congratulates the players in question. An option is to present a small prize or certificate to those who successfully solved the mystery.

Options

If the Mystery Keeper wants, he or she can provide additional evidence for the players to consider and even appropriate props for use during the session. Especially ambitious Mystery Keepers can stage the murder scene, complete with the body of the professor and the implement of death corresponding to the appropriate deed (e.g., lamp, heavy book, statue). He and the players can even reenact the murder (with the Mystery Keeper or someone else playing the role of the killer), rather than simply describe it. The Mystery Keeper and players are limited only by their imaginations. This game can also be scaled for additional players by going to the Skirmisher Forum, at www.skirmisher.com/forum, where you can download new characters, alibis, deeds, and evidence.

Event Timeline

Although the pace of your game may differ from what is shown below, this timeline can help you structure the event in phases.

Phase One: The Arrival

- Have the character backgrounds, Alibis, and Deeds ready ahead of time.
- Hand them out as players arrive, instructing players to keep their Alibis a secret.

Phase Two: Event Start

- Read over the introduction to the event to all players.
- Allow players to mingle and get to know each other (approximately 10 - 15 minutes).
- In any order, begin calling players into the Professor Peterson's "office" (e.g., any nearby area where the players can speak with some privacy).
- Allow each player time to start their individual goals (approximately 5 - 10 minutes).

Phase Three: Murder Most Foul

- Have the Professor's body be discovered by one of the players (e.g., Horace Harbinger, upon returning to the professor's office to see if he made any headway translating the strange cipher).
- The player playing the Professor, who is now dead, takes on the role of Campus Police Officer Justin Case.
- Have the players read their Alibi sheets to themselves.
- Allow players to investigate each other and the murder scene.

Phase Four: The Discovery

- After players investigate each other and the scene, have Campus Police Officer Justin Case assemble them in one area.
- Justin Case officer will interrogate each person about their alibis.
- After the questioning, the Mystery Keeper should hand the players a slip of paper to write down who they think killed the Professor.

Phase Five: Endgame

- Justin Case officer reads each slip of paper aloud to the players, noting who got it correct.
- The Mystery Keeper reveals who the murderer is and congratulates the players that got it right.

The Characters

Professor Paul Peterson — *Department Head of Modern Occult* — Professor Peterson is an odd fellow who is often more at home with his nose in a dusty tome than dealing with students. Though a bit eccentric, he is an asset to the Miskatonic faculty.

Doctor David Drake — *Professor of Ancient Studies* — Doctor Drake is a young and upcoming teacher looking to gain his tenure. One of the most well-liked educators at Miskatonic, he is seen by many of the old guard as too easy on his students.

Horace Harbinger — *Graduate Student* — Horace is a class 1 bookworm. He would rather spend time in the racks at the campus library than ever venturing outside the safety of his books.

Bryson Billingsworth — *Spoiled Rich Kid* — Bryson is the son of a family of wealthy alumni. With sections of the campus named after his family, he feels that he can buy his way through school and earn his degree with money rather than hard work.

Charles “Chuck” Chesterfield — *Star Quarterback* — Chuck, as he is called by his buds, is the picture of an All-American quarterback. His athletic prowess on the field hides the fact that his academic performance is less than stellar.

Character Backgrounds

The following character profiles can be cut directly out of this booklet if desired and permission is granted to photocopy them for personal use. Additional characters and individual copies of some of these, including Professor Paul Peterson and Juston Case, are also available in a dedicated section of the Skirmisher Forum (www.skirmisher.com/forum).

Alibis and Deeds corresponding to each character appear on the reverse sides of their sheets, and the Mystery Keeper should instruct the players to ignore these until after the murder occurs. Once it has, all the players should read their alibis and the one who the Mystery Keeper has designated as the murderer should read his deed (the other character's deeds can be crossed out if desired, but this might be noticed by other players and tip them off to who is or is not the killer).

Doctor David Drake (Associate Professor, Ancient Studies)

You have had it up to your eyeballs on how the old guard of decrepit, aging professors at this university is treated like royalty while you are treated like nothing more than a graduate student. Sure, you don't have tenure, but you are working toward it. The first step is to get rid of some of the deadwood cluttering up these hallowed halls.

Your teaching style is very free and open. You have captured your students' minds and are free to shape them as you see fit. This style, however, is looked down upon by the senior staff, who see your teaching style as too experimental and would rather see you stick to prescribed methods.

The biggest obstacle to your tenure is moldy old Professor Paul Peterson, who should have retired years ago. His theories are full of holes, his research is sloppy, and his conclusions are the things of tabloids. Well, you have a plan to remove him from his lofty seat of power.

For the past three months, you have researched his theories and tried to debunk them. Some of your efforts have come close and any rational person would have listened, but not the senior staff here. But no more.

You have spent the last several weeks crafting concrete proof that Professor Peterson is a fraud. Tonight, you will present it and enjoy watching his world crumble before you. Sure, the research you have is an expert forgery, but it will certainly be more than enough for the senior staff to take your accusations seriously and lead to Peterson's termination.

Horace Harbinger (Graduate Student, Bookworm)

All your life you have been searching for an understanding of what makes the universe tick. You know that in some dusty old tome lies the clues you need to discover the ultimate truth. That is why you have dedicated yourself to finding that spark of information that will lead to your very own academic big bang.

Helping guide you along your way is Professor Paul Peterson. He has opened your mind to the possibility that there is more than science can explain in this world. That is what your latest batch of research focuses on. If there is a clue to the formation of the universe, you are sure that you will find it.

After going over your research and uncovering strange symbols and ciphers, you have decided to ask Professor Peterson for some help. You recently discovered a cipher that you are having trouble decoding. Hopefully, the good professor will help shed some light on it.

You intend to leave it with him for the evening and see what he can come up with and are hopeful that this piece of ancient information will be the clue you are hoping for.

Alibi — Doctor David Drake

While you did want to see Professor Peterson leave the University, it was not in a body bag — you just wanted to ruin his career and claim tenure so you could act like one of the old guard. At the time of his murder, you were preparing your presentation for the senior staff to discredit the professor and were alone in your basement office. You can prove this by having the police review your network activity on the campus computer system.

The Deed — Doctor David Drake

That old fool didn't know how to take a hint and just leave. You tried everything from discrediting his work to questioning his education and even his lineage. Nothing worked and you finally decided that enough was enough. You went back to his office to give him a piece of your mind. In the process, the conversation got heated and you threw a tome lying on a nearby shelf at him. It struck the professor in the head and he went down. Panicked, you ran out of the office and set in motion your alibi.

Alibi — Horace Harbinger

Professor Peterson was like a father to you. When you heard of his death you were distraught. You knew that he was not liked by all the students and even the staff. Who could have done such a horrible deed to such an honorable man? While the professor was being murdered, you were in the library going over some new tomes brought in by the librarian, Sandra Shushley.

The Deed — Horace Harbinger

Professor Peterson was like a father to you and you would never have intentionally caused him harm. Little did you know, however, that the cipher you gave him was what killed him. He managed to translate the cipher and in the process went mad and died from fear. What he saw when he finished the translation is not known.

Bryson Billingsworth (Student, Spoiled Rich Kid)

For generations your family has graduated from the hallowed halls of Miskatonic. Dating back from when the school was founded, a Billingsworth has helped shape this fine Ivy League institution into what it is today. From the Billingsworth English Literature building to the Billingsworth Medical Center, your name is synonymous with this university.

With your family history, you should have no trouble with your classes, and whenever you have fallen behind in a course you have used your family influence to help you out. Some may say that you are buying your way through college, but that is preposterous: you are not buying your way, your family's money is.

Everything was going swimmingly until you made the mistake of taking Professor Peterson's course. That man is a stubborn old fool that should have retired long ago. How dare he fail you this semester? Well, that just won't fly. You intend to have a talk with the good professor and make him an offer he cannot refuse. No one denies a Billingsworth.

If he won't listen to reason, then perhaps he will listen to your checkbook. After all, there is the old saying about money talking. Should the fool decline your generous offers, you will have no choice but to take things up a notch.

Charles "Chuck" Chesterfield (Star Quarterback, Jock)

It is 4th down and the team is down by 6 points. You need that touchdown to win the game. The ball is snapped and you fade back. You release a perfect spiral to your receiver. Touchdown! The 'Pods win the championship game!

Now what if you aren't there to make that amazing pass because some moldy old Professor decided to flunk you, thus screwing up your athletic eligibility? That would drive you crazy. Well, it is happening and you are going nuts trying to figure out a way to convince Professor Peterson to give you at least a C in his class.

You thought that his Modern Occult class was going to be a piece of cake. After all, you have seen almost every horror movie out there and that is what you thought Modern Occult meant. Turns out it means studying old books and weird artifacts that played a role in the development of mankind's religions and legends.

This class has been much more trouble than it is worth and you should have taken Peruvian Basket Weaving or an art class instead. Well, you need to do something about it. That is why you are going to talk to the professor and get him to change your grade. Without that passing grade, your career in football will be over. It is time to play hardball.

Alibi — Bryson Billingsworth

You may be many things, but you are not a murderer. Sure, the professor was a stubborn old fool that could have made out like a king if he accepted your generous offer to change your grade, but you weren't going to kill him if he didn't. Your methods are of a different sort and, at the time of the murder, you were bribing the English Literature professor to change the C you got in his class into an A.

The Deed — Bryson Billingsworth

Some people can't be bargained with and the professor was one of them. He only needed to take the generous offer you handed to him to change your grade. Who would have thought that there was still some integrity left in the faculty? When he refused you early in the evening, you decided to return and up the ante. Even with your new offer, he declined. That made you furious and, in an act of blind rage, you struck the professor with a nearby statue. After you realized what you had done, you quickly tried to establish an alibi.

Alibi — Charles "Chuck" Chesterfield

Yeah, you were angry at Professor Peterson, but would you kill him? No, of course not! You have too much to look forward to in your career. Sure, him failing you in his class would screw up your eligibility, but you know that the coach would have had some words with him about that. At the time of the murder, you were pumping iron in the gym getting ready for the big game this Saturday.

The Deed — Charles "Chuck" Chesterfield

No one, especially some nutty old professor, is going to screw up your chances to make it big in football. You went back to that crusty old fart and laid down the law. You told him that if he didn't at least give you a C in his class, your hopes and dreams would be dashed. When he still refused, you just snapped. Maybe it was those hormones you took to pump up or just seeing your future destroyed because of this old coot. You picked up the desk lamp and beat the professor to death. You then hastily cleaned up the scene and worked on coming up with an alibi.

Professor Paul Peterson (Professor of Modern Occult, Head of the Occult Studies Department)

For many, life is black and white. There is the good in the world that provides the positive things like love, peace, and understanding. There is the bad in the world that provides things like war, hatred, and fear. For you, however, life is not black and white. You are fascinated by the multihued shadows that exist between good and evil. For your entire life, you have investigated the things that lurk in the shadowy realms of the gray.

As the professor of Modern Occult Studies at Miskatonic University, you strive to shape the young minds in your class so that they, too, can see the shadows. You have to be a harsh taskmaster in order to force them to understand there is more in this world than what they can see with their eyes and many are disappointed in their hopes that your course will be easy. Sometimes it is an uphill battle, but it is a challenge you have accepted.

As with any profession, there are stumbling blocks. These are more often than not fellow teachers that do not share your views, or ignorant students that refuse to open their minds to education. This semester you have had to deal with both.

You have recently discovered that a fellow professor, Doctor David Drake, has been trying to discredit you among your peers. He has constantly tried to debunk your theories, point out your flaws, and destroy your character. You feel sad for this man and hope that he, too, will see the world in a different light some day. Then there is the case of young Mr. Billingsworth. Just because his family has given so much to this University, he expects to buy his way to a diploma. Well, you and your passing grade are not for sale. One other tarnished student is Mr. Chesterfield. If they boy would just put forward the effort he does on the football field to his studies, he would be a straight-A student. In stead, he uses his brawn to muscle others into doing his work for him. Well, you know his game and with his failing grade in your class, he will lose his athletic eligibility.

At least there are stars in the class to which you are proud to pass on your knowledge. Those beacons of hope are Mr. Harbinger and Miss Korman. His academic prowess is beyond anything you have seen. Why, even today he wishes to discuss a codex he found in his research that he would like your help in translating. You have recently discovered that Miss Korman's star is a bit tarnished, however, as she has been doing all of Mr. Chesterfield's work, which in your mind is cheating.

Tonight, you have meetings with several students to discuss their latest mid-term grades and progress. Even Dr. Drake would like to speak with you (no doubt about yet another theory of yours he would like to debunk). These little meetings are just going to kill your evening.

Justin Case (Campus Police, Lead Investigator)

Murder on your campus? You don't think so! One of these suspects is guilty and you are going to find out which one it is. Then, the party responsible for this heinous act will pay and you will make sure that the full force of the law is brought down on them with all due prudence. A crime of this scope will not go unpunished.

After doing your initial investigation and collecting affidavits from witnesses and evidence from the scene you are ready to confront the prime suspects. They are a shifty lot all with something to hide. It is your job to pry the truth from them. They might try and be cagey, but this isn't your first day on the job. You know that as you go over the evidence and interview the suspects, the guilty party will fold like a cheap suit. That is when you will take them into custody and throw the book at them. No one commits a capital crime on your campus.

The Evidence

Each player has evidence that will support or hinder their alibi. Each piece of evidence is presented to the players by Justin Case during their interrogation and they can consider it in their determination of who is guilty.

Should a player wish to decode the scroll given to Professor Peterson by Horace Harbinger, they will be able to do so if they determine that the coding sequence is a simple +3 code (e.g., A = D, B = E, C = F). If desired, the Mystery Keeper can hint to the players that this might be some sort of a replacement cipher. It reads:

O Thou that lieth dead but ever dreameth,
Hear, Thy servant calleth Thee.
Hear me O mighty Cthulhu!
' Hear me Lord of Dreams !
In Thy tower at R'lyeh They have sealed ye,
but Dagon shall break Thy accursed bonds,
and Thy Kingdom shall rise once more.
The Deep Ones knoweth Thy secret Name,
The Hydra knoweth Thy lair;
Give forth Thy sign that I may know
Thy will upon the Earth.
When death dies, Thy time shall be,
and Thou shalt sleep no more;
Grant me the power to still the waves,
that I may hear Thy Call.

Affidavit #1

Name: Dusty Halls

Occupation: Night Janitor

Statement:

While mopping the halls in the south corridor I heard the following:

1. Doctor Drake having a heated discussion with Professor Peterson. He stormed out of the office and headed downstairs.
2. There was strange mumbling coming from the Professor's office after Mr. Harbinger left after his meeting.
3. Mr. Billingsworth and Professor Peterson got into a heated discussion and then it got quiet. Shortly after, Mr. Billingsworth left the office.
4. As I was cleaning the john in the North hall, Mr. Chesterfield passed me leaving Professor Peterson's office. He was sweating and carrying a gym bag.

Affidavit #2

Name: Sandra Shushley

Occupation: Librarian

Statement:

I remember seeing Mr. Harbinger in his usual spot at the reading tables with a stack of various books of all subjects.

Affidavit #3

Name: Manny "Moose" Mullroy

Occupation: Student

Statement:

I remember seein' Chuck at da' gym pumpin' iron with da' rest of da' boys. He was doin' reps like a man possessed. Must 'a been gettin' ready for da' big game against the Nantucket Barnacles on Saturday.

Billingsworth Financial Corporation		7995
Pay to the order of:	<i>Professor Paul Peterson</i>	<i>/...../</i>
Amount:	<i>Twenty-Five Thousand and</i> 00/100	\$25,000.00
Memo:	<i>Research Grant</i>	<i>Bryson Billingsworth</i>
144714:8848-88754-99958:7995		

**Miskatonic IT Department
Network Usage Report**

User ID: Doctor David Drake
IP Address: 164.153.99.01

Log Entry - User was actively on line during the hours of _____ and _____ . The Doctor was logged in using his personal password and user id.

Billingsworth Financial Corporation		7996
Pay to the order of:	<i>Professor Petunia Participle</i>	<i>/...../</i>
Amount:	<i>Five Thousand and</i> 00/100	\$5,000.00
Memo:	<i>Research Grant</i>	<i>Bryson Billingsworth</i>
144714:8848-88754-99958:7996		

Professor,

I discovered this strange cipher while working on my thesis. I cannot figure out the decode sequence. Could you please take a look at it for me?

Thanks,

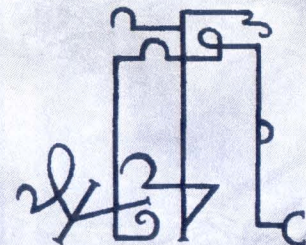
Horace



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yrq xxdlk pexii yoyxh qev
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xkx qev hfkdxlj pexii ofpy lkzy jloy.

qey xyym lkyp hkltqye qev pyzoyq kxjy,
qey evxox hkltqye qev ixfo;
dfsy zloqe qev pfdk qexq f jxv hklt
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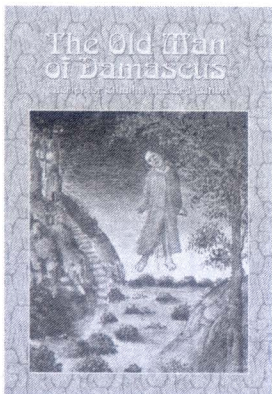
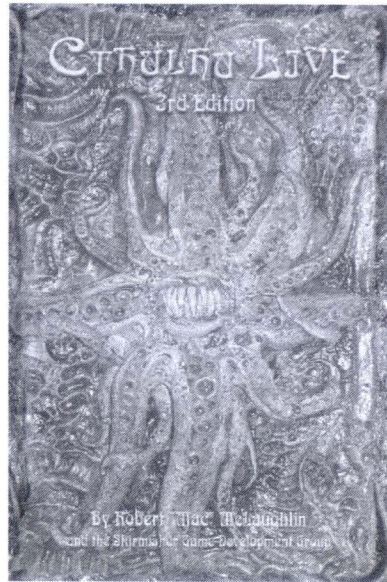


Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition is the highly acclaimed live-action role-playing game based on the horror tales of H.P. Lovecraft. This newest and greatest edition of *Cthulhu Live* includes a richly detailed and uniquely playable rules system that incorporates 14 years of refinements and best practices from hundreds of gamers worldwide. Features of this self-contained game include all-new rules for skills, combat, Sanity, Magic, and Psychic powers; guidelines on organizing events, stagecraft and special effects; details on role-playing Outsiders tainted by the touch of the Mythos; and much more!

Accessories for *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition* include a Companion CD-ROM that includes a stunning graphic interface by Mantra Design Studio, a soundtrack by Midnight Syndicate, an advanced character creation program, a Government ID Badge Creator, a Character Card Creator, a library of *Cthulhu Live* Game Scripts with ready-to-print handouts, a collection of Tome Texts to print and bind for your own props, an extensive selection of document props ready to be customized and used in your games, and a simulated secure email server for sending encrypted email.

Scripts available for *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition* include *House of Pain*, *Old Man of Damascus*, *Green Fairy*, and *Sight Unseen*, and upcoming supplements include ones based on the Wild West and Dark Fantasy.

Skirmisher products are available in hard copy from game stores, Amazon.com, and directly from the company, and in PDF format from a variety of sources, including DriveThruRPG and RPGNow.





Miskatonic University, that ivy league institution of higher learning that has produced many a fine young adult ready to shape the world the way they see fit. With diverse courses such as Peruvian Basket Weaving, Modern Occult Legends, and Ancient Languages, Miskatonic has a class for any student. And with the award-winning sports team, the Fighting Cephalopods, even the athletic scholar can find his path to a brighter future among these hallowed halls.

There is, however, a class not in the curriculum that one person on campus is about to earn a masters in. That class is Murder 101. This class has only one test, but the final is a real killer.

Who will pass this course? Will it be the jock? What about the bookworm? And let us not forget about the professional rival! Only time and your sleuthing skills will uncover who the culprit is in *Murder at Miskatonic*. So get ready to uncover secrets and things that man was not meant to know as you ferret out the murderer. Fail and they go free, succeed and be the savior of the campus. The choice is yours!

Cthulhu Live's Mysteries of the Mythos: Murder at Miskatonic is a self-contained sleuthing game. It is based on the popular *Cthulhu Live 3rd Edition* live-action role-playing game but does not contain any complex rules or game mechanics and is instead based almost entirely on player interaction. It is very easy to run and will usually take about two hours to complete.

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