

He Who Laughs Last

Trail of Cthulhu Conversion notes

The following notes will help convert the modern Cthulhu Dark scenario, He Who Laughs Last, to the Trail of Cthulhu system. This scenario tells the tale of a comedian who has gained access to ancient magic, which he then uses for fame and fortune that come with the requisite horrible costs.

Trail of Cthulhu is very similar to Cthulhu Dark (which the scenario was written for), in that they both do not rely on rolling dice to make sure the PCs get the appropriate clues. As such, most of the conversion notes center on either the investigative skills needed or Stability checks.

Also, note that I have created three new Investigative skills for playing TOC in modern times: **Computer Use**, **Electronics** and **Pop Culture**. As popular culture has become such a strong force in modern civilization, I do believe it is valuable as a skill described below. If you don't want to add it to a modern campaign, just replace it with Oral History where noted.

- **Computer Use:** This represents to use a computer beyond the basic uses. You know how to Google something beyond the first page of results, search and modify a registry, install a video card, find hidden or erased files on a hard drive, and dig into cache to find passwords. This also covers the ability to understand and navigate IP addresses, Wi-Fi networks, and cloud-based storage.
- **Electronics:** The ability to use, manipulate and modify electronic devices beyond their day-to-day uses (without hurting yourself or the device). This includes hacking mobile phones and computer networks, jump-starting a car, and rewiring/jury-rigging anything with a charge in it.
- **Pop Culture:** The ability and knowledge to not only navigate the multiple avenues of modern communications and media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, BuzzFeed, etc.), but to be in-the-know regarding the latest happenings and any

fallout from them (viral videos, flame wars, doxxing, etc.). This includes knowing about the latest movies, performances, pop stars, and anyone else deemed “famous.”

Back at the Hotel

(pg 15,17)

- Instead of having the PCs roll for what they know about Becca, require a **Cop Talk, Law, Oral History, or Pop Culture 1-point spend** to gain a clue.
- Watching Bryan's video requires a **Stability Test of Difficulty 2**.
- Finding the clues on Becca's phone requires **Electronics or Evidence Collection 1-point spend**.

Becca's Apartment

(pg 17-18)

- Entering the house and smelling Becca's death requires a **Stability Test of Difficulty 1**.
- Chemistry notes the presence of the gasoline smell, and a **Chemistry 1-point spend** notes the smudge marks are some sort of graphite composite.
- **Occult** is necessary to recognize that the smudge marks resemble some sort of spell.
- **Oral History or Computer Use** determines where the appropriate Home Depot is located.

David Lee – Coroner

(pg 18-19)

- **Law** determines that Lee is the head person in charge of the death and where to find him.

- **Intimidation or Reassurance** is needed to get the PCs past the receptionist to talk to David Lee.
- While **Assess Honesty** determines that Lee is hiding something, **Intimidation or Athletics** will reduce him to a blubbling mess where he will divulge Ares' name.

Janey Lassiter

(pg 21-22)

- **Reassurance or Flattery** will get Janey to open up and talk with the PCs.

Susan Ortega

(pg 22-23)

- **Reassurance or Flattery** will also get Susan to open up, though she is less susceptible to blatant flattery and may eye the PCs with suspicion of they go that route.

Ralph Ares, Future Self

(pg 23-24)

- After unsuccessfully confronting Rafe and finding themselves locked in a dumpster, a **Stability Test of Difficulty 3** is required.

Bryan's House in the Hills

(pg 24-28)

- **Electronics** can get a PC to open the front gate, while an **Athletics Tests of Difficulty 2** can get them over it.
- Seeing the Hyena through the window costs a **Stability Test of Difficulty 1**.
- Meeting Bryan requires a set of Stability checks of growing intensity. Start with a **Stability Test of Difficulty 2**, then continue to **Difficulty 3, 4 and 5** until the PCs are incapacitated.

- A series of **Stability Tests of Difficulty 2** are required as the PCs are first dumped into the tank, then find the scorched bodies, then sit inside the dark tank for hours, wondering if they'll be rescued.

Laughing Hyena Spell

Incantation (pg 28)

- **Archaeology or History** can be used to date the old pages.
- **Stability Test Difficulty: 3**
- **Costs:** 1-5 Stability per round, depending on the severity of the casting; can also "store" up to double the caster's Stability for future use by laying hands on someone, sucking out their life-force and turning them into charcoal
- **Time:** 1 round to begin
- Causes listener to pass two **Stability Tests of a Difficulty** matching how much Stability was spent in the casting to stop from being overwhelmed with laughter.

Detective Jim Wrigley, Rtr.

(pg 29-31)

- **Persuasion or Reassurance** gets Wrigley to help the PCs.

Medallion of True Sight

(pg 31-32)

- Removing the medallion costs a **Stability Test of Difficulty 2**.
- Seeing Bryan with the medallion costs a **Stability Test of Difficulty 3**.

Hollywood Bowl Gig

(pg 32)

- Allow the PCs to use **Disguise, Intimidate, Reassurance, or Stealth** to gain access to the Hollywood Bowl.

NPCs

David Lee

- Abilities: Athletics 4, Health 6, Fleeing 8
- Hit Threshold: 3
- Weapons: None

Janey Lassiter

- Abilities: Athletics 6, Health 6, Disguise 6
- Hit Threshold: 3
- Weapons: None

Susan Ortega

- Abilities: Athletics 10, Health 6, Scuffling 8
- Hit Threshold: 4
- Weapons: None

Bryan Tobler

- Abilities: Health 6, Credit Rating 5
- Hit Threshold: 3
- Weapons: Laughing Hyena Spell

Ralph Ares

- Abilities: Athletics 8, Health 22, Credit Rating 10, Sense Trouble 12
- Hit Threshold: 4
- Weapons: Any Ancient Magics Necessary