



Crimes People Play

A Role-Playing Game of Detection

By Joe Williams

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Getting Started

One of the greatest pleasures in reading a mystery is putting yourself in the shoes of the protagonist. You observe every clue, mull over witness testimony and delve into the psychology of the criminal right alongside the main character. You may even establish the identity of the culprit before the detective does.

In *Crimes People Play*, you and your friends take on the roles of detectives working together to solve a mystery. You'll question suspects, search for leads and ferret out information. Once you've examined all the clues, you'll try to figure out the correct solution to the mystery and bring the culprit to justice. Best of all, you can use the same character over and over, just like a favorite detective in a series.

Requirements

To enjoy *Crimes People Play*, you'll need:

- pencils and paper
- blank character sheets copied from this rulebook
- six-sided dice
- a narrator to run the game
- one or more players to take on the roles of detectives

Summary of Play

Using an outline prepared beforehand, the narrator responds to the actions of the players and describes what happens in the game. The narrator serves as the player's senses, describing settings, situations, the passage of time, and all events outside the players' control. The narrator keeps the

game running smoothly but is not the players' opponent.

The narrator portrays every character the detectives meet, assuming new roles as needed even if it means posing as three or four characters at a time. This can be very demanding, but it's made easier by semi-diceless rules and simplified non-player characters. All characters controlled by the narrator are referred to as suspects.

The players each portray a detective in the game, and react to people and events according to the personality of their roles. The players' decisions directly affect what happens. They decide where to go and who to question, when to fight and how to solve problems. They control what their characters say, how it's said, and what they attempt.

A story develops naturally out of the actions and questions of the players. Rather than restricting the players to a pre-conceived plotline, the narrator lets the story go wherever the players and the dice take it.

Die rolls help the narrator decide exactly what happens out of a range of possibilities. They provide uncertainty, suspense and challenge, both for the players and the narrator.

For instance, a detective who wishes to track a suspect must make a die roll. On a high roll, the detective is able to follow the suspect without any trouble. On a low roll, the suspect darts into an alley and eludes pursuit.

The challenge for the players is in dealing with the fallout of failed actions, while for the narrator, it's interpreting outcomes impartially and creatively. Even if the narrator thinks a particular outcome would be most dramatic, exciting, or interesting, the narrator must abide by the tyranny of the dice and construct a narrative within the limits they impose. Paradoxically, the randomness of the dice can foster unexpected and unique developments that could never be scripted.

Die Rolling Methods

Crimes People Play uses six-sided dice exclusively. Rolling d6 means to roll one six-sided die. A number in front of the “d” tells you how many dice to roll, so if the game tells you to roll 2d6 you would roll two dice and add them together.

There are a few other ways that six-sided dice are used in the game.

A d3 is a six-sided die, but you add only the 1’s, 2’s and 3’s that you roll. Numbers higher than 3 count as zero. Your d3 dice should all be the same color, typically white.

Similarly, a d2 is also a six-sided die, but you count only the 1’s and 2’s that you roll. Your d2 should be a different color or smaller than your d3 dice so you can tell them apart. A d2 is considered “half” a d3. Whenever you have to roll half a die simply roll a d2 instead of a d3. You must always replace pairs of d2 with a single d3. Therefore you will never roll more than one d2 at a time.

A penalty die, or dp for short, is a regular six-sided die that you roll with the other dice. It should be a third color, not used by the other dice. A penalty die cancels one other d2 or d3 die that shows the same value. So if you roll a 3 on a d3, and one of your penalty dice also shows a 3, the two would cancel out.

A penalty die can only cancel a die that would otherwise be counted. So if you rolled threes on a d3, d2 and penalty die, the penalty die would cancel the d3 because the three showing on the d2 would have no chance of being counted.

It’s possible you will need to roll ten or more dice at a time. Fortunately, adding the 1’s, 2’s and 3’s is much less tedious than it sounds. But if you dislike hefty fistfuls of dice, this game may not be for you.

Core System

Whenever there is uncertainty, conflict or disagreement over what will happen in the game, the question is answered with an ability roll. While ability rolls are most often used to resolve an

action, they may also be used by the players to introduce helpful items, suspects and events or otherwise shape the game environment.

The need for an ability roll is always declared by the narrator. The player or narrator decides the ability applicable to the situation and the narrator assigns a difficulty based on the likelihood of that ability providing a result favorable to the player.

The player rolls a number of d3 equal to the character’s relevant ability score plus the difficulty adjustment. If the ability score ends in ½, the player adds d2 to the roll.

The total of the roll ranges from 0 to 11, which corresponds to Catastrophic to Perfect in twelve distinct steps.

Ability Dice + Difficulty Dice = Outcome

The narrator never rolls the dice, but interprets the die rolls made by the players.

Other Terminology

Narrator: The person who runs the game; the referee or gamemaster. In these rules, the narrator is not considered a player.

Player: Someone who is playing a detective. Unless otherwise specified, the rules always address the player.

Detective: A individual character controlled by a player. May also refer to the player.

Suspect: A character controlled by the narrator.

Mystery: An outline that assists the narrator in responding to the actions of the players. A mystery ends when it is solved (either correctly or wrongly).

Session: A single gaming session. Some bookkeeping happens at the end of every gaming session. Sessions last about four hours. The end of the mystery is also considered the end of a session.

Chapter 2

Creating a Character

Your Character Sheet

In *Crimes People Play*, you pretend to be a detective with distinct characteristics. These qualities define what your detective is good at and things you might want to avoid trying. Your detective's abilities are recorded on a character sheet. As a player, a completed character sheet and a handful of dice are all you'll need to participate in a *Crimes People Play* mystery.

Attributes represent your detective's innate aptitudes and maximum potential. A high attribute will enable you to increase related abilities to a greater degree, and will give you a starting advantage over someone with a lower score. All detectives have the same six attributes. Your attributes are set when your character is first created and can never change.

Abilities are what you use to do things in the game. Your current rating represents how close you are to achieving your potential through exercise, practice and training. Abilities may never exceed the attribute listed above them on the character sheet.

Specialties are advanced abilities. You won't start with any specialties, but will develop them as your abilities increase beyond a score of 7.

Talents are special advantages that are unique to your detective type.

Perks are special items that give you an ability bonus. You start with no Perks, but acquire them by expending experience points.

Character Creation

1. Choose a detective type from Chapter 3: Detective Types.
2. Distribute 3 points among the attributes for your type. No attribute may be greater than 9. Attributes must always be whole numbers.
3. Assign scores to your abilities.
 - The sum of each group must equal twice the attribute listed above them.
 - You may assign scores in increments of one half.
 - An ability may not start with a score higher than half its ruling attribute.
 - Prerequisites for your type must be at least 2.
 - You must not assign a score to at least three abilities in each group.
4. Once you are done assigning scores, you must assign three abilities in each group a score of -3.
5. All remaining blank abilities are assigned a score of 0.
6. Your detective starts with 4 experience points.
7. Write your detective's health, talent and gear on your character sheet.
8. Roll or select your detective's age, sex, appearance and background.
9. Name your detective.
10. As a group, decide on the type of agency you belong to.

Health

Health shows how many wounds you can take before you fall unconscious. Each letter corresponds to an injury as shown on the Wound table. Your Health is determined by your detective type and it will never change. To maintain balance between the types, detectives with more health levels have slightly lower attributes.

On your detective sheet, scratch out those health levels you do not possess.

Example: You are playing a Sweet Old Lady with a Health of L M H. You must scratch out the S, C and D on your health track.

Taking Damage

Your narrator will tell you how much damage your characters takes. Damage ranges from light to deadly as shown on the Wound table.

When you take damage, mark off the corresponding health level on your Health track. If the appropriate level is already marked off, cross out the next available health level to the right.

Once the rightmost health level is marked off, your character falls unconscious. You are out of the game until you are revived. **Each time you are knocked unconscious you lose 1 experience point.** Although this may leave you with negative experience points, you do not lose advantages you have already purchased.

If you and the rest of the detectives are all knocked unconscious your adversaries may take you prisoner or leave you for dead. In any case, you will eventually awaken wounded and weary. Detectives cannot die in *Crimes People Play*.

Types of Damage

Mark **stun** damage on your character sheet by circling the corresponding health level.

Mark **fatigue** damage with a triangle. Fatigue represents sickness, poison, or exhaustion.

Mark **normal** damage by putting a slash “/” through the health level.

Mark **lethal** damage by putting an X through the health level.

When you take normal or lethal damage, look up the health level *that you marked off* (not necessarily the same as the original damage) on the Wound table to determine the special effect. For example, if you mark off an H for a heavy wound then you will suffer 1dp on your next turn.

Wound Table

Code	Severity	Special Effect
L	Light	A mere scratch or bruise.
M	Medium	A deep cut or contusion.
H	Heavy	Suffer 1dp on your next turn.
S	Severe	Lose your next turn while you recover.
C	Critical	Lose your next turn and suffer 1dp on all actions until you are healed.
D	Deadly	You are knocked unconscious.

Health Recovery

At the end of the battle, erase all stun damage and all light wounds with a slash through them.

In addition, erase the **rightmost** slash and put an “X” through the wound level to the immediate left of it. Change all the remaining slashes to X.

If there is an X on the rightmost health level, erase it. Your character has now revived.

Fatigue damage lasts until the source of the fatigue is eliminated.

Erase all wounds (including lethal damage) at the end of the mystery.

Talents

Your talent depends on your type. A talent is something only your character can do. It’s a special ability that you may use without making a die roll, or an advantage due to your reputation or wealth. If you attempt to use a talent that would ruin the mystery, the narrator may prohibit it from working quite as effectively as described in the rules.

Gear

Before you set out and start solving mysteries, you'll need to equip your detective. Your most important possessions are listed for your detective type, but you may jot down a few additional items of your choice. Don't list every tissue and ball of lint, just useful equipment.

Your carrying capacity is the maximum number of items you can equip. It equals your Fitness + 5.

Beginning equipment may allow you to do things you couldn't otherwise, but it is all basic gear. You cannot take any beginning equipment that grants you an ability bonus. You could, for example, take simple lock picks (or a specially bent hairpin) that would let you pick locks, but they wouldn't give you a bonus to your Unlock roll. Likewise, your pistol will allow you to use your Shooting ability, but it will not give you a bonus to your roll.

Uncommon or illegal items cannot be taken as beginning equipment. This includes night scopes, grenades, machine guns and bulletproof vests. Avoid inappropriate starting gear. Remember, this is a game of sleuthing. A detective's most important piece of equipment is a keen mind.

Later, you can acquire better equipment and armor by spending experience points on Perks.

A detective who is not wealthy can only afford one or two luxury items, such as a cellular phone or car. Wealthy detectives will have no trouble affording an assortment of expensive items. To a very wealthy detective, money is no object, and they can buy almost anything they need. While it would be reasonable for a wealthy character to have diamond earrings, and a very wealthy character to have a safe full of jewelry, a poor character would be lucky to have a mood ring.

A large or bulky object cannot be easily concealed, and may attract attention. It may also restrict your actions. A detective carrying a chain saw would certainly have trouble climbing a ladder. Most detectives can carry only one bulky item at a time.

During the game, you can assume your detective is carrying whatever else seems appropriate for your type, provided it is small enough to fit in a pocket or purse. A hard-boiled PI could produce a book of matches from the pocket of his trench coat, even though they are not noted on his character sheet, simply because they are apt for his type.

Appearance

Your age and sex depend on your detective type. You may roll or simply choose what you're comfortable with.

Make separate rolls for your height, weight, hair color, hair style and eye color. If you dislike what you roll, feel free to roll again or simply make up anything you like. These tables are meant to stimulate your imagination. They aren't intended to limit your creativity.

Background

Roll four times on the background table. To make a background roll, roll a six-sided die three times, once for each digit of a three-digit number. So if you rolled 3, 2 and 5 in that order you would look at the background item for 325.

Your detective's relatives, friends, and lovers are controlled by the narrator. They may provide you with important information, a free cab ride, or other assistance. Your narrator may even incorporate elements of your background into a mystery.

The background tables includes personality traits you may wish to use to embellish your detective. Feel free to re-roll any personality quirk that you dislike.

Naming Your Detective

Since your fellow players can't actually see your detective, a name acts as a first impression. The moniker Jack Slade would fit a hard-boiled PI, while Miss Pansy Periwinkle would better suit a sweet old lady. Choose a name appropriate for your type.

Chapter 2: Creating A Character

Appearance Table

2d6	Height	2d6	Weight	2d6	Hair Color	2d6	Hair Style	2d6	Eye Color
2	Very Short	2	Very Thin	2	Red	2	Long & Ratty	2	Amber
3	Very Short	3	Very Thin	3	Strawberry	3	Long & Flowing	3	Green
4	Short	4	Thin	4	Blond	4	Short & Frizzy	4	Black
5	Short	5	Thin	5	Light Brown	5	Long & Straight	5	Gray
6	Average	6	Average	6	Brown	6	Short & Curly	6	Light Blue
7	Average	7	Average	7	Dark Brown	7	Short & Wavy	7	Dark Brown
8	Average	8	Average	8	Black	8	Short & Straight	8	Light Brown
9	Tall	9	Heavy	9	Auburn	9	Long & Curly	9	Dark Blue
10	Tall	10	Heavy	10	Sandy	10	Long & Wavy	10	Hazel
11	Very Tall	11	Very Heavy	11	Gray	11	Long & Frizzy	11	Violet
12	Very Tall	12	Very Heavy	12	White	12	Crew Cut	12	Silver

Background Table

111 Suffer depression	212 Own a pet	262 You and an enemy are professional rivals
112 Periodic amnesia	213 Criminal history, you decide whether you deserved it	263 Enemy hurt or killed your loved one
113 Compulsive lying	214 Political prisoner for 1d6 years	264 Enemy caused you to be imprisoned
114 Paranoia	215 Associated with a religious group	265 You stole enemy's lover
115 Hysteria	216 Persecuted by a powerful individual	266 Enemy stole your lover
121 Obsessive compulsive	221 You have mystical visions	311 You caused enemy to be imprisoned
122 Megalomania	222 Acquaintance: Weapons enthusiast	312 You humiliated enemy
123 Delusions	223 Acquaintance: Psychologist	313 Enemy humiliated you
124 Hallucinations	224 Acquaintance: Pharmacist	314 Enemy is insane
125 Manic depressive	225 Acquaintance: Pawnshop owner	315 Enemy thinks you owe them a fortune
126 Phobia of a particular animal	226 Acquaintance: Rare book dealer	316 Enemy stole from you
131 Phobia of darkness	231 Acquaintance: Politician	321 Sole support of aged, infirm mother
132 Phobia of insects and spiders	232 Acquaintance: Cab driver	322 Alcoholic older sibling is a lawyer
133 Phobia of water	233 Acquaintance: Morgue attendant	323 Sister married to Mafioso
134 Phobia of disease	234 Acquaintance: Reporter	324 Uncle in local police force
135 Phobia of poison	225 Acquaintance: Doctor	325 You have a twin
136 Phobia of snakes	226 Acquaintance: Small-time criminal	326 Intense sibling rivalry
141 Phobia of terrorists	231 Acquaintance: College professor	331 You are the black sheep of the family
142 Phobia of foreigners	232 Acquaintance: District Attorney	332 Strong ethnic background
143 Phobia of tight spaces	233 Acquaintance: Cabaret artiste	333 You are seventh in line to a fortune
144 Phobia of being alone	234 Acquaintance: Doctor	334 Close loving relationship with parent.
145 Phobia of tight spaces	235 Acquaintance: Law professor	335 Family rife with weirdoes and criminals
146 Phobia of heights	236 Acquaintance: Scientist	336 You care at home for a parent with Alzheimer's.
151 Phobia of guns	241 Acquaintance: Computer specialist	341 Lover is insane
153 Never caught for a crime you committed	242 Friend owes you a favor	342 Lover married to another
154 Haunted by a secret from the past	243 You owe a friend a favor	343 Lover is a criminal
155 Worked in a blue collar industry	244 You saved friend's life	344 You date lover regularly
156 Suffer flashbacks of a bad experience	245 Met friend during a crisis	345 You and lover grew apart, but you are still friends
161 Family killed when you were young	246 You saved friend's life	346 Engaged to lover
162 Host a local television show	251 Friend saved your life	351 Rival stole lover's affections
163 Persecuted by a powerful group	252 Friend is a former enemy	352 Love is unrequited
164 A near death experience changed you	253 You and friend have a common enemy	353 Stalked by a former lover
165 Associated with a criminal group	254 You and friend have common goal	
166 Inherit or find a special item	255 Friend helps you financially	
211 Falsely imprisoned for murder	256 You must protect friend	
	261 Friend is a former lover	

Chapter 2: Creating A Character

354 Lover kidnapped	463 You have a cruel streak	613 Your hobby is archaeology
355 Lover murdered	464 You suffer bursts of anger	614 Your hobby is painting or other art
356 Lover is wealthy	465 You're just plain lazy	615 Your father went into hiding after being accused of a crime
361 Spouse committed suicide	466 You have a fear of rejection	616 Your mother is in jail for a crime you believe she didn't commit
362 Spouse died in an accident	511 You have a fear of commitment	621 You have a bumbling sidekick
363 Spouse vanished	512 You are emotionally clingy	622 You have a grumbling sidekick
364 Spouse murdered	513 You will never betray a friend	623 You have a need to demonstrate your intellectual superiority
365 Spouse imprisoned	514 You always keep your word	624 You're a secret kleptomaniac
366 Happily married	515 You despise all dishonesty	625 You have a special tattoo
411 Planning a divorce	516 You dislike people in general	626 You have an odd birthmark
412 Spouse kidnapped	521 You are frighteningly impulsive	631 Your parents disapprove of your lifestyle
413 Divorced: Split apart by professional goals	522 You are downright reckless	632 You have expensive tastes
414 You lost your job, then your spouse	523 Favorable reputation	633 Exposure to death has left you jaded
415 Divorced: Split apart by money problems	524 Unfavorable reputation	634 You have become numb to violence
416 Divorced: Spouse was two-timing	525 You hate violence	635 You empathize too much with crime victims
421 Divorced: Spouse's family drove you apart	526 You're overly competitive	636 You have a prized possession you always carry
422 Divorced: Split apart by personal goals	531 You just can't keep a secret	641 You wear a flamboyant piece of clothing, such as a hat, scarf or coat
423 Divorced: You still love your ex	532 You never refuse a person in need	642 You worship Agatha Christie
424 Divorced: You were having an affair	533 You're always asking what's in it for you	643 You are dangerously curious
425 Divorced: You argued constantly	534 You always have to have your way	644 You have an unusual goal in life
426 Divorced: You are separated, but still married	535 You're stubborn	645 You were scammed out of your inheritance
431 Divorced: Spouse drank too much	536 Minor physical affliction	646 Your annoying brother is much more successful than you are
432 You have an adopted child	541 Relative is a criminal	651 You hate murderers
433 You have a step-child	542 You are an animal lover	652 You hate thieves
434 You have a bad relationship with your child	543 You are a packrat	653 You hate rapists
435 You have a child being raised by the other parent	544 You tend to be absent-minded	654 You hate anyone who harms a child
436 You have an obnoxious child	545 You are very religious	655 You hate all criminals
441 You have an imaginative child	546 You are politically active	656 You hate lawyers
442 You have a good relationship with your child	551 You are intolerant of a certain kind of person	661 You run an inn frequented by kooky guests
443 You have a very bright child	552 You have decadent tastes	662 You believe your pets help you to solve mysteries
444 You have a precocious child	553 You once belonged to a criminal gang	663 You have psychic visions, but it's really just a tumor
445 Your child is always getting into trouble	554 You are a decorated war veteran	664 You have an annoying catchphrase you say whenever you find a clue
446 You have a disabled child	555 Your friend's murder was never solved	665 You know the way to a confession is through baked goods
451 You have twins	556 You never graduated high school	666 You have somehow attracted the interest of a satanic cult
452 You are an alcoholic	561 You have a foolish childhood dream	
453 Chemical addiction	562 You are responsible for saving your enemy's life	
454 You habitually crack jokes	563 You ran away from home as a child	
455 You are greedy	564 You have bad relationship with your parents	
456 You are lecherous	565 You have a good relationship with your parents	
461 You seek personal fame	566 You were adopted	
462 You are cowardly	611 You once committed a horrible crime that you still conceal	
	612 Your hobby is gardening	

Character Personality

Any ability with a score under 2 is a liability. Low Charm will make your character bad at dealing with suspects, while a low Cunning will make you guileless. You can decide how these low abilities will be role played. Does your low Charm make you cold and aloof? Coarse and crude? Or do you stammer helplessly? Does your low

Willpower suggest a problem with alcohol or anger issues?

You are free to invent personality traits and interpret your abilities in ways that you'll enjoy playing. At the end of the game, the other players will decide how well you did when it comes time to award experience points.

Agency Types

Just how does a motley crew of detectives meet? What motivates them to act as a team? Simple: they all belong to the same detective agency.

Your agency could be a covert operation with offices hidden in an underground bunker. It may be a simple mom and pop business run from a garage, or a professional firm situated in a glass high rise. For a more gritty feel, you could belong to a shoestring agency, wedged in a untidy office over a green grocer's shop.

As a group, you and the other players must decide what type of agency you want to operate and who owns the business. It could be one or more of the detectives or, if none are wealthy enough, it could be a friend, relative or other character controlled by the narrator.

You must explain how your detective became involved with the agency. It might take quite a story to justify why a titled gentleman is operating a shoestring agency.

While you must name your agency, printing business cards is optional.

Covert Agency

Covert agencies are run by those who wish to keep a low profile. Most often the group as a whole owns the agency under an assumed name owned by a holding company incorporated in another state. Because the agency is not connected to a government body, they do not have direct access to confidential files or international records. However, they do have contacts in the legal and political professions who act as informants. Covert agencies are most often found in penthouse offices or secret underground bunkers. They are equipped with high tech equipment, including computers and advanced security systems.

Mom & Pop Agency

Mom and pop agencies are formed by people who have a natural talent for solving mysteries, so they've decided to start their own business. A mom and pop agency is most often found in the home of the owner. Their families help them run the business in a slipshod but surprisingly effective way. Part of their success results from the fact that the detectives are known and trusted by everyone in their neighborhood, from the mail carrier to the mayor. Their local contacts can provide them with invaluable background information on suspects. Typical acquaintances include the local bartender, the sheriff, the high school principal, the pharmacist, the librarian and the town gossip.

Professional Agency

Professional agencies can be found in steel and glass high rises in the heart of New York, or unassuming mansions in the elite suburbs of Boston. They are equipped with a secretary, computers, fax, legal library and extensive references. Most have a wine cellar or wet bar. Unfortunately, the agency is so new that its files are incomplete.

Shoestring Agency

Shoestring agencies are small but honest businesses trying to survive in a harsh world. The office can be found above a green grocer's shop on one of the meaner streets of a city. It is small, untidy and smells of age. No wet bar here, just a whiskey bottle stashed in the bottom drawer of the desk. All the equipment is old and in need of repair. Lacking sophisticated equipment, shoestring agencies rely on their massive files of newspaper clippings. The scarred and battered desk is another great source of information. Scratched into its surface are the names and phone numbers of small-time crooks and informers. Many are dead and gone, but a few are still kicking and willing to talk for a buck.

Chapter 3

Detective Types

Custom Types

To make them immediately familiar and accessible to a wide audience, the detective types in this chapter are all genre clichés (or if you prefer to delude yourself, archetypes representing universal aspects of human personality).

Once you've looked them over you may wish to create something more original. Simply distribute the values 3 through 8 between the six

attributes and assign a Health rating, then adjust the attributes based on the Health rating:

- L M H add 4 points to attributes
- L M H S add 2 points to attributes
- L M H S C no change to attributes
- L M H S C D subtract 2 points from attributes

Finally assign three prerequisites, invent a talent that's not too powerful and complete the rest following the spirit of the examples listed here. In no time at all you'll have a custom detective type.

Armchair Detective

Around the family television, you earned the ire of your siblings by guessing the endings of movies by the first commercial break. You've read and seen so many mysteries you can instinctively predict the solution to a case. Hunches play a key part in your investigations.

Vivacious eyes and an engaging enthusiasm endear you to everyone. Both the police and criminals dismiss you as a harmless amateur. They underestimate you at their own peril.

When not on a case, you spend your time taking care of your family. Juggling your home life with your investigations can be more of a challenge than solving a mystery. Your long-suffering spouse takes care of the kids when you're on a case.

The detective agency calls upon you for answers. They know you won't refuse them, no matter how inconvenient the timing. Once a puzzle gets in your head, you can't rest until you've found a solution.

- Awareness: 7
- Coordination: 3
- Creativity: 8
- Ego: 7
- Fitness: 4
- Intelligence: 6
- Prerequisites: Lip Reading 2+
Wisdom 2+
Charm 2+
- Health: L M H S
- Talent: Intuition
Once per day you may ask for inspiration. The narrator must give you a hint related to the problem at hand.
- Age: 30 + 2d6
- Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
- Gear: Universal remote for use with any TV, mace, minivan with DVD player, favorite TV shows on DVD, crossword puzzle

Brilliant Professor

You are a renowned expert in your field. Between your duties teaching at a prestigious university and publishing groundbreaking papers, you make time to consult with the agency on cases that interest you. Applying your expertise to matters of everyday life is much more exciting than the strictures of academia, and the gratitude of a client is often more rewarding than the jealous skepticism your more revolutionary ideas engender in your peers.

Some of your more stodgy colleagues consider you eccentric, yet students flock to your lectures because of the energy you bring to your subject matter and the dynamic way you teach difficult subjects.

The police respect your background, but wonder how your expertise can possibly help them solve crimes. Somehow you always manage to demonstrate how your field of knowledge provides the key to the mystery.

Awareness: 7
Coordination: 4
Creativity: 7
Ego: 5
Fitness: 3
Intelligence: 9
Prerequisites: Knowledge 2+
Cryptography 2+
Science 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Classification
By examining a material sample in a laboratory, you can identify its probable source. For example, you can determine the manufacturer of a paint sample, or the source of a fiber.
Age: 28 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: chemistry kit, chalkboard, plastic bags and tweezers for collection samples, latex gloves

Connoisseur

You have one great passion in life, and it's not detecting. Questioning witnesses, tracking down suspects and dealing with fumbling police officers are just a distraction-you'd rather be collecting rare Japanese azaleas or breeding miniature goldfish. Yet displaying your deductive abilities is satisfying, and no matter how much you might complain, you would never pass up a chance to solve a case.

Some ignorant fools consider you egotistical, pompous and unpleasant to be around. Although your manner is gruff, you have a damnably soft heart and may, on occasion, be talked into working for free, especially if the cause is a noble one, or your client properly respectful. You can't stand the police and their narrow-minded ways. When forced to deal with them, you are naturally condescending.

You joined the agency not for the money, but to demonstrate your keen mind. Through your participation, you seek to prove your mental superiority and gain the admiration of your peers.

Awareness: 4
Coordination: 6
Creativity: 5
Ego: 7
Fitness: 3
Intelligence: 8
Prerequisites: Bargain 2+
Business 2+
Smuggle 2+
Health: L M H S C
Talent: Expert Appraiser
Do not apply any points to your Appraise ability. It automatically starts with a rating of 7.
Age: 30 + 2d6
Sex: 1-5 Male
6 Female
Gear: dignified attire, luxury car, pistol

Costumed Avenger

By day you're a mild mannered bookkeeper. By night you're a secret do-gooder, hiding your true identity behind a mask and skin-tight leotard.

You are driven by an all-consuming sense of morality and will do anything you can to prevent the spread of crime. You can't bear the thought of a criminal roaming freely through the streets of your town.

Secretly scarred by a childhood trauma, you would rather face death than have your true identity revealed. You may even insist on keeping it hidden from the other detectives.

During the day you disguise your exceptional physique and good looks under dowdy clothing and ugly glasses. You're something of a bumbling loser until you slip into your costume. The transformation into confident, quick-witted hero is truly astounding.

You avoid contact with the police. The police commissioner has made it clear the official policy is that you're a nut-case vigilante in need of a psychiatric evaluation.

You work for the agency as the office manager or bookkeeper. When a case cracks you slip out for

coffee, only to return dramatically in your costume. You don't think your fellow detectives know your true identity, although it's possible one or two have caught on and are just too kind to reveal your secret.

Awareness: 6
Coordination: 6
Creativity: 5
Ego: 3
Fitness: 7
Intelligence: 4
Prerequisites: Brawling 2+
Fighting 2+
Disguise 2+
Health: L M H S C D
Talent: Gadgets
As part of your gear, you carry a selection of improbable but non-lethal gadgets.
Age: 25 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: Grappling hook pistol, electronic bugs for tracking suspects, smoke bombs

Country Sheriff

The big city has a lot of bustle, but it's basically the same as your old beat in Dogswheat County. Tracking a drug dealer ain't much different from hunting a sheep-eating coyote. Outlaws are the same no matter where they roam.

You wear a Stetson hat, jeans and snakeskin boots. Mostly, you miss your faithful horse Roy. You had to leave him back at the ranch in Dogswheat when you took a leave of absence to go to the big city to learn those newfangled ways the big city police were always talking about on them TV shows.

The police consider you a country hick, incapable of understanding the finer points of law enforcement. They tend to snicker at your country wisdom.

That's why you joined the agency. At least they respect your ten years as a sheriff.

Awareness: 6
Coordination: 7
Creativity: 5
Ego: 4
Fitness: 6
Intelligence: 3
Prerequisites: Horsemanship 2+
Survival 2+
Tracking 2+
Health: L M H S C D
Talent: Ambush
By setting up an ambush in advance and laying in wait for an unsuspecting target, you can gain three attacks on the first round of combat without a chance of being hurt.
Age: 26 + 2d6
Sex: 1-4 Male
5-6 Female
Gear: lasso, cowboy hat, revolver, knife, leather gloves, cowboy boots

Fast-talking Reporter

You're looking for the story of a lifetime. Nothing can stop you in your relentless search for the truth. Those who find you abrasive and interfering just haven't discovered your lovable side.

Your roguish charm and casual air enable you to get along with all sorts of people, from politicians to lowly criminals. They all have a story to tell.

The police view you as an amusing meddler, though somewhat of a nuisance when the chips are down. They'll learn to heed you once you win a Pulitzer.

You're not an employee of the agency, but you dally at the office every day, waiting for a story to break.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 4
Creativity: 6
Ego: 8
Fitness: 5
Intelligence: 4
Prerequisites: Gossip 2+
Persuade 2+
Question 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Confidant
Once per suspect, you can get an informant to confess whatever they feel most guilty about. The suspect will not confess to the central crime of the mystery. You must be alone with the suspect to use this talent.
Age: 25 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: notepad, pen, camera, tape recorder, business cards, press badge

Federal Agent

Trained by a government organization known only by its initials (you won't admit whether it was the FBI, CIA, or IRS), you spent ten years hobbled by federal regulations and restrictions. After seeing one too many cases botched by the bureaucracy, you resigned out of frustration.

Because you aren't above bending the rules to get the job done, the local police don't always appreciate your methods. You demand complete cooperation from them, yet rarely give any information in return. Vital evidence belongs in your briefcase, not in the station's evidence room.

In a white shirt, blue suit and dark sunglasses, you're a striking figure: clean cut, chiseled features and a physique honed by an uncompromising fitness regime. A serious demeanor tempers your good looks, barricading your emotions behind a straight face. A handgun bulges under your jacket.

Your training made you a natural for detective work, so after leaving the feds, you joined the detective agency. Now, unhampered by ineffectual regulations, you strive to bring justice to those criminals the police can't handle.

Awareness: 6
Coordination: 5
Creativity: 4
Ego: 3
Fitness: 8
Intelligence: 7
Prerequisites: Bureaucracy 2+
Law 2+
Surveillance 2+
Health: L M H S C
Talent: Authority
By displaying a badge or other symbol of authority, you encourage complete cooperation from law-abiding citizens. Criminals and social rebels, however, will react negatively.
Age: 25 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: pistol, knife, suit, sunglasses, briefcase, walkie-talkie, handcuffs

Hard-boiled PI

You've been around the block and then some. A hard-drinker with a quick right cross, you know the score, and it's not in your favor. After seven years on the force, the stink of corruption finally sickened you and you turned in your badge. A partner once worked with you, but he was killed by a slinky dame. Now all you have is a bottle of whiskey.

Shadowed by the upturned collar of your trench coat, your handsome face glowers wearily beneath the brim of your hat. A wry sense of humor and sharp wit make you popular with the ladies. Or maybe it's just because you're a sap for a pretty face, especially one accompanied by a hard luck story.

Except for a few friends on the force, the police consider you one step above a snitch. A shaky reception is the best you can expect from them.

You joined the agency because somebody's gotta keep the garbage off the street. At least it's a living.

Awareness: 5
Coordination: 6
Creativity: 3
Ego: 5
Fitness: 8
Intelligence: 4
Prerequisites: Brawling 2+
Shadow 2+
Defense 2+
Health: L M H S C D
Talent: Gut Feeling
When you ask if you sense danger, the narrator must tell you if you are in immediate peril. The sensation manifests itself as a feeling in the bones or the hair rising on the back of your neck.
Age: 28 + 2d6
Sex: 1-5 Male
6 Female
Gear: pistol, brass knuckles, whiskey bottle, lighter, cigarettes, trench coat, fedora

Inquiring Doctor

As a doctor, you are frequently called to the scene of a crime to determine a victim's cause of death. Your training makes you adept at solving murders, although your deductive skills are equally useful on other cases. When you're not investigating a crime, you tend to your private medical practice.

A nicely tailored suit compliments the cultured tones of your voice. Others perceive you as a trifle dull, yet you are well respected by the police, and have a professional acquaintance with the Chief Medical Examiner.

A comprehensive knowledge of poisons and forensics makes you an invaluable consultant to the agency. Your strong sense of humanity compels you to help those in need.

Awareness: 6
Coordination: 6
Creativity: 4
Ego: 3
Fitness: 7
Intelligence: 9
Prerequisites: Forensics 2+
Medicine 2+
Poisons 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Medical Degree
Once per day per detective, you can heal one wound completely.
Age: 30 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: luxury car, cellular phone, pager, medical bag

International Spy

Beautiful, sleek and cunning, you are highly intelligent and sensitive to the needs of others. You are well educated and well traveled.

Always impeccably dressed and equipped with an arsenal of weapons and gadgets, you are as dangerous as you are mysterious. It's hard to win your trust, and you are careful not to reveal that you are a spy. To do so might mean your death.

The detective agency is a perfect cover for your true profession. At any time, you may receive a coded message from your superiors sending you on a dangerous mission. Meanwhile, you relax by solving the minor puzzles that come through the agency, glad for the chance to amuse yourself with a trifle that doesn't involve global concerns.

Awareness: 3
Coordination: 7
Creativity: 5
Ego: 7
Fitness: 4
Intelligence: 5

Prerequisites: Driving 2+
Shooting 2+
Electronics 2+

Health: L M H S C D
Talent: Sex Appeal
You can seduce a member of the opposite sex. For one day, the suspect will view you favorably and do all sorts of minor favors for you. Sadly, the next day the victim will feel used and grow to resent you. This talent works on only one suspect at a time.

Age: 27 + 2d6
Sex: 1-4 Male
5-6 Female

Gear: pistol, knife, mini-camera in lighter, night vision binoculars, wristwatch phone, mini-computer in cigarette case, fiber-optic viewer in sunglasses

Keen Deductor

Through years of dedicated practice, you have trained yourself to be a sharp observer, able to quickly notice imperceptible clues. You rely heavily on logic, scorning intuition and luck. As a student of human nature, you understand what motivates people and your knowledge of the criminal mind is unsurpassed. A multitude of acquaintances may think they know you, but only a few trusted friends have seen you in unguarded moments.

A tweed jacket hangs from your thin frame. Your sharp features and piercing eyes remind some of an alert hawk. To get close to a suspect, you often disguise yourself when on a case, and through necessity have become a passable mimic.

The police admire your abilities, often calling upon you when an especially convoluted case has them baffled. Even while accepting their puzzles, you treat them with disdain.

The triumph of logic is all important to you. Working for the agency is an ideal occupation for a person of your aptitude. For you, the game of deduction is a reward in and of itself.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 4
Creativity: 6
Ego: 4
Fitness: 5
Intelligence: 8

Prerequisites: Profiling 2+
Lab Use 2+
Wisdom 2+

Health: L M H S
Talent: Detect Lie
You can determine if someone is lying. Simply ask if the suspect is lying and the narrator must answer yes or no.

Age: 30 + 2d6
Sex: 1-5 Male
6 Female

Gear: pipe, magnifying glass, plastic bags for collecting samples, disguise kit

Legal Eagle

Renowned as the best defense attorney in the city, your perfect record allows you to pick only the most interesting cases. You have a reputation for never defending a guilty person and rarely misjudging a witness. Nothing excites you more than an engaging battle of wits, especially when you can interpret the rules to achieve your ends.

The clothes you wear are conservative, tasteful and very expensive. Your wealth comes from investments; many of your cases are pro bono. The ability to pay is not always commensurate to innocence.

When necessary, you resort to quoting statutes to receive information from the police. They view your methods as high-handed, and are slow to provide the documents you are entitled to.

While you don't work for the detective agency, you have close ties with them. They help you, and in return you help them. Your desire to see justice prevail is more important than any amount of money.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 3
Creativity: 4
Ego: 7
Fitness: 5
Intelligence: 6
Prerequisites: Law 2+
Question 2+
Bureaucracy 2+
Health: L M H S C
Talent: Cross Examine
You may make up to three leading statement to a suspect, such as "You were blackmailing your boss." The suspect will acknowledge if you are right, but if you are wrong or the suspect doesn't know the answer, the suspect will clam up and no more questions may be asked. The suspect will never admit to the main crime of the mystery.
Age: 30 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: cellular phone, luxury car, laptop computer

Married Adventurer

Independently wealthy, you have many friends and spend much of your time traveling with your spouse from party to party. A popular gad-about, you're written plays for off Broadway and hunted big game in Africa. Now, you're taking a spin as a detective.

You banter constantly with your companions, telling amazing stories of your antics, some of which actually happened. Young, good-looking and fashionably dressed, you and your spouse are often described as "the perfect couple." Somewhat snobbish, you tend to travel only in the better circles.

You play the sleuth for fun, and for the anecdotes it provides at parties. The money doesn't matter since you're already rich. The day to day running of the agency bores you, but when there's a potentially exciting case, you are always there.

Awareness: 3
Coordination: 7
Creativity: 7
Ego: 9
Fitness: 5
Intelligence: 4
Prerequisites: Entertain 2+
Gossip 2+
Contacts 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Mental Link
You can sense what is happening to another detective of emotional importance. Only strong emotions are conveyed.
Age: 20 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: pistol, car, flask, Rolex

Mechanical Genius

The only child of a man who wanted a son, you grew up tomboy in a small town. Your fondest memories are of helping your father repair the family car. To your delight, you were always the apple of your father's eye.

You wear glasses, shapeless jeans and grease-stained t-shirts. Your baggy clothes conceal a nice body, toned by lifting heavy auto parts and trimmed by the many occasions you've been so busy working on computers that you've forgotten to eat. With your glasses on, you look dowdy. But when you take them off, you're surprisingly attractive.

Too many hackers have given your kind a bad reputation, and the police view you with suspicion. They think nice girls should wear dresses.

You got involved with the agency when they asked you to install their computer system.

Awareness: 4
Coordination: 8
Creativity: 7
Ego: 3
Fitness: 6
Intelligence: 5
Prerequisites: Electronics 2+
Explosives 2+
Mechanical 2+
Health: L M H S C
Talent: Invent
Using everyday items you can create ingenious single-use devices and chemical concoctions to escape death traps or confinement.
Age: 24 + 2d6
Sex: 1-4 Male
5-6 Female
Gear: Car, toolkit

Mystery Writer

A famous author of mystery novels, you have also written, under a pseudonym, several books on true crime. The agency depends upon your keen understanding of criminology and character motivation. They frequently call upon your aptitude to help solve puzzling cases.

After unraveling a mystery, you incorporate the finer points in your books. You enjoy associating with detectives and law enforcement officers. They, in turn, appreciate your realistic portrayals and are always cooperative. Friends on the force will tip you off when an interesting crime is being investigated.

Casual clothes, glasses and comfy shoes are your favorite attire. In conversation, you make frequent references to your own works, comparing elements of a current case to earlier mysteries.

You spend most of your free time sitting in the agency office, talking with the detectives and researching material for your next book. When possible, you'll gladly join an investigation to get firsthand knowledge of a case.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 5
Creativity: 6
Ego: 5
Fitness: 7
Intelligence: 4
Prerequisites: Graphology 2+
Research 2+
Communications 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Fame
An expert in your field, you have appeared on television and written popular books. Your celebrity will gain you prestige and cooperation from average citizens.
Age: 26 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: notepad, beat up car, pencils

Odd Foreigner

This is a strange country. The customs are unfamiliar, making you feel peculiar and out-of-place. You speak with an accent, struggling daily to convey your meaning to frustrated listeners. Often viewed as stupid or slow, you are actually quite sharp. A honorable heritage enables you to handle prejudice with quiet dignity.

Despite your innate adaptability, you bemoan the customs of those around you, and long for your homeland. A close friend at the agency helps you maneuver in this unfamiliar world.

Most law officials dismiss you as a hopeless fool, but others see past your foreign ways and respect your abilities. Every day, you feel you must prove yourself.

Participating at the agency allows you to achieve harmony, promote brotherhood and punish the wicked. What more could you ask for?

Awareness: 7
Coordination: 6
Creativity: 8
Ego: 3
Fitness: 5
Intelligence: 6
Prerequisites: Knowledge 2+
Languages 2+
Willpower 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Diplomatic Immunity
Through friends at your embassy, you can use diplomatic immunity to prevent yourself from being ticketed or arrested when caught performing what otherwise might be considered an illegal act.
Age: 30 +2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: Translation dictionary, pistol

Plodding Police Officer

You once belonged to that large brotherhood of unsung heroes: the police. Your job at the detective agency isn't much different. Long hours, little pay and no glory. For all of that, you might as well be on the force.

Some dismiss you at first glance as a buffoon or drudge, viewing your rumpled suit and squeaky shoes as signs of vapidness. All that fast food and donuts have left you a little plump, and some nights an ulcer stabs at your gut. Despite your unpolished appearance, your painstaking examination of witnesses and clues and your relentless pursuit of the truth makes you a formidable foe. You always carry a gun, but hate to use it.

Though your face is weary and careworn, your eyes remain sharply focused. You work within the system, and are well acquainted with the local police.

You joined the detective agency for the same reason you did the police force. It's the only job you know.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 4
Creativity: 3
Ego: 5
Fitness: 6
Intelligence: 5
Prerequisites: Interrogate 2+
Search 2+
Restrain 2+
Health: L M H S C D
Talent: Influence
You have embarrassing information on business people and politicians. You can ask a suspect a favor. The suspect will help, so long as you don't ask anything dangerous, illegal or clearly against their best interest. If you use this talent too much you may find yourself the target of wealthy and powerful people trying to get rid of you.
Age: 35 + 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: handcuffs, flashlight, revolver, baton

Precocious Teen

On your last report card, Mrs. Finster called you "spunky, popular and bright." You've been class president, an honor student and captain of the debate team. Mom and dad are sweethearts, your brother isn't half as bad as he pretends to be, and even on Saturday night you'll baby-sit the neighbor's kids because they're just so cute.

Like most teenagers, you wear sweat shirts, jeans and sneakers. A clear complexion, an inviting smile and a sparkling laugh endear you to all who meet you. Intensely curious, you're compelled to explore unusual phenomena. Some say you have a weak sense of danger, but they're just fuddy-duddies. The police consider you a nuisance. You help them, and they think it's you who needs rescuing!

Sleuthing is so much fun! You hope to be a detective, reporter or lawyer some day-you can't make up your mind-which is why you're always involved in criminal investigations. To this end, you work part-time for the detective agency, helping them file reports. When a case breaks, there's no way they can stop you from tagging along!

Awareness: 4
 Coordination: 8
 Creativity: 7
 Ego: 7
 Fitness: 6
 Intelligence: 3
 Prerequisites: Sincerity 2+
 Athletics 2+
 Tame 2+
 Health: L M H S
 Talent: Blend
 Adults always underestimate you and will ignore you during a confrontation as long as you do not draw attention to yourself.
 Age: 11 + 1d6
 Sex: 1-3 Male
 4-6 Female
 Gear: Swiss army knife, tazer

Spunky Gal

Your father, a police sergeant, raised you until he was killed in the line of duty. Since early childhood, your one desire was to follow in his footsteps. Dad taught you to set goals for yourself and work toward them relentlessly. Driven by his memory, you fight every day to live up to his expectations.

The memory of your father still causes you pain. To hide your sensitive side, you project a swaggering toughness and brash confidence that some men find threatening. Although you take no guff from men, you've been known to bat an eyelash to get what you want.

The police figure you're a tomboy playing a man's game. Many would rather hit on you than take you seriously. Any respect you receive you've earned through hard work. A few old-timers remember your father, and they are the most likely to give you a break.

You work at the agency both to prove that a woman can do a man's job and to follow in the family tradition.

Awareness: 4
 Coordination: 3
 Creativity: 7
 Ego: 6
 Fitness: 6
 Intelligence: 5
 Prerequisites: Driving 2+
 Mechanical 2+
 Shooting 2+
 Health: L M H S C D
 Talent: Witticism
 You can leave the target of your drollery speechless and confounded. The target suspect can do nothing for two turns while they recover their wits. This talent can be used just once per encounter.
 Age: 19 + 2d6
 Sex: Female
 Gear: pistol, knife

Sweet Old Lady

Everyone in your neighborhood calls you the community grandmother. Genial and kind, you take enjoyment in quiet hobbies. You bake, knit and tell amusing stories. Though you don't always approve of the actions of younger people, you try to be understanding. People are so interesting, what with their hopes and foibles. Your knowledge of human nature is vast and you are a wonderful amateur psychologist.

Plump, with gray hair, you are somewhat frail, but still able to care for yourself. Even your doctor agrees you're in excellent health for your age. Childless yourself, you have a myriad of nieces and nephews to dote upon.

You respect the law and nearly always defer to authority. However, you will not hesitate if justice must be done. It amuses you when the police disregard you as an interfering, foolish old woman. The way they treat you, those young officers must think you're dotty!

You are a dear friend who brings the detectives at the agency cookies. They're all such nice people. When they need extra help, you sit in as their receptionist. You always seem to be

around when a case breaks, and you're always happy to help.

Awareness: 6

Coordination: 3

Creativity: 7

Ego: 9

Fitness: 4

Intelligence: 8

Prerequisites: Charm 2+

Sincerity 2+

Question 2+

Health: L M H

Talent: Judge Character

You can tell whether you get a "good feeling" off a suspect or a "bad feeling." A good feeling means the suspect is friendly, helpful or simply harmless. A bad feeling shows the suspect has something to hid, doesn't like you, or intends someone harm.

Age: 60 + 2d6

Sex: Female

Gear: knitting needle, hat pin, handbag

Titled Gentleman

An aristocrat with a cultured accent, you put forth a carefree attitude that shocks your peers and parents. You are known for your generosity and fun-loving nature, but your tendency to flit from one interest to another has lost you respectability with the conservative upper crust. To escape false friendships and monotonous civic duty, you act the dunce, but those who truly know you swear by your intelligence, foresight and integrity.

Cambridge, Oxford and Eton; you've attended them all. You have some scientific knowledge, but your heart lies with the arts, particularly classical music. Colleagues rightly fear your fondness for teasing, but your famous wit is wasted on notoriously humorless police officers. Your relationship with them is strained at best.

Financing the detective agency provides you both the excitement of a glamorous indulgence as well as the opportunity to help those less fortunate than yourself.

Awareness: 8

Coordination: 5

Creativity: 8

Ego: 7

Fitness: 3

Intelligence: 6

Prerequisites: Shopping 2+

Seduction 2+

Luck 2+

Health: L M H

Talent: Wealth

Since money is no object to you, you can buy almost anything you need so long as it is legal to own and readily available.

Age: 22 + 2d6

Sex: Male

Gear: sword cane, luxury car, cellular phone

Wily Thief

The old adage, "It takes a thief to catch a thief" proves true in your case. A former burglar, you know the criminal mind intimately. Although you may still indulge your larcenous impulses on occasion, you try your best to keep out of trouble. You strive to live a respectable life on the nest egg you have hidden away. Only your closest friends know your past. Throughout your criminal career, you never resorted to violence, and are outraged by thieves who harm their marks. You rarely carry a weapon, and would rather surrender than harm someone. Nimble and quick-witted, you've managed to escape most scrapes unharmed.

You stick by your word and your pals. Early on, you infiltrated upper society to find the most lucrative items to steal. Now you pass yourself off as a savvy business person.

Although the police never got the goods on you, they still view you with suspicion. They're more likely to consider you the cause of the crime rather than the solution.

A few years ago, you were caught by the agency and offered a deal: "Come work for us or go to jail." You agreed to join the agency to atone for your past crimes.

Awareness: 7
Coordination: 8
Creativity: 6
Ego: 5
Fitness: 4
Intelligence: 3
Prerequisites: Security Systems 2+
Filch 2+
Streetwise 2+
Health: L M H S C
Talent: Hunch
You can predict the probable outcome of a specific action. You will be able to tell if the results are liable to be good, neutral or bad.
Age: 25+ 2d6
Sex: 1-3 Male
4-6 Female
Gear: car, nylon cord, grapnel, gloves, lock pick

Wise Priest

Without guile or pretense, you kindly point out what others have missed. Your compassion encourages total strangers to confide in you, and your advice brings comfort to even the most troubled souls. While your superiors in the church sometimes judge you as too concerned with worldly matters, you cannot abide human suffering, and will do what you can to alleviate distress no matter where you find it.

Devout but not fanatical, you indulge a few secular vices, such as watching popular movies and reading mystery novels. Despite your gentle sense of humor, you can be roused to anger by flagrant wickedness.

You would never consider defiling the accouterments of your faith by carrying a firearm. Instead, you trust in God to protect you. A sincere interest in people has garnered you friends and acquaintances from all walks of life. The police respect you and seldom interfere with your investigations.

Although not an employee of the agency, you always seem to show up right before an important

case. Maybe it's God's will for you to help those in need. Since it's impossible to stop you from participating, the agency has come to accept and even rely upon your assistance.

Awareness: 8
Coordination: 5
Creativity: 4
Ego: 7
Fitness: 6
Intelligence: 5
Prerequisites: Occult 2+
Wisdom 2+
Persuade 2+
Health: L M H S
Talent: Fear of God
Your soothing voice and calm reasoning prevents all combat for as long as you preach, because fighting would be against the will of God.
Age: 40 + 2d6
Sex: 1-6 Male
Gear: Crucifix, holy water, bible

Chapter 4

Abilities

Awareness Abilities – your perception & the acuity of your senses

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Alertness	Spot danger Notice something suspicious React to an ambush	Use Search if you are looking for something specific.
Appraise	Assess monetary value Assess cultural significance Assess historical importance Detect counterfeit money Detect forged artwork Detect forged documents	Used to assess the value of something or to detect a forgery.
Direction	Sense north Read maps Navigate a maze Use a GPS Use a compass Find a shortcut Navigate by the stars	Used to figure out how to get from one town to another when the signpost is down. Includes the use of anything from a compass to a satellite locator.
Driving	Sports car Pickup truck Sedan SUV Minivan Truck Motorcycle	Used when driving a car or truck. In most cases, a roll is required only when you attempt a maneuver under difficult circumstances. For instance, a character making a hairpin curve at high speeds would have to make a Driving roll to avoid rolling his car. During a chase, a Driving roll might be used to determine whether a character escapes pursuit or is caught.
Graphology	Handwriting analysis Match handwriting samples Detect forged signatures	Used to identify general personality traits from a handwriting sample or to detect a forged signature.
Lip Reading		You must be close enough to the target to see their mouth moving as they talk.
Listen	Eavesdrop Hear noise Recognize voice	Hear what is said through a closed door or across a noisy room, distinguish garbled sounds, or hear a suspicious noise while distracted.
Profiling	Serial Killer profile Rapist profile Murderer profile Thief profile	Used to create a profile of a criminal based on evidence left at a scene of the crime. The profile is based on statistical analysis of common behaviors.
Search	Frisk suspect Body search Search desk Find hidden compartments Find secret doors	Search is used when you are actively looking for something hidden. On a failed Search, the narrator may give a misleading clue that appears important but is actually a red herring.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Security Systems	Set security system Spot security system Hack security system	Used when dealing with security and alarm systems.
Shadow		Used to follow someone without being seen. When you are shadowing someone in a car you roll your Shadow or Driving, whichever is lower. If you are spotted and the suspect tries to elude you will have to make a Run roll or Driving roll, as appropriate.
Surveillance	Still photography Videography Security cameras Stakeout	Used to notice the suspect sneaking out the back door during a stakeout, or to take useful photos, or to gather information during reconnaissance. It's a combination of timing, framing, and familiarity with camera equipment.
Tracking	Find tracks Follow tracks Interpret tracks	Used to follow someone you can no longer see, or tell what happened in an area by the footprints left in the dirt.
Wisdom	Detect deception Read emotional state Operate polygraph test	Wisdom is your ability to read people and is used synonymously with kinesics. Kinesics (pronounced ki-ne-sics) is the formal study of nonlinguistic body movements, such as gestures and facial expressions.

Coordination (CO) Abilities – your aim & motor control

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Agility	Tightrope walking Balancing on ledges Squeeze through gaps Escaping restraint	This is your balance, physical grace and limberness. Used to twist free from being held. Used for tightrope walking, swinging from a chandelier and performing other acrobatics.
Boating	Raft Rowboat Canoe Sailboat Speedboat Yacht	Used to pilot a small watercraft. A roll is required to start the craft. Otherwise, a roll is required only when you are attempting a maneuver or are piloting under difficult circumstances.
Dexterity	Tying/untying knots Catching a thrown object Drawing a weapon	Used to work with your hands.
Dodge	Dodge bullet Duck falling object Tumbling	Used to escape combat, avoid a falling object, or evade an attacker who is shooting at you.
Electronics	Repair Use specific device Hotwiring cars	Used to operate or repair most electronic devices. It does not include electronics that are covered by other ability. Repair can help you jerry rig something until it can be fixed properly. Of course, you'll need the proper tools, materials and time. A repair can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few days.
Explosives	Plant explosives Disarm explosives	Used to plant explosives for the maximum effect. It can also be used to deactivate a bomb.
Filch	Pickpocket Palm object	Used to steal a small object without being noticed. This includes picking a pocket or palming a piece of evidence.
Jump	Long jumping High jumping	Used to leap over small obstacles. You can jump farther with a running start.
Quickness	Quickdraw	Use to determine if you can react before some event occurs. Use it to draw your weapon before your opponent attacks, or to grab an item before it falls out a window.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Shooting	Shotguns Revolvers Pistols Machine Guns Rifles	Used to shoot a firearm.
Stealth	Hide Sneak	This is your ability to move slowly on foot without being noticed, provided there is cover available and the suspects in the area are not specifically looking for an intruder. A successful Stealth roll can give you the advantage you need to subdue your opponent before they know you are there.
Throwing	Throw grapnel hook Grenade Throw specific weapon	Used to throw an object to a friend or to toss a grapnel hook so it catches securely. Also used for all thrown weapons.
Traps	Set trap Deactivate trap	Used to set and deactivate traps. Unless it is obvious, a trap must first be located with Search or noticed with Alertness.
Unlock	Jimmy car door Jimmy window latch Lock picking Safe cracking	If something is locked, Unlock is used to open it.

Creativity (CR) Abilities – how inventive, artistic and intuitive you are

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Conceal	Hide on person Hide on someone else Hide in surroundings	Use Conceal when you want to hide something on your person or in a room. Also used to plant evidence on someone else.
Cunning	Cheat Trick Con	Used when cheating, scheming, and performing acts of trickery.
Disguise	Camouflage Mask identity Major makeover	Used to make a character look like a different person. The more material you have the greater the transformation. Material include makeup, dye, wigs, and prosthetics. You may want to use this ability to take on the guise of a specific person, but this is difficult to do and your build must match that of the person you are trying to impersonate. This ability allows you to camouflage yourself or another. The camouflage remains effective as long as you don't move.
Forgery	Forge signatures Counterfeiting Forge artwork Forge documents False ID	Used to create forgeries of all kinds. It's easiest to create a forgery when working from the original. Forgeries based on memory are much harder to make.
Gossip	Political gossip Celebrity gossip Local gossip Business gossip	Used to know what's going on in the lives of other people
Horsemanship	Distance riding Speed riding	Used to ride horseback and to get a horse to do what you want.
Impersonate	Mimicry Impersonate specific type	Used to assume someone else's gestures, mannerisms, and accent. You can impersonate a general type of person, or with study you can impersonate a specific person (with the help of a good disguise). This ability can also be used to make realistic animal or bird noises.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Interrogate	Grilling Sustained interrogation Torture	Interrogation is used to extract information from an unwilling subject. It includes the threat of physical abuse and the demonstrated conviction to employ torture. Whereas the Question skill makes the victim eager to share information, the Interrogate skill makes the victim afraid not to. Sustained interrogations can take many weeks.
Lie		Used to con people into believing something that isn't true. A high roll lets you tell tall tales and be believed.
Luck	Gamble	Used when things are totally outside your control.
Preparedness		Used to determine if you are carrying something helpful when it is needed.
Shopping		Used to locate an item that might otherwise not be found. It might be in an antique store, second hand shop, museum or private collection. Actually acquiring the item may be an adventure on its own.
Sketch Artist		Primarily used by sketch artists to draw an accurate illustration of a suspect from a verbal description (whether by hand or using a computer), it can also be used in other creative endeavors, such as painting or sculpting. It's also used when drawing maps.
Smuggle		Used to smuggle contraband past inspectors, or to smuggle a dissident out of the country without the bad guys knowing.
Streetwise	Locate a thief Locate a fence Locate a loan shark Locate a snitch Locate a counterfeiter Locate a stoolie Learn "word on the street"	This skill covers your ability to locate a thief, fence, loan shark, or to learn of illegal activity in an area.
Tame	Dogs Cats	Used to interact with animals. You can deduce the habits, abilities and possible actions of any animal. Tame is used to train animals.

Ego (EG) Abilities - your self-assurance & the impression you make on others

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Bargain	Negotiate Mediate Bribery Barter Haggle	Used to negotiate with others and develop compromises. A successful Bargain roll will make everyone feel like they've come out ahead. Used to bribe government officials.
Charm	Etiquette Fashion sense Make a friend	Charm is your manners and style, and your ability to make friends. It helps you avoid social blunders at anything from a party to a formal ceremony.
Communications		This is your ability to operate and repair communication equipment, including anything from a walkie-talkie to an advanced satellite system.
Contacts	Business contacts Government Contacts Military Contacts Police Contacts Political Contacts Social Contacts	Used to get a meeting a specific type of person. The higher the person's rank the harder the meeting will be to arrange. Contacting criminals requires the Streetwise ability.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Entertain	Singing Dancing professionally Musical instrument	This covers your ability to sing, tell jokes, dance professionally, play a musical instrument, tell stories and otherwise entertain or distract an audience.
Leadership	Command respect Inspire followers Give orders	Used to take charge of a situation, either by barking orders or inspiring others to follow you. Those you lead must have a reason to follow. Either you are their acknowledged leader or, in an emergency, they lack any other source of leadership.
Persuade	Play on emotions Argue an opinion Fast talk	Used to sway an individual or a group by playing on their emotions. It can be used to persuade an individual to accept an idea or certain course of action, or to talk a friendly suspect into doing what you want, provided it is not dangerous or illegal.
Piloting	Take off Landing Maneuvering	This skill is used when piloting a fixed wing aircraft. A roll is required at take off and landing. Otherwise, a roll is required only when you are attempting a special maneuver or are flying under difficult circumstances. During a chase, a roll might be used to decide whether you escape pursuit or are caught.
Psychiatry		This skill represents training in psychoanalysis. By studying an NPC, you may be able to distinguish criminal tendencies or psychotic behavior. Psychiatry can also be used to calm a disturbed individual, or to gain useful information from a ranting lunatic.
Question		Used to gain information from a reluctant source. Use it to wheedle state secrets out of a spy, or to find out why the tight-lipped villagers are afraid to go out on the moors at night. It determines how much useful information is obtained. During a formal interrogation of a prisoner, the Interrogate skill is used instead.
Seduction	Flirt Proposition Seal the deal	Used to seduce a person into wanting physical intimacies. The victim's passions can then be used in further manipulations or for a few hours of enjoyment.
Sincerity	Be a credible witness Speak with righteous conviction	Used to convince others that you are telling the truth. This is different from the Lie skill, because Sincerity can only be used if you are in fact telling what you believe is the truth. It is a combination of credibility, innocence and honesty. Just because someone believes you doesn't mean they will do what you want.
Willpower	Resist torture Resist seduction Resist temptation Self control	Willpower encompasses your self-awareness, self-control and confidence. It is used when resisting temptation, seduction, interrogation and torture. It frequently comes into play when resisting the persuasion of others and the mental manipulation of psychic forces. Self control is used to force yourself to do thing you might otherwise have qualms about doing.

Fitness (FI) Abilities – your physique & potential for physical fitness

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Athletics	Skiing Skydiving Water skiing Snowboarding Basketball Football	This skill shows how good you are at sports. It is used when you are skiing, skydiving, water-skiing, playing basketball or performing any similar strenuous sport.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Brawling	Punching Disarm Take Weapon	Your ability to fight unarmed. Brawling inflicts temporary Stun damage. Brawling can also be used to disarm an opponent (knocking their weapon to the ground) or to take a weapon away from an opponent. Disarming opponents is harder than punching them, while taking their weapons is harder still.
Bully		You use your Bully skill when you try to intimidate others, but intimidation wears off fast. Bullying makes enemies, not friends, and a bad result usually means that you have a fight on your hands. Bullying requires a threat of violence or a show of Might and cruelty. It is most effective against the helpless (such as prisoners) or brutal, stupid folk who believe that bullying is a sign of authority.
Climb	Mountain climbing Ice climbing Wall climbing Rope climbing Free climbing Tree climbing	Use this ability to climb walls, cliffs and other sheer surfaces. Climbing stairs or ladders does not require a Climb roll unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a ladder covered in oil.
Defense	Defend against specific weapon Defend against stray shot	Defense is your ability to resist damage when nothing else applies.
Fighting		Attacking with a weapon that does not leave your hand when you strike with it.
Mechanical	Repair vehicles Repair heavy machinery Repair cars Repair trucks Repair airplanes Repair boats Repair helicopters	Your Repair skill can be used to fix any common mechanical device that is not covered by another skill. Repair can help you jerry rig something until it can be fixed properly. Of course, you'll need the proper tools, materials and time. A repair can take anywhere from a few minutes to a few days.
Restrain	Grapple Immobilize Handcuff Knockdown	Used to capture or take down a suspect long enough to cuff him.
Run	Speed running Distance running	Used to pursue a suspect on foot, win a race, boldly charge into battle, or flee for your life.
Stamina	Resist poison Resist disease Hiking	
Strength	Lift Carry Smash	Used to kick open doors and other barriers or lift and carry heavy objects.
Survival	Desert survival Forest survival Artic survival Ocean survival	This is your knowledge of survival in hostile environments. It helps you to know where to locate water, how to construct a shelter, build a fire or signal for help. This covers your ability to obtain food and water. In a country setting, it includes hunting and trapping small animals, fishing and collecting fruit, roots, mushrooms and edible grubs. In a city, Forage is used when rooting through garbage for discarded food, begging for food, (not money), or finding a charity soup kitchen.
Swim	High diving Speed swimming Distance swimming Scuba diving	This is your ability to swim. If you have this skill, you won't need to make a roll under most circumstances, only when in swift moving rapids, rough seas or other hazardous conditions.

Intelligence (IN) Abilities – your mental brilliance & powers of reasoning

Ability	Specialties	Notes
Bureaucracy		This skill covers your understanding of procedures and your ability to interact with bureaucrats. It's used to fill out paperwork, and to know which permits are needed to get something done in a corporate or government office.
Business	Running a business Getting credit Forensic Accounting Investing	This skill covers running a business, getting credit, analyzing the books of a business, and investing money wisely.
Computers		Your ability to operate computers. Includes programming, and gaining access to a secured computer system. This is your ability to operate computer software. It can be used to gain information from a computer database, or write a simple program. Altering an existing computer program is very difficult and time consuming.
Cryptography		
Forensics		You know about ballistics, fingerprints and other scientific clue-finding methods. Covers determining time of death by examining insects.
Knowledge	History Geology Cultures Archeology	This is your knowledge of the customs and politics of various communities. It's useful when dealing with people from diverse nationalities or for identifying the ethnicity of a suspect. Knowledge of history can help you remember pertinent facts about a specific place, item or person. The Geology skill allows you to locate mineral deposits, fault zones and hazardous terrain. You can use Geology to determine where a certain kind of stone came from, or identify a building material. Archeology is used to date and identify artifacts from ancient cultures.
Lab Use	DNA testing Microscopes Spectrographic analysis	You are an experienced lab technician, able to run chemical analysis.
Languages	Speak specific language Read specific language	This is your ability to speak, learn and understand foreign languages. It's also used to interpret local slang and secret codes. Languages is used for both spoken and written communication.
Law		The Law skill enables you to know general legal principles, precedents and procedures.
Medicine	Drugs Psychiatry Diagnosing disease Surgery Trauma treatment	The medical skill is used to diagnose diseases and tend the sick and injured. Unsuccessful Medical rolls can result in misdiagnosis. A Medical roll is needed to determine whether an enemy is dead, unconscious or merely playing possum. It can also be used to deduce how a character died and how long ago. Used to perform first aid. Drugs: Covers the recognition of drugs and an understanding of their side effects and interactions. This skill is used to prescribe medication. Psychiatry: This skill represents training in psychoanalysis. By studying an NPC, you may be able to distinguish criminal tendencies or psychotic behavior. Psychiatry can also be used to calm a disturbed individual, or to gain useful information from a ranting lunatic.

Chapter 4: Abilities

Memory		Memory is used when trying to remember something complex. Use it when trying to recall something you have seen or heard only briefly.
Occult	Theology Satanic Cults World Myths Folklore	Theology is your knowledge of religions, myths and deities. You do not have to practice a religion to know about it.
Poisons		This is your ability to prepare and apply poisons and their antidotes. Poison may be extracted from plants, animals, snakes, spiders and other poisonous creatures. Metallic poisons, such as arsenic, are also covered by this skill.
Research		Use this skill to gain information from a library or hall of records.
Science	Biology Chemistry Physics Zoology Entomology Botany Mathematics Engineering	A knowledge of physics, biology, chemistry. Botany is your knowledge of plants and herbs, their properties and where to find them.

Chapter 5

Playing the Game

Turn Sequence

Crimes People Play is played in turns. During a turn, every detective gets the opportunity to do something.

Unless you specify otherwise, the narrator starts with the player on the left and proceeds clockwise around the table, resolving each detective's turn one at a time. You and the other players can change the order at any time. Disputes are resolved with Quickness rolls (high roller gets to choose when they go).

It's possible for suspects to ambush your detectives. In this case, the suspects will act upon you for one turn with impunity. Detectives who make Alertness rolls may still be allowed to act before the suspects.

What can you do on your turn? The choices are limitless. A turn represents anything from a few seconds to several hours, based upon what the detectives are doing. During a fight, turns could represent a few seconds, but during an interrogation a turn could represent hours. Similarly, it may take only a few minutes to play out what happens in an hour of game time, or it may take an hour to cover what happens in just a few minutes.

Your narrator will help you decide how much you can do in one turn. The goal is to maintain a balance between the players. In general, each player should be allowed to initiate one ability roll on their turn. Some things may take more than one turn to finish.

The narrator intersperses the actions and reactions of the suspects between the players' turns. If on your turn you try to wrestle a gun from a suspect's hand, then your ability roll will determine whether they get the gun or get shot by the suspect in the attempt.

Sometimes the narrator will ask you to make an ability roll to defend against an attack or resist the effects of a trap. These rolls can happen at any time and are in addition to whatever roll you made on your turn.

Once all the players have taken their turn, the narrator decides what any remaining suspects are doing. Usually all the suspects will have already done something and the next turn can start immediately.

Actions

"Doing something" on your turn frequently means taking an action of some sort. Most of your actions will succeed effortlessly, others will fail automatically and some will require a die roll to resolve.

Automatic Success

The narrator should allow automatic success if failure would have no substantial effect on the story or if the action is so easy that failure is unlikely.

If you search an area, you will normally find any clues the narrator has planted there. The challenge isn't finding clues, it's interpreting them. However, you will need to make a roll if you are looking for something specific that the narrator has not planted.

Some actions are automatically successful depending solely on your detective's type. A sweet old lady could bake an apple pie and a legal eagle could prepare a brief without any trouble. It never hurts to ask if you can do something based on your type.

Impossible Actions

The narrator must judge if an action is impossible. No ability will save a detective who tries to jump a hundred-foot wide chasm. The character has no hope of success.

An action is impossible if you have tried it earlier in the mystery and failed. For instance, if you try to smash open a door and fail, you will never be able to smash open that particular door for the rest of the mystery. However, that doesn't mean you can't jimmy the lock or smash open a different door.

Questions of Importance

You can do more on your turn than just perform an action. You can also introduce unexpected elements into the game environment or unexpected twists that not even the narrator expected.

A question of importance is one where the answer:

- is not trivial or inconsequential
- is not obvious and inescapable
- has not been predetermined by the narrator

A question of importance is resolved by an ability roll. For practical reasons, you are limited to one question of importance per turn, plus one action.

As a simple example, say you are in a room rifling through a CEO's desk and three security guards barge in through the only door. Your "question of importance" could be, "Can I get out a window?"

A narrator who hasn't already established whether the windows offer an egress should allow a Alertness roll. If the roll is high enough, it might mean the windows open onto a fire escape, or it might mean you are close enough to a tree (or another rooftop) to jump out, or there might be a ledge outside that will let you climb down. But if the roll is low, the windows might be

shatterproof or you could be so far up that jumping is out of the question.

Note that climbing or jumping will probably require another ability roll to resolve. So just because the answer is positive, it doesn't mean it's going to be easy!

Player Story Additions

Questions of importance can affect the course of the story in very important ways. The point is that the narrator, like the players, doesn't know everything and doesn't control everything. The narrator's job is to interpret the rolls of the players and build a story around them.

Say you are searching for a receipt that will confirm a suspect's alibi. The narrator hasn't planned for it, but decides to let you make a Search roll. On a high roll, you might very well find the receipt you were looking for, even though the narrator didn't know it was there!

This principal can also be used by the players to introduce friendly suspects. The Military Contact ability could allow a player to ask if the man guarding the hideout is an old war buddy. The narrator should let the dice decide (with the chance that the man turns out to be an old war enemy always a possibility).

The Stakes

Before you make an ability roll, you and the narrator need to understand the stakes involved. The higher the stakes, the more interesting the results will be. The stakes always involve a penalty and/or reward.

The game mechanics provide for two types of penalties: wounds and penalty dice on future rolls. Most often you'll be putting something else at risk. On a personal level, you may be risking your pride, popularity, or a leadership role in the group. A low roll could limit your future choices or send the narrative in a direction that's disadvantageous to your detective. Anything that complicates your detective's life can be seen as a penalty.

Each gaming group has its own limits on acceptable penalties. Some groups might find graphic torture, mutilation, rape and amputation

all fodder for fun times. Others will want to limit penalties to more lighthearted complications—as frivolous as a meddlesome relative at an inopportune moment. The most interesting penalties offer new situations. They can balance frustration with challenge, humiliation with amusement, disgrace with opportunity for redemption.

Possible rewards include progress toward a goal, or a clue that will help you solve the mystery. Just being the center of attention and in control of the situation can be a reward. Rewards are a much less touchy subject than penalties. Anything that makes you happy is a reward.

The most common situations involve the potential for a reward and a penalty. You either talk your way into the closed crime scene or you get detained by the police as a person of interest. You handcuff the suspect or he gets away. You pick the lock or you set off an alarm. You climb the mansion fence or you fall and hurt yourself.

At other times the only reward is the avoidance of something bad. Something of yours has been put at risk (usually your Health) but you have nothing to gain. You either resist the poison gas or it sickens you. You either dodge the falling safe or it hits you. Simply avoiding something bad

can be a great relief and satisfying in itself.

Situations where you have something to gain but nothing to lose have less dramatic potential but make for creative puzzle solving. Because there isn't a penalty, the players are free to try different things. A low roll in this case means a missed opportunity that can never be recaptured (see the One Roll Rule below). You either pick the lock or you don't. If you don't, what do you try next to get in? Do you smash the window and wake up the neighborhood? Do you look for an open second-floor window and climb up?

Ability Rolls

Ability rolls are used to resolve situations where there is a range of possible outcomes *and* you have something to gain or lose.

If the narrator can think of only one possible result then that outcome is automatic and no roll is needed.

If you have nothing to gain or lose, then the narrator should simply move the story along without resorting to a needless die roll.

You never get to decide when to make an

Action Results Table (ART)

Roll	Result	Description	Assist	Impede	Suspect		Detective Damage			
					Damage	H	S	C	D	
0	Catastrophic	CT	Complete disaster	Catastrophic!	No effect	--	H	S	C	D
1	Pathetic	PT	Blunder	3dp	No effect	--	M	H	S	C
2	Feeble	FB	Mistake	2dp	No effect	--	M	M	H	S
3	Poor	PR	Setback	1dp	No effect	--	L	L	M	M
4	Mixed	MX	Stymied	No effect	No effect	L	L	L	L	L
5	Passable	PS	Complication	+½	1dp	L	--	--	--	--
6	Good	GD	Incomplete	+1	2dp	M	--	--	--	--
7	Great	GT	Solid success	+1½	3dp	H	--	--	--	--
8	Super	SP	Quick work	+2	4dp	S	--	--	--	--
9	Awesome	AW	Bonus	+2½	5dp	C	--	--	--	--
10	Inspired	IN	Advancement	+2½	5d6	C	--	--	--	--
11+	Perfect	PF	Player's call	Perfect!	6dp	D	--	--	--	--

Result: The outcome of an ability roll.

Assist: The bonus you receive based on another player's roll (see Group Efforts).

Impede: The penalty you receive based on another player's roll (see Group Efforts).

Suspect Damage: Damage the suspect takes.

Detective Damage: Damage the detective takes; use the column appropriate for the threat's damage rating.

ability roll. The narrator will tell you when to roll, what ability to use, and the difficulty modifier. If the difficulty is unspecified, it's assumed to be Routine (+4).

Add the difficulty to your ability before making the roll. Follow the instructions in Chapter 1: Introduction for making an ability roll. Find the total of your roll on the left column of the ART and tell the narrator the corresponding result.

The quality of your roll is used as an essential guideline in deciding what happens in the game. The higher your result the more completely, quickly, easily, or spectacularly you succeed. Awesome or better rolls give unexpected benefits, while Catastrophic rolls should raise serious complications.

Substituting Dice

Before you roll the dice you **must** replace any pairs of d2 with a single d3. A d2 is considered half a die, so when you have two of them they must be replaced with a regular d3.

If you have more than 9 dice (including all d2, d3 and penalty dice) you **must** remove penalty dice by removing other dice on a one-to-one basis. Should you still have more than 9 dice remaining you do not get to roll. Your results are automatically Perfect.

Using Experience Points

After you make an ability roll, you may expend experience points to re-roll dice.

- Each die you re-roll costs one point.
- You get to decide which dice to re-roll. You may re-roll any d3, d2 or penalty dice.
- All the dice you choose to re-roll must be rolled simultaneously.
- Points expended this way are erased from your character sheet.

Be careful that you do not expend all your experience points. They are also used between mysteries to improve your detective (See Chapter 6: Advancement).

Assigning the Ability

The narrator must decide which ability you will use to do things in the game. Your narrator should strive to be consistent and fair. Asking one player to make a Quickness roll and another to make an Agility roll when both are trying to accomplish similar things could be construed as showing favoritism.

Although you never get to choose which ability you will use, you may offer suggestions. This is especially helpful when you're using an uncommon ability that the narrator tends to forget about.

Still, you should refrain from using abilities to describe what you are doing. For example, instead of saying, "I'll use Unlock on the door," you could say, "I will try to pick the lock." This habit of explaining what you are doing, and not the ability you are using, helps to make your actions more descriptive and easier for others to visualize.

In some rare cases it might take a combination of two abilities to perform an action. For example, following a suspect in a vehicle takes a Shadow or Drive roll, whichever is lower. Your narrator will let you know when this is the case.

Using Specialties

A specialty is an advanced skill with a score greater than seven. Your narrator will never ask you to roll against a specialty—your narrator can only ask you to roll against standard abilities.

When the narrator asks you to roll against an ability and you have a specialty that applies, you may use the specialty instead. The specialty must descend from the same ability that the narrator asked you roll. You don't need the narrator's permission to do the substitution, but it's cheating to use a specialty when it doesn't fit the action you are attempting.

***Example:** Your Shooting ability is 6, your Handgun ability is 6 ½ and your Rifle ability is 8. When you fire your pistol at an enemy, the narrator asks you to roll Shooting +3. Because you are using a handgun, you use your Handgun*

specialty instead. You may not use your Rifle ability because you are not using a rifle.

Setting the Difficulty

The narrator sets the difficulty from the perspective of someone who is familiar with the task at hand. The individual abilities and equipment of the detective attempting the action are not a factor. Using common sense and instinct, the narrator must summarize everything else about the situation into the difficulty rating.

The difficulty is always a whole number from -2 to +6. Higher numbers favor the player, representing an increased likelihood of a beneficial outcome.

When setting the difficulty, its often easiest to consider what would be Routine and then go from there. For instance, if juggling two balls would require a Routine roll, juggling three balls would be Tricky, four would be Hard, five would be Daring, and so on.

The narrator should also consider any unique circumstances that would make the action easier or harder. Juggling three balls in a strong wind might be Hard (not just Tricky). A situational advantage might make a roll easier, such as hiding in a dark alley as opposed to an open street.

Time can be a factor in the difficulty of an action. Given enough time, digging a hole in your backyard big enough to hide a body might take an Easy roll. But digging that same hole in a half hour before the neighbors wake up might be called Reckless.

Lastly, the narrator needs to factor in any

Difficulty

The attempted action is:	Difficulty Adjustment Add to your ability before rolling
Easy	+5
Routine	+4
Tricky	+3
Hard	+2
Daring	+1
Reckless	+0
Foolhardy	-1
Desperate	-2

special precautions you take. By using your wits you should be able to augment your chances of success, while thoughtlessness will increase your chances of failure.

Adding Difficulties

Each difficulty level is twice as challenging as the one above it. This allows difficulties to be added together and the combined difficulty determined by following these steps:

- Replace pairs of identical numbers with a single number that is one lower
- Repeat until no duplicates remain
- Take the lowest number as the difficulty

The narrator can use this as a guideline, but should not feel obligated to use it when it would slow down the pace of the game.

Example: You are being shot at by five punks each with a difficulty of +4. The narrator can resolve all the attacks with one roll by combing the difficulties. Each pair of 4's can be replaced with a +3, so 4 4 4 4 4 = 3 3 4. Each pair of 3's can then be replaced with a 2. So 3 3 4 = 2 4. The lowest number is 2, giving a combined difficulty of +2.

Example: You are shooting at 4 enemies with difficulties of +2, +3, +4 and +4. This can be resolved with one roll. 2 3 4 4 = 2 3 3 = 2 2 = 1. The combined difficulty is +1.

Minimum Dice

You always roll at least 2d3 for an ability roll. However, if your Ability + Difficulty is less than zero the results are automatically Catastrophic and you do not roll at all.

Example: Fleeing from gangsters at the marina, you jump into a speedboat. The narrator tells you to roll Boating +4 to make your escape. Your Boating is -3, so your Ability + Difficulty is -3 + 4 = 1. You would roll 2d3.

You roll 4 and 6, leaving you with a score of 0, a Catastrophic result. Unaccustomed to standing in a boat, your detective trips over the gunwale and falls into bay.

Changing Your Mind

Your expectation of the appropriate difficulty for an action may not be what the narrator decides. Therefore, once the narrator announces the difficulty and ability, you should be allowed to abort the action before making the die roll. Aborting an action counts as your action for the turn.

***Example:** For your action you say you will attempt to jump from one rooftop to another, thinking the buildings must be close together. The narrator, envisioning a wide alley between the buildings, tells you to roll Jump +1. This is much more difficult than you expected. Rather than take the chance of falling to your death, you abort the action. Next turn you will have to try something safer.*

Describing the Results

The many possible results listed on the ART are guidelines. Part of the craft of being a narrator is in adapting the quality of a character's roll to actions not specifically covered in the rules. Simply saying an action is "great" or "feeble" is not enough. Neither is saying the results are "successful" or a bland "failure." The narrator must describe what happens in terms of concrete events. The result of the roll must be woven into the narrative.

Not all narrators will make the same judgment call in the same situation. While there is no right answer, there are wrong answers. The narrator should strive to be consistent and fair. If you make a Poor roll, the narrator would be unjustified in having complete disaster befall you. As a rule, disaster only happens on a Catastrophic roll, while an Awesome or better roll brings about unexpected benefits.

By interpreting the degree of success and failure, the narrator controls the tone of the game. Individual creativity is at work here, flavoring the game with the narrator's personal sense of what is appropriate and fun.

In many situations, a player will spontaneously suggest an interpretation for the narrator. If it's acceptable, the narrator should let

Outcome of Ability Roll

Catastrophic: Complete disaster. The worst thing possible happens. Your screw up causes significant problems, possibly even physical harm. Things are much worse than when you started.
--

Pathetic: Blunder. You failed completely, and looked foolish in the process. Your best efforts accomplished nothing and things are worse than when you started.
--

Feeble: Mistake. You made a terrible mistake. You only did a small fraction of what you intended and much of what you accomplished has been done wrong.
--

Poor: Setback. You failed more than you succeeded, and most of what you tried to do is left unfinished.
--

Mixed: Stymied. Your current tactics have brought you to the edge of success, but something is preventing you from fully realizing your intentions. There is failure mixed with your success. The narrator might break it to you this way, "I've got some good news and some bad news..."
--

Passable: Complication. With considerable difficulty, you finish most of what you wanted, but there is much left that you simply cannot do. Your workmanship is shoddy and will not last long. There may be a complication that will have to be resolved.
--

Good: Incomplete. Your work is good, but you cannot do everything you intended. There is some small part left undone that leaves a feeling of incompleteness.
--

Great: Solid success. With an effort, you barely accomplish everything you intended. Nothing fancy, just solid success.
--

Super: Quick work. You succeed completely, efficiently and look good doing it.

Awesome: Bonus. The results exceed all reasonable expectations. Not only did you accomplish everything you wanted, you gained an unexpected benefit in the process.
--

Inspired: Advancement. This is the same as an Awesome result, but you also get to increase your ability by half a point.

Perfect: Player's call. Since this is the best possible outcome, the player who made the roll gets to narrate the results. The narrator may add additional details. Some players don't enjoy interpreting their rolls, so they are free to ask the narrator to do it for them.

it stand! This takes the burden off the narrator and gives the players a stronger sense of participation. Their contribution can only enrich the story, making it more enjoyable for everyone.

Perfect Results

Normally its up to the narrator to describe what happens based on how well you rolled. But if you roll Perfect you get to describe your outstanding feat in your own words.

Inspired Results

Whenever you roll a **Inspired** result you immediately get to increase the ability or specialty that you rolled against.

- Increase the ability or specialty by half a point.
- An ability may never exceed the attribute listed above it on your character sheet.
- Abilities may be increased to a maximum of 7.
- A specialty may never exceed the ruling attribute of the ability from which it originated.

Example Ability Roll

Here's an example of how the ART might be interpreted for a common undertaking. Wayne is trying to get information from a recalcitrant suspect. The narrator asks him to roll Question + 2. Depending on what Wayne rolls, the following results might occur:

Catastrophic: The suspect and his gang of belligerent buddies attack Wayne!

Pathetic: The suspect deliberately lies to Wayne, giving him false information that could cause Wayne harm in the future.

Feeble: The suspect grudgingly answers some of Wayne's questions, but obviously doesn't care for talking to Wayne. The information contains significant errors.

Poor: The suspect refuses to speak to Wayne.

Mixed: The suspect answers a few of Wayne's questions, but cuts off the conversation

early before answering the important questions. The answers he gives are confusing and not very helpful.

Passable: The suspect answers most of Wayne's questions, but the information is incomplete or misinformed and may be misleading.

Good: The suspect answers most of Wayne's questions, but forgets an important detail.

Great: After much prompting from Wayne, the suspect answers all of Wayne's questions but without any detail.

Super: The helpful suspect answers all of Wayne's questions without hesitation.

Awesome/Inspired: The suspect quickly answers all of Wayne's questions and offers additional unsolicited advice.

Perfect: The suspect becomes Wayne's friend for life. Proving to be a storehouse of information, the suspect answers all of Wayne's questions, plus gives him helpful, detailed information that surprises even Rupert.

Successes & Failures

A success is any roll over Poor. Passable counts as one success, Good as two, Great as three, Super as four, Awesome and Inspired as five successes, and Perfect as six successes.

A failure is a roll of Mixed or lower. Mixed counts as one failure, Poor as two, Feeble as three, Pathetic as four and Catastrophic as five failures.

The number of successes (or failures) on an ability roll can be used to figure out very specific results. For example, an mystery may say that climbing a particular brick wall takes a Climb-1 roll, and that characters climb at a rate of five feet per turn for each success or fall 10 feet per failure. A player who rolls Feeble (three failures) will fall 30 feet (3 x 10). A player who rolls Good (two successes) will climb 10 feet per turn (2 x 5).

Example: *During a struggle, John's ammunition pouch split open and his bullets spilled onto the floor. Now the fight is over and he wants to recover his bullets. The narrator decides that John will find 1 bullet for each success on a Search*

roll. John rolls a Great result. Great equals 3 success, so John recovers 3 bullets.

If John had rolled Mixed he would not have found any bullets at all.

Example: Kim has swallowed a toxin. The narrator informs her that she will fall unconscious for 2 hours for each failure on a Stamina-1 roll. Kim's Pathetic roll equals 4 failures. Kim is unconscious for 8 hours (2 x 4).

If Kim had rolled Passable or better she would have resisted the concoction and not fallen unconscious at all.

Example: A thug with Strength-2 grapples Bob, pinning him for 1 turn for every failure Bob rolls on a Strength-2 check. Bob only manages to roll a Feeble result. Feeble counts as 3 failures, so Bob will be pinned for three turns.

The One Roll Rule

You are allowed one roll to accomplish most actions. If you fail the first time, the task is beyond your abilities. If you try to repeat the action, you will automatically fail. You must wait until the next mystery before receiving another chance to succeed.

For instance, picking a lock requires an Unlock roll. If you fail the roll, you cannot open that particular lock no matter how hard you try. However, you can still attempt to pick *other* locks.

Likewise, if you succeed at a task by a wide margin, you should never again have to roll to do it. So if you roll Awesome to pick a lock, you might never again need to roll to pick that particular lock. You have already proven your mastery of it.

Many situations allow you to accomplish the same task using different abilities. If you can't pick a lock, you could try using your Strength to break it. The One Roll Rule is intended to encourage a variety of tactics.

The only exception to the one roll rule are combat actions. A character may attack a suspect repeatedly. Each attack is considered a unique action.

Group Efforts

Several detectives may work together to accomplish a goal. By coordinating their efforts, they make the difficulty easier than it would be for a single character and increase their chances of success.

The maximum number of characters that can combine their efforts is limited by common sense; too many and they start to get in each other's way and the difficulty could increase. Two characters might work together to lift a heavy object, while around eight could try to tip a car.

Not every action is easier for a group. If two characters want to pick a lock their efforts cannot be combined in a way that reduces the difficulty. The players will have to make separate rolls.

Group Roll

Group rolls are used when you want to use a single roll to resolve the combined efforts of all the detectives. The players must agree on what they are attempting and all the detectives must be doing the same thing.

The narrator sets the ability and difficulty for the group as a whole to perform the action. It is obviously easier for five characters to lift a safe than it would be for one, and the difficulty must reflect this. Conversely, it is harder for five characters to sneak past a guard and so the difficulty would be higher.

To make a group roll, one of the players rolls the average of their ability scores.

Example: Three detectives attempt to carry an injured friend to safety. The narrator asks them to roll Strength +5 as a group.

The detectives have Strength scores of 3, 2 and 7. The average of their strength scores is 4. They roll $4 + 5 = 9$ dice. One of the players rolls the dice and gets 6 (Good). The group carries their friend to safety but weren't able to carry all his equipment and had to leave his pistol behind.

Assist Rolls

Sometimes detectives will cooperate to complete an important or complex task. Not all the characters will be doing the same thing, but their efforts will combine into one objective. A classic example is a surgeon being assisted by other doctors and nurses.

The players decide in what order they will take their turns. Some steps cannot be completed before others, and this will have to be kept in mind. Anyone providing assistance or support to someone else must take their turn before the detective they are helping.

- The narrator sets the ability and difficulty for each player separately.
- As each player rolls, look up the result on the Assist column of the ART. This shows the bonus the next player gets to their ability. This is in addition to the difficulty assigned by the narrator.
- A bad assist roll causes the next player to add penalty dice to their roll.
- Continue until all the players have rolled. ***If anyone rolls 0 (Catastrophic) or 11 (Perfect) the group action ends immediately in that result.***
- A player who rolls a Poor or lower result may suffer an individual setback, injury or complication.
- The narrator interprets the final roll as the outcome for the group.

Example: *Jane, with a Piloting of 4, is helping you to land a plane via radio.*

Jane is assisting so she rolls first. Because she can't see the airplane, the narrator decides she must make a Piloting +1 roll. She rolls and gets a Great result. Her instructions give you + 1½ on your ability.

Now it's your turn. Landing the plane is Routine (for someone familiar with flying), so the narrator asks you to roll Piloting +4. But your Piloting is -3 for a total of 1. The +1½ from Jane brings your total to 2 ½ dice.

You roll Poor. The narrator describes a very rough landing with lots of damage to the plane, but everyone gets down safely.

Impede Rolls

Players can also attempt to impede each other. This is treated in much the same way as a Group Effort, but the Impede column of the ART is used instead of the Assist column.

Player Versus Player

Even in a game as cooperative as *Crimes People Play*, the players will sometimes turn on each other. It might be in the spirit of good sportsmanship, or it can be with lethal intent.

You and the other player must both make an ability roll. The player with the highest result achieves their goal. If the results are the same, the character with the highest ability score wins. If both ability scores are identical, the result is a tie.

Both characters do not always roll against the same ability.

This system can be used to determine who wins a race, or who gets to act first on a turn.

Multiple Actions

The rules allow you to initiate just one ability roll to perform an action per turn. But sometimes you will need to do more than one thing. You can combine multiple actions into one roll. Simply roll against the lowest of all the abilities that apply. The narrator may increase the difficulty of your roll based on how many things you are attempting, typically assessing -1 for each additional action or using the rules for adding difficulties.

Hidden Rolls

In *Crimes People Play* the players always make their own rolls. Sometimes the mere fact that the narrator asks for a roll will suggest that something is happening. The narrator may use misdirection to keep the players uncertain of what is happening, especially on a low roll.

Example: You decide to search a room for a secret door. The narrator tells you to make a Routine Search roll. You roll Mixed. The narrator tells you that you're certain the bookcase opens up as a secret door. You can even see a faint outline, but you just can't find the means to open it. Even though you know the result of the roll you do not know whether the door is really there or not. The narrator is simply saying the detective thinks there is a secret door; the detective may be entirely mistaken.

Example: You walk into a room and the narrator tells you to make a Hard Alertness roll. You roll Feeble. You know something is up, but you don't know what. The nagging feeling that you missed something may cause you to search the room; or maybe you think you're entering an ambush and you draw your pistol. Both reactions are acceptable.

Chapter 6

Advancement

Experience Points

At the end of each gaming sessions the players award each other experience points.

Each detective awards one other detective a single experience point. The awards may be done in the open, or they may be done secretly with the narrator tabulating the results to make sure no one gave themselves a point.

It will benefit you the most if you reward the player who exhibited behaviors that you want to encourage in your gaming group. If you value role playing, give your experience point to the player who did the best job playing the quirks of their character. If you value cooperation, give it to the player who helped the most in solving the mystery. If you just want a good time, give it to the person who made the game most fun for you. But if you just want to give it to your best friend that's OK too.

Bonus Experience Points

After the players are done exchanging points, the narrator also awards experience points. All detectives receive the same number of experience points. The narrator may not award some players more points than others.

At the end of a typical session the narrator should award zero to three points, depending on how many clues the players found.

At the end of the mystery the narrator should award one to five experience points. The harder the mystery and the closer the players were to the right solution, the more experience points they should receive. Even if the players fail to solve the crime, they should still receive one or two experience points at the end of the mystery.

Ending The Mystery

The mystery ends when the players either solve the mystery or the villain gets away. A mystery may take one or more sessions to complete. The end of a mystery is also the end of a gaming session.

There is a place on your character sheet to track how many mysteries you have solved. This makes it easy to compare the relative experience of different detectives.

Expending Experience Points

Between mysteries you may spend your experience points to improve your detective. Experience points spent this way are deducted from the detective's total. Leftover experience points may be saved and spent later.

Learning Specialties

When you have an ability of 7 and the ruling attribute is 8 or greater, you may spend 4 experience points to start a specialty based on that ability. The specialty has a starting value of 7 ½. Write is under the Specialties section of your character sheet along with the ability it derived from. Once learned, the specialty will increase independently from the ability.

Chapter 4: Abilities includes a list of specialties based on each ability. With the approval of your narrator and the other players, you may invent other specialties that are then available to everyone in the group.

Example: Your Coordination is 9 and your Shooting is 7. You may expend 3 inspiration points from the Shooting ability to learn the Handgun specialty. Write "Handgun" under the Specialties section of your character sheet, assign it a starting

value of 7 ½ and note that its ruling attribute is Shooting.

Increasing Abilities

The experience point cost to increase an ability by half a point depends on the attribute listed above it on your character sheet. Abilities cannot be increased to more than their ruling attribute or 7, whichever is lower.

Cost to Increase Abilities

Attribute	Experience Cost to Increase Related Ability by ½ Point
3	33
4	25
5	20
6	17
7	14
8	12
9	11
10	10

Increasing Specialties

Specialties may not be increased by spending experience points. You must use the specialty during play and hope for an Inspired result.

Buying Perks

A perk is a special piece of equipment that grants you an ability bonus, or is hard to find or illegal. Special equipment you find during a mystery can be used throughout that mystery without a cost. But if you wish to keep the equipment for use in future mysteries, you must pay its experience point cost.

You can use these rules to calculate the cost for weapons, armor and most other equipment. The experience point cost for other equipment should bear some relationship to the value of the perk in game terms.

Be careful in buying perks. They can be taken away from you, lost, or destroyed—taking your experience points with them!

Perks may only be purchased between mysteries.

Equipment Perks

You can use experience points to buy equipment that grants a bonus to a related ability when performing a specific action.

For instance, a lock pick may grant you +½ Unlock when you are trying to pick a lock. It does not, however, grant a bonus if you are trying to open a combination lock.

Add the adjustment to your ability before making the die roll. You never adjust the actual roll.

The Equipment Cost table shows the experience point cost for buying special equipment perks. As explained below, weapons have other factors that can reduce the cost. No matter how many other factors are applied, the cost cannot be less than the minimum cost shown on the table.

Example: You could buy safe cracking tools that grant +1 to Unlock safes for 9 experience points.

Equipment Cost

Ability	Experience Cost	Minimum Cost
+ ½	6	2
+ 1	9	4
+ 1 ½	13	6
+2	18	8

Weapon Perks

Like other special equipment, weapon perks grant an ability bonus of +½ to +2 when you use them. Use the Equipment Cost table to determine the experience point cost of a special weapon.

You can reduce the cost by assigning the weapon a Strength Required. Normally you may attack every turn. But if your Strength is less than the requirement you must spend every other turn recovering your balance.

Instead of (or in addition to) a Strength Required, you can assign a Dexterity score needed to use the weapon effectively. If your Dexterity is less than Dexterity Required you must reduce any damage you do with the weapon by one level, to a minimum of Light.

A Strength Required is appropriate for heavier weapons such as large caliber handguns or heavy shotguns. Lightweight weapons that require finesse, such as a well-balanced dagger or highly accurate pistol would be more suited to a Dexterity Requirement.

Cost Adjustment

Strength or Dexterity Required	Experience Cost
0	-0
2	-1
4	-2
6	-3
8	-4
10	-5

Weapons are classified as Shooting, Fighting or Thrown, based on the ability that you will use to attack with it.

Shooting weapons can have a range of short, medium, long or extreme. Greater range may enable you to attack your target without fear of retaliation. The range of your shooting weapon will increase its cost.

Additional Weapon Features

- Short range (pistols, shotguns, Thrown): +0
- Medium range (machine gun, bow): +2
- Long range (rifle, assault rifle): +4
- Extreme range (sniper rifle): +6
- Requires 2 hands: -2
- Fighting weapon can also be thrown: +1
- Area effect: +3

Armor Perks

You can augment your Health by wearing armor. When you take damage, if you have an armor level that *exactly* matches the wound level

you may mark the wound against your armor instead of your health. Once your armor is out of armor levels it is useless until it is repaired.

By paying one experience point between mysteries you can repair all your armor to its original condition.

Armor is bulky, uncomfortable, and may restrict your movement or limit vision. You may wear more than one piece of armor, within reason, but the penalties are compounded. Typically you will only want to wear armor when you know you are going into combat.

No one piece of armor can have more than four wound levels.

Example: You are wearing a heavy jacket with armor or L M M. You take Light damage and mark off the L on your armor. Later you take another Light wound. The L on your armor is already gone, so you must apply the damage to your health.

Sample Armor:

- Football Helmet: H H cost 10
- Bulletproof vest: M H S C cost 25
- Heavy jacket: L M M cost 7
- Heavy duster: L L M M cost 8

Armor Cost

Armor Level	Experience Cost
L	1
M	3
H	5
S	7
C	10
D	15

Vehicle Perks

Fast cars, boats and airplanes are expensive both in terms of cash and experience points.

Chapter 7

Interacting With Suspects

Suspects

Suspects are the characters controlled by the narrator. The sly bellhop who spies on the dame in room 210 is a suspect, so is the seemingly friendly codger who gives the detectives a hot tip.

The narrator never rolls to see if a suspect can accomplish something. Instead, detectives use their abilities to influence, resist, or gain information from suspects. The narrator uses the suspect's traits as a guideline in setting the difficulty of the player's ability rolls.

When not interacting with a detective, a suspect can do whatever the narrator deems feasible based upon the suspect's traits.

Suspect Descriptions

The most important aspects of a suspect are appearance, personality, attitude toward the detectives, and secret knowledge.

Appearance is immediately obvious to anyone who looks, and it can reveal much about the suspect's personality and emotional state. The narrator uses loaded words can help shade the suspect with nuance. A filthy bum in soiled and smelly rags evokes a more extreme image than a unkempt unfortunate in old clothing.

Personality reveals itself in the way the suspect behaves and speaks. Many factors about a suspect can be shown through the suspect's inflection and vocabulary. Other elements of personality come out in what the suspect does.

Attitude toward the detectives establishes the kinds of interactions the players are likely to have with the suspect. A hostile suspect will be much harder to elicit information from than a helpful suspect.

Secret knowledge is the information pertinent to the mystery that the suspect possesses.

Extracting this information always requires some effort on the detective's part—typically an ability roll of some sort.

Difficulty Ratings

Suspects do not have abilities. Instead, they have difficulty ratings.

Each attribute is assigned a difficulty rating that applies when a player uses any ability under that attribute against the suspect. It's important to remember that although they share similar names they are not the same as a detective's attributes. They are simply a shorthand method for assigning difficulties to a group of abilities.

In fact, difficulty ratings describe something quite the opposite of the attribute they are named after. For example, if you are trying to spot an ambush, you would use the suspect's Awareness difficulty as a modifier to your Alertness skill. Obviously the Awareness difficulty does not represent the suspect's perception. It's their ability to counter perception.

These ratings are not the sole determining factor when the narrator sets the difficulty. The suspect's ratings are just one element of many.

***Example:** You are trying to sneak up behind a guard so you can knock him unconscious without being detected. The narrator decides this will take a Stealth roll. Stealth is a Coordination ability, so the suspect's +2 Coordination difficulty applies.*

You would normally roll Stealth +2, but the narrator, deciding the full moon favors the suspect, asks you to roll Stealth +1.

The narrator does not need to explain how the difficulty rating was derived. It could be the guard's keen hearing, the quality of the moonlight, the gravel on the ground, or the stillness of the air that carries every sound.

Difficulty ratings can also allow the narrator to decide what the suspect is capable of when the detectives are not involved.

Health

Suspects have health ratings just like detectives and wounds are recorded in the same way. The narrator marks off the corresponding level on the suspect's Health. If the appropriate level is already marked off, the narrator crosses out the next available Health level to the right. Once the rightmost Health level is marked off, the suspect is incapacitated, dead or mortally wounded at the narrator's discretion. It's up to the narrator to decide how bad off they are. Perhaps they have broken bones, or maybe the fight's been knocked out of them and they simply surrender. One thing's for sure, they won't be giving the detectives any more trouble.

- A suspect cannot attack on the same turn after taking a heavy wound.
- Players receive +1 difficulty when interacting with a suspect that has taken a heavy or critical wound.

Attacks

A suspect's Attack rating is the maximum number of detectives a suspect may damage in one turn.

When a detective attacks a suspect and rolls Mixed or lower, the detective takes damage. This counts as one of the suspect's attacks. So a suspect attacked by three detectives who each rolls poorly can potentially damage all three on the same turn.

***Example:** A suspect with two attacks is being shot at by three detectives. The detectives all roll Poor. The first two detectives would take light wounds from the suspect's counter-attacks. The third detective would take no damage because by then the suspect has already used up all his attacks.*

Damage

The suspect's damage rating shows the maximum damage the suspect can inflict on an attack. Use this to decide which column of the ART

applies when the detective takes damage from the suspect.

Sample Suspects

Guard Dog

Health: L M H
Attacks: 1 (bite)
Damage: H
Awareness: +1
Coordination: +3
Creativity: +4
Ego: +0
Fitness: +4
Intelligence: +6

Average Person

Health: L M H S
Attacks: 1 (unarmed)
Damage: S (stun)
Awareness: +4
Coordination: +4
Creativity: +4
Ego: +4
Fitness: +4
Intelligence: +4

Armed Guard

Health: L M H S
Attacks: 2 (9mm pistol)
Damage: S
Awareness: +4
Coordination: +4
Creativity: +4
Ego: +4
Fitness: +4
Intelligence: +4

Bear

Health: L L M M H H S C D
Attacks: 3 (claws, bite)
Damage: D
Awareness: +6
Coordination: +4
Creativity: +4
Ego: +4
Fitness: +0

Chapter 7: Interacting With Suspects

Intelligence: +6

Police Officer

Health: L M H S C D

Attacks 3 (service revolver)

Damage: C

Awareness: +4

Coordination: +4

Creativity: +4

Ego: +2

Fitness: +3

Intelligence: +4

Thug

Health: L M H S C

Attacks 2 (.38 special)

Damage: S

Awareness: +4

Coordination: +4

Creativity: +4

Ego: +4

Fitness: +4

Intelligence: +5

Punk

Health: L M H S

Attacks 2 (.22 pistol)

Damage: S

Awareness: +5

Coordination: +5

Creativity: +4

Ego: +5

Fitness: +4

Intelligence: +6

Chapter 8

Combat

Combat

Although some mysteries will never erupt in violence, others may require you to defend yourself or your companions. Whether it's a brawl, knife fight or shoot out, the following rules apply.

To speed play, it's assumed detectives and suspects carry plenty of ammunition and reload as necessary during a firefight.

Combat can be resolved as a group effort, individual efforts, or a blow-by-blow narrative. How an individual combat is resolved is up to the players and the narrator.

The Basic Attack

To attack with your weapon, simply tell the narrator who you are attacking and what weapon you are using or if you're using your bare hands. The narrator will tell you the difficulty of your Brawling, Shooting, Fighting or Throwing roll.

If you roll Mixed or better you hurt your target. See the Suspect Damage column of the ART for the damage you inflict.

If you roll Mixed or lower you are injured as shown on the Detective Damage column of the ART. This assumes the suspect was attacking back and you are within their range. If the suspect was trying to do something else or cannot reach you then you do not take any damage. The narrator may devise other results for especially low rolls, such as hitting a friend by accident, tripping, or dropping your weapon.

Any suspects that were not attacked get to attack back at the end of the turn.

Combat as a Group Effort

Normally you'll use a group effort for small fights with inferior forces where all the players can agree to the same approach. The combat is very

abstract and may feel too brief. This type of combat is always resolved in one round of ability rolls.

The players must agree on what they are trying to do. A "win" could be driving off the enemies, killing them, getting them to surrender, escaping them, or incapacitating them.

As usual, the players decide in what order they will take their turns. All the players will roll against the same ability with the same difficulty.

The narrator sets the difficulty based on what the players are trying to accomplish. If the sides are equally matched, the difficulty would be +4. If the detectives are outnumbered or up against superior weapons, the difficulty would be +3, +2 or lower. Conversely, if the detectives have the upper hand the difficulty could be +5 or +6.

The players add the results of their ability rolls as a Group Effort (see Chapter 5: Playing the Game). Any player who rolls Mixed or lower takes a wound as shown on the Detective Damage column of the ART. The damage is lethal, and must be marked off with an X.

The narrator doesn't bother recording the wounds the suspects take. Instead, the final roll represents the outcome of the conflict and is interpreted using the normal guidelines, based on what the players intended.

Example: *Three detectives comes across two armed thugs looting a jewelry store.*

The players decide they will try to capture the thugs. The narrator decides the thugs will open fire to defend themselves as they try to escape to their van.

Both groups are armed with handguns, but the thugs are outnumbered so the difficulty will favor the players. Since the players are attempting to capture the thugs the narrator decides they must roll Restrain and sets the difficulty at +5 because the players have the advantage of numbers.

Player a goes first and rolls Poor. The detective takes a light wound and the next player has to add 1dp to their roll.

Player b goes next. He also rolls Restrain +5, but he must add a penalty die. He rolls Good. The detective is unharmed and the next player gets to add +1 to his attribute.

Player c rolls Restrain +5 +1 and gets a Passable result. The group outcome is Passable.

The narrator decides they managed to capture one thug but the other thug escaped with the jewelry. To make matters worse, the thug they caught was just a hired gun with no real knowledge of the operation.

Combat as Individual Efforts

Like a group effort, the combat is resolved in one round of die rolls. Players do not have to all be doing the same thing. Some could provide cover fire while others creep forward to take their opponents by surprise. Players may roll against different abilities and the narrator may assign a different difficulty to each player's action. The players do not need to agree in advance on what they are doing.

On your turn, decide how many enemies you will confront. Enemies may be confronted by more than one player in a turn. However, all enemies must be confronted by at least one player. The last player must always confront any enemies that have not been confronted by anyone else that turn.

Next, decide what you want to accomplish. Do you want to run away? Shoot your enemies? Fight them in close combat? Take them prisoner? Chase them away? Kill them? What you want to do and how many enemies you are facing helps the narrator set the difficulty.

Make your ability roll. What you roll determines the outcome. The outcome must have some degree of finality.

Any damage a detective takes is lethal, and must be marked off with an X (assuming the suspects are armed and fighting back).

As with Group Efforts, the narrator does not record damage on the suspects but resolves results according to the gradations of the ART.

Example: *Same as above, three detectives comes across two armed thugs looting a jewelry store.*

Player a goes first. He draws his gun and commands the thugs to drop their weapons. The narrator asks him to roll Bully +5. He rolls Poor. One

of the thugs hesitates but the other answers his command with gunfire. The detective takes a light wound.

Player b goes next. He returns fire on the thug that's shooting. It's an even fight so the narrator tells him to roll Shooting +4. He rolls Good, dropping the thug with a shot to the leg.

Player c goes last. He tries to tackle the remaining thug. The narrator asks him to make a Restrain +4 roll. He gets a Passable result. He barely manages to wrestle the suspect to the ground. As a complication, the narrator decides he drops his wallet in the scuffle without realizing it.

Blow-by-blow Combat

Blow-by-blow combat allows a lot more opportunity for tactical maneuvering and dramatic narrative, but can take many rounds to resolve. The combat continues until all the players or all the enemies are defeated.

When you use blow-by-blow combat, damage is normal and must be marked off with a slash. In addition, the narrator must track damage taken by the suspects.

On your turn you can attack one or more enemies. The narrator must combine the difficulty rating of all the enemies you attack.

Enemies that do not act in response to a player's roll get to act at the end of the turn. Their attacks may be combined into one roll.

Example: *Same as above, three detectives comes across two armed thugs looting a jewelry store.*

Player a goes first. He draws his gun and commands the thugs to drop their weapons. The narrator asks him to roll Bully +5. He rolls Poor. One of the thugs hesitates but the other answers his command with gunfire. The detective takes a light wound.

Player b goes next. He returns fire on the thug that's shooting. It's an even fight so the narrator tells him to roll Shooting +4. He rolls Good. The thug takes a medium wound.

Player c goes last. He tries to tackle the wounded thug. The narrator asks him to make a Restrain +5 roll (normally it would be +4 but since the thug is wounded the narrator grants an extra die). He gets a Passable result. He barely manages to wrestle the suspect to the ground.

The second thug still hasn't done anything, so he hops into the van.

A second turn now begins. Player a tries to order the suspect from the van. The narrator reminds the player that he already tried that and he can't try the same thing twice. The player instead tries to shoot out a tire to stop the van. The narrator calls for a Shooting +4 roll to see how effective the shots are. The player gets a Great roll. The front tire blows out, the driver loses control, and the van crashes against a light post. This counts as an attack on the driver, so the narrator consults the Suspect Damage column of the ART and sees that the driver takes a heavy wound and loses his next turn.

Player b runs to the van to pull out the suspect. He rolls Restrain +5 and gets a Pathetic roll. The thug grabs the detective, holds a gun to his head, and uses him as a human shield!

Player c, meanwhile, has barely restrained the other thug. He can feel the thug starting to break free. Because of the one roll rule he can't roll again to restrain him, so he will have to think of something else. Desperate, he tries to knock him unconscious with a fist to the jaw. The narrator calls for a Brawling +4 roll. The player gets a Good result. This corresponds to a Medium wound on the Suspect Damage column of the ART. This thug has already taken a medium wound, so the narrator records a heavy wound instead. It's just stun damage, but it's enough to stop the thug from struggling for a turn.

The third turn starts with player a facing the thug from the van who has player b as a hostage. Player c is sitting on a groggy thug on the ground.

Crimes People Play is more about style than gaining a combat edge.

Pathetic Attacks: If you roll Catastrophic on your attack, you must roll Dexterity +4. If you roll Catastrophic your weapon breaks; on Pathetic it jams, and on Feeble or Poor you drop your weapon.

Hitting Friendly Targets: If you're using a gun on a foe who is adjacent to a friend, you may hit your friend instead. If you roll Catastrophic your friend must roll Defense +2 to avoid taking damage. If you roll Pathetic your friend must roll Defense +3; if you roll Feeble your friend must roll Defense +4..

Combat Modifiers: Your tactics will affect how well you fight. Foolish maneuvers will result in a penalty, while imaginative attacks should give you a bonus. Here are some suggested modifiers:

- +2 when attacking a prone foe in hand to hand combat
- 1 when shooting at a prone foe
- 1 when attacking from a prone position (except rifles)
- +1 when firing a rifle from a prone position
- 3 when attacking a foe you can't see
- 1 if targeting a specific body part
- +1 if taking a complete turn to aim

Unconscious Suspects: Unconscious foes are automatically dispatched by a character with a hand to hand weapon or by a character firing a gun at point blank range.

Destroying Objects: Some objects, such as mirrors and pottery, can be easily smashed. For more sturdy objects, such as a barricaded door or a locked cabinet, the narrator assigns a roll required to destroy it. If your damage roll equals or exceeds the roll required, you destroy the object.

Stand Up: You may choose to stand up slowly by taking a full action. Or you may try to stand up quickly by making an Agility +4 roll. On a Passable or better roll you may stand up and act on

Optional Combat Rules

The narrator may use any of the following rules.

Attacking More Than One Enemy:

You may attack more than one enemy on your turn but this will increase the difficulty. Reduce damage by 1 level for each enemy. So if you do H wound you would do H on one enemy, M on another and L on a third.

Using Two Weapons:

A character holding a one-handed weapon in each hand still gets just one attack roll. Using two weapons in

the same turn. On a Feeble or worse roll you can't stand up that turn.

Draw/Pick up Weapon: You may choose to draw or pick up a weapon slowly by

taking a full action. Or, you may try to do it quickly by making a Dexterity +4 roll. On a Passable or better roll you may attack on the same turn. On a Feeble or worse roll you can't draw or pick up the weapon that turn.

Chapter 9

Examples of Play

Basic Role-Playing

Wayne and Terri are playing detectives. They are on their way to the home of a witness, but are stopped outside the house by a police officer.

Narrator: The officer says, "You can't go in. The place has been sealed off."

Terri: I'll talk to the policeman and see what information I can get out of him.

Wayne: Meanwhile, I'll slip away and sneak around the back of the building. Are there any open windows?

Narrator: Wayne, it will take you a couple of minutes to get around back. Terri, what do you say to the cop?

Terri: I'll ask him what happened here.

Narrator: He says, "The police have everything under control. You'll have to move along."

Terri: *Attempting to gain more information, Terri starts speaking as if her detective were talking to the police officer.* "On, no! My uncle, is he all right?"

Narrator: "Your uncle was Mr. Dickerson?"

Terri: "Has something terrible happened to him?"

Narrator: "There was an incident last night. He must have come home late and interrupted a burglar."

Terri: *Feigning her reaction.* "How awful! Tell me, what happened? Is he all right?"

Narrator: "Well, he didn't suffer. The burglar shot him and fled without taking anything."

Terri: *Aside to Wayne.* That's what they always say. In other words, they don't know a thing.

Narrator: While you're talking to the cop, Wayne circles around to the back of the building. There's a back door and some windows, but all are shut.

Wayne: I'll check the back door. Is it locked?

Narrator: Yes, but a panel of glass is broken. It looks like you could easily reach in and open the lock. As you step on the porch, you hear crunching noises.

Wayne: I'll look down.

Narrator: You're standing on broken glass.

Wayne: The glass was broken from the inside? Strange. I'll let myself in and see what clues I can find.

The game continues in this fashion, with the narrator alternating between Wayne and Terri until they reunite.

Using Abilities

Narrator: Lord Marmaduke has been caught in a bear trap. He'll slowly bleed to death unless someone can free him.

Terri: I'll try.

Narrator: Roll your Strength.

Terri: *Rolls against her Strength of 3 + 4 (default difficulty) = 7 and gets 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 6 for a total of 6. She consults the Action Results Table printed on her character sheet.* I did Good.

Narrator: That's good enough to open the trap, but his leg is pretty messed up.

Terri: I'll free Lord Marmaduke and help him back to the mansion.

Narrator: Marmaduke can't walk. You'll have to carry him. He's pretty heavy, all those crumpets you know, so you'll have to roll your Strength +2.

Terri: *Rolls her Strength of 3 + 2 and gets 1, 1, 5, 6 for a total of 3.* Oops. That's Poor.

Narrator: You make it halfway to the mansion before you have to sit down and rest. Lord Marmaduke has passed out from blood loss, and his skin is growing cold.

Terri: I'll use a strip of my skirt to bind his leg.

Narrator: Roll your First Aid to see if you stop the bleeding.

Terri: *Since the difficulty wasn't specified, it's assumed to be at +4. Terri's First Aid is 0. She rolls 2, 3, 4, 4 for a total of 5. I did Passable.*

Narrator: Well, he won't die right away. But you can tell he needs better medical attention than you can provide.

Terri: Now that I've rested a little, can I make another try to carry him to the mansion?

Narrator: *Since Terri failed her first attempt to carry Lord Marmaduke to the mansion, the narrator won't let her try again. He's too heavy for you to carry him all that way.*

Terri: All right, I'll leave him here and go for help.

Narrator: When you reach the mansion, you find the door is locked and no one answers your knock.

Terri: I'll try to jimmy the lock with my credit card.

Narrator: Roll Unlock +2.

Terri: *Rolls her Unlock of 3 + 2 and gets 1, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 for a total of 6. I got Mixed. She puts an inspiration point next to her Unlock ability because of the Mixed result.*

Narrator: You fiddle with the lock for fifteen minutes, but it doesn't open. You worry that Lord Marmaduke might not have much time left...

Interacting With Suspects

Wayne wants to know where Jimmy the Latino is hanging out, so he's grilling Jimmy's girl, Sally, for information

Wayne: I'll give her one of my best leers. That usually melts them like butter.

Narrator: Roll your Charm +2. Sally is pretty loyal to Jimmy.

Wayne: *Wayne rolls 3, an Poor result. Inferior.*

Narrator: Sally tells you to blow it out your ear. She turns and flounces out of the bar.

Wayne will never impress Sally with his looks. She will find him unappealing no matter what he does. He needs to try a different tactic to get her attention.

Wayne: Before she gets to the door, I'll stride after her and drop a twenty down the front of her

dress. "There's another twenty in it for you if you tell me where Jimmy's holed up."

Narrator: Now you're talking her language. Deciding that Sally is more greedy than loyal, the narrator asks Way to make a Bargain +4 roll.

Wayne: *Rolls a 6. I did Good.*

Narrator: Sally softens. "I guess you ain't such a bad guy after all. Jimmy's staying with Quiet Cal over on Vermont St."

Combat

Narrator: The two of you come across two punks looting an electronics store.

Terri: I pull out my gun and yell freeze!

Mike: Forget that. I start shooting.

Narrator: You've got the drop on them, so you get the first shot. Roll your Shooting.

Mike: *He rolls at the default of +4. Good.*

Narrator: *The narrator assigns the thugs Health ratings of LMH. He crosses off the M on one of the thugs. You wing one of them. Terri, the thugs are drawing their guns. What do you do?*

Terri: I'll shoot one. *She rolls her Shooting. I got Mixed.*

Narrator: Which punk did you shoot?

Terri: The uninjured one.

Narrator: *Marks off a L on the uninjured thug's Health. He's wounded, but not bad enough to keep him from returning fire. You take a light wound in the exchange. This is because on the ART a Mixed combat result means both the attacker and the target takes a light wound.*

Terri: *Marks off an L on her Health.*

Narrator: *Both players have now taken their turn. One of the thugs has fired. The first thug now has a chance to do something. Mike, the thug you shot crouches behind a car and fires back at you. Roll your Defense +4 to avoid his bullets.*

Mike: *Mike rolls. I did Pathetic.*

Narrator: You take a heavy wound and lose your next turn as you recover. Terri, what do you do?

Terri: Keep shooting, of course. *Rolls her Attack. I got another Good roll.*

Narrator: *A Good roll corresponds to a medium wound on the ART. The punk already has a medium wound so the narrator marks off the next Health level to the right. It's a heavy wound, the punk's last*

Chapter 9: Examples of Play

health level. The punk spins around, the gun flying from his hand. He drops to the ground. His buddy swears and shoots at Mike, who's still recovering from the heavy wound he took last turn. Mike, make a Defense roll.

Mike: *Mike makes a Pathetic roll.* I got another Pathetic.

Narrator: You take another heavy wound.

Mike: *Since he already has a heavy wound, he marks off the next one to the right, which is critical.* That's it. I'm knocked out.

Narrator: Be sure to subtract an experience point for being knocked out. Terri, what do you do?

Terri: I'll take another shot at the gunman.

Narrator: The lightly wounded punk has taken cover behind a car. You'll need to roll your Shooting +3.

Terri: *Rolls.* That's Mixed.

Narrator: You inflict a light wound. *The punk already has a light wound, so the narrator marks off medium, the next available wound to the right. The punk already attacked Mike this turn, but because he can make up to two attacks per turn he can also shoot back at Terri.* Terri, you also take a light wound as he shoots back at you.

Terri: *She already has a light wound so he bumps the wound up to medium.* By now he must be pretty badly wounded. I'll try to convince him that it's not worth ending up dead over a few

electronics. After seeing his buddy killed, it might give him pause.

Narrator: *The narrator considers this very reasonable.* Roll your Persuade +5 to convince him to surrender.

Terri: *Rolls.* I got a Poor result.

Narrator: The punk makes a break for it. He scrambles into his car and slams on the accelerator. You have just a moment before he escapes.

Terri: I'll shoot out a tire.

Narrator: Make a Shooting +3 roll.

Terri: *Rolls.* It's a Passable roll.

Narrator: The tire blows out, but the thug keeps the pedal to the metal. Strips of rubber peel from the tire as he drives on his rims. You slowed him, but he's still getting away.

Terri: I'll let him go. I'd better see what I can do for Mike.

At the end of the battle, Terri has a light and medium wound. Mike has a heavy and critical wound.

Following the rules for healing, Terri erases her light wound. She erases the medium wound and puts an X through the wound to its immediate left. She ends up with a light wound that will not heal until the end of the mystery.

Mike erases the critical wound and puts an X through the heavy wound.

Chapter 10

Running the Game

Warning to Detectives

This section addresses the prospective narrator. It is not intended for detectives to read this section. So if you're not a would-be narrator, turn back now!

Mysteries

A *Crimes People Play* mystery is your blueprint for a night of sleuthing. It presents suspects, clues and the solution to a case in an easy-to-reference format. As the narrator, you prepare for a game by reading the mystery in advance. The detectives are not allowed to read the mystery.

It's necessary to read the complete mystery before running it. That way, when the players are interrogating a witness, you will be able to answer their questions appropriately even if the questions aren't specified in the adventure.

Parts of a Mystery

A mystery is made up of certain building blocks:

- Introduction
- Clues
- Settings
- Suspects
- Timeline
- Exhibits

Introduction

The introduction briefly explains how the detectives became involved in the mystery and

where they are at the start of the game. A case normally begins with a client calling the detective agency or arriving at their office. The introduction will suggest people to talk to or places to investigate. Quite likely, the detectives will already be speaking to a key suspect: the person hiring them.

Most importantly, the introduction includes the objective the players must achieve to solve the mystery and thereby win the game.

The Text

Most of a mystery is a description of important settings, suspects, and clues.

Mysteries are written in a two column format. The main text and clues are in the right column. The information in the left column comments upon the main text. It gives you additional details to help you answer the player's questions when they are examining a clue. The information in the left column may not always make sense to you at first. It often mentions suspects described later in the text. By the time you finish the mystery, the information in the left column will fall into place.

The mystery describes the results of actions the players are likely to perform. Relay this information only if the players perform the required action. It's up to you, using the ART, to determine the results of actions the players take that are not specified in the mystery.

Clues

A clue can be a hidden object, or a piece of information a suspect must be prompted to divulge. Clues should be checked off as they are revealed to the players. This helps you to remember what information the players have already uncovered, allowing you to repeat an important fact if needed.

Clues are presented in the order they will most likely be uncovered. The players won't

always visit locations or interview suspects in the order they are listed in the mystery, so be prepared to jump around.

It's impossible for a mystery to predict everything the players might ask. You'll have to rely on common sense and your knowledge of the case to answer some of their questions. By having a firm grasp on the plot, you can ad-lib as needed without contradicting vital evidence or the laws of nature.

Say Alvin, a suspect, stood in the rain watching a murder from the garden window. Immediately, he steps into the foyer where he meets the detectives. You had better mention that Alvin is wet and his feet are covered in mud. Players will look for such circumstantial evidence, and it's your job to provide it accurately.

But what if you accidentally give a clue that sends the detectives in the wrong direction? It's all right to occasionally mislead the detectives so long as there's a reasonable explanation. But if, based on your information, the detectives prove the wrong person committed the crime, you had better give that suspect an airtight alibi, or else yield to the detectives' creativity and change the solution to match their surmise.

Settings

During a mystery, the detectives will travel to a variety of locations. If nothing important happens along the way, you should immediately shift the action to the new setting.

When the players enter a location, briefly describe what they can immediately see. Either read the description from the mystery write-up, or describe it in your own words. Later, if the detectives search the place, disclose any clues hidden there. If there's nothing special to be found, simply tell them they find nothing.

A mystery may include maps of some locations. These maps are for your eyes only, to help you track the movements of the detectives. Show these maps to the players only if it won't reveal any hidden clues. Otherwise, sketch less detailed maps for the players to study.

Suspects

The real fun of *Crimes People Play* is when the detectives question a suspect. The players must

figure out who to interrogate, what questions to ask, and how to elicit reliable answers. You must strike a balance between the information a suspect will offer freely, and what will require prodding by the players. Is the suspect friendly or hostile? Will the detectives have to bribe, intimidate or sweet-talk the suspect into talking?

A mystery will describe the suspect, giving a synopsis of the suspect's personality and the clues the suspect knows. The players must extract each clue by careful questioning. Some suspects will hide essential clues behind a facade of lies. A lying suspect will admit the truth only if the detectives provide accurate, conflicting information from a reliable source.

You should make your suspects as interesting as possible. If the players run into a rabbit library, make your voice timid and weak. If they encounter a nightclub bouncer, a gruff, low voice will convey the character's menace.

The detectives may question suspects not listed in the mystery. Perhaps they decide to grill the gardener—a suspect you've not prepared for in the least. Just do the best you can. Who knows? Maybe the gardener can provide an important clue the detectives would otherwise miss (taken, perhaps, from the description of another suspect). Or, have the gardener suggest they speak to one of the suspects you've prepared, and then make certain that character gives them a lead to another.

While interacting with a suspect, the players will ask roundabout questions designed to find inconsistencies in the suspect's statements. Answer these questions as best you can. By reading the mystery in advance, and knowing the timeline, you can usually arrive at a reasonable answer. With this knowledge, you can embellish the mystery as you play.

Detectives will often accuse a suspect of a crime to see the character's reaction. Obviously, a suspect will deny the charges unless the detectives can prove their accusation. This is done by detailing how the suspect committed the crime and why. If the detectives correctly describe what happened, the villain may break down and confess, or else pull a gun and try to shoot a path to freedom.

Timeline

The timeline is a chronological list of all the important events connected to the mystery. It includes events that happen both before and after the detectives were called in on the case. The timeline shows where a suspect was at any given time during a crime, and where suspects will be at different times during the investigation. This makes it easy for you to tell the players where a suspect can be found.

When the players wish to question a suspect, they must know where to find the character. They can ask another suspect who knows, or simply look up the address in a phone book. Sometimes finding a suspect can be part of the mystery.

Exhibits

Exhibits are visual clues that can be handed to the players, such as letters, coroner's reports, floor plans and notes. They may also be pictures of important items, maps of locations or portraits of suspects. Players love to examine evidence for themselves. Instead of reading the contents of a document aloud, give your players a copy of the document at the time it is discovered. Not only does this save you the trouble of reading the clue aloud, it also allows them to refer back to it as needed.

The text of a mystery will specify when you should give the players an exhibit.

Troubleshooting

Problem: The players are off the right track.

Solution: To get the players back on the right trail, simply give them an obvious clue. If they're wandering around, asking passersby for information, have someone suggest they speak to one of the suspects you've prepared.

Problem: The players insist on splitting into two or more groups.

Solution: *Crimes People Play* requires the detectives to stay together. Players who insist on leaving the rest are removed from the game until they rejoin the others. Instead of splitting the

group, the detectives can send a trusted friend or relative to perform simple tasks in their stead.

Problem: You need the results of a roll to be unknown to the players.

Solution: In most cases, the players should be allowed to make their own rolls. Sometimes, a situation requires you to make a roll without the player knowing the result. This happens when you don't want a player to know the roll failed. For instance, a detective may wish to examine a diamond to see if it's genuine. The narrator decides the roll required and rolls against it secretly, then tells the player "You're sure the diamond is real," even though the result was a failure, and the diamond is actually a fake.

Problem: Your players are failing their die rolls and missing clues.

Solution: You're probably asking your players to make too many rolls. Players should never have to roll to find a clue; if they search an area, they should find whatever is hidden there. Likewise, if a detective asks a friendly suspect a question, the suspect will answer.

Problem: The players ask you for hints.

Solution: If a player asks, "Did so-and-so do it?" they need to ask a suspect, not you. Suspects will answer according to how much they know and what they want to reveal. Be careful not to give away too much with your voice or expression. Sometimes, players will talk among themselves, making suggestions and brainstorming the solution. They'll watch to see how you react. Keeping a poker face may be hard when the players are close to guessing the right solution.

Problem: The players solve the mystery too quickly. After fifteen minutes, they accuse a suspect, and they're right.

Solution: Do the players know why and how the culprit committed the crime? If not, then the suspect will deny the charges. The players will have to come back with more evidence to make their charges stick. In the meanwhile, an important witness could vanish, or a valuable clue could be destroyed. By pacing how quickly you give out clues, you can stretch or compress a mystery to fit into any given time frame. A mystery normally lasts about four hours.

Problem: You don't know how much information to give the players.

Solution: What makes a mystery fascinating is that the detectives see only a piece of the whole picture and must confirm the rest. As they discover clues, they'll come up with a hypothesis. You must confirm or contradict parts of their hypothesis, slowly guiding them to the right answer.

Your most important tool is your control over information. No single clue should give away the entire mystery, yet you must give the detectives enough information to keep them interested. If they are doing too well, throw in a red herring to mislead them. If they appear stuck, give them an obvious clue to get them restarted, or repeat an important point until they take notice. Make a trail of clues, like breadcrumbs through a forest, and your detectives will not stray.

Writing a Mystery

Once you have become familiar with the structure of *Crimes People Play*, you may wish to create your own mystery. Perhaps you've been inspired by a book, TV show or movie.

You'll soon realize that developing a challenging mystery isn't easy. Below are some tips for creating an entertaining, exciting adventure that will be fun to play and narrate.

Have a Goal in Mind

When you start a mystery, the introduction clearly states what the players must accomplish to win the game. Whether it's finding the location of a kidnapped child or discovering the murderer of Lady Witherspoon, the goal should be obvious to your players. A clear objective at the beginning of the case gives your players lasting motivation, allowing them to work toward a common goal. It also enables you to tell when to end the mystery. When the players achieve their objective, or the objective becomes impossible, the game is over.

Not all mysteries involve a murder. Restoring a stolen heirloom, preventing a robbery or uncovering a political conspiracy are all appropriate challenges for a detective agency. Whatever the objective, it must be interesting

enough to drive the detectives into action. It should be achievable as well. No one wants to spend hours searching for a purloined letter only to discover that the letter was burned the previous day. You may think it's a great joke, but your players will not. They should be challenged but not discouraged.

Many mysteries have a time limit, either a few hours or a few days (game time). To win, the players must meet the objective within the time limit. Finding a nuclear bomb before it takes out a city could be just the case for a covert agency.

Incorporate Background Material

Before writing your mystery, take a look at the detectives who will be playing in it. Are they tough guys or demure old ladies? Do they have any skeletons in their closets? What about their relatives, any problems there? How about enemies?

A detective's background can be a great springboard for a mystery. If one of the characters has a twin, you could make it an evil sibling out to ruin the other. Maybe a detective's history indicates that an enemy stole something. Perhaps it's a will that could make the detective a millionaire!

Work with the players to develop intriguing story hooks. They will be more interested in the mystery if their characters are personally involved. Money is poor motivation unless the detectives have a desperate, immediate need for it.

Suspects, Clues & Settings

A good rule of thumb is to have at least ten suspects, twenty clues and five locations. Suspects and clues should never dead end, one should always lead to the other. For example, a torn theater ticket found in a victim's coat could lead to an usher who remembers a strangely dressed man who insisted on sitting in the third balcony, where the detectives find a knife covered in bloody fingerprints.

Players will not discover every clue you have planted, so be sure to provide more than one way for the players to reach the solution of the mystery. Important facts should be available from several

sources. Not only will this guarantee that the players learn the clue, its repetition will convince them of its importance.

No single clue should answer all the questions in the objective. But when all the facts are taken together, the answer is evident.

Have Your Props Ready

Players love props. If your mystery mentions an illicit love letter, type one up and circulate it around the table. Cut photographs out of magazines to illustrate your suspects. You may also

use items found in your own home as props. A matchbook, ticket stub or the Complete Works of William Shakespeare could be used to make the game more interesting.

Maps are also important. If the detectives are going to spend some time in a room or building, you may wish to draw a quick sketch of the area. Let them know where the furniture, suspects and visible items are. You will have fewer arguments ("I thought the gunman was standing in the corner, not by the door!") if you run a mystery with plenty of maps.