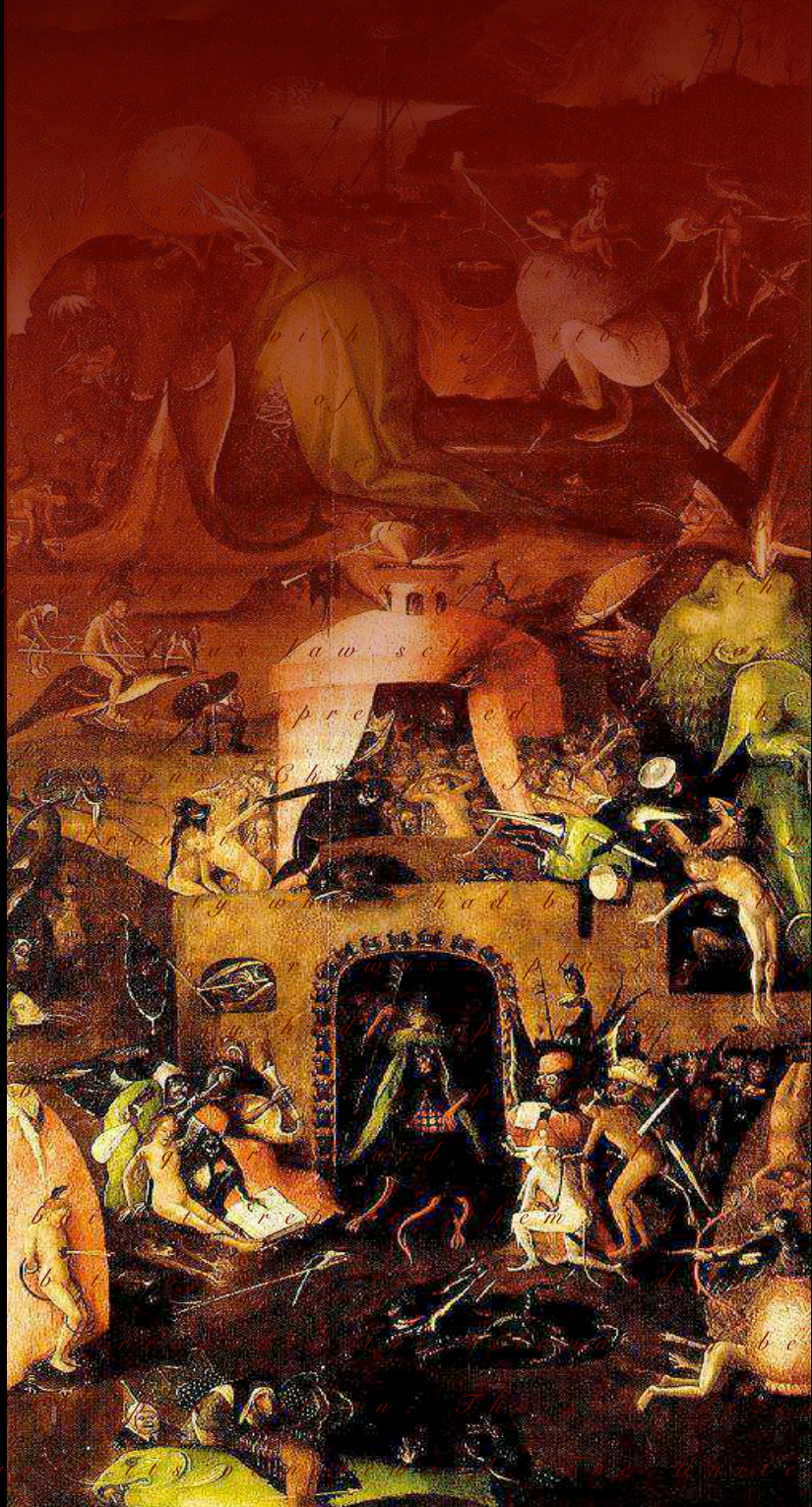


# I N S Y L U M



## THE SLEEP OF REASON BREEDS MONSTERS...

A GAME, BY  
DENNIS DETWILLER



The Tatters of the King.....	5
Introduction-The System.....	6
Facilitators Only.....	11
Treatment.....	11
Midnight on Ward 23.....	15
The Play.....	17
The Players.....	24

## **Insylum — A game by Dennis Detwiller**

*With special thanks to our anonymous sponsor — without which, this game would never have been realized*

*Along the shore the cloud waves break, The twin suns sink behind the lake, The shadows lengthen*  
*I n C a r c o s a*  
*Strange is the night where black stars rise, And strange moons circle through the skies, But stranger still is*  
*L o s t C a r c o s a*  
*Songs that the Hyades shall sing, Where flap the tatters of the King, Must die unheard in*  
*D i m C a r c o s a*  
*Song of my soul, my voice is dead, Die thou, unsung, as tears unshed Shall dry and die in*  
*L o s t C a r c o s a*

*Dedicated o Robert W. Chambers and John Tynes — Birds of a feather...*

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*Because you're mine, I walk the line.*







# THE TATTERS OF THE KING

THE WORLD WELCOME TO THE END OF THE WORLD, END OF THE WORLD, END

You are here — in the Asylum — because of something you did. You don't recall the specifics; not yet, but you're here to work through your problems in a constructive manner. To learn from mistakes and move on with your life in what they call "the world". It's arts and crafts, lunch, meds and therapy. The life of a pet. Cared for, groomed and maintained, but not permitted past the boundaries into the outside.

You're *Insylum* to remember.

Something important was lost. Something more important than anything you've ever known before. And late at night, after therapy and TV time, you sit awake and think back. It's like reaching into a darkened drawer filled with sharp, rusty implements of some forgotten operation — it's easy to hurt yourself, it's easy to bleed.

You remember a party. A mask.

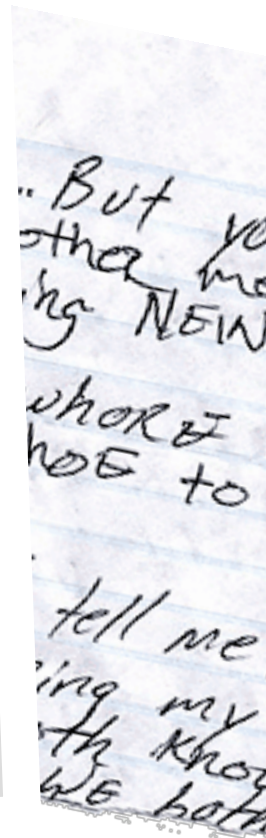
A play...

You remember the end of the world.

Sometimes, you have no idea what you're doing here. It's like trying to cure a drunk by locking him in a brewery. You and your friends — what of them you have — talk and talk. About the

past. About the things you think are real. You differ on many points, but you can all agree on one thing:

Sometimes it's best not to remember.





# INTRODUCTION—THE SYSTEM

SMOOTH BROKEN GLASS, INSIDE, NOTHING BUT THE SMOOTH REFLECTION OF

The first rule is this: you're not in charge anymore. Your life is gone, and you're Insylum at the whim of the one who controls the world inside its walls: the Facilitator. He dictates the course of events, establishes what and what is not real, and attempts to cure you. You have no choice but to follow. Everything Insylum is — the doctors and rooms and billy clubs — is the Facilitator. Nothing you do ever escapes his attentions. Nothing you feel is secret.

You're not sure just what is real and what is fantasy — that's why you're here. Nevertheless the world you exist in is dictated by rules. You must live or die by these rules, just like everyone in the world. The only difference is, to you, the rules seem to change from time to time.

You're a Patient. As a Patient, your progress and health are measured in several number codes indicating your state of well-being. They are (in order):

- Memory**
- Lucidity**
- Fatigue**

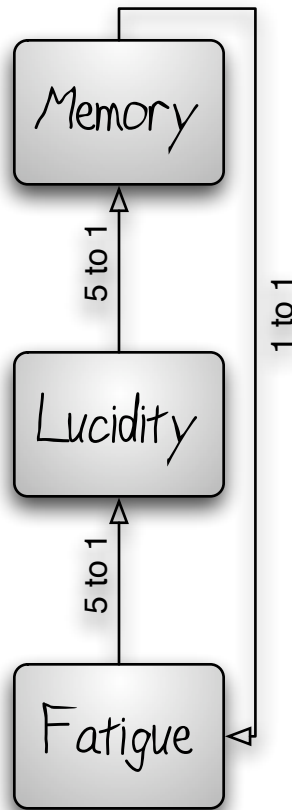
These codes range lowest to highest from 1 to 20, with Fatigue at the bottom to Memory at the top. It costs 5 points of a lower code to increase a code one step up by 1 point. For instance, 5 points of Fatigue equals 1 point of Lucidity, and 5 points of Lucidity equals 1 point of Memory (or 25 points of Fatigue equals 1 point of Memory). If you have 5 Fatigue points, you can expend them and gain 1 point of Lucidity. If you spend 10 Lucidity, you buy 2 points of Memory.

All Patients start with Fatigue 5 and Lucidity 3. Memory however, always begins at 1.

Points move backwards as well (say, from Memory to Lucidity), but the ratio is not the same — you don't gain 5 points of Fatigue back for 1 point of Lucidity, you just gain 1. Just the same, 1 point of Memory doesn't buy you 25 points of Fatigue, only 1.

It's possible to have scores like:

- Memory 6**
- Lucidity 5**
- Fatigue 2**



So, with the above scores, you can drop 1 Lucidity to make your Fatigue 3, or a point of Memory to make Lucidity 6. You are trying for Memory 20. When you reach it — you're cured, whether you want to be or not. You remember everything; all the details of what landed you inside. You don't really want to remember, but then again, the world inside is a dangerous place and Patients have a habit of turning up missing, or worse.

### **Fatigue**

Fatigue measures physical strength, as well as a madman's tenacity, force of will or drive. Jumping over a wall, beating an orderly to death with a rusty bed pole or struggling up a wall made of severed doll heads can cost Fatigue points. Resting for ten minutes always brings you back to 1 Fatigue point (or restores 1 Fatigue point if you're already positive). If you force yourself to 0 Fatigue points, you pass out and can no longer dictate your own actions (whereupon you wake in 30 minutes with 1 Fatigue point).

Once someone is unconscious they can't defend themselves and it no longer costs Fatigue points to kill them — it's a snap to murder someone who's unconscious. If you say you do it, you're a murderer.

At negative Fatigue points, congratulations, your problems are over: you're dead. You can't spend yourself negative; it takes an outside force; like a razor blade hidden in a pants' cuff, a melting mass of blue and yellow pills clutched like a fading hope, or a boot to the forehead to escape in that manner.

### **Spending or Losing Fatigue**

There are two ways to lose Fatigue points; either you spend them or lose them when someone takes them from you. The most

common application of spending Fatigue is attacking someone, or defending yourself from injury.

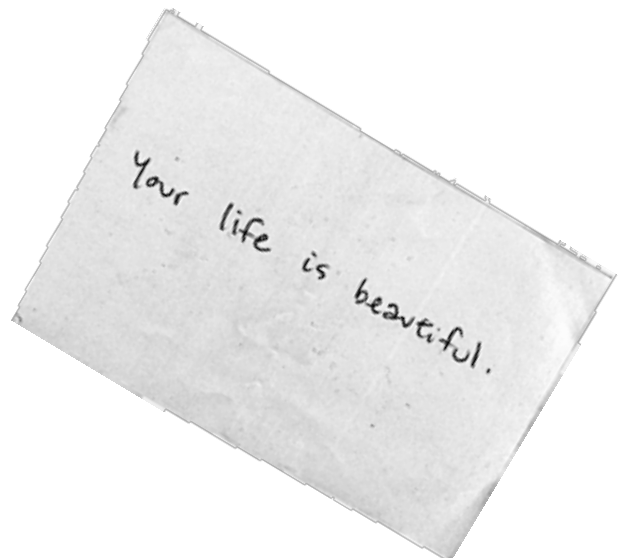
### **Attacking and Defending with Fatigue**

To injure somebody, spend Fatigue points. Grab a d20 and set it to a number from 1 to 20, up to the amount of Fatigue you can possibly spend, but keep it hidden from your opponent. All Fatigue you spend is a blind bid in this manner. Reveal what you've spent only when the Facilitator asks. Once you've spent the points, announce your intentions.

Say something like; "I spend Fatigue points and stab him in the face with the rusty screwdriver." If the target sees the attack coming, they can spend Fatigue points to cancel your attack in the same manner. Whoever bids highest — the attacker or defender — wins.

If the defender outspends an attack, they lose 1 Fatigue point (no matter how many were bid) and take no damage — while the attacker loses everything spent. If they don't counter for some reason, they lose the full number of Fatigue points bid, but the attacker only subtracts 1 point.

If they defend but fail to beat the attacker's amount — they fail to fully block your rusty screwdriver attack, but manage to block 2 points of it for example





— they lose half the amount of points spent on defense, and take the left over damage, while the attacker loses half the amount spent (round up).

To defend yourself, declare it. After you're told who's attacking you and how, say something like "I spend Fatigue points and catch the Billy Club in my hand before it comes out fully." Blind bid. Win or get injured. If you don't see the attack coming, you're simply hit.

**Example:** *Michael M. (Fatigue 9); reveals a straight razor from his belt. The Orderly, whom the Patients call Mr. Ed (Fatigue 10) pulls his baton to defend himself. The two blind bid — Michael M. bids 4 Fatigue, and Mr. Ed bids 2 Fatigue. Mr. Ed swings the baton in a threatening manner to keep Michael at a distance, while Michael aims for the face with the unfolded razor.*

*The bids are compared.*

*Michael M. hits, inflicting 2 points of damage (since Ed blocked 2) at the cost of 2 Fatigue points (half the Fatigue spent on the attack, since it was partially defended). Michael has unzipped Ed's face like an unlaced football, and blood pours everywhere. Ed spends 1 Fatigue on the failed defense and suffers 2 points of damage as well.*

*"I gave you a new mouth, now you can eat twice as fast," Michael says.*

*Ed (now Fatigue 7) makes an all-out attack with the club spending 2 Fatigue; while Michael (now Fatigue 7) defends with 1 Fatigue.*

*The bids are compared.*

*Crack! Michael attempts to swing the razor in a threatening manner, but is struck in the head with the billy club for 1 point of damage; this attack costs Ed 1 Fatigue point (now Fatigue 6); Michael's defense costs 1 point of Fatigue (now Fatigue 6).*

*They are both bloody and wheezing from exertion.*

*"Repson lied," Michael mumbles through gasps, "it's not like killing someone in your mind at all..."*

## **A Coup**

A coup is when you're engaged in combat against an opponent with twice as much (or more) current Fatigue and still manage to land *any* attack. When this is accomplished, your Fatigue spikes back to its full score for the remainder of that particular combat (when the combat is over, it drops back down to what it was before the spike). This Coup Fatigue is spent normally, and represents a blood lust induced second wind. Use it wisely, it



doesn't come around often.

**Example:** *Ed (now Fatigue 1) prepares one last attack. He drops his club and crawls around on the ground as if he was nearly unconscious. Michael begins chanting, "Horse MEAT! Horse MEAT!" paying little attention to his quarry. Ed launches a punch with his lone Fatigue Point — Michael doesn't see it coming.*

*The punch lands, inflicting 1 point of damage, and Ed's Fatigue spikes to 10 — he's pulled off a coup (otherwise he would have passed out!) He immediately launches a 9 point attack on Michael who recoils in horror as the blood-soaked orderly leaps up and begins pummeling him. Michael defends with all 6 of his Fatigue points.*

*Ed smashes Michael against an iron baseboard heater and slams both fists down on his chest. Michael ribs splinter. Michael loses 3 points*



*for his failed defense and 3 points from Ed's assault.*

*Ed slowly begins to pummel the unconscious Michael to death.*

### **Gaining Fatigue**

Gaining Fatigue points past the initial 5 you begin with is a tough process. Spend backwards from Lucidity or Memory to increase your Fatigue (if, say, you're at 5 Fatigue and you spend a point of Lucidity to increase it, your new max Fatigue score is 6).

### **Lucidity**

Lucidity represents the middle ground between Fatigue and Memory. How well you understand what is real and what is not. You begin with 3 points of Lucidity.

Sometimes, you'll see things in the Asylum, things that shouldn't be there. Expend a point of Lucidity to make them go away. Sometimes, however, those things really *are* there — or you are so convinced they are there — that any number of Lucidity points won't make them go away. If you don't make something "go away" — it can very effectively kill you — whether it's real or not.

Lucidity points are the litmus test of reality. If you're successful, and what you see turns out to be not real (or at least, not real enough), you keep the Lucidity point. If not — if it keeps coming for you — you lose the point. Once a point is gone, it's normally only recoverable by spending 5 Fatigue points or 1 Memory point.

### **Memory**

Memory is the prize. Choose to expend a point of Memory to determine whether something rings a bell, is familiar or has something to do with why you're here. Unfortunately, remembering this way — when you're not ready to remember everything at once — can be damaging (hence losing a Memory point when doing so).

Sometimes, you can gain Fatigue or Lucidity suddenly by spending Memory; something you recall gives you strength or establishes just which way to insanity and which way to reality. This however, remains up to the Facilitator.

There's an upside however; when you do successfully remember that fact is ironclad — it is an absolute fact that no amount of drugs, hallucinations or terrors can change. When you do remember successfully, scribble down what you recall; it can prove to be the difference between life or death later.

When you hit 20 Memory and spend it all at once, all becomes clear to you — all the incontrovertible facts you've jotted down now make sense — and you're ready to...move on.

### **Name, Apparent Age, Height, Weight and Distinguishing Marks**

First name and last initial please. Look in a mirror and jot down these facts about yourself. Try to be honest.





PATIENTS READ NO  
FURTHER



FACILITATORS ONLY





# TREATMENT

NOTHING INSIDE EMPTY EMPTY EXCEPT FOR THE SMELL OF ROSES, AND A

You are the Facilitator of the Asylum; as such, you are its entire staff, the orderlies, the doctors, and nurses; the drugs, the locked doors and barred windows; the shock therapy and billy clubs — and they are you. You're even the madness that stalks the halls after light's out — the monsters that may or may not be real, the places only madmen can see, and go.

You are everything contained within the shifting expanse of rooms in the Asylum. You control it, you are it, and you create it. You are the result of the patient's peculiar type of madness. You are lunacy given shape, form and function.

It is your job to collect the recollections and memories of those select few that have glimpsed another world. This is what you call treatment. You talk, experiment and help the Patients to work their way through their "difficulties", to uncover their memories and examine them at length, but most of all, to get them to reveal what they know of the real secret.

Of the last King. The Palace, the party and the lake. As Facilitator, you have been in control of the Asylum for a long, long time, and you have heard many things about the play — *The King in Yellow*. Long ago, you fell under its sway, and yet, you don't even know what it really is. When they arrive, most of the patient's don't either... It's not surprising; something so grand, so epic, so revealing,

washes people away like one might erase a blackboard — but things remain behind; hints and shapes in the dust. You must find out what the Patient's saw on the other side, what they learned before being spit back into the real world like an aborted fetus; blank and dead.

This is what unites the patients under your care. Each has read and blocked the play from their memories. Uncovering just what they gleaned from it, and what it made them do to land them here, is your job. Not literally of course. The play works in images, ideas, innuendo and allegory. It bends the world like a paper model, folding lives, families, places and things into seams — whose symmetry is too terrible for one person to understand. As Facilitator, you search for the central message of the Play — the idea; the concept; the premise. The point where everything joins in the center.

And then, when all is clear and the book is yours, the Asylum will *change*. It will become one with the world the madmen create with their insanity — a place without reason, whose endless rooms expand in infinite directions of fiction forever. A place beyond this world where order is a dream and facts run like dripping wax, changing, congealing and flowing into one another until nothing is indistinguishable from anything else. This is the place from which you came, and when the time is right, to which you will return.

## Past is Prelude

In the beginning, the deepest history of the Patient is not known — to the Facilitator or even the Patient themselves. Instead, it is brought out over time, through experience, the Patient gaining Memory, and exploring the ever-expanding world of CarCoSA — *the Carlsbad County Schizophrenics Annex*.

The Patient recalls (or pretends to recall) just what it was that had them placed in the Asylum in the first place. It's not very long until the Patient learns that there's something about CarCoSA — about the way the minds of those who inhabit it affect it — that's not quite right.

The secret power of the mind of madmen is clear to you, the Facilitator, but you do your best to pretend to understand the difference between — fantasy and reality: just to get them to open up — of course. But, if a patient is close to... remembering...this disguise may falter. Everyone in your employ is after the same thing, the secrets of the divide, that place in-between where the world of insanity and sanity meet in an unstable shifting wasteland of imagination, whether they know it or not.

As the Patients begin to unlock their memories, and to piece together their pasts, it is up to the Facilitator to unite their individual memories and stories into a single unbroken story — a story which begins for all Patients the same way, though they may not know it. They picked up and read a book: *The King in Yellow*. It is your job, as Facilitator, to put it back together piece by piece, from the recollections of the madmen in your care.



## Therapy

Therapy is where Patient's are questioned and talk about their past or present. As Facilitator, it's your job to get to the bottom of their disturbance. A Patient can ask for a Session at any time during the day, and vice versa. Mostly, Sessions are group — that is, all the Patients are called together to share ideas about just what landed them in CarCoSA. But sometimes it's just one on one.

As Facilitator it's your job to reconstruct the circumstances of the Patient's break with "reality". Questions about their family life, their former jobs and passions are common — along with more disturbing questions that even the Patient themselves may not know; *But why did you saw the boy's head off? How many times did you use Heroin before overdosing? How many times did your father molest you?*

While the Patient may know some things, you, as Facilitator stand on the divide of what is real and what is false — you alone are the watchman of reality. It is your job to talk the Patient out of his delusions, convince him of reality, and learn the secrets of what drove them to



madness — the engine that powers imagination, *The King in Yellow*. Ultimately, what you say is real, is real, and what the Patient says is real, suspect. When the Patient spends a point of Memory, it is you who decides whether what they are attempting to recall is real or not. But once it is — that is the only thing beyond your reach. Once you have deemed something real by allowing a point of Memory to be spent to reveal it, it is incontrovertibly real and cannot be changed; even by you.

A good Facilitator keeps extensive notes of such Sessions — altering them as they like of course — so that the progress of the Patient can be easily tracked. Barring notes, try only to be consistent in your facts, or those facts that you create and deem to be real. Consistency, or a subtle shifting of almost-consistent elements is a sly way to bend the Patients mind towards revelation.

If a Session is deemed beneficial — if a Patient offers up a relevant, or disturbing piece of information, the Facilitator may award them 1 point of Lucidity. If the Session is particularly insightful and offers some hint of *The King in Yellow* (without prior coaching or leading questions from the Facilitator), 1 point of Memory may be awarded.

If the Patient refuses to believe or reveal things that they have learned or discovered in CarCoSA, the Facilitator may put them on a drug regimen — this freezes all codes — Fatigue, Lucidity and Memory — at their current numbers for as long as it lasts, and makes forward movement up the chain to Memory 20 impossible. Codes can, of course, decrease, but upward movement is not possible as long as the drugs last. Only the Facilitator can remove a Patient from a drug regimen. Successfully sharing in a Session and gaining either a

point of Lucidity or Memory is enough to remove a Patient from a drug regimen.

### Secrets

As Facilitator, you know that your Patients, just like you, keep secrets. Secrets about their past; about the world within the rooms of the Asylum that bloom at night when the sane madmen sleep. It is your job to test them — to send them into the dark borderland and to see what it does to them. And when — and if — they come back from the edge, to uncover what they have learned about what made them this way.

The greatest secret is exactly what the play, *The King in Yellow* is. What it means and most importantly, what it does to the mind. This is the ultimate secret you will do anything to uncover. But long ago you learned that Patients had a habit of dying, disappearing, or — on some rare occasions — being cured of their insanity before all they learned of the Play could be uncovered.

It is your job to push, probe and explore their madness before one of these three outcomes — the only ones possible in CarCoSA — occur.





THE MIRROR  
IS NOT  
WORKING



# MIDNIGHT ON WARD 23

AS FLESH SAGS AND DOORS OPEN, SOON WE COME TO THE LAST FLESH

The Patients share a small section of the Carlsbad County asylum. They are off hallway A, in a section called Ward 23, off the Schizophrenics Annex. They rarely leave the Annex for the main building — their treatment and life exists only in this small appendage of the Asylum — but they do go places, at night.

The Night World exists only after light's out — when they are alone with their memories.

At night, despite the fact that the Patients remain locked in the tiny Ward 23, there are many, many places for them to go. When the clock strikes midnight

their doors, locked promptly at 8 PM open onto the Ward, and entrances to the Night World are visible. Sometimes they are obvious — a huge mahogany door emblazoned with the timeworn faces of a thousand screaming men, sunk in a wall where it never was before. Other times, they are not so obvious — a billow of confetti blown from an air-vent that also carries the distant sound of Calliope music; a trail of dust leading to the child-scrawled chalk shape of a trap door on the floor; a loosened drain sticky with something rich with a metallic smell like blood.



The Patients can choose whether or not they enter the Night World, but any chance at true salvation lies there — this feeling is fundamental and obvious to all Patients. Those who stay behind have no real chance at revelation or escape; though a Patient may choose to ignore the Night World altogether, few can resist the temptation of knowing just what it all means. Those who remain behind face only a slow decay and a million different questions, with no real answers.

When they do enter the Night World, Patients quickly learn to stay together. Those who enter alone or separate from the group often do not come back. No one in the Facility is ever overly concerned with missing Patients in Ward 23 — their disappearance is simply labeled a suicide or escape, and life, such as it is, goes on. Patients that stick together have a chance — they can spend 1 point of Lucidity to undo the monstrosities in the Night World for one another, they can learn together and

unlock the secrets of the Play together, and help each other find their way back to Ward 23 by spending a Point of Memory, or combined 10 points of Lucidity.

That is the rule — entering the Night World costs nothing, but finding a way out costs 1 point of Memory or 5 points of Lucidity (any Patient present can contribute to these totals). Otherwise, the Patients remain in the Night World, and it continues on and on, possibly forever.

### **Inside The Night World**

The Night World is everything and nothing. It is everywhere and everything the Patients have ever seen, heard of or imagined and it is as elastic and infinite as their subconscious. It can be absolutely lucid and clean or bizarre and disjointed. It can, in short, be anything, do anything and change anything except the Patient themselves. It can go on for days, years, or minutes. It can even last forever.

There are only five permanent rules in the Night World:

1) Entering the Night World is always achieved by discovering the entrance from Ward 23 that appears exactly four hours after lights out and lockdown — promptly at 12 Midnight.

2) The Patient remains the Patient — they cannot be physically changed into something else, though they can be injured or killed while in the Night World. If they are killed or fail to return to Ward 23 (that is, they hit 0 in Fatigue, Lucidity and Memory while in the Night World), they vanish, forever — never to be seen again.

3) Any Patient, can spend 1 point of Lucidity at any time, to change what they are currently seeing in the Night World — as with everything, what this changes remains up to the Facilitator to decide. It can be a positive or detrimental change; but one thing is certain — a change always occurs under such circumstances.

4) Patients that enter alone or a separated from the group in the Night World must expend 1 point of Memory or 5 points of Lucidity to leave the Night World to Ward 23, or rejoin the other Patients in the Night World.

5) Exiting the Night World requires the Patients to search for an exit back to the Ward by expending 1 point of Memory, or 5 points of Lucidity. This always brings the Patients back to Ward 23 at the last second before 12:01 AM — no matter how late after midnight they left for the Night World; despite the fact that six hours, or sixty years, might have passed in the interim.



# THE PLAY

IF GOD IS DEAD AND THE DEVIL IS DREAMING WHAT DOES THAT MAKE A

The Play is the engine that makes the world spin. The Night World is the result of the Play — the pivot on which the world was set — while the real world is nothing more than a still reflection of the madness that lies at the heart of it all. Entering the Night World is the only real way to the Play. It is the meaning of the Play, and its effect on the Patients given physicality and form.

Only in the Night World are the real secrets of the Play learned through experience. This is not some dry tour through a shifting maze of rooms; it is a coherent flow of insanity, ridden like a roller coaster. Ideas grow; shift and change like monstrous plants, and sometimes even consume their creators.

## **The Stage**

The Night World expands forever. There is nothing it cannot encompass, be, or do. It is larger than all the worlds that ever were. It is in the truest sense, infinite. It is the liquid substance of the imagination made real when it is observed. Before it is solidified however, it is simply that — liquid and shifting

and indistinct — insubstantiality waiting to be made real by the mind of a madman.

## **The Set**

The Set is the area of the Night World the Patients can see, smell, taste or hear. It is the directly observable area in the Night World all around them. When Patients split up, multiple Sets form, floating in the void of the Stage, and when the Patients reunite in the Night World, those two Sets congeal to form one larger bubble of a Set.



A Set can be anything the Facilitator decides the Patients see, feel or imagine.

Some Sets created long ago by other minds in the Night World are so strong, so real, they insist themselves into the minds of those who did not create them. Occasionally, depending on circumstances, these Sets collide with the sets created by the Patients — like an iceberg striking land.

The power of these Sets should not be underestimated — they were created long ago through the thoughts of other madmen; the most powerful of which are the Sets that comprise the endless cycle of the Play *The King in Yellow*, though there are others. They have lasted in the timeless eternity of the Night World like a perfect, implacable bubble of pure concept. They have a tendency to absorb those who lack the wherewithal to escape their purity.

### **Example Sets**

The following example Sets are given as a guideline to show the Facilitator what is expected. They are by *no means the only Sets in existence*. The Facilitator is in control of all the Patients see and hear, and the world is shaped at his whim, he should feel free to expand upon, change, or completely create all Sets in the Night World by himself.

The Night World, like the Facilitator's imagination, is infinite.

### **The Castle**

This set exists on the edge of a mist-covered lake at night. The sky shows an alien set of stars, and two moons hover near the edge of where the sky turns to fog. There, vast and ancient spires — like a castle from a Russian fairy-tale — spring up from the clouds; dotted with

lamps and lit windows. Distant music can be heard from inside — a hurdy-gurdy like din, backed by a band and mechanical calliope that plays an endless looping tune.

On a boulevard, partygoers walk past — dressed in elegant clothing; rich burgundy and green velour; pearls and tiaras, diamonds and scepters — and each wears a mask. Demons and charlatans, jesters and tragic Homeric heroes; the partygoers are faceless and rich and empty. They give the patient's a wide berth and laugh at their dress, or occasionally throw a few copper coins their way. They speak different languages — sometimes recognizable, other times not.

### **The Party**

The Party is a masquerade ball that happens every night in the Castle — a countdown to the end of time. Its splendor draws in partygoers from every reach of



the Night Floors and if they stay until the unmasking; keeps them forever.

Nearly every character in the Cast (see below) can be found there.

To enter the Party, the Patient must have an appropriate costume (which can be found many places in the Night World) without it, the guards turn them away; those attempting to sneak in are caught and thrown into the mists of the Lake. The guards are implacable brutes who speak no English and seem to multiply along with the Patients' struggles – each wearing an identical Lion mask.

If the Patients do not struggle and are turned away, they spy a brief glimpse of huge mahogany doors closing on a party so opulent and rich that sheer curiosity of what could possibly be going on consumes their every waking thought. Those that catch this glimpse are sure the answer to their question lies within.

Inside, the party unfolds in a maze of rooms, each more vault-like, festooned with confetti, discarded drinks, and drunken mask-wearing partygoers. In fact, it's very confusing to maneuver through; so much so that to find the entrance or any exit costs 1 point of Lucidity.

The partygoers are full of gossip – that much is obvious – but their language, initially, can't be understood. As the hour approaches Midnight (as marked on ancient, chiming clocks) the Patients discover they can understand more and more of what is said around them. This understanding grows just like their sense of dread – a feeling of some impending doom that settles on them and slowly suffocates them. Those that can remain until the hour before the unmasking understand everything said around them. Talk centers on “The Phantom of Truth”

and “The King”. The partygoers are anxious to know if a legend will come to pass that evening. Rumors have spread that the Phantom of Truth has come to Carcosa to herald the coming of the last King. Talk centers around a stranger who wears a plain ivory mask and yellow robes. The stranger is often seen, but difficult to catch up with – he is always one step ahead in the party. Visible but never within reach.

Any Patient remaining to the last fifteen minutes before Midnight begins to lose first Lucidity and then Memory points. At Midnight, the Patient is one with the Party, and will remain there, forever. Those that escape before the last chime gain 1 point of Memory.

### **The Lake**

The Lake appears to be just that – but closer examination reveals it is nothing more than a thick mist that sits in a depression like a lake. There is no water. Boats seem to float across it, but those entering it find nothing but a thick mist. Walking down the slope of the shore, one eventually finds themselves beneath the mist lake. Inside, giant whale-like creatures occasionally disturb the mist, swimming within yards of the Patients; but they never approach the Patients, seemingly disturbed by their presence. Other less cautious things haunt the mist as well.

As the Patients descend, the mist seems to thicken to the consistency of water – though the Patient can still breathe. There is a level in the mist where the Patients can swim about as if they were underwater. Swimming lower, the Patients sink until they arrive in Carcosa; swimming higher they arrive on the shore

and can walk up. But at the level where the mist is thickest, the Patients can float indefinitely.

At this level, beneath them, barely visible, are the spires of some city. Above them, lost in the fog are two pinpricks of light that must be the moons above.

### **Carcosa**

The door to the Night Floors always opens into Carcosa. Carcosa is the city that surrounds the Castle. Caught somewhere between Victorian England and Gaudi Spanish architecture, it's a sprawling town of many levels, plazas and vistas; shrouded in mist and always consumed by night. Doors are shut, windows shuttered and plazas empty. Those that move through the streets are either partygoers (accompanied by the Lion-Mask guards) heading to the Party, or secretive individuals who rush through the streets on various secret tasks.

This city literally leads anywhere – at the Facilitator's discretion, *any* set can be accessed from Carcosa. It is the center of every Set; the hub of a wheel that has many spokes. Everything comes from it, and relies on it. As such, a single wrong turn down a Carcosan street can leave the Patient stranded in Stalingrad, Berlin, The Whisper Labyrinth – anywhere. As such, it's dangerous and wonderful...and addictive. It's very easy to remain in Carcosa for too long; eager to see just what is around the next corner, what might be found on the next street, to see who lives in the house that vanishes into the mist...

### **The Broadalbin**

The Broadalbin is a dilapidated hotel in New York City circa 1922. Patients usually enter from one of the basement levels. It's a small hotel; but as those who've been to Carcosa know, looks can be deceiving. Though it claims only a dozen stories all told, the rooms of the Broadalbin seem to wind and twist in a way that seems unnatural, somehow stuffing enormous ballrooms, huge tunnels and staircases and halls into a thin, brownstone style building.

Those who stay at the Broadalbin are either searching for Carcosa, the Whisper Labyrinth or something more – no one stays there by accident. Some might not know exactly why they are there; only that they're searching for something. Everyone who





checks into the Broadalbin eventually get what they deserve...

All rooms and hallways in the Broadalbin have ceilings lined with four groove-like tracks. The staff is rarely seen – when they are, it’s always at a distance, and even then something about them seems not right. They walk unnaturally, floating and bobbing on the ground as if they were under water.

### **The MacAllistair Building**

The MacAllistair Building is a four-story brownstone-like structure in modern Manhattan. The building once served as low-income home for artists, but fell under the sway of the *King in Yellow* sometime in the past. Its inhabitants are all caught in the pull of Carcosa, and often travel there, after dark, when the MacAllistair connects to the Night World. At night the MacAllistair seems to go on and on – floor upon floor of cluttered rooms, hidden hallways and rickety staircases. At night, like Carcosa and the

Broadalbin, the MacAllistair is one with the Night World.

The inhabitants of the MacAllistair live normal lives in the day – going about their business in the world outside. At night however, they don’t sleep; instead they haunt the halls of the MacAllistair and congregate in the upstairs rooms to discuss the play and its implications. They fraternize with the personalities who were long ago consumed by Carcosa; and some even travel into the depths of the Night World, searching for whatever the play took from them. What they don’t realize is that the MacAllistair is simply a way station – nothing of import can be found there; it’s simply a honey-trap.

There’s enough in the MacAllistair to keep a Patient fascinated forever, only those strong enough to pull themselves away from its draw will ever discover anything of import.

### **The Whisper Labyrinth**

The Whisper Labyrinth is a series of hand-carved stone tunnels which wind, turn, twist and drop in some endless subterranean gulf – the path is often treacherous and poorly lit, and covered in dust. Footprints in the dust are often visible.

Discarded items can be found nearly everywhere. Most often, they’re tools – like pick axes, rock hammers and such. Sometimes there are old ropes, burned out lamps and even clothing scattered about.

There are never any bodies.

Every few feet in the tunnels, a recessed alcove is carved in the stone. Each alcove is unique. Some are ovals; others are more complex carvings such as faces, hands, or



geometric shapes. Each alcove holds a unique bottle. Each bottle is wholly original – no two are alike. And each is labeled in one way or another – each bears a single name on it. Some have it carved into their surface, others a ratty tag scrawled with a signature, and still others have initials marked in blood.

All bottles in alcoves are sealed and lit from behind by a dim light. This is the only light source in the Whisper Labyrinth.

Sometimes, a bottle is found on the floor – and an empty alcove is nearby. The bottles on the floor are never sealed. There's nothing in them; though the bottles in the alcove all seem to contain *something*. A few hold what look like mysterious objects – perhaps a slip of paper behind darkened glass; or bits of decaying matter. Others hold strange liquids, sand or rocks.

If Patient finds the alcove with their bottle, they can remove it, and if they choose to do so; open it. Every other bottle except their own is effectively off limits to the Patient. It can't be lifted, moved or smashed.

Patients often spend their lives searching for the secret that resides in their bottle. The draw is this: the answer to all a Patient has ever wished to know – some final peace – can be found within it.

Rumors persist that if a person opens their bottle – they vanish forever. Still, many hunt the Whisper Labyrinth for their secret.

### **The Library**

The Library is an endless sprawling complex of mahogany bookshelves, hallways and raised walkways. There are no windows; only door upon door –

reading rooms which open on impossible vistas of galleries, stairs and walkways that seem to continue on and on forever. The shelves are more often than not filled with exotic books in bizarre languages – but some areas of the Library are in disrepair; wrecked by water damage, collapsed plaster ceilings and books bloated like leeches filled with water. Some books are in English, but they describe bizarre, never-before-heard-of locales. Countries that don't exist, animals that don't exist, people who don't exist.

Tracks – like those found in the Broadalbin – are found everywhere in the Library. Sometimes, strange, bounding figures are seen in the distance. Otherwise, besides the Patient, the Library seems to be vacant – of people, that is.

Various areas seem to have been lived in for long periods. Debris like old food tins, empty bottles of alcohol and the remains of books burned for warmth can be found. Animal bones – which seem to be of strange rat-like creatures – can sometimes be found near these campsites.

The lights in the library seem to grow and shrink in intensity over long periods of time, almost as if they were mimicking night and day. Despite this, there are no obvious light sources – the light seems to bleed from the walls themselves. As it grows darker, sounds begin to echo through the halls. At first, they are the sounds of skittering – something far off and small rushing across a dusty floor. Later, as the darkness increases, the sounds grow in intensity until it's the sound of something the size of a lion padding through the stacks.

Anyone who remains there after dark should light a fire, or they'll find out

what wanders the halls of the Library at night.

### **The Clockwork Factory**

This vast warehouse is covered in a huge, vault-like ceiling, which can never be seen – it's forever lost in absolute blackness. On the floor are dimly lit work areas, most covered in old-looking tools of questionable purpose – none are readily identifiable.

No workmen are ever present. Though occasionally, a mournful violin tune can be heard. Its direction can never be pinpointed, though those pursuing the sound fervently enough can locate a single steel door sunk into a wall; like that of a submarine. It's unlike any other door in the Factory and through it, the music seems to emanate. It is immune to all mundane attempts to open it; though persistent Patients might find a way to open it.

The worktables themselves are nothing exceptional – huge roughly cut wooden slabs on twisting wrought-iron legs. On some worktables are what look like ivory limbs – a hand here, a foot there – these limbs are startlingly complex clockwork recreations of actual limbs. Fingers articulate, heels pivot, elbows bend and rotate. They are wholly convincing. Their “skin” is incredibly detailed ivory sculpture; delicate and amazingly thin.

Occasionally, an entire clockwork man will be found – dangling from four sets of wires that rise and vanish into the vault-like ceiling. These clockwork men are often clothed in a simple approximation of a tradesman's dress – one might wear a priest's collar, another a gangster's pinstriped suit, still another the

outfit of a 1920's bellhop. All these clothes – despite color and style differences – are made of a similar satin-like material.

Sometimes huge jumbles of these figures can be found gathered in open spaces, their wires hopelessly tangled about one another. A woman tied around a police office, the officer leaning towards a doctor, the doctor strangling on a cord from an old lady. Sometimes Patients might see a relationship in these figures that imitates their former life.

### **Yhtill**

Yhtill is an ancient city. It looks like a cross between classical Rome and Mesopotamia, rich with former glory and opulence. Lions adorn every available surface – the same yawning maw of a stylized beast staring from a surface. But someone has meticulously scraped the eyes off each and every lion, so they are blind. The city seems abandoned.

No one lives in Yhtill – in fact, it seems centuries have passed since anyone but the Patients have set foot in the city. Flagstones are uneven and overgrown with grass, buildings have slumped and spilled over with time, roads have rippled as the ground beneath them shifts.

Also, a strange symbol – like a rippling eye with lines of power emanating from it – can be found scrawled in random places. It's drawn in ancient crumbling yellow-brown paint. Those attempting to remember the sign often have trouble forgetting it, and begin to see it everywhere. Though, to Patients, the sign is often very familiar to begin with.





### **Threats**

The Night World is inhabited by all manner of beings – creatures, figments, the remains of personalities set to repeat the last moments of their lives forever – they are drawn to Carcosa, and are there set in the orbit of their particular madness. All these beings have one thing in common – they feed of fear, discomfort, madness and melancholy.

At best, they are mundane – at worst, they threaten the very existence of the Patient. Some murder, others drain, still others lure the Patient to other fates, but have no fear; there is life after death. If a Patient vanishes in the Night World it's likely the others will see him again, as he endlessly haunts the pathways of Carcosa...

### **Dealing With Threats**

The particular threats in the Night World can be classified in 4 categories, from least to most powerful: Figments, Creatures, Repeaters and Entities.

Figments exist only on Lucidity points. They attack and defend with Lucidity and must be overcome by a Patient's Lucidity to be destroyed.

### **Figments**

Figments are rarely seen – and then only by individuals. Usually, only the after-

effects of their particular obsession are seen; a room covered with bloodstains, a cigar-burned manuscript next to a ruined typewriter, a smashed film camera from the 1920's filled with old photographs. They are all that is left of a particular personality consumed with a single vice, purpose or obsession, which lacked the corresponding will to remain whole in the Night World. When their personalities are shattered by madness, the fragments that are left wander Carcosa.

No group can observe a figment – instead, they will see the effects of its madness and nothing more. Alone however, individual Patients can see or even *interact with* Figments. Such encounters are never good on the whole, though sometimes hints of Memory can be gleaned from them. Locating a Figment is extremely difficult, and should cost Fatigue or Lucidity at the Facilitator's whim – but if the Patient is wise, and follows through, the reward should be a point of Memory.

Figments have a Lucidity score and nothing else. This is the equivalent of Fatigue for them. They can attack and defend with Lucidity until a Patient spends enough Lucidity to make them go negative; whereupon they vanish. Patients do not need to spend Lucidity to defend

from a Figment; they can just spend and counter with Fatigue.

### **Creatures**

Creatures are often the product of some great tragedy or sorrow. They are non-human in the classical sense, though they can be almost anything – a walking construct of Victorian chairs, a statue with no eyes that moves when the Patients aren't looking, a buzzing swarm of paper butterflies – it doesn't have to be a living, breathing creature to be classified as such. Creatures generally want very simple things: to eat, to play, to follow, to fetch. Some are extremely dangerous – eager to kill anything that crosses their path; others are more benign – content to watch or follow the Patients.

If a Patient can fulfill a Creatures' desire they should be rewarded with Lucidity points.

Creatures have a Fatigue score and nothing else. They attack and defend with Fatigue normally. If they are sent negative from external attacks, they vanish or are killed, at the Facilitator's whim. Lucidity points are useless against them.

### **Repeaters**

Repeaters are the shell of a consciousness that was drawn into and then destroyed by Carcosa. They are different from Figments in that they are simply shells; nothing else. There is no remnant of consciousness within: as such, in and of themselves they are not a significant threat. However, each is linked to some locale, idea of concept – the thing that consumed them and they repeat the actions that lead to their doom, over and over again. They often lead unsuspecting Patients into such traps – where they are consumed themselves.

Each Repeater is composed of a single point of Memory and nothing else. Those who follow a Repeater and survive the trap that consumed them gain that point of Memory and dismiss the Repeater forever.

### **Entities**

Entities are independent beings that have managed to hold on to some part of their consciousness despite their consumption by Carcosa. They are capable of new and self-motivated action despite the repetition and melancholy of Carcosa; and can even make plans, form alliances and choose where to be.

They range from those that barely made such a transition (Ambrose), to those who exhibit a huge amount of control on the Sets of Carcosa (The King). Like Patients, each Entity has all three scores: Fatigue, Lucidity and Memory. Even if they are overcome with Fatigue, they do not perish in the common sense – instead they seem to vanish – they are fully restored the next time the Patients enter the Night World.

### **The Cast**

The following beings are presented only as examples. Like Sets, it is up to the Facilitator to create and administer the Players in the Play. Anyone or anything is possible in the Night World.

#### **Aldones (Repeater)**

A member of the Royal family, Aldones is a young man who is always at the Party in the Castle. He wears a lion mask and a complex outfit of sequins, jewels and satin. He is a foul-tempered, disbelieving sort, eager to have the “prophecy” of the Phantom of Truth turn out to be nothing

but hogwash. He is the younger brother of Cassilda and Cassandra and will become King someday.

However, every night at midnight, he finds he is mistaken. He will continue to do so, forever.



### **Ambrose (Entity)**

**Fatigue** 4

**Lucidity** 5

**Memory** 3

Ambrose is an old man who haunts Carcosa. He is one of the few who does not attend the Party nightly, and instead spends his time in the Clockwork Workshop constructing toys and marionettes that strike his fancy. He's both a skilled violinist and tinkerer, and has built all manner of impossible machines. He has waited for an invitation to the Party for eons now, and eagerly, every evening prepares his outfit, a meticulously constructed mail suit of tin clockwork that bends with his body.

He has never worn it.

Ambrose does not recall where he was before all this, though he does remember his country being at war sometime in the past with the Russo-German Pact. This fact seems to confuse

him more than comfort him as he does not think Carcosa was his country at all. It was somewhere else, a long time ago.

Ambrose is eager to help Patients and is one of the very few useful Entities in the Night World who does not have an ulterior motive.

Instead, he will do all manner of things for the Patients is motivated to do so, and understands

much of the Night World, as such, he's a valuable contact to have. He can most often be found in Carcosa or the Clockwork Factory.

### **Cassandra and Cassilda (Repeaters)**

Mother and daughter; Queen and princess of the realm respectively. They are always found at the Party in the Castle.

Cassandra is caught between prophecy and fear. She is certain the Phantom of Truth has spoken and the King in Yellow has arrived. She is an older woman in regal gown, wearing a crown of emeralds, rubies and diamonds, and a mask of a cat. She glances about the party nervously, and wanders about as if searching for somebody.

Cassilda is young and certain nothing supernatural is going on at all.



She is eager to gain the favor of her brother Aldones, since more down-to-earth matters concern her; such as the royal succession when her mother dies.

Both are equally shocked however, when the King reveals himself at Midnight.

### **Mark Roark (Entity)**

**Fatigue** 6

**Lucidity** 7

**Memory** 2

Mark Roark is an obnoxious traveling salesman type, clothed in 1920's fashions and topped by a hideously realized wig. Roark thinks he is in a "hotel" and in fact, thinks everything in the Night World is part of the "hotel". Roark is familiar with the Broadalbin and the MacAllistair building, but knows very little outside of those locations – he's eager to learn, however.

Roark is loud, brash, overweight and obnoxious. He talks over anyone with a strong opinion, and has a mercurial temper – he snaps at the slightest provocation. Roark is obsessed with locating his bottle in the Whisper Labyrinth; but so far, despite nightly sojourns into the rocky maze, has failed to do so. He will do anything for someone who can help him complete such a task.

Though he comes across as silly, if provoked, Roark can prove murderous – he has killed before – for all the good it's done him.

### **The Addict (Repeater)**

The Addict can often be found lounging about. He stumbles from place to place, nodding off or crawling on the floor searching for something. He's a thin man dressed in 1920's clothing with a porkpie

hat and rolled up trousers. He looks clean but smells terrible. He has no name.

His arms are marked by what at first appear to be track marks, but closer examination reveals them to be holes of some tiny burrowing worm-like creatures. Every once in awhile the Addict consumes something brought out from his pocket – a gelatin cube of amber, filled with tiny golden worms.

The Addict is difficult to talk to. He often gives the impression he knows more than he does (when he can be understood), and will gladly lead the Patients nearly anywhere in the Night World. It doesn't matter where he goes – he's already in his own personal hell and he's eager for company.

### **The Author (Figment)**

The Author is never there – instead, only the remains of his work can be found: thousands of manuscript pages spilled about a room; a wrecked typewriter, open bottles of booze, a burned through cigar. He is defined by his absence.

Those who do manage to see him must put up a vast pursuit event to catch a glimpse of him; and they must be alone to do so. He is a tall, thin man in a sweat-stained suit with small, round; silver rimmed glasses, a slight mustache and dusty brown hair.

He doesn't speak – instead, he responds with manuscript pages that he pulls from some interior pocket. Sections circled on such pages in red indicate his response. He always seems to be late for some great event he is ill prepared for. He has a cheap charlatan mask sticking from his pocket. Perhaps he is going to a party...

### **The Clockwork Child (Entity)**

**Fatigue 2**

**Lucidity 2**

**Memory 3**

The Clockwork Child is a small clockwork being composed of brass-parts, wheels and the remains of a porcelain doll. It cannot talk, but its mouth clacks open and shut as it wobbles on its two uneven wheels. Its arms spin as it moves and a gloomy dirge plays from a music box embedded in its chest. Its clockwork seems to be lubricated with something like blood – and the air fills with a coppery stench when it is nearby.

The motivations of the Clockwork Child are mysterious. It can often be found haunting the Clockwork Factory or following Ambrose about, but frequently, it is out on its own, wandering the streets of Carcosa. The Child cannot communicate in the common sense, but instead is found carrying notes; carefully written letters pinned to its back. Who writes these notes is unknown.

Despite appearing to be a Creature, the Clockwork Child most definitely has its own sense of self-motivation, and very often goes off on its own.

### **The Dog (Creature)**

**Fatigue 6**

The Dog is an invisible Creature with the countenance of a playful and somewhat nosy large dog. It can be heard and felt, but never seen. It does what all dogs do – it goes to the bathroom, roots around for food, whines, and plays. It is quite startling to first encounter, since it always bounds up to the Patients – making a terrible noise

as its claws clack on the floor.

Sometimes the Dog will follow Patients and, if fed, will remain with them for some time. It can prove useful – locating hidden objects, entrances and beings. But more often than not, it simply wanders off, bored or hungry.

The Dog is not a threat in any conventional sense, and can be found nearly anywhere in the Night World.

### **The King in Yellow (Entity)**

**Fatigue 20**

**Lucidity 20**

**Memory 20**

The King is in control of all of Carcosa, and every realm it touches. He brings Carcosa behind him like his shadow, and he is simultaneously always at the Party and anywhere else he deems important in the Night World. Difficult to approach and impossible to defeat – he never loses enough Fatigue to be defeated despite any attempts by the Patients, and when midnight strikes, he's restored to full scores. He can't be "beaten" in a



conventional sense because he is not real. The King In Yellow is a fictional entity given life and power by the forces that created the play.

In the classic chicken and the egg scenario, the King pre-dates the play and the play the King. They created one another and in concert they power Carcosa and all who haunt it.

The King is an inscrutable figure in tattered yellow robes that wears a porcelain mask of pure white. Nothing is visible inside the mask – no flesh of any sort is visible. Any who stays at the Party long enough discovers that the mask is no mask – it is his face. And at midnight he announces to the Party, “I wear no mask...”

### **The Paper Lion (Creature)**

#### **Fatigue 10**

The Paper Lion is the beast that haunts the Library. As the “day” turns to “night” in the Library the Paper Lion grows in power and size, from Fatigue 1 to Fatigue 10, and shrinks back down again as the “day” breaks.

It appears to be a huge beast composed of dripping wet paper; like an ever-shifting papier-mâché beast that never dries. Its face is a maw composed of broken glass, rusty nails and razor blades sunk in the ruined husks of old leather-bound books. It is a killer – and will run down and kill any Patients it can.

Once it makes a single kill, it’ll resign itself to feeding on the corpse; leaving anyone else nearby free to leave.

### **The Marionettes (Creatures)**

#### **Fatigue 5**

Marionettes are people consumed by the Clockwork Factory, the Broadalbin or

Library. They are the form stripped of consciousness, and serve some outside power, fulfilling its will. They are life-size marionettes – clothed in satin and composed of clockwork limbs. They hang from tracks in the ceiling and can move with great speed. They are utterly silent and terrifying and their motivations are inscrutable. Sometimes they simply deliver something – a book, a picture, a bottle – other times they are there to make more of their kind.

No one knows what motivates or controls the marionettes.







...WELCOME TO THE  
INSYLUM

...YOU CAME HERE  
TO FORGET...

...IT IS OUR JOB TO  
MAKE YOU...

...REMEMBER...

...WE SEND YOU INTO THE NIGHT WORLD...

...AND YOU BRING BACK...

...SECRETS...

OR YOU DO NOT COME BACK AT ALL...