

### Contents

- St. Vitus's Dance
- Finding Carcosa
- Search for Manoa
- · Court of the Radiant King
- Exit Stage Death
- Miscellany: Three Dozen MORE Forbidden Texts
- Codex Keepers

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ST. VITUS'S DANCE

A CTHULHU DARK MYSTERY IN LONDON DURING THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE 1989



Amidst our people here is come
The madness of the dance.
In every town there now are some
Who fall upon a trance.
It drives them every night and day,
They scarcely stop for breath,
Till some have dropped along the way
And some are met by death.

Seventeenth Century poem describing the dancing mania.

In the early 1990s UK parliament passed The Criminal Justice Act criminalizing "illegal gatherings of more than 20 people listening to repetitive beats."

#### THE HOOK

The mangled body of an Italian exchange student, dressed in old fashioned automobilist clothes, is recovered from a fatal car crash. The driver's body and his car show disturbing alterations.

#### THE STORY

Sophie Chalmers, student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, finds an unreleased composition of Franz Liszt for solo piano. She becomes obsessed with a certain movement from the piece and plays it until her hands bleed.

After a nervous breakdown, she drops out of university and moves into a squat, called the Roundhouse, where she meets Fuzz, a DJ at the pirate radio station Sunrise FM. She records the song on his equipment, puts a beat under it and passes it on to Heather, her friend and occasional roommate. Fuzz discovers the master tape, remixes it and presses the song on vinyl to play it at an upcoming rave in front of thousands of people. Meanwhile, Sophie continues performing the song in the Roundhouse, weakening the border between reality and the madness of Carcosa.

#### THE SONG

Late in his life, Franz Liszt starts experimenting with tonal ambiguities, simultaneous minor and major chords, obsessive repetition of themes and the "forbidden notes" of parallel 5ths. In the manuscript of Csárdás Macabre he writes: "May one write or listen to such a thing?" It is believed that he burns the last of these four compositions that historians refer to as Csárdás Perdue.

The piece is very percussive but with varying speeds, the rhythm is flung between both hands, giving the impression of movement in space. The harmony oscillates between dissonant and euphonious. Listening to it, you realize immediately that you are doing something forbidden like watching your parents having sex or being aroused by observing the broken body of Christ during Mass. But you can't stop listening, the same way you can't stop compulsively probing a sore tooth with your tongue.

#### THE INVESTIGATORS

All PCs are members of Section 3, an unofficial government agency specialized in countering paranormal threats. Section 3 recruits agents from all sectors of civil service. Although there is a preference for law enforcement and counter-terrorism, expertise from other areas like education and health are needed as well.

#### CHARACTER CREATION

- . When making characters, ask each player one of the following questions about their character:
- . What piece of popular culture (a film, book, video game, etc.) were you obsessed with as a teenager?
- . Describe a ritual action you had to perform because it would bring "luck," such as tying and untying your shoelaces a certain number of times.
- . What kind of infestation plagued your parents' home when you were a kid, e.g. ants, moths, mice?
- . Describe a recurring surreal dream you have since childhood. Why does it scare you?
- . What is your sexual fetish?

Use the answers to define how the characters will experience the song, and for the rooms of the Roundhouse squat.

#### THE CRASH

The agents receive a phone call from their handler on Friday, August 18th, 1989, in the middle of the night. They are asked to investigate the unusual circumstances of a fatal car crash.

Sound: The first birds of the morning, a man occasionally shouting in disbelief.

Sight: Yellow and black police tape, emergency lights flashing, a demolished vintage car with elongated front crashed against a tree.

Upon arriving at the crash site, the agents see the car being towed away. A firefighter receives psychological support nearby. The autopsy is performed by a coroner associated with Section 3.

#### THE CAR

The car looks like an old sports car from the first half of the 20th century, although it can't be ascribed to any known model. The passenger compartment has been removed along with the body. According to the number plate and insurance papers from the glove box, the car is an Aston Martin DB5. It was reported stolen by the owner two days ago. Investigating the car might reveal that it resembles a Alfa Romeo Berlinetta from the 1930s, as if painted by a cubist, with sharp angles and retrofuturistic shape.

#### THE TAPE

A cassette tape in the tape recorder labeled Csárdás Fuzz Mix, severely burned. Fragments of the tape can be recovered: A looped piano piece with TR-909 beats.

The percussive piano movement has similarities to Csárdás Macabre by Franz Liszt. Fuzz might refer to the fuzz modulation effect or DJ Fuzz, a radio DJ on the pirate station Sunrise FM. The location of his terminal is unknown.

Clue: DJ Fuzz, Sunrise FM

#### THE BODY

The body is mangled and seems strangely fused with the car, hands melted onto the wheel without discernible fingers, the joints at his elbows, hips, and knees chromed and metallic. The driver wore a heavy coat, leather helmet, and goggles. Inside the coat is a passport that identifies the driver as Rudi Mancini.

They can also tell that Rudi is an Italian student of architecture at the University of Greenwich and lives in Islington. The passport was issued in 1927 at the Italian Regency of Carnaro, an enclave in Croatia under the influence of the futurist poet and general, Gabriele D'Annunzio.

Investigating the coat also reveals a safety pin with a price tag and the label "English Eccentrics," a second-hand clothing store at Camden Market.

Clue 1: Rudi Mancini's address Clue 2: English Eccentrics, Camden Market





#### RUDI MANCINI'S APARTMENT

<u>Sight:</u> Post-its on every surface, a print of Autoportrait (Tamara in a Green Bugatti)

Smell: Withered roses

Mancini's apartment is a small studio full of books about architecture, Italian Futurism, and poems by D'Annunzio and Marinetti. There are post-its with English words crossed out and fogliame autumnale written over them. A calendar with birthdays and university courses shows a bi-weekly meeting with "Heather" at Dingwall's. His bed is surrounded by numerous vases full of wilted roses. Further inspection reveals a diary, written in Italian, and accounts for his arrival in London six months ago.

The last pages repeat the same sentence over and over again: Perché alcuni accordi musicali dovrebbero farmi pensare alle tinte marroni e dorate del fogliame autunnale? - which translates to: "Why should certain chords in music make me think of the brown and golden tints of autumn foliage?"

Reading the whole diary reveals that he received the Csardas Fuzz Mix tape from Heather and has been obsessed with it ever since. He made a copy for Andy Townsend, a fellow student at Greenwich.

Clue 1: Meetings with Heather at Dingwall's Clue 2: Fellow student Andy Townsend has a copy of the tape

#### ENGLISH ECCENTRICS, CAMDEN MARKET

<u>Sight</u>: A shop girl with plucked-out eyebrows, an older customer dressed in a coat and scarf, unaware of the heat and the moths crawling on his clothes

Smell: Oppressive incense

Nobody recognizes Rudi Mancini's name.

#### DINGWALL'S

Sight: Concert posters; through the windows, a view of young people enjoying the sun on the banks of the loch

Smell: Cigarette ash, beer, and urine

Dingwall's is located in a former warehouse adjacent to Camden Loch. The bar crew will identify "Heather" as Heather Oakes. She works part-time as a waitress at the bar and can be found either at her friend's house in Muswell Hill or at the Roundhouse, a nearby squat. They remember her sitting with a handsome young Italian twice a week for mutual language lessons.

Clue 1:\_Heather's address at Muswell Hill Clue 2: The Roundhouse squat



Killerhertz live at Dingwalls, 1981.

#### MUSWELL HILL ADDRESS

Sight: A two-story Edwardian brick building with a small fenced front yard, a baby doll with adult teeth lies in the grass

Sound: From the window on the second floor: faint beats, a female voice (1) and a shrill male voice (2) arguing. If the investigators pause and listen they hear:

Voice 1: Where is the child?

Voice 2: Gone - gone to sleep.

Voice 1: What have you done with the child?

Voice 2: Gone to sleep, I said.

Voice 1: What have you done with it?

Voice 2: What have I done with it?

Voice 1: Ay, done with it. I heard it crying just now. Where is it?

Voice 2: How should I know ...?

#### Inside:

Sight: Dozens of cats lounging on mismatched furniture from flea markets

Sound: Whistling tea kettle, rave music from upstairs

Smell: Cat piss, smoke, and herbs

A woman wearing a black Misfits tank top covered in grey cat hair opens the door. This is Molly Parker, hospitable but aloof, smoking hand-rolled cigs, and occasionally coughing up hairballs. She doesn't seem to hear the music from upstairs or the kettle whistling.

Molly hasn't seen Heather in a while, and says that she might be in the room upstairs, listening to that song again. Molly will also mention that Heather might be at the Roundhouse, and that ever since Heather met Sophie at the squat, she's changed.

Clue: Heather got the tape from Sophie while staying at the Roundhouse

### Heather's room:

Sight: Heather swaying in the middle of the room, near an antique puppet booth, its red curtains closed; dolls and puppets on the ground; a gold-framed mirror

Sound: Piano over acid beats, a squeaky voice as if distorted by a kazoo

Smell: Old wood and dried blood

Heather wears a wooden Mr. Punch mask, blood trickling from her hairline and around her ears and jaw. She holds a heavy wooden stick. She will cackle, mocking the agents as they come near. She will physically resist them if they try to stop the tape. Her squawky voice seems to come from behind the puppet's curtain.

In the mirror, the puppet's curtain is drawn with Mr. Punch standing on stage.

Heather's mask is sewn on, and she will easily faint from blood loss. If the agents cut away the mask, they will see that her face is altered. She now has large lidless eyes, no lips, and a grotesquely large nose and chin.



#### ANDY TOWNSEND'S APARTMENT

<u>Sight:</u> Several flickering TV sets, mannequins frozen in fluid motions, crumpled balls of tissue, dozens of Japanese pornos on VHS

Sound: White noise

Smell: Sweat and semen

A circle of TV sets, all attached to one VHS recorder. The tape is paused, the TV displays showing a glitching picture of Andy's face in a state of pure bliss. In the center of the television lies Andy's naked body, dehydrated and thin, his genitals - although still vaguely visible - are covered with oddly colored, square patterned skin-tissue. The autopsy will reveal death by heart attack; there is no explanation for the genital mutilation.

The skin of the mannequins is warm and soft to the touch. On the wall are posters of Edwardian-Era erotica, showcasing mostly nonconforming bodies like conjoined twins, uncommonly large or small people, or those with hair or skin conditions, all posed and held in unnatural, almost geometric positions, by corsets and leather contraptions. Some of the faces are veiled with animal masks, but some people resemble friends and family members of the PCs.

The tape in the VHS player reads CSARDAS FUZZ MIX in Rudi's handwriting.



#### THE ROUNDHOUSE

Sight: A circular-shaped yellow brick building with a pointed roof. Pasted on the front are faded concert announcements for UK Punk bands, garish advertisements for Gilbey's Gin from the turn of the century, an announcement for the August 8th, 1917 premiere of the French play Sous Le Monde, recruitment posters for the War against the United Empire of America and other records of alternative history.

Smell: Campfire and burned plastic

Outside, caravans of Irish travelers have pitched tents, children play among the debris, throwing stones at a discarded kitchen sink.

#### Inside:

Sound: Low rattling of a Diesel-generator, faint piano music

Smell: Dead leaves and patchouli

A round cavernous space, dimly lit by rays of light coming through a few windows and many holes. There are 24 cast-iron Doric columns in two concentric circles and a curved, rib-like frame. Bedsheets hang from ropes, which are strung between the columns, to create numerous private spaces for the squatters.

#### The Bedsheet Labyrinth

Every "room" has a candle and a mattress, but sometimes the candle and flame are made from cardboard, or the mattress is marked on the floor with chalk. Some accoutrements are merely reflected in a large gold-framed mirror, which leans against a column. One room has red and yellow leaves of a juniper tree covering the mattress, another is full of wingless golden beetles that slowly wind down, buzzing even after they have stopped moving, in another, a tall shadow approaches quickly from behind the next curtained room. Rooms should reflect the fears and obsessions of the PCs.

#### Fuzz's room

A writhing mass of tangled cables, a reel to reel audio recorder spinning, stickers of Sunrise FM on various electronic devices.

#### Sophie's room

A cheap keyboard, a charcoal drawing of a ballroom from above, dancers surrounding a piano, a scribbled note says, "Hey Soph, couldn't find you. Cheers for the mix, I'll have it pressed tonight, make sure you're coming tomorrow to the Summer Madness. It will be wild! -F"

Clue: Fuzz will play the song at a rave on Saturday night

#### The Center Stage

Sophie, a young woman, is wearing an old-fashioned black dress and white collar while playing a grand piano illuminated by a hidden spotlight. She is surrounded by half a dozen dancers, their heads lolling, opposing arms and legs moving in sync, as if operated by a puppeteer.

PCs with Insight 4 or higher see the strings disappearing into the darkness above. They might soon join the dance.

#### THE RAVE

The location of the Summer Madness event-an abandoned warehouse just off the orbital ring around London-will be announced through a telephone chain half an hour before it starts. Most ravers meet at South Mimms Service Station, waiting for those who received the call, or instead, drive along the M25 searching for laser lights and beats.

Depending on how late the agents arrive, the mix will play and there might be either several dancers unconscious or dozens trampled to death while a yellow robed figure is impassively observing the chaos from the side of the stage.

#### COMPLICATION:

After the agents first report their findings, the handler will call them back in order to invoke the White Noise Protocol and then immediately hang up.

# WHITE NOISE PROTOCOL

Investigating White Noise Protocol

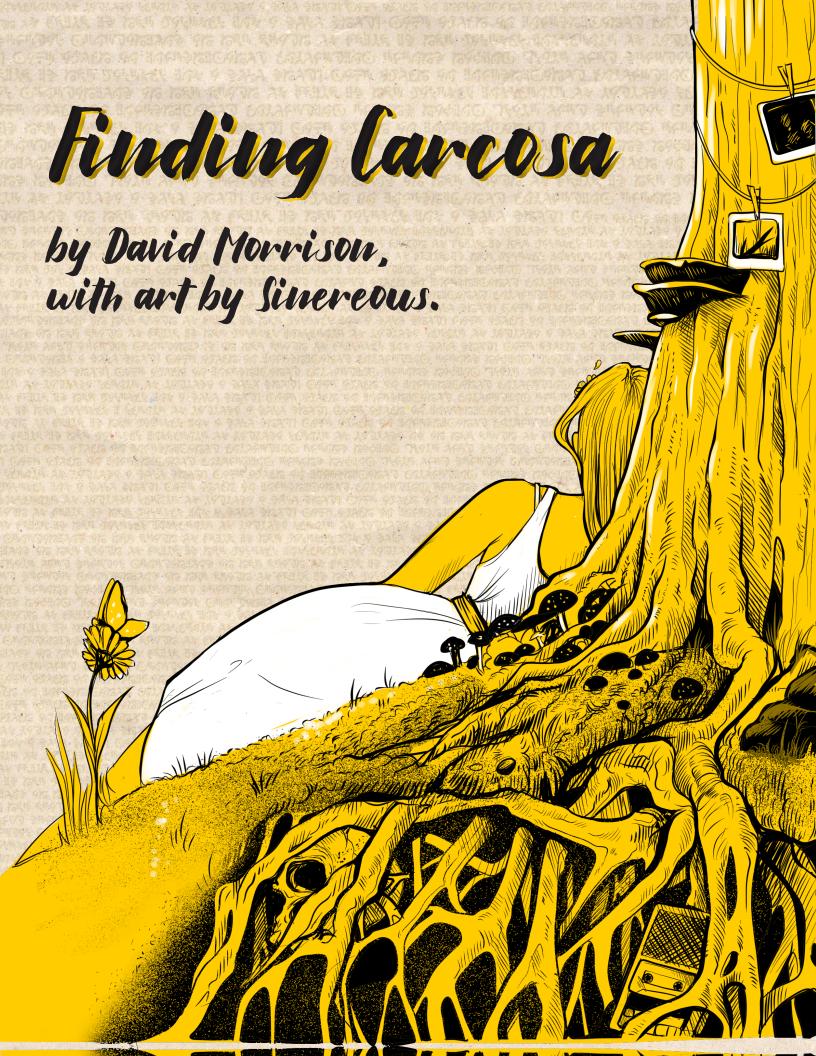
On a 1-4: The protocol puts the agents under quarantine because of a virulent meme vector they might have been exposed to. Agents are to cut off communications with HQ and to observe each other for unusual behavior. Their only goal now is to destroy the vector.

On a 5: A fellow agent told the PC about a "shadow team" that is deployed in case of White Noise. Ask the player about what happened.

On a 6: The PC was part of a White Noise operation concerning an art performance, exhibition or similar. Ask the player about the event, the fatalities and what caused them.

St. Vitus's Dance by Martin Schwartz
Illustration by Jeremy Duncan

Image credit: RockReport. UK Power trio "Killerhertz" circa 1981- performing Live at Camden Town's "Dingwalls used under Creative Commons Attribution 1.0 Generic licence.



### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Finding Carcosa is a solo story game about an investigator in the present day uncovering mysterious and disturbing events taking place over several generations (called Ages in the game) at the heart of which is the baleful influence of Carcosa. The design of this game is heavily influenced and inspired by Thousand Year Old Vampire by Tim Hutchings, Ironsworn by Shawn Tomkin, and Lovecraftesque by Becky Annison and Josh Fox. Key media touchstones are The King in Yellow by Robert Chambers and True Detective.

To play this game you will need this rule text and the accompanying tables; dice—one four-sided dice (d4), one six-sided dice (d6), and one twelve-sided dice (d12); and pen and paper or the note-taking device of your choice. For full immersion, feel free to get a bunch of index cards, string, and a pinboard!

If this is the first time you have played a solo game, there are a couple of different ways to approach it. The first is to treat this game like a piece of creative writing—take down notes as you play, and write these into a fictional journal or short story. The second is as a purely imaginative exercise—enjoy envisioning the investigator and the strange events they encounter, perhaps taking the odd note to keep things fresh in your mind. These rules will assume the first, but if you prefer the second approach, then feel free to ignore those bits that are not relevant to your experience.

It should be noted that this is a game of both mundane and supernatural horror; elements of violence and death, as well as allusions to loss of control and mental torment, may arise in play. As you will most likely play this game alone, there are no formal safety tools built into the text. While you play, bear in mind you are more important than the game, and if ever you wish to ignore a specific entry because it deals with content you don't want to engage with, you have explicit permission to skip it.

In Finding Carcosa you will take the role of a single investigator—perhaps a police detective, or a driven amateur—who looks into a strange occurrence. Over the course of the game, you as a player will generate a series of people, events, and objects, which the investigator will slowly piece together as they unearth a wider mystery. In order to prompt and guide you in exploring this mystery, and to ensure that there are some surprises even as you craft the story yourself, there are a series of tables that will prompt you to roll dice to randomly determine the next entry you read. These will be described

in more detail shortly, but each entry will have a mechanical action—something the game requires you to do—and a brief fictional prompt to give that action some context.

As you resolve each entry, you should make note of the entry's effect. When you believe your investigator can draw enough connections to deepen their understanding of the mystery—discovering a significant new clue, for example—then you can write a new part of their story. You may wish to record this in the form of a journal, or as case notes the investigator is keeping, or as a third-person short story.

It should be noted that this game is designed so that you will experience the story in a non-linear fashion. Because of this, you may generate some trailing plot threads that you have yet to incorporate into the story itself, particularly if you are writing from the first-person perspective of the investigator. Embrace this messiness, and even if you don't immediately follow up on these missing pieces, allow them to influence your descriptions of other events. You should always be looking to synthesise the plot points you have generated into something coherent—if that's the sort of story you want to tell!

You should end the game when you feel you can draw your story to a satisfying conclusion. There is no concept of risk in the game—choices about what your investigator does and the outcome of their actions are almost always yours to make. There are a few entries on the tables that will bring the story to an end, as well as a couple of other mechanical actions that do likewise, but the random nature of these means you shouldn't count on them being the action to end the game. The rule of thumb is when you believe the investigator has learned enough about the mystery to reach a conclusion, you should end their story in the way that feels most appropriate to the established tone. This ending can be anything, from solving a crime with questions remaining, discovering a deep and unsettling mystery about the world, to losing yourself forever in a haunted painting.



# PLAY

You begin the game by describing your investigator. Make a few notes about them—their name, their profession, what they're like, what they do. Your investigator will be an individual based in the present day. They should be someone who will invest in the mystery, and will pursue the truth, even if things become convoluted and strange.

Below is a list of four specific investigator types. If you wish, you may choose one or randomly roll to select a character. They introduce some additional mechanics which will put a specific slant on the type of story told. They are completely optional, though, and you may feel free to ignore them. The only thing that is required is to choose three Anchors for your investigator—things that tie them to the world, whether they be relationships, behaviours, or pastimes. During the course of the game it is possible your investigator's relationships will become degraded or obsessive, as they are increasingly drawn into the mystery.

### ROLES:

You may play with a specific role if you wish, either choosing or rolling below

<u>Detective</u>: You start with the discovered artifact *Police Files*. This may contain clues relating to people or crimes from Ages I, 2, or 3, but no clues which are overtly supernatural.

<u>Historian:</u> Create an ancestor character who lived in Age 3. You start with the discovered artifact [*Ancestor's*] *Diary*, which functions like an ordinary artifact. If you roll a duplicate entry in any other Age, you may set the d4 to 3 instead of advancing the d12.

<u>Reporter:</u> You may use any characters from Age I or 2 you are able to interact with as a discovered artifact, but if you apply three clues to them, mark the character—they are no longer willing or able to talk with you.

<u>Seer:</u> You start with the discovered artifact *Strange Visions*. This may contain any clues from Age 4, or any supernatural clues from other Ages. If you roll a duplicate entry, you may choose to advance the d6 instead of the dl2.

### Anchors:

Your investigator should have three anchors—these should be things that ground them in the mundane world, such as a best friend, a hobby, a social obligation, or a habit. In general, these should start off as something broadly positive. As examples, "a close friendship with my old schoolfriend Ahmed," "going to Sunday Mass," "A glass of good scotch to unwind in the evening."

Whenever you would otherwise mark off an Artifact or Character, you may instead choose to mark one of the anchors. Sometimes, you may be required to directly mark off an Anchor. Draw a line through it, and replace it with a phrase that shows how the investigator's relationship to the anchor has suffered due to either neglect or increasing obsession. For example: "Missed Ahmed's wedding," "constantly worrying at a rosary," "drinking to forget the horror." Be sure to show this change in the fiction you have created.

When you feel a specific anchor has become overwhelmingly negative and a horror in itself, mark off the anchor entirely. Your investigator has now irrevocably lost that anchor. If all three are marked, your investigator has lost their connection to their world and their story is over—and it probably won't be a happy ending.



Once you have an image of your investigator, it is time to expose them to the mystery that will come to consume their attention. This mystery will unfold by rolling on a series of tables. These tables will generate the building blocks for your mystery. A core feature of this game, and the story it is designed to tell, is that these events take place over four different periods of time, called Ages. These are the present day, 1969, 1929, and the timeless realm of Carcosa. Each Age has its own set of six tables. Each table has twelve entries. The entry you read is always determined by reading the d4, d6, and d12 in that order, to give Age, Table, and an Entry.

Your story always starts with the death or disappearance of an individual in the Present Day—so set your Age d4 to I. Then, take a moment to think about who this victim may be, with reference to your investigator. If they are a professional, it could be anyone. If they are an amateur, this could be a relative, a friend, or an old teacher. Write down the missing person's name in your Character list, and make a couple of notes on them.

If your story starts with the discovery of a body or violent crime scene, set the Table d6 to 4. If you start by investigating the home of a missing person, set the d6 to I. Finally, roll the dI2. This will give you your first entry to read.

Remember, the dice should always be read d4 d6 d12.

Read your first entry now, then return to this rule text to learn what it means.





## DICE & ENTRIES:

At all times, you will have a d4, d6, and d12 in front of you. You will use these dice to determine which entry to read. The dice should always be read in ascending order of sides—so d4, then d6, then d12. The d4 corresponds to the Age the entry will take place in, the d6 will give you a table to reference in that Age, and the d12 will tell you which entry in that table to read. So, for example, if the d4 = 3, d6 = 1, and d12 = 7, you would go to Age 3, Table I, Entry 7.

When reading an entry, it will give a short piece of text to give the entry context. It will then generally tell you to either add or mark something on your investigation record. This might be a character, artifact, clue, or some combination. The entry will then give you instructions on what to do with the dice to determine the next entry to read. If no explicit instruction is given for a dice, it should remain as it is.

ROLL: Roll any dice for which this instruction is given—do not roll any other dice—and read the new result in combination with the other dice.

<u>Set</u>: This will always have a number with it, and you should place the specified dice so it shows the face with the specified number. E.g. "Set d6 to 3".

ADVANCE: Turn the dice to show the face with the next highest number.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

d4 = 2, d6 = 4, d12 = 1 "Advance d4, Turn d6 to 3, roll d12".

The d4 and d6 are manually changed, the d12 is rolled, giving a 7 So now d4 = 3, d6 = 3, d12 = 7. So you would go to Age 3, Table 3, and read Entry 7.

d4 = 3, d6 = 3, d12 = 7 "Roll d6 and d12"

Because there is no other instruction, you don't touch the d4. Both the d6 and d12 are rolled, giving a 6 and 7 respectively.

So you have d4 = 3, d6 = 6, and d12 = 7, and would go to Age 3, Table 6, Entry 7.

## **DUPLICATE ENTRIES:**

If you are sent to an entry you have already used, you must advance the dl2. (This happens each time you land on a duplicate entry, so if you advance into another duplicate entry, advance again.) If you cannot advance the dl2 (i.e. it is showing a l2), then advance the d6 instead. If you cannot advance the d6, then advance the d4. Please note that Age 4 has a Table 7. (This can only be reached if you duplicate Entry 4—6—l2, which is quite unlikely!)

## AGES:

There are four Ages denoted by the d4. The ages are:

- I. The Present Day
- 2. The Summer of Love—1969
- 3. The Wall Street Crash—1929
- 4. Carcosa, a place beyond time and a time beyond place

The entry will contain a brief line of descriptive text which is left deliberately vague to give context and inspire ideas but leave room for you to make it part of your ongoing story. Next, it will have some mechanical prompts which give you the material for these stories. Usually you will be told to Add, Mark, or Discover something on your record.

Adding something will require you to come up with a new detail. Depending on what it is, it may not immediately become part of your story (for example, if you add an event taking place in an earlier Age you have not yet discovered). Discovering an Artifact should always be a pivotal moment, as these are the primary way of finding information about past events. When you Mark something, it is no longer part of your story—an Artifact has been exhausted or lost, or a Character has moved on or met a worse fate. Whenever instructed to Mark an Artifact or Character, you may mark an Anchor instead. If you cannot Mark an Artifact or Character you must mark an Anchor instead.

Finally, the entry will tell you what to do with your dice. The result showing on the dice once you have resolved the instructions will determine the next entry you read. The game will then follow this pattern—reading an entry, resolving its mechanical effects, and generating the next entry—until an ending is reached.



# **CHARACTERS:**

Characters are the people that your investigator meets or learns of during the course of the game. When a Character is added to the game you will be given a prompt with a vague role or type and you may fill in as much detail about the character as you like. You may use them as the subject or object of any of the events. They are never added to Artifacts, but an Artifact may reference them.

In general, it is possible to meet Characters whose origins are in Age I or 2; it is possible but highly unlikely to meet Characters whose origin is in Age 3; and it is impossible to meet Characters whose origin is in Age 4. When you Mark a character they may take no further part in the story and may, at your discretion, be dead or disappeared.

# **CLUES:**

Clues are events that have taken place which may relate to the overall mystery. These will take the form of a short prompt which are meant to be a starting point for your own additions. Primarily, it is from these Clues you will piece together the events of the mystery.

Clues can be added to a relevant Artifact instead of your Clue list. Or, when you generate a relevant Artifact, you may erase a Clue from the list and record it under that relevant Artifact. Your investigator can learn any Clues that take place in Age I, and as such you can feature them in your fiction as and when they occur. To learn Clues from earlier ages, your Investigator must have access to an Artifact that contains them.

# **ARTIFACTS:**

Artifacts will be created throughout the game. Generally, they will be a physical object, but some may be more ephemeral. When an artifact is created you will usually need to specify what it is, and which Age it comes from. Once an artifact has been created clues may be associated with it.



There are two restrictions on associating Clues with an Artifact; the Clue must come from the Age the Artifact is associated with, and it must be related to the Artifact's purpose. So if you have *John Smith's Diary*, a diary of said John Smith from Age 3, then it can only contain clues from Age 3 that John Smith was aware of and may have written down in his diary.

Existing Clues may be added to an Artifact when it is created, and new Clues may be added to an Artifact instead of your record. These new clues (probably) don't just materialise out of thin air, but represent further study or new insights.

The significance of an Artifact is that it can be discovered by the investigator in the present day. If a clue from Age 2, 3, or 4 is not in an Artifact the investigator has discovered, they may not use it in their investigation. It is something you the player are aware of in the background, but the investigator does not yet know it. It is never necessary to have an Artifact from Age I—Clues from this Age can be found by the investigator regardless.

# ADD:

When you are required to Add something, you will need to add a detail to your record depending on whether it is a Clue, Character, or Artifact. You should write out some brief detail, and always record the Age where it originated.

### MARK:

Through the game, you will be asked to strike through information and characters in the story. When you Mark an element, that part of the story is no longer available as an asset as you progress through the game, although any prior references remain in your notes and gameplay. Refer to the section on Anchors for how they behave. Generally you choose how the element leaves the story. You may choose to mark an Anchor instead of a Character or Artifact, and must mark an Anchor if you cannot mark a Character or Artifact.



## **DISCOVER:**

When you Discover an artifact, you may check the "Discovered" box. This means your investigator now has access to the artifact and the clues contained within it, and your fiction should reflect this. If you would discover an artifact but currently have no undiscovered artifacts, you may create a new artifact and immediately mark it discovered. If you have any unmarked clues that aren't associated with an artifact, this new artifact must relate to one (or more) existing clues and the age they are from. If you have no unmarked, unassociated clues, you may create the artifact within any theme and age. Valid forms for these freely-created artifacts are as follows (note that many of the entries break these rules, but those are specific exceptions):

- Age 2: Media (film, audio, writing, photos), eyewitness accounts (must be linked to an existing character), artworks (paintings, sculpture, fiction), physical locations, physical evidence
- Age 3: Media (film, audio, writing, photos), artworks (paintings, sculpture, fiction), physical locations, physical evidence.
- Age 4: Artworks (paintings, sculpture, fiction) only.



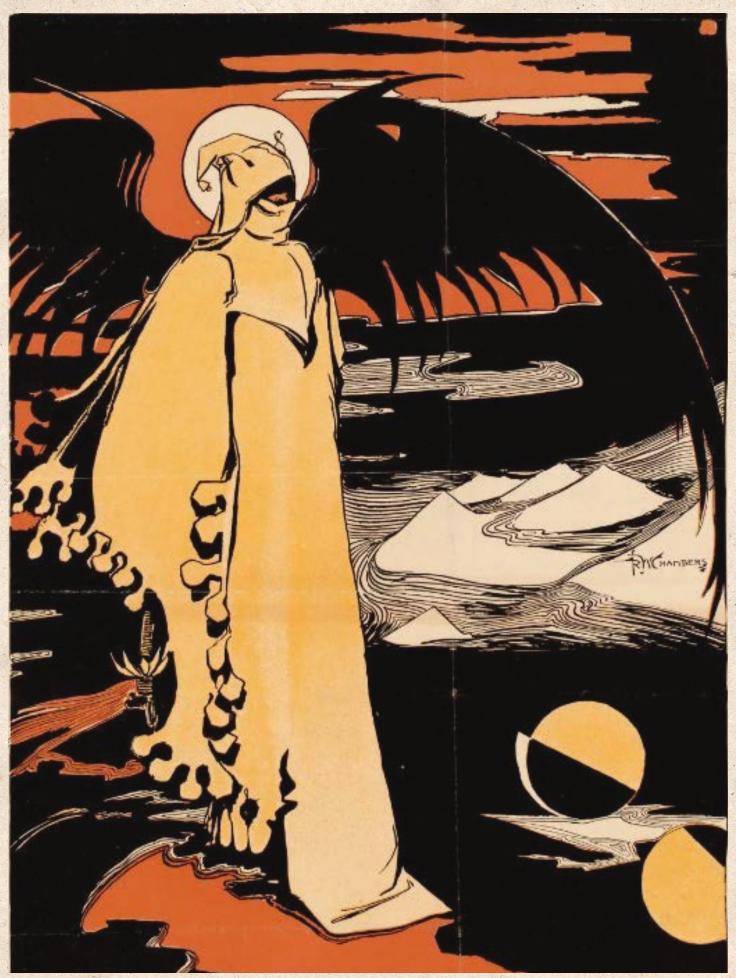




### ENDING THE GAME

The game ends under a few circumstances: when you feel the investigation has reached a satisfactory conclusion; when the text of an entry demands it; or when your investigator's anchors have degraded to the point that their story becomes untenable.

In keeping with the genre, a satisfactory conclusion may involve the investigator undergoing an existential crisis, reaching a conclusion no-one will believe, or becoming lost in their own mind or stranger places. Of course, they may also solve the mystery! As a player, you should take a moment to reflect on the story, and, if you are writing it up as you go, perhaps read back through it and revise it.



This Illustration (also used on the tables below) is from the cover of The King in Yellow by Robert W. Chambers from the 1895 first edition and is in the Public Domain.

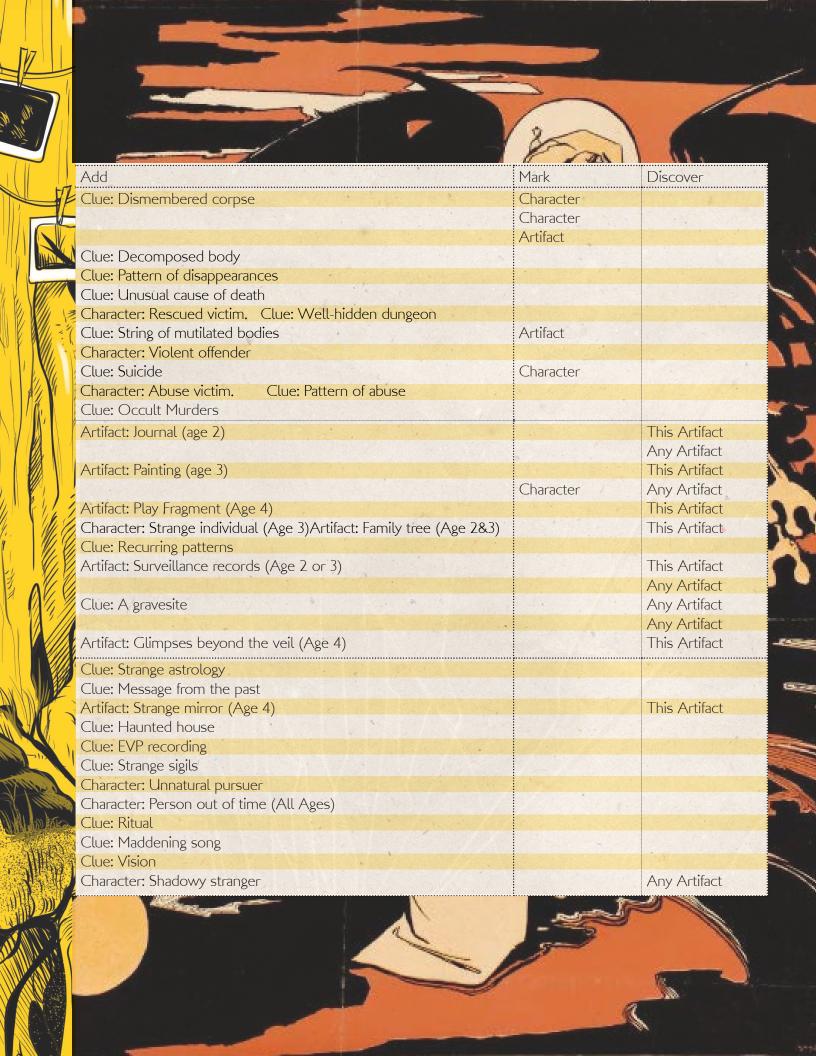
# AGE 1 - PRESENT DAY (2019)

M A				
Table	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
	A book missing from a shelf			d6,dl2
	A stack of old letters bound in string		d4	d6,dl2
	Ticket stubs from an art exhibition	d6:5		dl2
	A scribbled note about a recent meeting		dl2	
	Meet someone related to a missing person			d4, d6, d12
	Receive notification of a death	A / 1		d4, d6, d12
	An old photograph with "I'm sorry" written on the back		d4, d6	dl2
1 ♦	Something hidden in the back of a wardrobe			d4, d6, d12
	A sculpture of a strange figure	d4:4		d6. dl2
	A ransacked office	d6:3		dl2
	A USB drive taped under a desk	d6:6		dl2
	A map with several landmarks circled			d4, d6, d12
	An ancestor, dead in mysterious circumstances	d4:3		dl2
	Adoption paperwork hidden in a safe		d4	dl2
	An unexpected pregnancy			d4, d6, d12
	An anonymous love letter		<b>多国际自然的发展。</b>	d6, d12
	An elderly relative on their deathbed		d4	d6, d12
<b>1</b>	An acrimonious break-up			d4, d6, d12
	A child who has seen too much	d6:6		dl2
<b>_</b> +	The return of a relative thought long lost	TELLIS	d6	dl2
*	An unexpected inheritance		d4	d6, d12
	A disorder in the family, mental or physical			d4, d6, d12
	An unusual family tradition	61 y 1	d4	dl2
	A feud of uncertain origin	d4:3		d6, d12
	Theft of a significant object			d4, d6, d12
	An affair long hidden			d6, d12
	Slow descent into bankruptcy			d6, d12
	A stash of false identities			d4, d6, d12
	A property held under a shell company		d6	dl2
7	A foiled theft	1		d6, d12
4	A criminal enterprise behind an innocent front	d4:3		d6, d12
J+	A religious or MLM scheme exploiting the vulnerable	d6:5	d4	d12
	Evidence of a long-running cover-up	13.5	d6	d4, dl2
	A dark desire exposed			d4, d6, d12
	Blackmail			d12
	A fraud exposed		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	d4, d6, d12
	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	VIII		31, 30, 312

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			Di AMARIA	
	Add	Mark	Discover	
111	Artifact: Book (Age 4)			
MA	Artifact: Letters (Age 2)		This Artifact	
A STATE	Clue: Art Exhibition			
377	Clue: Recent Meeting			
-	Character: Acquaintance of a missing person	Character		
	Character: Person in photo (Age 2), Clue: Photo	Character		
THE PROPERTY OF	Character. Terson in photo (Age 2), Cide. Thoto		Any Artifact	
2	Character: Alien muse (Age 4); Clue: Sculpture	Anchor	7 (rly 7 (rtildet	-
AF CONTRACTOR	Clue: Ransacked office	/ (ICHO)		-
WHIT!	Clue: Audio file of discordant sounds	A TORRESPONDE TO A STATE OF THE PARTY.		
- 4 1 1 P	Clue: Pattern of locations			-
The state of	Character: an ancestor (Age 3)			
Maria	Clue: Adoption; Character: Birth Parent (Age 2)		CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE	
at Marie	Clue: Unexpected pregnancy			W.
	Clue: Love letter; Character: Secret Admirer			
	Character: Elderly Relative; Artifact: Relative's Story (Age 2)	Character		
	Character: A spurned lover			L
	Character: A strange child		Gradel Street Land	
	Character: Long lost relative			A
<i>b</i>			Any Artifact	W
	Clue: A hidden condition			
	Clue: Unusual tradition			
	Clue: Family feud		-	
3, (1) S		Artifact		
10	Clue: Secret affair	Character	- C	
	Clue: Financial records			
	Character: Hidden Identity			
	Clue: Shell company		Complete Com	
	Character: Thief			
	Clue: Criminal enterprise			1
61.5	Character: Con artist/Leader			100
	Clue: Corrupt organisation"			
	Artifact: Evidence of conspiracy (Age 2 & 3)	A .*C		
	Clue: Transgressive acts	Artifact	Secretary and the second secon	33.
	Character: Blackmail victim	Artifact or Character		1
	A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	~~~		
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		AND REAL PROPERTY.		
			The state of the s	15004

	Event Event	Set	Advance	Roll
Table	A body dismembered and displayed publicly	300	7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	dl2
	A sudden violent death	1 19		d4, d6
	Destruction of something valuable			d6, d1
	Discovery of a concealed body			dl2
	Pattern of disappearances		d6	d4, d6
1	Autopsy report revealing unusual cause of death	d6:6		d12
	The rescue of someone held captive since childhood	0.0		d4, d6
	An album of vintage photos of mutilated bodies	d4:3	d4	d12
	A confession of deprayed violence	U-1.5	d6	d4, d6
	A suicide			d4, d6
	A killing in self defence or by a long suffering victim			d4, d6
	Murders with overt occult elements			d4, d6, d1
			14:	
	An old journal, hidden away	14.2	d4	d6, d1
	A surprising find at a second-hand shop	d4:2		d6, d1
	A surrealist painting thought lost	d4:3		d6, d1
	An item seized in a police raid	d6:4		d4, dl
	Translated fragments of an unknown play	d4:4;		dl2
<b>L</b>	Genealogical links to a mysterious individual	d6:l		d4, d
	A pattern of similar events across the country			d4, de
	Surveillance records found in storage			d4, d
	A safety deposit box under a false name	14.3		d4, d
	An item buried in a coffin	d4:3		d6, dl
	Object retrieved from a demolished building		d4	d6, d1
	A series of disturbing realisations			d4, d6
	Events mapped alongside celestial occurrences			d4, dl
	Recurring dreams of another time		d4	d6, dl
	A mirror that shows glimpses of otherworldly figures	d4:4		d6, dl
	A house, rumoured to be haunted	d6:4		d4, dl
	An old cassette reel with electronic voice phenomena		d4	d6, dl
	Strange sigils inscribed somewhere unexpected			d4, dl
<b>n</b>	A following presence, never quite glimpsed			d4, de
0+	An individual claiming to have lived many lives			d4, de
	Evidence of a ritual			d4, d6
	Obsession with an unusual song	d4:4		d6, dl
	A scene from the past, repeated nightly	d4:3		d6, dl
	A gift from a shadowy benefactor			d4, de

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# -AGE-2-SUMMER OF LOVE (1969)

\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \		The second lines		
Table	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
100	An item hidden away for later discovery			d4, d6, d12
	A newspaper with an anachronistic headline			d4, d6, d12
	A locked box engraved with initials		d6	d4, d12
V	A pocket bible, pierced by a bullet			d4, d6, d12
	A sci-fi novel, pulled from shops shortly after publication	d4:4, d6:5		dl2
	A sample of rock brought back from the moon			d4, d6, d12
	A high frequency hum permeating a recording			d4, d6, d12
1 +	Police reports on sightings of strange creatures	d4:4,d6:5		dl2
1	A letter from a teenage runaway	d6:5		dl2
	A telephone book, with some numbers underlined			d4, d6, d12
	A television, which only picks up strange signals			d4, d6, d12
	Newspaper clippings about a crime	d6:4		dl2
	A parent deserting their family			d4, d6, d12
	Birth of twins, one living, one dead		d4	d6, d12
	A relative, Missing in Action	d6:4		dl2
	A family scrapbook			d4, d6, d12
7	A chosen family in a harsh situation		d6	dl2
	A set of wedding photos revealing a secret		d4	dl2
	An old family home, now abandoned			d4, d6, d12
<b>—</b> +	A perfect nuclear family, hiding a surprising secret			d4, d6, d12
*	A new step-parent introduced to a family		1 - V - V	d4, d6, d12
	A rift in a family		d4	d6,dl2
	An overbearing head of a family	4 4 6 6 9		d4, d6, d12
	A family making a fresh start in a new town	d4:l		d6, d12
	Sealed testimony to a court		d4, d6	dl2
	A series of cryptic letters from a murderer		d6	dl2
	Plans for a building, never completed			d4, d6, d12
	Odd words circled in printed material			d4, d6, d12
	A time capsule, buried in a new children's park	d4:1		d6, d12
フ	A number of star charts for particular places and times			d4, d6, d12
	A series of academic papers on an esoteric subject		d4	dl2
J+	A list of seemingly unrelated names, some crossed out			d4, d6, d12
	A box of medals from WW2, but of unknown origin			d4, d6, d12
	A strange object, brought back from an overseas war	d4:4		d6, d12
	A bundle of old newspapers		d4	d6, d12
	Documentary film, not intended for public viewing			d4, d6, d12
		1/2		



1				••••
able	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
	A string of murders along a major road	d4:l		d6, d12
	A decapitated body			d4, d6, d
	A series of attacks targeting a very specific victim type		d4	d6, d12
	A detective's personal notes on a case			d4, d12
	Murder of a high profile victim		d6	d4, d12
1	Mass "suicide" of a cult	d6:6		d4, d12
4	Reports of a war crime			d4, d6, c
1 +	A string of bombings			d4, d6, c
	A body staged in a distinctive way		d4	dl2
	A needlessly violent robbery		d6	dl2
	Political assassination		dl2	
	A conspiracy concealed by murder	d4:l		d6, d12
	An LSD-fuelled poem peaking beyond the veil	d4:4		d6, d12
	A group of young new-agers, vanished without trace			d4, d6, c
	A charismatic cult leader			d6, d12
	An LP of hypnotic music		d6	d4, d12
	A remote compound, deserted	d4:l		dl2
	A rambling manifesto		d6	d4, d12
	A person tattooed with mystical sigils		d4	d6, d12
<b>→</b>	An abstract poster, the shapes and colours seem to shift	d4:4	d6	dl2
•	Someone on a voyage of discovery			d4, d6, c
	A cult horror film, either prescient or worse	d4:4, d6:4		dl2
	Re-discovered Pagan rites			d4, d6, c
	A re-incarnation of an ancient figure	d4:4, d6:3		dl2
	An inhuman skeleton		d4	d6, d12
	The images of human figures, burnt into a wall			d4, d6, c
	Reports of UFO activity	d4:l		d6, d12
	A message delivered by strange voices		dl2	d4
	A notebook filled with seemingly insane notes			d4, d6, d
	An alien abductee, returned in the present day	d4:l		d6, d12
	The Yellow Sign (Special: *** See footnote).		9	d4, d6, d
<b>*</b>	A subject with uncontrollable psychic manifestations		dl2	
	Government documents revealing psychic experimentation			d4, d6, d
	Dreams of another person's life		4 4 7 7 1 3	d6, d12
•	Ascension to a higher plane of existence	d4:4		dl2
	A visitation by a being from beyond			d4, d6,

\*\*\* You may land on this entry multiple times - apply all effects.

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		E San	(4.
	Add	Mark	Discover
T	Clue: String of murders		
	Clue: Decapitated body		
	Clue: Victimology		
	Character: Detective; Artifact: Case Notes (Age 2)		
OTHER PARTY NAMED IN COLUMN TO PER YOUR PER YOUR PARTY NAMED IN COLUMN TO	Character: VIP		
1 V VIII	Clue: Mass suicide		
	Clue: War crime		
W/ W/ - 29	Clue: Bombings	Artifact	
Wind	Clue: Staged body		The second second second
	Clue: Violent robbery	Artifact	
N/W	Clue: Assassination, Character: Political figure	Character	
	Artifact: Conspiracy Theories (Age 2), Character: Conspiracy Theorist		State of the state
\	Artifact: Psychedelic poem (Age 4)	CALLAN WALLENGE	
	Clue: Disappearance of hippies		SERVICE OF STREET, STR
	Character: Cult leader		
	Artifact: Strange Album (Any age)	Character	This Artifact
1 1/1/2	Artifact: Abandoned Compound (Age 2)	Character	THIS AFUIIACL
	Clue: Rambling manifesto		16
	Character: Tattooed person		REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY OF TH
13 1/1/1/1	Artifact: Swirling poster (Age 4)	Charata	
M AV W	Character: Traveling seeker	Character	State Control of the
	Artifact: Horror Film (Age 2 & 4)		
	Clue: Pagan rites		Care Charles and Agency
	Character: Reincarnated Historical Figure		
	Clue: Inhuman skeleton	Character	
	Clue: Unnerving silhouettes		
	Clue: UFO activity		
	Clue: Strange message	Artifact	
The state of the s	Artifact: Weird notebook		
11/1/200	Character: Alien Abductee, Artifact: Story of Abduction (Age 4)		This Artifact
FERREST .	Clue: The Yellow Sign	Anchor	
J. Miller	Character: Psychic (Age 2); Clue: Psychic manifestations		
MINA	Artifact: Psychic Reports; Clue: Experiments	Character	
The state of the s	Artifact: Dreams of another life (Age 2)	H 12	
A MANAGE	Clue: Directions on Ascending		THE RESERVE TO SERVE THE PARTY OF THE PARTY
一种批	Clue: Visitation		
THE WAY		7-	
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			Oracles Vision
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## -AGE-3-THE CRASH (1929)

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Table	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
7.5	An incredibly lifelike statue in a strangely smooth stone		d4	d6, d12
	A playbill for "The King in Yellow", stamped "Cancelled"		d4	dl2
	A twisting labyrinth hidden in a basement		d4, d6	dl2
	An antique family bible, with copious notations			d4, d6, d12
	A still hidden away from prying eyes	d6:4		dl2
	A wanted poster for a serious crime	d6:4		d4, d12
	Family keepsakes smuggled from the old country		d6	d4, dl2
1 💠	A blackmail letter for a government figure			d4, d6, d12
	Stock certificates in a company now out of business			d4, d6, d12
	An old church, seemingly unused			d4, d6, d12
	Evidence of police corruption			d4, d6, d12
	A diary that ends abruptly			d4, d6, d12
	A family uprooted by financial hardship			d4, d6, d12
	A wedding mired in scandal	d4:2		dl2
	An isolated family suspected of dark deeds	d6:4		dl2
	A refugee family fleeing evil			d4, d6, d12
	A family come into a sudden windfall	d6:4		d4, dl2
7	Rumours of a terrible family curse	d6:6		d4, d12
	Stories of former glory		d6	dl2
<b>_</b> +	A black sheep with a personal crusade			d4, d6, d12
4	A romance hidden from society		4,	d4, d6, d12
	A family portrait, no longer on display	d4:l		d6, d12
	A new member of the family		d4	d6, d12
	Betrayal by a close friend or loved one	d4:2		d6, d12
	A prophecy in hieroglyphs		dl2	
	The discovery of an Egyptian burial chamber		d4	d6, d12
	A sumerian tablet, recently translated		G I	d4, d6, d12
	The sacking of a library during the crusades		d4	d6, d12
	An old, distinguished, and terrifying family line	d4:l		d6, d12
7	An artifact retrieved from the Himalayas	d4:2		d6, d12
1	The sole survivor of an ill-fated Antarctic expedition		\$ .	d4, d6, d12
J+	An ancient statue bearing an uncanny resemblance to someone in the present day	d4:l	7,40	d6, d12
	A sacrificial knife that feels perpetually warm to the touch		d6	d4, d12
	The first visit by Westerners to an isolated tribal people		d4	d6, d12
	The discovery of an ancient city, long rumoured to exist		d4	dl2
	The personal notes of a renowned explorer			dl2
	The parameters of a fell of this of species	1100		312

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15		Pin	1111	
	Add	Mark	Discover	
111	Artifact: Lifelike Statue	Character (Age 3)	This Artifact	
AM.	Clue: Cancelled Performance			
12 SAV	Artifact: Secret Labyrinth (Age 3 & 4)		This Artifact	100
371	Artifact: Bible (Age 3 & 4)	Character		
	Clue: A still	A		1
	Character: Wanted criminal (Age 3), Clue: Crime	Artifact		
不	Artifact: Family Keepsakes (Age 3)  Clue: Blackmail		The state of the s	-
	Clue: Stock Certificates			
A H	Artifact: Old church (All Ages)		The second second	A
	Clue: Police Corruption			
SIMICA	Artifact: Diary (Age 3)			-
N. T.	Clue: Old family home			1
MAIN	Clue: Scandal, Character: Newlywed			8
The state of the s	Clue: Dark practices; Character: Family head			
N - I MAN	Character: Elderly descendant (Age I)		Any Artifact	
	Clue: Sudden windfall; Character: Prominent figure (Age 3)			
	Clue: Family Curse			
	Clue: Fall from Grace			
	Character: Black Sheep (Age 3)			
<i>h</i>	Clue: Illicit romance			-
	Artifact: Family Portrait (Age 3)			
	Character: New Family Member (Age 3)	Character		
	Character: Intimate (Age 3); Clue: Betrayal			-
<u>√</u> (2008)	Clue: Prophecy; Artifact: Hieroglyphic Message (Age 4)			
10	Clue: Burial Chamber		Any Ancient Artifact	
	Artifact: Sumerian tablet	Character		
	Clue: Sacking of a library	Artifact	Any Artifact	
	Clue: Dark family secrets, Character: Surviving scion (Age I)		TILLA	
	Artifact: Himalayan object (Age 4)		This Artifact	
1 Maria	Character: Survivor (Age 3); Clue: Doomed expedition			
	Artifact: Perplexing Statue (Age 4)  Artifact: Sacrificial Knife			100
	Clue: First Contact		MARKET TO THE PROPERTY.	
	Artifact: Ancient City; Clue: Cataclysm	Artifact	This Artifact	
	Character: Explorer (Age 3); Artifact: Notes	/ (i tildet	THIS / WILLIACT	
	2.13. 3213. 1. 2. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.			
			THE REAL PROPERTY.	
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			***	

ans in canopic jars and not - of a gangland hit of a suspected drug OD ents, with little medical value	Set d6:3 d4:2	Advance	Roll dl2
and not - of a gangland hit of a suspected drug OD ents, with little medical value			
of a suspected drug OD ents, with little medical value	d4:2		- 17
ents, with little medical value			dl2
않았다. (요리 100명) [127] 이 시크로 128 (2015) 이 경로 기업하는 (요리 128) (2015) (2015) (2015) (2015) (2015) (2015) (2015) (2015)			d4, d6, c
			d4, d6, c
bootleg booze		d6	dl2
unionists	d4:l	d6	dl2
s across the country		d6	d4, d12
son's child		d4	d6, d12
orrific crimes have been perpetrated	d6:6		d4, d12
by a member of high society	d4:2		d6, d12
e by a hate group			d4, d6, c
arson			d4, d6, c
ilm		d4	d6, d12
	d4:l		dl2
s with unsettling themes			d4, d6, d
Order of the Golden Dawn			d4, d6, d
	d4:2		dl2
aling strange obsessions			d4, d12
bank by an anarchist cell	d4:2		d6, d12
strange castle	d6:2	d4	dl2
ritualistic elements		d6	dl2
old speakeasy			d4, d6, c
th occult themes			d4, d6, d
ished novel		d4	d6, d12
		d4	d6, d12
present			d4, d6, d
eyond	d4:2		d6, d12
ptian book of the dead	d6:3	d4	dl2
e at the crossroads	d4:2		d6, d12
ature in human guise		d4	d6, d12
*** See footnote below).			d4, d6, d
a certain spot	d4:l		d6, d12
			d4, d6, d
			d4, d6, d
			d4, d6, d
		d4	d6, d12
9	poltergeist activity andoned at sea	poltergeist activity andoned at sea	poltergeist activity andoned at sea

\*\*\* You may land on this entry multiple times - apply all effects.

	100	1 (1,
Add	Mark	Discover
Clue: Ritual murder		
Clue: Gangland hit	Character	
Character: Movie Star		
Clue: Surgical experiments		
Clue: Tainted booze		
Clue: Violent strikebreaking; Character: Tycoon (Age 3)	Artifact	
Clue: Armed Robberies	Artifact	Any Artifact
Character: Kidnapped Child (Age 2); Clue: Kidnapping		
Artifact: Isolated Farm (Age 3); Clue: Horrific crimes	Character	This Artifact
Character: Abusive Socialite (Age 3); Clue: Cover Up		
Clue: Hate group		
Clue: Arson	Artifact	
	7 truidet	
Clue: Strange Performance; Artifact: Silent Film (Age 3 & 4)	No.	and an early leading
Artifact: Psychoanalyst's notes (Age 3)		Λ Λ ± · f ±
Clue: Unsettling vistas		Any Artifact
Clue: Hermetic rites		<b>TI</b> • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
Artifact: Occult society ephemera	Character	This Artifact
Artifact: Artist's diary (Age 3)		
Clue: Anarchist Cell		Any Artifact
Clue: Visions of a castle		
Clue: Eldritch cabaret		
Artifact: Speakeasy Backroom (Age 3)		
Clue: Occult pornography	Character	
Artifact: Novel Draft; Clue: Death of an author		
Clue: Seance	Character	Any Artifact
Clue: Parallel Universe	Character	7 (ii) 7 (itiliaet
Character: Otherworldly Spirit		
Artifact: Book of the Dead (Age 4, Special ++ see footnote below)		
Clue: Faustian pact		
		ega kara zartaben
Character: Corpse-worm Creature	ΛL _	
Clue: The Yellow Sign	Anchor	A A 1°C 1
Clue: Haunting		Any Artifact
Clue: Inexplicable disturbance		TI . A
Artifact: Ghost Ship (Age 3)		This Artifact
Clue: Bloody Writing		
Clue: Hounded by an ill omen		
Marine Land		
LL \M/bila this actifact is in your pages in a		
++ While this artifact is in your possession, you mark Anchor to conduct a ritual and convert a character into an Artifact of the corresponding age.	dy	1
<u>mark Yucuor to čougočť a utgar ang cóuverr a cua</u>		The second second

### -AGE-4-LOST-CARCOSA

<u></u>				
Table	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
	A newly discovered scene of the King in Yellow		d4	d6, d12
	Two suns rise over the horizon		d4	dl2
	The dim and twisting streets of Carcosa		d4, d6	dl2
	The widow Cassilda			d4, d6, d12
	The madness of Camilla	d6:4		dl2
	A dining table set with tarnished silver	d6:4		d4, d12
	A strange sickness upon the land		d6	d4, d12
• •	A stranger in a pallid mask		4	d4, d6, d12
	A haunting swansong heard by the lake			d4, d6, d12
	A figure in tattered yellow rags			d4, d6, d12
	A person flayed alive			d4, d6, d12
	The pallid mask is removed			d4, d6, d12
	Masked revellers in an endless dance			d4, d6, d12
	An empty throne, covered in cobwebs	d4:2		dl2
	A thorned crown, stained with rust and blood	d6:4		dl2
	A bite of food like honey and ash			d4, d6, d12
	A cold and skeletal hand leading in a dance	d6:4		d4, dl2
	An object revealed under an age-worn cloth	d6:6		d4, d12
	A viciously thorned hedge maze, dotted with statues		d6	dl2
<b>4</b>	Tarnished trumpets blaring a discordant fanfare			d4, d6, d12
*	An anachronistic band with members and instruments from different eras		4, 1	d4, d6, d12
	Pursued by visions of the King in Yellow	d4:I		d6, d12
	A succession of portraits, the most recent all too familiar		d4	d6, d12
	An anticipatory crowd, faces hidden, murmuring softly	d4:2		d6, d12
	A new sun, born from an excised heart		dl2	
	A resplendent Pharoah, to whom all bow down		d4	d6, d12
	Mummified alive, organs replaced with valuable gems			d4, d6, d12
	Scouring of the land by dark sand, burying a civilisation		d4	d6, d12
	Sacrificial victims hurled into an underground lake	d4:1		d6, d12
)	A meteor crosses the sky, sowing illness and despair	d4:2		d6, d12
	Dark secrets leading to a flourishing society			d4, d6, d12
<b>*</b>	An age of great heroes and terrible monsters	d4:1		d6, d12
	A great migration to a new homeland beyond the horizon		d6	d4, d12
	A golden tablet inscribed with eldritch script	.*	d4	d6, d12
	A civilisation consumed by hubris and fell sorcery		d4	dl2
	A prophet, equally worshipped and reviled			dl2
		11/2		

5		Mad	M.
V	Add	Mark	Discover
/	Artifact: Scene from the King in Yellow	ΛL -	
All	Clue: Two Suns Clue: Mist-shrouded streets	Anchor	
11		Character (coo **)	
2,7	Character: Cassilda (Her face is revealed in an Age I character) Artifact: Nightmares of a screaming woman(Age 4);Clue: Camilla's Torment	Character (see **)	This Artifact
7	Clue: An abandoned feast	Anchol	THIS ALLIIDCE
3	Clue: Malignant sickness		
1	Character: The Stranger		
1	Clue: Swansong	Character	
H	Character: The King in Yellow	Character	k en en en en en en
1	Artifact: secrets written on vellum (Age 4)	Character	
4	Clue: What lies beneath	Anchor	
1.13	Clue: A never-ending dance	Character	
"	Clue: An empty throne	Character	
11.70	Artifact: An iron crown whispering mysteries (Age 4)		
111	Clue: Fairy food	Anchor	
1	Character: Dance Partner (Age 4)	Artifact	
			Any Artifac
111	Clue: Maze of Statuary	Character	
	Clue: An Important Arrival		
//	Clue: People out of time; Character: Anachronistic Bandleader (Any One Age)		
_	Character: An Emissary of the King (Age I)	Anchor	
	Clue: A Familiar Face		
	Clue: Murmuring Crowd		
ران	Clue: Human sacrifice; Clue: A new sun	Character	
	Character: Sorcerer-King	Artifact	
E	Artifact: A mummy that speaks in a raspy voice (Age 4)	Anchor	
1.	Clue: Lost civilisation	Artifact	
1	Clue: Sacrificial Lake		
	Clue: Ill-omened Meteor		
	Clue: Dark secrets		
	Clue: Gods & Monsters		
	Clue: New Land		
14	Artifact: Golden tablet		
1	Clue: Extinction event	Character	
4	Character: Prophet (Age 4)		

		-	/	
able	Event	Set	Advance	Roll
1DIE	<u></u>		Advance	
	A soul trapped within an obsidian mirror for all time	d6:3 d4:2		dl2 dl2
	Implanted with a parasitic creature	U4:Z		
	Someone rendered into their component elements			d4, d6, c
	Light & life stripped from someone's eyes, leaving them a shambling husk		1/	d4, d6, c
1	An unnatural and all-consuming obsession	177	d6	dl2
	Driven to unthinkable acts by a possessing spirit	d4:l	d6	dl2
十人	Subjected to inhuman tortures		d6	d4, d12
	Crafted into a macabre work of art		d4	d6, d12
	A body slowly transforming into something abhorrent	d6:6		d4, d12
	Separated from reality, trapped outside looking in	d4:2		d6, d12
	Commanded to deliver a final message before death			d4, d6, d
	Consumed to allow another to live			d4, d6, d
	Men with the faces of beasts, stalking the night		d4	d6, d12
	Beings in yellow livery, playing haunting flutes	d4:I		dl2
	Hollow men, preaching falsehoods			d4, d6, d
	Starving leviathans, consuming all in their path			d4, d6, d
	Psychic vampires, feeding on bloodlust and hate	d4:2	( <b>)</b>	dl2
	A spectral creature consumed by vengeance			d4, d12
	Alien hunting dogs, seeking to cleanse a taint	d4:2		d6, d12
<b>*</b>	Constructs of pure intellect, seeking to obtain knowledge	d6:2	d4	dl2
0	Unspeakable flapping creatures in the gloom		d6	dl2
	A menagerie of grotesque and exquisite beasts			d4, d6, c
	Interstellar collectors, experimenting on the living			d4, d6, d
	Formless entities in shabby robes dispensing prophecy		d4	d6, d12
	An odd, discordant waltz		d4	d6, d12
	A star collapsing in on itself, leaving a tear in space			d4, d6, d
	The sensation of breathlessness and sucking cold (see * below).	d4:2		d6, d12
	Time dilates in strange ways, melding past with future	d6:3	d4	dl2
	A tale of distant places written in an obscure constellation	d4:2		d6, d12
1	An upcoming celestial conjunction	G III	d4	d6, d12
7	A figure wrapped in a cloak of stars		чт,	d4, d6, d
J+	The baleful influence of the Hyades brings torrential rain	d4:l		d6, d12
	The full moon leads to a horrific act	U-T-I		d4, d6, d
	A new star rises, casting a weird light over the galaxy			d4, d6, d
	Find the Way to Carcosa ( see ** below).			d4, d6, d
			d4	d4, d0, d
	Plagued by dreams of strange constellations			1
			is a second time	e, do not
/		: the game	e is over.	
	are far beyond the Hyades. The Earth			

\*\* If this clue is ever in a discovered Artifact, you travel to Carcosa and the game is over.

	( - \ \	
	E m	(1)
Add	Mark	Discover
Artifact: Obsidian Mirror	Character	
Clue: Parasite		
Clue: Bodily destruction	Character	
Clue: Shattered Soul		
Clue: Obsession		
Clue: Possession		
Clue: Sadistic torture		Any Artifact
Artifact: Unspeakable Art (Age 4)	Character	
Clue: Traumatic transformation		This Artifact
Character: Out of time & place (All Ages)		
Character: Undying One (All Ages)		
Clue: Beast-faced men		
Clue: Yellow-liveried creatures		
Clue: Hollow men		
Clue: Leviathan		
Character: Psychic vampire (Age 4)		
Character: Vengeful spectre	Character	
Clue: Alien hunting pack		
Artifact: Collection of Knowledge (All Ages), Clue: Beings of intellect	t Artifact	
Clue: Horrific flying carrion-creatures		
Artifact: Menagerie Catalogue (Age 4)		
Clue: Vivisectionist Aliens	Character	Any Artifact
Clue: Formless seers; Artifact: Dark Prophecy (Age 4)		
Clue: Strange Music		
Clue: Collapsing star	Anchor	
Clue: grasping void		
Clue: Temporal distortion	Artifact	Any Artifact
Artifact: Story in the Stars (Age 4)		
Clue: Celestial conjunction		
Character: Person in the stars		
Clue: Hyades in ascendant	Anchor	
Clue: Lunacy	Character	
Clue: An alien star	Artifact	
Clue: The way to Carcosa		
Artifact: Strange dreams; Clue: Constellations	Artifact	This Artifact
All	į į	2
++ While this artifact is in your possession, you may mark Ancho conduct a ritual and convert a character into an Artifact of the cosponding age.		

Character Name:			Anchor One		
Character Description	Description		Marked		
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Character Role:		••••	Anchor Two		
Character Description			Description		MARKED
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CEGE		7 (GE	DESCRIPTION		MARKED
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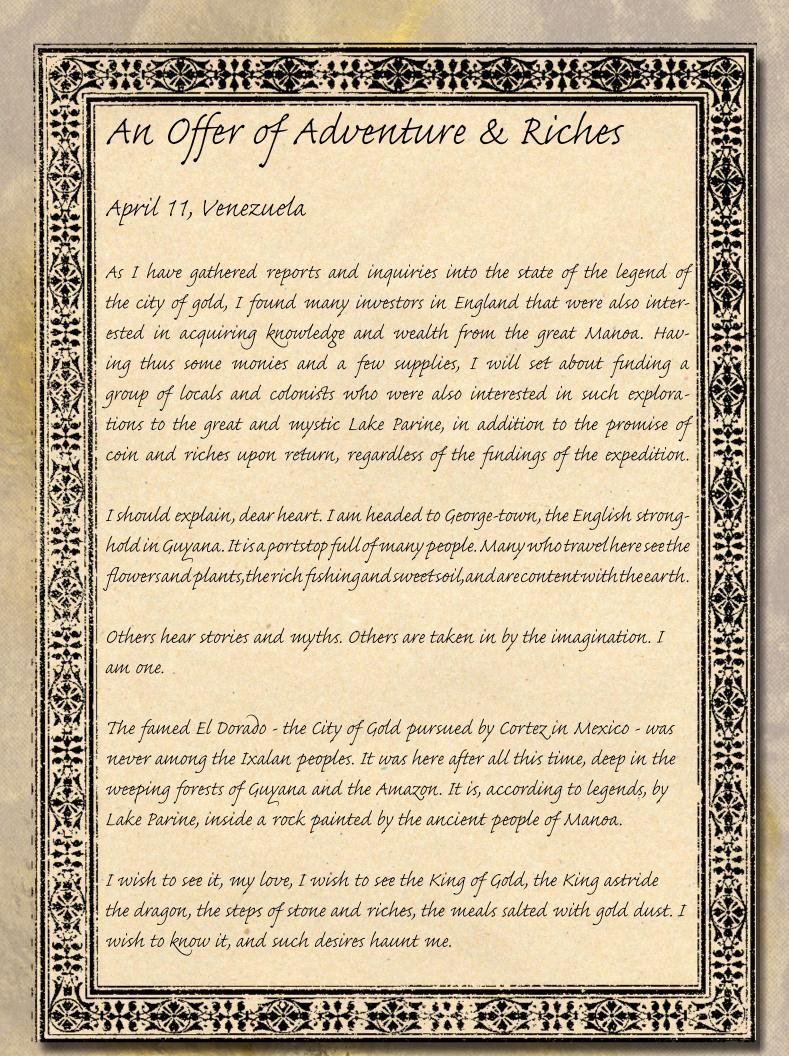
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Artifact, Name	ARTIFACT NAME
DESCRIPTION MARKEI	DESCRIPTION MARKED
ARTIFACT NAME	ARTIFACT NAME
Description Market	
Clue Age	NOTES, SKETCHES, SCRIBBLES, VISIONS ETC.
Character Age Marke	D

# SEARCH FOR MANOA

AN EPISTOLARY MONSTER OF THE WEEK ADVENTURE





#### Adjusting to 1835:

When playing, the players should talk about colonialism and the history of the English in this part of the Americas. It is encouraged that your group of hunters be diverse, but be wary of harmful tropes of representation. At this time, slavery has been outlawed, and some previously enslaved people have self-segregated to their own communities.

Creating a group of hunters for this mystery should involve nuance and care. The four large cultural groups in Guyana were White Europeans, Native Americans (for the purposes of this game, the Arawak in the northern and Carib areas, the Waiwai and Patamona in the southern regions), West Africans, and Southern Indians.

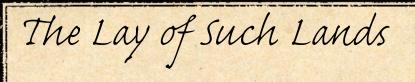
The following playbook suggestions are so that those who choose to play diverse characters can allow the burden and expectations of history to easily inform their actions, as well as provide an opportunity to combat, rewrite, and give power to those whom white history has unfairly vilified.

White/European: The Professional, The Monstrous, The Crooked, The Flake Native American: The Chosen, The Mundane, The Divine, The Initiate West African: The Expert, The Exile, The Flake, The Wronged Indian: The Constructed, The Summoned, The Spellslinger, The Spooky

Characters should tweak your backstories and weapons to match the limitations of the time. Because of the tension inherent in the premise, please refer to Resources and Safety Tools to ensure that no harm is done during the game.

THERE ARE TWO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS WHEN CREATING CHARACTERS.

After you do your relationships phase, go back around the group and ask "Why did you join the expedition?" & "What role do you play in the expedition party?"

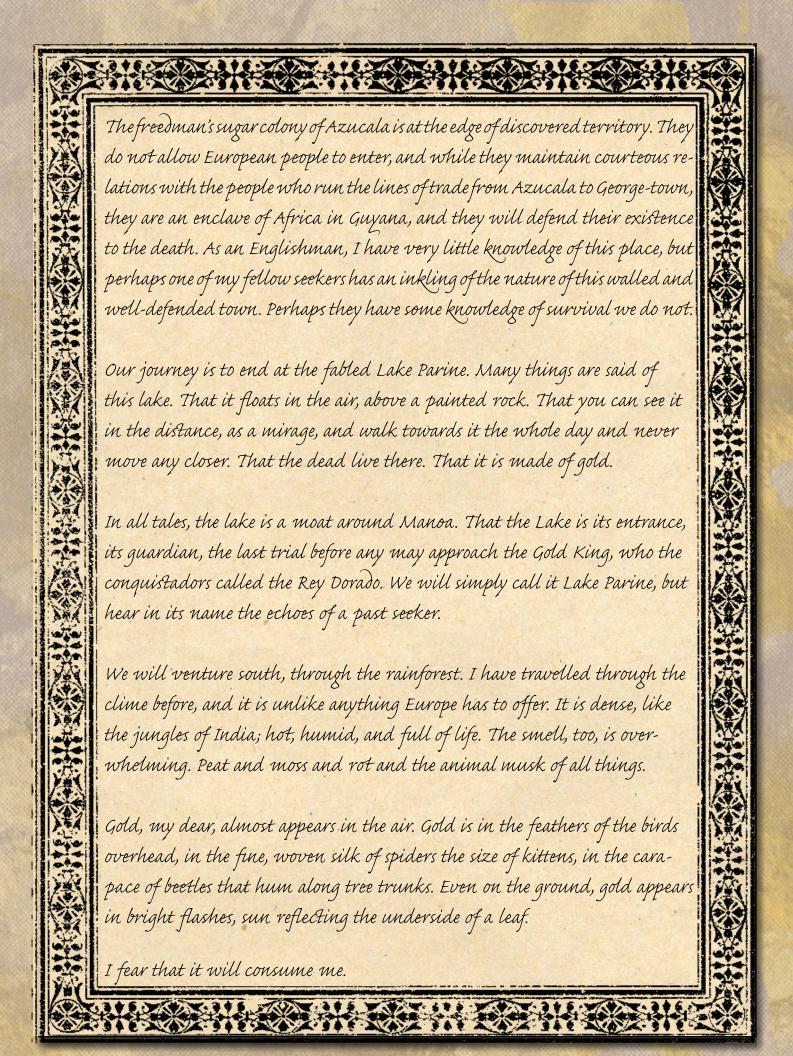


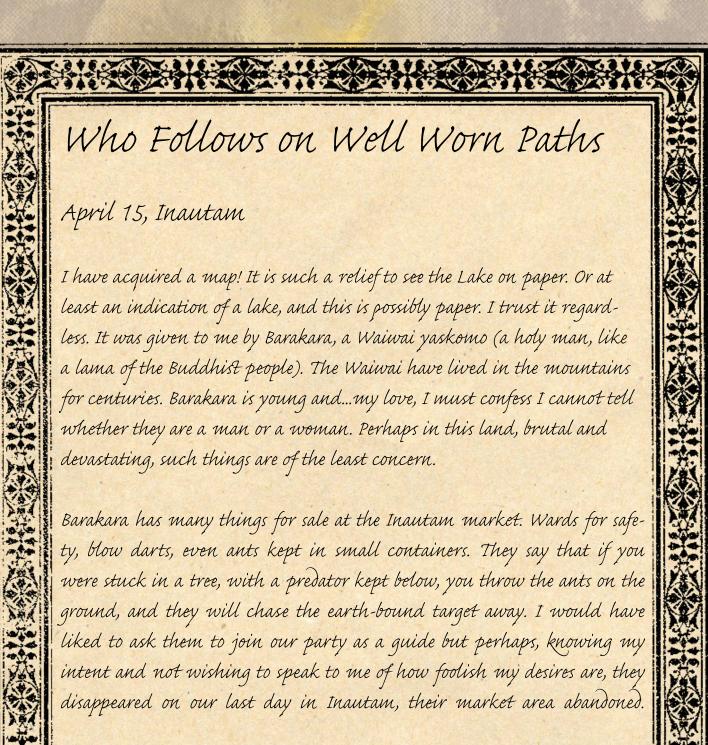
April 13, George-town

We begin in George-town, a young, bustling English colony. The (now-out-lawed) trade of enslaved Africans (primarily of the Igbo and Yoruba peoples of West Africa) has led to a large population of freed African folk. Immigrants from the Western Indies are also well-represented in the city. Native Americans, Arawak in Geroge-town and in northern Guyana and the Patamona in the south, protected by the Pacaraima mountains, are common in towns and have found many Englishmen willing to pay large sums for their skills as pathfinders and translators.

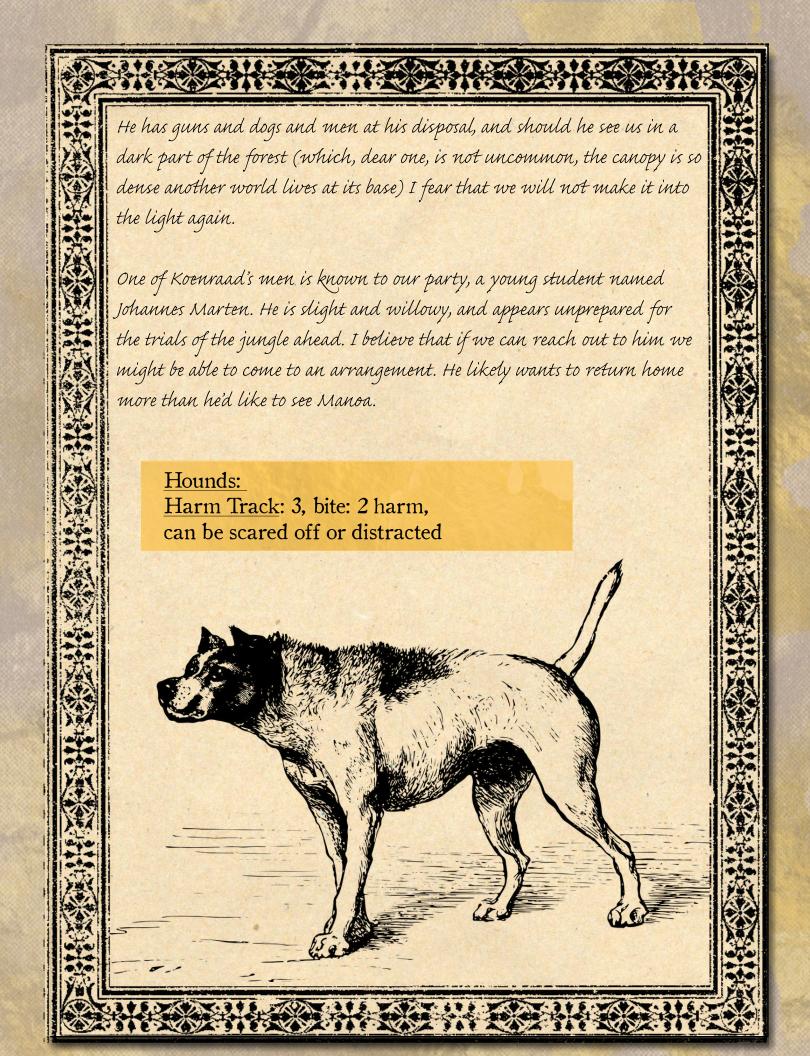
George-town itself is full of commerce. The popular places are the East India Trading Outpost by the docks, the Skien and Silver, (a fascinatingly tumultuous drinking establishment frequented by sailors, ruffians, and various people of certain reputations), and the Dutch Bazaar, an open-air street market where you can find anything from swords and muskets to hallucinogenic mushrooms and healing potions created by an Arawak shaman named Aiyo.

There are small villages further south we intend to use as stop-overs during our travels. The colonized town of Inautam is small, but full of English who are ever eager to trade. They are also (as is wont to happen when men of circumstance find themselves in unfamiliar territory, overwhelmed and hungry for home) desperately invested in stealing back what they first promised over a familiar handshake.





We have learned of another party, this one led by a Dutchman, who seeks the same treasure we do. His name is Koenraad ter Avest, and if we were ever uncouth this man exceeds our own transgressions tenfold. He seeks the gold as if he were a madman, truly possessed by the power and lure of the metal. He has an expert tracker and more than a few famed marksmen in his retinue, and the baying of his hounds will, I fear, bring more trouble upon his party than they will protect him.



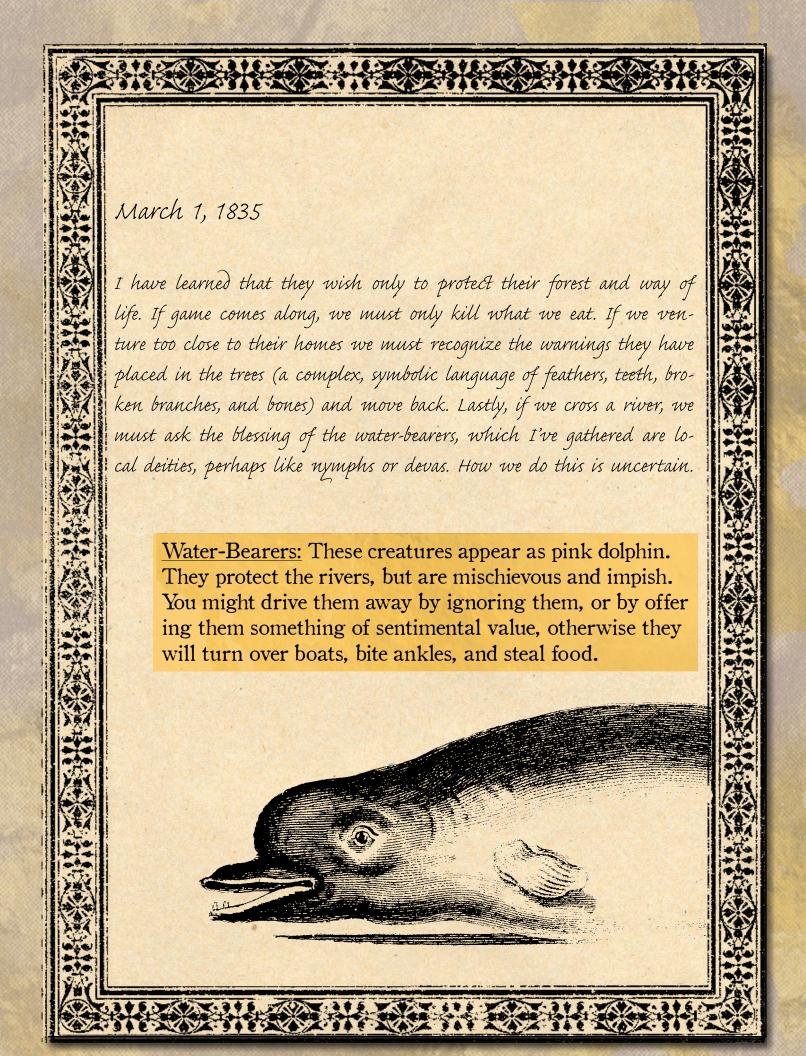


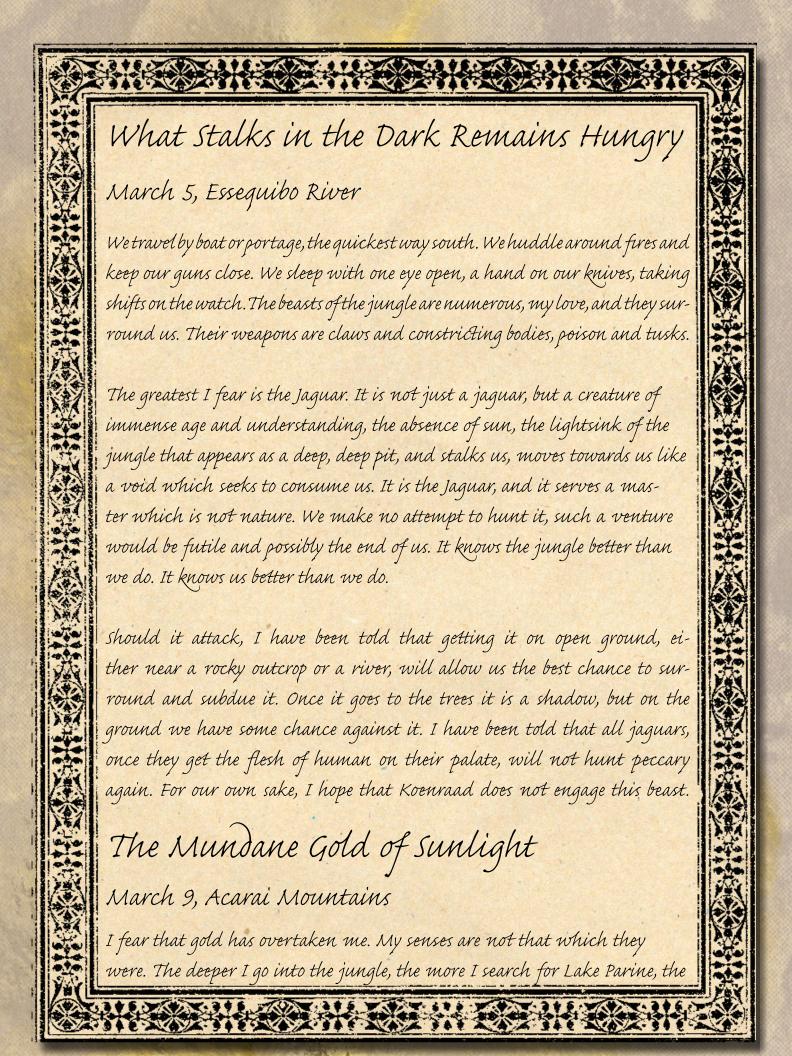
April 30, The Jungle

Two weeks into our journey and already we have been beset by all sides, by all manner of frightful creatures. There are schools of piranha in the water, as well as giant electrified eels, caiman, and even a species of catfish so large it could swallow a man whole. In the trees are howler monkeys, which never cease their tirade against us. On the ground there are deer, called broket, and large pig called peccary, which have tusks the size of a forearm.

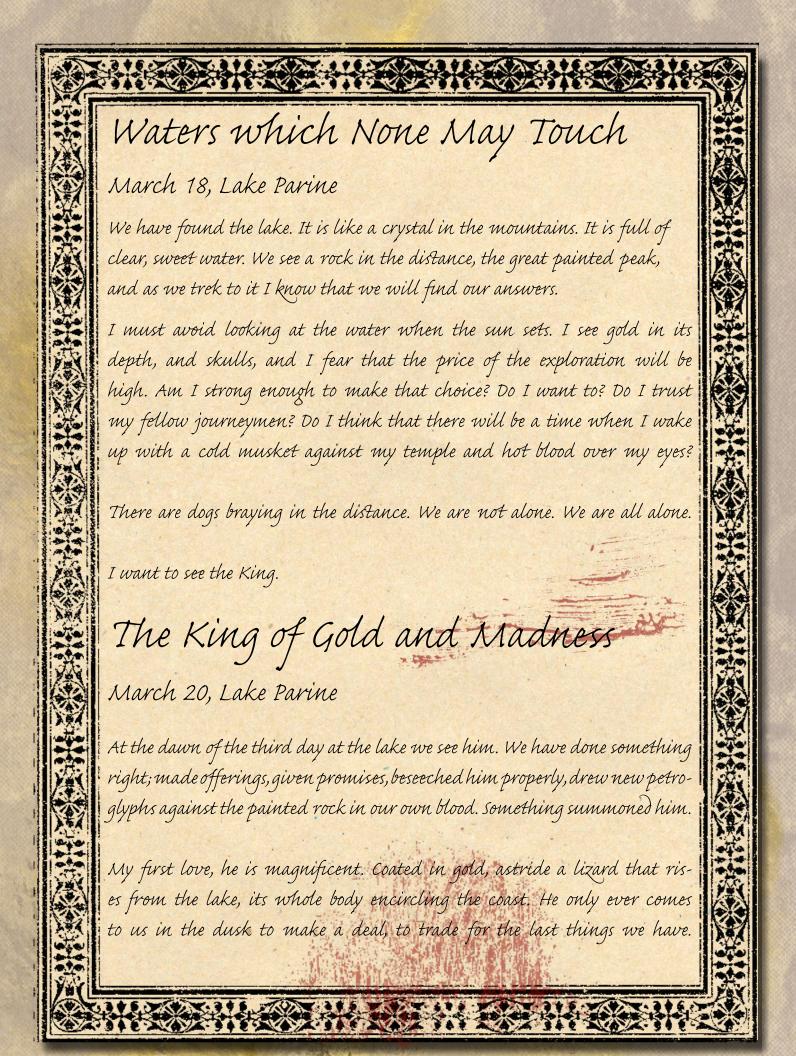
We know that there are native peoples here, but they stay in the shadows, watching us. Some in our party have pointed them out in the treetops, but they are ghosts, they are shadows. They are not hunting us, but they are watching. The moment we trespass from the path we will be shot in the neck with blow guns, poisoned by a urari warning. Either we have to disappear without them noticing or we will have to bargain with them. I do not much look forward to either option.

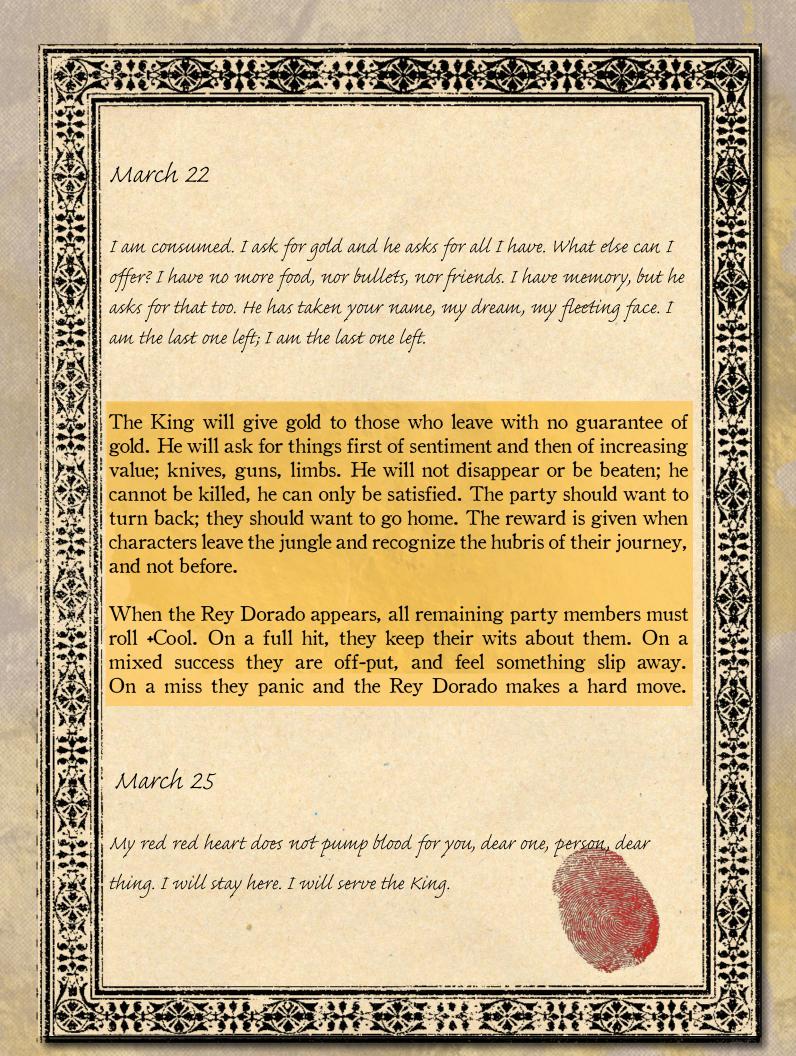
Poisoned Blow Dart: 1 harm each. One dart will knock you unconscious for an hour, two, for six hours, three, and you might never wake up. Artificial respiration will allow you to revive a poisoned adventurer.

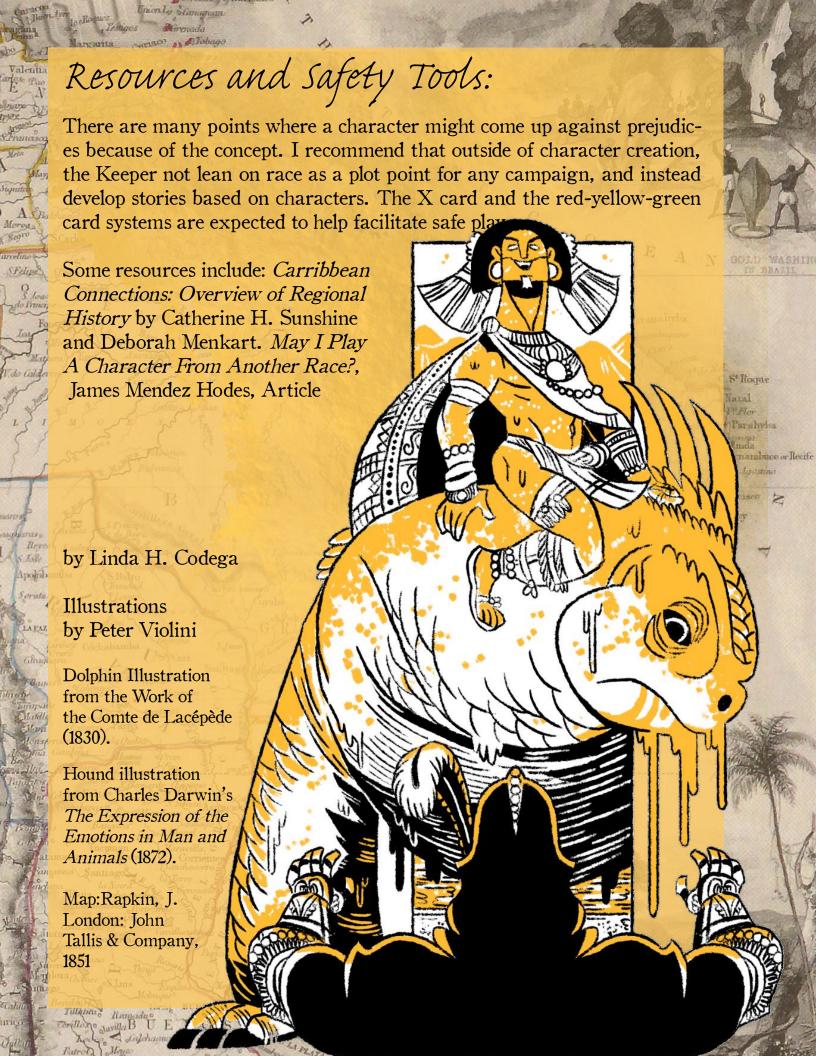


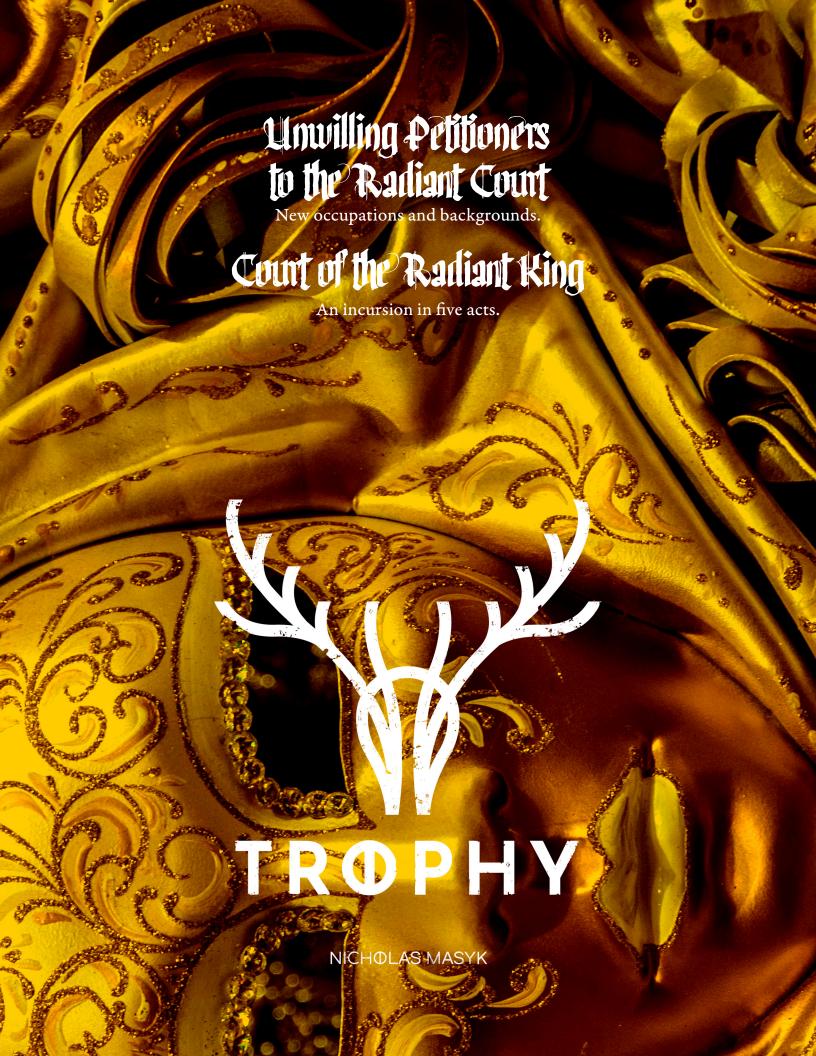


more the thought of gold even comes into my head, the more it appears before me. I see gold in the venomous frog's banded pattern. I saw gold in the scales of an anaconda which was swimming through a river, and nearly jumped in to take it. As the night's fire snapped and shot bright rivulets of molten gold into the air, I reached out and snatched at it, only to receive an ember, a burnt hand, and the searing pain of humiliation. I see it, my red, red heart, I see it. I know that it lies before me and around me, but I know, also, that it is not here. It is not here. The longer I stay in this jungle, the longer I seek it, the longer my luck is stretched to its breaking point, the more I am turning into a thing that is only ever hungry, that only ever seeks one thing, damn the human lives that stand between me and that which is precious. The following is a custom move for the Jungle, to be rolled as the Keeper sees fit, but increasingly so if: there is discord in the team, there is imminent danger, a member is angry or upset, one has spoken arrogantly. THE JUNGLE, WAITING The European explorers must roll +Weird. On a full hit, nothing happens, and they are preserved for another night. On a mixed success, they wake up distrustful and angry, jealous and nervous, depending on their demeanor. On a miss, the Keeper may hold a hard move for the future, or take a soft move immediately. Non-European explorers roll +Sharp. On a full hit, they gain an awareness of their surroundings, get +1 to Sharp for three rolls. On a mixed success, they gain +1 forward. On a miss, the keeper may take a soft move, and they wake up distrustful, angry, jealous, or nervous depend ing on their demeanor.









## Unwilling Petitioners to the Radiant Court

The following are new options for treasure-hunters for use with the Incursion *Court of the Radiant King*, or any other session of Trophy.

#### **OCCUPATIONS**

Courtier (skilled in deception, omens, rhetoric)

Dancer (skilled in acrobatics, distraction, evasion)

Historian (skilled in appraisal, lore, rituals)

Knight (skilled in athletics, defense, weapons)

#### **BACKGROUNDS**

Defeated Officer (skilled in tactics)

Degenerate Libertine (skilled in carousing)

Discredited Scholar (skilled in deception)

Disgraced Emissary (skilled in misdirection)

#### **INCURSION**

# Court of the Radiant King

Along the shore the cloud waves break, The twin suns sink behind the lake, The shadows lengthen In Carcosa.

Strange is the night where black stars rise, And strange moons circle through the skies, But stranger still is Lost Carcosa.

Songs that the Hyades shall sing, Where flap the tatters of the King, Must die unheard in Dim Carcosa.

Song of my soul, my voice is dead, Die thou, unsung, as tears unshed Shall dry and die in Lost Carcosa.

-"Cassilda's Song" in The King in Yellow Act 1, Scene 2

Along the shores of a lake mirrored by strange moons lies the fallen palaces of the Radiant King. His ancient and famous city was swallowed aeons ago by the hungering wood, but legends linger of the awe and dread of his court; the riotous, frenetic excess; and the hideous fates befallen those who failed to amuse or entertain his brilliant depravity.

Those same legends also list the uncountable tributes brought in from all corners of a vast empire, treasures of a forgotten age, abandoned in crumbling vaults and silent halls... treasures awaiting those brave enough and cunning enough to survive a night exposed under the black stars of the King's forgotten court.

#### THEME

Masks

#### **MOMENTS**

- ♦ The night sky opens up, revealing an endless vista of black stars.
- ♦ The air is filled with the cacophony of riotous music and sound, only to end abruptly.
- ♦ A hunched figure in shredded finery slips around a corner and disappears into a pocket of shadow.
- ♦ The air overhead fills with the rustling of thousands of unseen, leathery wings.
- ♦ A brilliantly-colored bird shrieks as it flaps swiftly overhead.
- ♦ The silhouette of a monstrous, tusked beast suddenly looms over the treasure-hunters, only to be revealed as a trick of shadow and light.
- ♦ A torch sputters, casting unnatural shadows over a companion's face, giving them a monstrous appearance.
- ♦ A pattern of moss or verdigris manifests in the spiral symbol of the Radiant King.
- ♦ Innumerable chittering, squealing vermin stampede across the treasure-hunters' path, fleeing from something unseen and unheard before scattering into the ruins.
- ♦ A group of drunken revellers appear, arm-in-arm, clad in exquisite finery and wearing elaborate masks, cutting across a street or passageway before vanishing abruptly.

#### CONDITIONS

- ♦ Your expressions and reactions become exaggerated and theatrical.
- ♦ Your skin becomes highly sensitive and you are filled with a need to conceal it with hoods or veils.
- ♦ Your skin turns white and chalky, save for your cheeks which become unnaturally rosy red.
- ♦ You start to notice the seams at your companions' faces and are filled with a desire to "unmask" them.
- ♦ The skin of your face hardens into whorled wood or brittle porcelain.
- ♦ You begin laughing or weeping uncontrollably at intervals.
- ♦ The hair at your temples grows into brilliantly-colored feathers.
- You feel an itching behind your eyelids and are filled with an uncontrollable urge to tear them off.
- ♦ The corners of your lips split and crack, turning your mouth into a rictus grin.
- ♦ A spiral shape—the sign of the Radiant King—becomes pressed into the flesh of your forehead.

#### RING 1

The Old Road to the Court lies through a bleak and desolate plain of dry, withered grass that moans and whistles with the wind. Peppering the plain at long intervals are blasted trees lining the path, and tall, strangely-shaped and somber-colored standing stones. Carved in each stone and into the bark of each tree is a mask-like face, uncomfortably glancing toward the next tree or stone as if in anticipation of some unspoken event, in silent expectation of the treasure-hunters' journey. Overhead, the cold sun is all but invisible, shrouded by low, lead-colored clouds. The air is raw and chill, and aside from the sighing of the wind through the boughs of dead trees and the whispering of grey grass into the earth, there are no sounds—bird, beast, insect, or otherwise. Even the treasure-hunters' footfalls are swallowed up by the silence.

- Whose face do you see in the masks?
- What lies do you hear whispered in the wind through the fingers of grass?
- What strange patterns do you see in the canopy of clouds above?

TERRORS: As the treasure-hunters draw closer to the bleak tangle of the woods, a mournful wail undulates from within the tall grass, and then another and another, building steadily into a discordant chorus. A pack of misshapen beasts emerges on all fours, tattered furs and tawny skins, howling with the voices—and faces—of men clad in the ruined finery from a forgotten age. They stumble clumsily toward the treasure-hunters on filth-encrusted claws, eyes feverish, shrilly calling "How came I hither? How came I hither?" as they advance with strange, unnatural purpose. The creatures are more pitiful than dangerous, and can be easily dispatched by the treasure-hunters. The manner by which the creatures are dealt with by the treasure-hunters will show the party's propensity for violence.

- In what oddly specific ways do the creatures' humanoid faces and features resemble the treasure-hunters?
- How do the creatures' tattered finery match their accursed forms?
- Who do the voices of the creatures remind the treasure-hunters of?

TEMPTATIONS: In the shadow of the forest from whence the creatures emerged, the treasure-hunters stumble upon a number of broken and weather-worn stones, covered in moss and sunken into the earth—the headstones of forgotten graves, though the graves themselves are conspicuously absent.

The headstones lack names or dates, but each bears a similar face to those found on the blasted trees and standing-stones in the field. Scattered among the broken headstones are tawdry trinkets and tokens similar to those worn by the bestial creatures—hanging from withered boughs, gently tinkling like mournful chimes, or placed reverently atop the crumbled masonry in strange and deliberate piles. Each trinket and token bears the spiral mark of the Radiant King.

- What do you plan on doing with your share of the riches?
- How recent are the markings on the headstones?
- What do you take from the piles, and how do you hide it from the other treasure-hunters?

#### RING 2

Past the broken headstones, the treasure-hunters plunge deeper into the forest and begin to come across more pronounced signs of the ruins of the ancient and famous city—massive blocks of Cyclopean masonry strangled by wrist-thick vines where the foot of a wall might have stood, the toppled pillars and crumbling spires of some pompous tomb or ambitious monument, stained by neglect and battered by time. Above, the lead-colored clouds are increasingly obscured by the ragged claws of gnarled trees. A thin, ephemeral mist begins to form, snaking around the treasure-hunters' ankles and swirling about the corners of antediluvian edifices.

- What myths and legends have you heard about the Radiant King and the fate of his accursed court?
- What shapes and forms do you see lurking within the growing mist?
- What drives you forward, and why can't you turn back?

TERRORS: Night begins to fall more quickly than expected or should be possible. Strange echoes and dismal howls ring out through the forgotten squares and abandoned streets. The mist and the gloom hide a plethora of pitfalls and snares for the treasure-hunters to fall prey to if they proceed through the growing dark. They will spot flickering lights appearing and disappearing at random in the mouth of every mausoleum and broken structure, and lengthening shadows take on the shape of ragged claws looming about their faces

and necks. Isolate and separate the treasure-hunters, and give them opportunities to make Ruin Rolls and Devil's Bargains to find each other and the path.

- What draws you down this forgotten side-street, away from the comforting torches of your companions?
- Where has your shadow gone?
- Which of your companions is slowing you down the most, and what would you do should they become "lost?"

TEMPTATIONS: One of the treasure-hunters should spot the silhouette of a sprawling palace wall, smothered in moss, and strangled by vines and overgrowth. Drawing closer, they will find a twisted path of cobblestones broken by an eruption of gnarled roots. Flanking the path to either side are rows of faceless stone sentinels, each one bearing a shield with a face transfixed with rapturous horror. Beyond the ranks of sentinels is a massive bronze gatehouse, spotted with rust and verdigris, fashioned in the likeness of a face with a yawning mouth.

- Whose faces do you see emblazoned on the sentinels' shields?
- Is the "mouth" of the gatehouse/face opened in awe or horror?
- What strange melody do you hear coming from deep within the ruins?

#### RING 3

Passing through the shadow and mist of the gatehouse mouth brings the treasure-hunters out of the vine-choked ruins and into the decaying opulence of the Radiant Court. Each cough and scuffle of the foot echoes unnaturally loud, seeming boorish and out-of-place and filling the treasure-hunters with a strong need to melt into the remaining stillness to avoid attention. The tyranny of Empire hangs above their necks like an executioner's axe. Beneath their feet, the stones are stained with the blood of those that failed to please the Radiant King.

- Why are your companions deliberately trying to attract the attention of the Radiant Court?
- Which of your companions benefits most from your discovery and execution?
- What terrible tribute to the Radiant King do you hope to return with?

TERRORS: The labyrinthine corridors of the decaying palace endlessly circle, cut back, branch out, and end abruptly. Time seems to cease to exist: one room might be illuminated by twin suns beating ceaselessly overhead, while the very next is dripping with an impenetrable, tenebrous darkness. No two rooms are the same, and attempting to double back leads to an entirely different space than existed previously. Some example rooms:

A formal garden full of elegant, classical-style statues. The statues are choked in ivy and depict people in great pain, surprise, or terror.

A moonlit courtyard of cracked cobblestone with pale ghost-grass growing between the slabs surrounds a shallow pool with a fountain in the middle. The fountain still flows, icy water trickling into a crystal-clear pool. At the bottom of the pool are strange coins bearing unfamiliar faces.

A long lawn, with stakes driven into the ground at one end. Arrows, bolts and javelins pepper the grounds. A few of the stakes have skeletons chained to them.

A "grove" of steel frameworks early reminiscent of trees, but lacking leaves. Hung from these, draped from tree to tree or suspended from the branches, are a mandala-like network of silk strands in a brilliant rainbow of colors.

A semi-circular amphitheatre with stone steps for seats, now overgrown with moss and ferns. In the center is a stage, with the rusted, rotted, crumbling apparatus for shadow-puppets. Shadows here don't move normally. They react when their owners remain still, groping toward light sources.

Foster suspicion and paranoia among the treasure-hunters. Who is leading them? Why are they leading them astray? Confront them with horrors, make them make Ruin rolls, and tempt them with Devil's Bargains to find their way out.

- How can you trust the one leading you progressively deeper into the palace?
- When did you "lose" one of the trinkets you took from the forest, and who do you suspect "found" it?
- Who among your companions knows of the treasure you seek within the palace, and why would they deny you it?

TEMPTATIONS: As the treasure-hunters progress through the palace rooms, they find among the piles of treasures intended for tribute offerings from their own lands, both historical and modern. Connect these tributes to the treasure-hunters' drives from earlier Rings, the faces they saw in the masks, and the trinkets they chose amongst the tombstones.

- What memories of home are brought about by the presence of the tributes?
- From where do you remember the haunting tune you catch the end of, echoing through the halls?
- Did you mean to take that familiar piece of tribute? How will those at home react when you return with it?

#### RING 4

The treasure-hunters find their feet unerringly leading them to an incalculably vast gilded hall, the brilliantly frescoed ceiling so high that to glance upon it is to induce vertigo. Crowding the room are courtiers clad in riotous colors; fire-dancers; sword-swallowers and blade-jugglers; charmers draped with the coils of venomous serpents; musicians trapped forever maintaining a frantic, ululating beat; and tumblers performing dazzling feats of acrobatics.

- What is the most shocking and spectacular thing you see present in the Court?
- What does the contingent from your homeland look like, and what have they brought as tribute?
- How do you make yourself seen and heard above the dazzle and the din of the assembled petitioners and revellers?

TERRORS: As the treasure-hunters enter the hall, a deep, resonant gong sounds, and all at once the revellers erupt into chaos, becoming more twisted and monstrous. Birds with beads of pure light burst forth from empty robes, illuminating the room in a hellish glow. Winged imps chained with silver and gold to listless, naked petitioners order their "anchors" in shrill voices to scurry about. Figures in finery of glorious color regard the spectacle behind masks of ash and oak and bone. A great and terrible cry of "Unmask! Unmask!" is taken up by the revellers and petitioners, and they begin to tear at their faces, doffing wood, steel, porcelain, silk, and flesh with equal abandon and vigor,

heedless of the horrifying wounds they are self-inflicting. They close in about the treasure-hunters, a living tide of cacophonous laughing, weeping, howling, shrieking, grabbing, and rending. They are too many to fight, but trip, trample, and generally impede each other as swiftly and as savagely as they grasp for their intended prey. Confront the treasure-hunters with increasingly supernatural horrors that cannot be fought or reasoned with. Call for lots of Ruin rolls.

- What horrifying apparition do you possess the secret to defeating? Which one eludes the strength and skill of your blade?
- When you see your chance to dive between the ranks of the swarm, who will you leave behind to face their wrath?
  - What terrible sorcery are you capable of as a last resort?

TEMPTATIONS: As the crowd surges toward the treasure-hunters, the treasures they have brought as tribute are left, abandoned and forgotten on the gilded tile and luxurious carpet of the floor. Such glorious tribute, just waiting to be claimed...

- How do you make sure you have first pick of the discarded tributes over your companions?
- What will you do when one of your companions claims tribute from your homeland?
- Who among your companions is most expendable?

#### RING 5

At the apex of the throne room stands a towering edifice of precious treasures—sundered crowns from forgotten kingdoms, jewelled goblets and chalices from the coronation banquets of aeons-dead monarchs, the arms and armor of once-legendary warriors and heroes, and uncountable piles of gemstones, coins, ingots, jewellery, and precious metals and stones of every kind imaginable. Atop this mountain of tribute from empires gone to dust sits hunched a cackling, skeletal figure clad in shredded regalia of a sickly yellow, a dizzying spiral coronet upon a feverish brow, a pallid face hidden behind a laughing jester's mask with eyes of burning pitch and a lolling tongue endlessly spewing lies that scorch the mind to comprehend: the Radiant King.

• What unknowable truths does the King whisper to you?

#### INCURSION: COURT OF THE RADIANT KING

- What unfathomable lies does the King seduce you with?
- What untouchable treasure lies at the foot of the King, just out of reach?

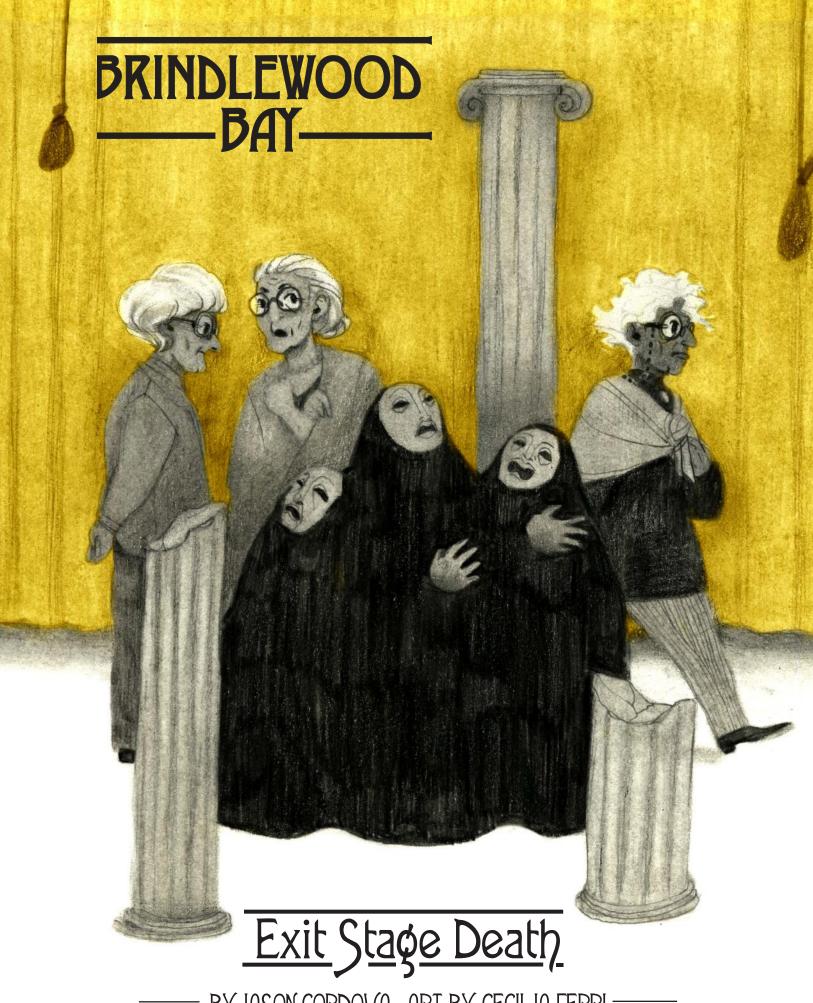
TERRORS: From atop his frightful throne, the cackling King begins grabbing handfuls of treasure and flinging it downwards toward the frenzied mob of petitioners. Almost immediately, they turn on each other as fiercely as they had the treasure-hunters—clawing, kicking, punching, and biting at each other in a mad rush to get at the discarded tributes. As gold and precious gems literally rain down upon the gathered revellers, the final "masks" of humanity begin to fall away as humans scream like beasts, and beasts like humans. In the chaos and madness of the struggle it is impossible to tell friend from foe—everyone's face is locked in the rictus grin of savagery and ultimate triumph.

- What treasure or tribute do you value above all others, and what vile deeds are you prepared to do to secure it?
- Who among your companions do you fear to struggle against for what is rightfully yours, and what hidden weapon have you prepared specifically for them?
- Which companion has seen through your final mask, and how will you ultimately silence them?

TEMPTATIONS: As the revellers—and treasure-hunters—claim their tributes, their actions become more and more barbaric and exaggerated. Each time a treasure is obtained, have the treasure-hunter make a Ruin roll—and point their erstwhile companions toward them, with the insinuation that they are taking more treasure than is their fair share. As they accumulate more treasure they become twisted caricatures of their former selves—like a stage actor portraying them, laying their sins bare in the most cutting, revealing sense.

How came you hither?





BY JASON CORDOVA, ART BY CECILIA FERRI —

# Complexity: 8

Note: This mystery revolves around The Court of the Occluded King, a cult that is rival to The Midwives of the Fragrant Void. Many aspects of the mystery don't come into play unless certain Maven characteristics or Dark Conspiracy elements are unlocked. The mystery can still be enjoyed without those elements in play—it will come across to the players as cryptic and weird, if not immediately relevant to the happenings in Brindlewood Bay—but it's something to be mindful of before choosing to run it.

# Presenting the Mystery

The Mavens are enjoying a week of sightseeing and cultural activities in Boston. They're taking in a show on the last night of their tour, a strange and disturbing production at The Twilight Playhouse called *The King in Shadow*. Normally, they'd skip something so avant-garde, but one of the Mavens has a nephew connected to the production.

**Establishing question:** Whose nephew is connected to the show? What's his name, and what's his involvement in the production?

The play is divided into three acts. The first act is somewhat normal and depicts the day-to-day life of a female protagonist, identified as the Journeywoman. The first act ends when the Journeywoman receives news that her three immediate family members—mother, father, and brother—have all been killed in a bizarre fishing accident.

The second act is considerably more strange, and depicts the Journeywoman's travels in the underworld with a character called the Boatman as they seek to find the court of the Occluded King in order to petition him for the release of her family members from his shadowy realm.

The third act is utterly bizarre, difficult to follow, and, to large portions of the audience that walked out in the middle of it, insufferable. The bulk of this act involves the introduction of three courtiers of the Occluded King: the Duchess, the Prince, and the Knave.

Assign each courtier to a player and ask them to describe the scene in which the character is introduced in the play. The scene should be either horrifying or bizarre. If any of the Mavens has **A Shadow in the Garden** marked, you may also reveal a Void Clue during one of these scenes.

The play concludes with the appearance of the Occluded King, an overly tall figure in tattered black robes, a ghost-white mask, and a blood-red helm. If any of the Mavens has **The Pallid Mask** marked, have them do the Prophecy of the King move, below.

#### The Prophecy of the King

If you have the Pallid Mask marked when the Occluded King appears on stage, he calls you "My Beloved" and whispers a prophecy of death to you (you are the only one who can hear the whispering). This prophecy relates to when another Maven will die. In a future scene, when another Maven is getting ready to take an action that will require a die roll, say "This is it! This is what the Occluded King whispered to me about! This is how you're going to die!" If they go through with the action anyway, you both mark XP. On the die roll, the 6- result is replaced with "You are killed; the Keeper will describe how."

The chorus members sing a shrieking, discordant dirge as the courtiers push the Journeywoman toward the King. The lights go out, and when they come back on again, the curtain has been lowered. No one takes a bow and there are no ovations; very few people even clap. The ushers then help people exit the theater.

The next morning, as the Mavens are getting ready to head back to Brindle-wood Bay, the nephew character drops by the hotel room and nervously explains that Natassia Gray, the young actress who played the Journeywoman, was found dead at the end of last night's performance, a ritual dagger plunged into her heart while the lights were out. Boston PD is investigating, but he hopes the Mavens might also get involved. He explains that the only people who were close enough to Natassia when it happened were the actors, chorus members, and director (if you wish, you can identify each Suspect by name at this point). The nephew might also be a suspect, depending on how the establishing question was answered, and so another reason for the Mavens to get involved would be to clear his name.

If the Mavens take the case, the nephew character will explain that *The King in Shadows* cast hangs out at a drinking club, The Styx, during the day. He will also tell them that the cast is having dinner at the apartment of Ambrose and Veruca Sinclair that night.

# Suspects

All of the suspects are members of The Court of the Occluded King, a death cult that aims to eventually thin the cosmic veil enough for their shadowy lord to enter this world and claim it for his own. Each performance of *The King in Shadows* is a ritual that gets them one step closer to achieving this aim. Despite their unsavory beliefs, the murder of Natassia Gray is a shock to the group, and none of them wants to be arrested and charged for the crime.

The suspects will not willingly discuss The Court of the Occluded King or their membership in it, preferring instead to be seen merely as members of an eccentric theater troupe. However, if the second layer of the Dark Conspiracy is unlocked, they are more open about their affiliation and aims. If the Mavens ever mention The Midwives of the Fragrant Void directly, the suspects will explain that they stand in cosmic opposition to the Midwives, and may even drop hints about what that cult is up to in Brindlewood Bay.

If the third layer of the Dark Conspiracy is unlocked, one or more suspects may offer to help the Mavens defend themselves against the Midwives by teaching them a magical ward that prevents Servants and Sendings from entering a space. This teaching can be the basis of an Occult Move roll, which is made with advantage.

A note about roleplaying The Court of the Occluded King: no matter what, play these Suspects seriously, even though their presence in the story may come across as slightly comic or absurd. The desired effect is what you might find in the film **What We Do in the Shadows**—characters that are amusing, but grounded in the truth and darkness of their world.

#### Ambrose Sinclair, the director

Frizzy, gray hair. Penetrating gaze. Constantly fidgeting with a pair of Baoding balls. Ambrose is very upset about Natassia's death; he viewed her as a protégé and a rising star in the world of experimental theater. Ambrose is Veruca's husband.

Quote: "Staging The King in Shadows will be my greatest work—what the world will remember me for. Did you know the author of the play is unknown? In fact, there may not even be an author. It could be that the play merely... exists, like an indelible truth of the universe."

#### Veruca Sinclair, the Duchess

Shiny black hair, pulled back tight. Blood red lipstick. The smell of tomato vine. Veruca is heartbroken about Natassia, who she treated like a daughter. Veruca is Ambrose's wife.

Quote: "Oh, Dis Pater, I would never be so foolish as to be grudge you taking what is rightfully yours, but why would you take our Natassia from us now? She was so young, Father of Night—surely she still had work to accomplish for you in this world?"

#### Antony Veit, the Boatman

Barrel-chested. Great, bushy beard. Easy, thunderous laugh. Antony is the most immediately friendly and approachable member of the theater troupe. Whereas the others are content to dress in dark clothing and skulk about in the shadows, Antony is something of a bon vivant. He is Belladonna's husband.

Quote: "This is the best job I ever had in my life! Before I met Belladonna, I was a stevedore—up at the crack of dawn, long hours, backbreaking work. Now? I sleep in until 10, get up and have brunch with Bella, and then head to The Twilight to get ready for the matinee. Sure, the people putting on this show are a little... unusual. But aren't we all?"

## Belladonna Veit, a member of the chorus

Dark, wispy clothing. Pale skin. Tattoos. Belladonna seems least bothered by Natassia's death and, if pressed, will say that she's going to audition for the role of the Journeywoman now that Natassia is out of the way. Belladonna is Antony's wife.

Quote: "Of course, I should have been cast as the Journeywoman in the first place. No one is more intimately familiar with the words of our lord—I mean, the play—than I am. But Ambrose wouldn't hear of it. It was always 'Natassia, Natassia, Natassia! She's a star! She's the future of this brave new world we are creating!"

#### Gregor Thune, the Occluded King

Vacant eyes. Thin, almost transparent flesh. Mostly unresponsive. Gregor Thune hasn't been the same since taking on the role of the Occluded King. He used to be a dynamic, energetic member of the troupe, but now only occasionally breaks his silence to mutter a few cryptic words. He is Giancarla's husband.

Quote: "...down below, in the vastness... gems and gold a-glittering... unspeakable wealth... unknowable knowledge... he is reaching out for us... calling us home to him... would that we could return to the cold embrace of the Void... but the Void has rejected us... and now we are truly alone... down below... down below... the inky vastness down below..."

#### Giancarla Thune, a member of the chorus

Long hair with gray roots. Flower crown. Sweet disposition. Giancarla has been friends with Ambrose and Veruca for a long, long time. It used to be that she, husband Gregor, and the Sinclairs were inseparable, but things have changed ever since Gregor took on the role of the Occluded King and became so... empty. Now she just sings in the chorus and takes care of Gregor. Giancarla is very familiar with Brindlewood Bay and the town's history.

Quote: "You're from Brindlewood Bay? I know it well—my brother-in-law lives there. Do you know him? He's a banker, very uptight. He disapproves of these theater-types Gregor and I hang out with, let me tell you... Oh! I hope you're not as stuck-up as he is. Please tell me you're not!"

#### Otho Fane, the Knave

Luxuriantly obese. Fond of cravats. Smells of lilac and baby powder. Otho is part of the Boston nouveau-riche, having made all his money investing wisely in tech and medical stocks. He joined this troupe out of sheer boredom, and was delighted to discover that the Sinclairs had landed on something truly exciting—truly groundbreaking—in *The King in Shadows*. He is Delia's husband.

Quote: "Ambrose is a visionary, of course—how else do you explain a production that is so brave, so exciting, so... thoroughly ahead of its time? You can't, of course. Genius always defies explanation. But I'm very happy to be here, very happy to be a part of this terrific work. I get chills when I think about it, frankly."

#### Delia Fane, a member of the chorus

Spritely. Modern coiffeur. Trying hard to fit in. Delia doesn't understand The King in Shadows. The play—and the activities surrounding it—are a complete black box for her. She mostly wants to make her husband Otho happy and not be an embarrassment in front of the other troupe members. She was a hesitant understudy for Natassia.

Quote: "Poor Natassia—I'm told she was very good in the role of the Journey-woman. Of course, I've seen her play the part up close a dozen times, but The King in Shadows is hopelessly opaque, and so I don't really know what counts as good and what doesn't. Ambrose and Veruca thought she was great, and Otho assures me she was brilliant, but the role doesn't even have any lines until about thirty minutes in, and the whole second act was just her and Antony rowing an imaginary boat with imaginary oars down an imaginary river, occasionally punctuated by wailing from the chorus. I mean, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? it is not."

#### Maxime Gray, the Prince

Handsome. Fresh-faced. Black turtleneck. Maxime is distraught over the death of his young wife, Natassia. They were genuinely in love, and he will happily share details of how they met on the set of Ambrose's last play, how they fell in love, and how they were married by Veruca at a lovely, private ceremony at The Styx.

Quote: "Maybe it would be best if the Occluded King really did come into this world and establish dominion over us. Living in his murky, shadowy realm has to be better than dealing with this emptiness in my heart."



## Paint the Scene

#### The set

As the camera pans around, what do we see that subtly suggests this is some sort of ritual space?

#### **Backstage**

Do you have any experience in the theater? If so, what about this place takes you back?

#### The dressing room

As the camera pans around the room, we see evidence that these actors may be dedicated to the Occluded King in more ways than just performing in a play about him. What do we see?

#### The Sinclairs' apartment

What do you see in the apartment that hints at Ambrose and Veruca's fascination with death?

### The Styx

Being in The Styx feels like being unstuck in time. What do you experience that makes you feel that way?

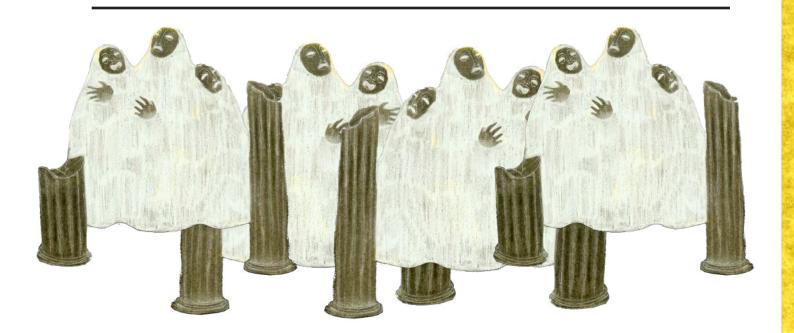
## Clues

- A group text message wherein Natassia expresses doubt about the direction Ambrose is taking the play in.
- A diary entry indicating Maxime wasn't really in love with Natassia, and that he married her because the Sinclairs pressured him to.
- A ritual dagger identical to the one used to stab Natassia.
- A life insurance policy taken out on Natassia.
- A script with the words "I'm going to KILL YOU!" written in a margin.
- A stash of love letters in an unusual place.
- A book, *Mysteries of the Occluded King*, which features an illustration of the King's lover that looks uncannily similar to a member of the troupe.
- A pile of bones, hidden.
- A secret message from a Hollywood talent agency to Natassia.
- A shattered Britty award.
- · A secret two-way mirror.

- A paternity test proving Natassia was a male Suspect's secret daughter.
- A prophecy written in a dream journal indicating Natassia must be sacrificed.
- A large amount of powerful sedatives.
- A spell, clumsily cast.
- Evidence of sympathetic magic being used on a Suspect (pick one: poppet/lock of hair/salt trail/egg in a strange place/something else).
- · A dress lined with arsenic.
- A depiction of the Erinyes in a provocative place.
- Risqué photos of a Suspect.
- A bus ticket out of Boston, recently purchased.

## **Void Clues**

- Dozens of people in the audience put on golden masks and begin making mocking, animal-like noises at the stage. None will remember doing this.
- There is nothing in the night sky—no stars, no moon, no clouds—just inky blackness.
- Random people on the streets are wearing featureless gold masks.
- Every page in every book features the same picture of a Suspect.
- A brother and sister with no eyes in their sockets are entertaining each other while waiting for their parents.
- A driftwood crown dripping with blood and bits of meat is waiting for the Mayens somewhere.



# Three Dozen MORE Forbidden Texts

- The Ribald's Tale. Seemingly one of Chaucer's, though the only edition is a green, midcentury, perfect-bound softcover from the defunct press of a small shuttered liberal arts college. The tale within seems authentic before Ribald diverges into a dark forest full of bloody druidic rituals for summoning and binding unseelie spirits of wood and earth into the profaned bodies of human sacrifices.
- This unnamed folio contains the final day's report of every vessel to sail the seas and sky: the Vasa, the Omega, the Titanic, the Columbia, the Enterprise D. Sometimes lifting the cover reveals soaked parchment, smoldering typewritten sheets, or a cracked and blistered screen of flickering text.
- An innocuously small PDF file titled False Earth Core Knowledge can be found among the forums of various conspiranoia websites. Among its bizarre and sometimes contradictory claims is that human life was dumped on Earth a millennia ago by aliens who considered it waste; that Earth isn't really a planet; and that a "true Earth" is out there in the universe, yet free of human stain.
- A loose cassette tape labeled Closet #72 in ballpoint pen. Playing the tape reveals a muffled, somewhat distant recording of your mother tucking you into bed at night. On each subsequent listen the recording becomes clearer (and, somehow, closer?) but your memories of your mother fade.
- In 2431, Interstellar Command exploration vessel Zheng He detected a mysterious radio signal from the uninhabited Theta Draconis system. Not two hours after deciphering the message embedded in the signal, the entire crew erupted into a cacophony of violence. All aboard were lost in the bloodbath. Interstellar Command has since quarantined the Theta Draconis system and deployed a flotilla of armed jammer drones to prevent anyone else from receiving that signal. Rumors still circulate that the ISC salvaged the Zheng He's computer core before scuttling the starship, but any information about that incident is accessible only to those with Omega-class security clearance.
- Rewarding the Bold. You can't read ahead until you've done the mildly unethical or degrading act described on page one. Once you've done it, the next page can be read, revealing valuable information. The next page requires a new, ever-so-slightly worse act, but it's always your choice to acquiesce or shut the book.

- There are tales, urban legends really, of a book that appears in public libraries from time to time. It doesn't have a Dewey Decimal number, it is plainly bound, and there is no identifying information on the spine or either cover. It is the sort of book that is almost impossible to see, *especially* if you're looking for it, and people who have heard of its existence are obsessed with finding it. Supposedly, this slim volume contains the secret to living a truly happy life. Notably, none of the people who are rumored to have read it have ever been seen again.
- The crib sheet of Joan Reed-Caskle. Rumored to be passed from valedictorian to valedictorian for over eight years, this single index card is said to be a cipher of every correct scantron test answer for Daisy Glen High School. Faculty routinely dismiss it as a lie told by upperclassmen, and more than one sophomore has been called to the office for trying to sell freshman hastily scribbled nonsense. Nobody can deny, however, that Carol Beekman is exceeding all expectations this year.
- To pursue the wisdom of the *Codex of Scars*, you must become it. Assuming that the Cult finds you a worthy vessel, you must offer a piece of knowledge heretofore unknown to them. Only then may you become the Codex: Your eyes will be plucked out, your tongue removed, your ears pierced, and after your own wisdom is flayed onto your skin, you may take your place among the Codex's pages. Only then you may reach out and read.
- Gra'arh's Anatomy. The master assassin's journal contains detailed analysis and instruction on delivering a variety of deaths via nerve clusters to every sentient species in the galaxy. Gra'arh wants her journal back and, naturally, the section on her species is riddled with inaccuracies.
- The Ynda-Khend manuscripts have remained untranslated since they were unearthed from the ruins of a lost citadel, centuries ago. Its evocative figurative writing system mostly seems to represent people during different ages, performing various tasks. Every scholar who perused the texts in the claustrophobic chamber where they are preserved, attempting to understand its patterns and meanings, came out disoriented and amnesic. They seem not to recognize their peers and surroundings, and even called themselves by other names.
- The Indestructible Scroll. This five-meter long scroll of linen is completely indestructible, but it can be written on by those who intend it no harm. Many have tried to burn it, lock it away, or cast it into the sea, but it always returns to a public library. Needless to say, it's covered in indelible truths and lies.

London in 1892. Mixed in with the expected descriptions of cathedrals, festivals, and local culinary specialties are references to occult masses, human sacrifice, cannibalism, and one very detailed description of hunting humans from horseback, including details about the butchering of corpses and the following high tea.

Bad Dog. A 1981 video game written and self-published by Sharik Preobrazhensky for the APPLE II. Like many games of the time, it was sold in a plastic bag with little else, in this case just a mimeographed card insert in poor English listing the basic commands, and a childish cartoon of a smug dog chewing on a human arm on the reverse. A typical action game of the time, the player's avatar is a block-pixel dog who navigates a 2D maze, "the house," to find and devour their master. The game is marred by a discordant soundtrack of inexplicable buzzing, seemingly the result of a bad conversion from MicrosoftBASIC to ApplesoftBASIC. Rumors on hacker BBS at the time Bad Dog was published indicate that if the sound code was compiled and run separately on a Microsoft machine it produced both a cheerful tinny song and odd, higher pitched noises that the original poster/tester claims made both his pet chihuahua Lasagna and hamster Krull aggressively violent. There is no other record of Sharik Preobrazhensky, beyond one post on the Jungle Kingdom BBS of Long Island in August 1980 in its Animal Rights and Rites forum where a user with Sharik's name posts that he's "No going to be around much... [he's] hard at work on something to punish the Exploiters and Speciesists!"

- The Turpentine Receipts. A collection of receipts for chemical and parachemical reagents that, when combined and processed in the correct way, allow one to blend, smear, and "discolour" realities.
- Something You Will Hate. This chain email was one of the first blocked by spam filters and virus scanners so it's hard to even find anymore. Anyone who receives this forwarded message will read something that will make them angrier than anything they've ever read before. Most who read the email then forward it on to their entire address list.
- Dozens of highway maps issued by a number of oil companies in the 1970s and '80s. Some appear water stained. The maps' routes look to save time between certain cities, but these roads do not actually exist. Anyone trying to follow the maps will find themselves taken elsewhere.
- Degoya County Eats is a cheaply-printed, spiral bound cookbook published in 1961 as part of a charity fundraiser held that year in Degoya County, New Mexico. Every person who contributed to the cookbook, all members of the local community, died in a gruesome or unexplained manner, and urban legends claim there is something in each recipe that predicts their respective author's fate. For example, Jackson Viejo, a farmer who contributed a spiral ham recipe, was devoured by his own hogs; Winnifred Krump, whose gelatin salad recipe was "[her] son's favorite" was shot dead by the son in question; and Donna Gilberto, who submitted her famous Mexican mince pie was killed in a tragic wood chipper accident.

- Our era is the only era that has ever existed. It is not the current era, for that would suggest a prior era existed. There are, of course, unfortunate people whose claims to have discovered bones of strange, unknown creatures can obviously be attributed to mental illness because such creatures have never been seen, and The Party has thoroughly mapped and explored our world, documenting everything that exists. Still, whispers from loyal citizens that a book containing clearly manipulated photographs of such nonsense exists. The Party knows that giving a name to such a thing would be to admit that it *might* exist, which it does not, so on the exceedingly rare occasions when this book is discussed, the high-ranking officials present merely refer to it as *The Book Of Lies*.
- The book Nec Deum Nec Dominum has had many names throughout the millennia, but always appears in a language that can be easily read by people in desperate need who discover it. Upon reading the book, they are imbued with a certain, terrible purpose. A brief period of suffering inevitably follows, as it follows any sudden, dramatic change, but in its wake is liberation from churches, royalty, and other abusive power structures. The book vanishes soon after, never to be seen by those individuals again.
- The Martyr's Tome is never dry—its pages are always damp, dripping tears as a constant remembrance of the saints and brave souls listed on its pages. Who else will weep for their noble sacrifices?
- The Red Thangka. This book has occasionally appeared in fine art auction catalogs since 1930. It is a blanket-sized cotton scroll with a beautiful example of Buddhist devotional art on one side. The other side contains scribbling in Russian and diagrams in dried blood, signed by a Red Cavalry guard named "Andrei," who allegedly looted the scroll after deserting from the 26th Rifle Division at the battle of Irtusk in 1920. Andrei's writings are an odd distillation of Marxist-Leninist theory and Tibetan mysticism. Several previous collectors have attempted to have translations of the text produced, but no copy of these translations or works is known to exist. What is certain is that all previous owners have died mysteriously to violence, fire, or suicide after a reported period of intense seclusion with the painting and growing irrational fear of ghosts.
- Banned by the Good Neighbor's Society of Jones Street, the Green Growers Pamphlet, or Greenies as they're called by the kids, details the best times and dates for planting unwanted vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and other non-ornamental plant-life not approved by the local Homeowners' Association. The last failure to clamp down on this forbidden text ended with the zucchini bombing of the local parish home after an argument over who really won the local jam competition.

- ICTX 2019.09.09.0001-0010 is a text file transcribing the intercepted broadcast of a previously unknown obfuscated content radio signal, colloquially referred to as a "numbers station." The summary indicates that this shortwave broadcast was repeated on multiple FM frequencies worldwide starting at 0011 (immediately after the shortwave broadcast concluded). Artificial intelligence has pattern matched certain digits as corresponding to the following emoji [:face\_with-thermometer: :dart: :cn: ], ten numbered bank account sequences, and the national IDs (SSN, SIN, etc.) of several known characters.
- The Guide is supposedly the second-to-last instruction manual one will ever need, since it provides directions to create the book that will allow the reader to usher in the end of days. Two copies are known to exist: one in the Vatican Library's secret archive, the other in the hands of a 34-year-old dude named Kyle in Ohio who still lives with his parents. I'm sure it's fine.
  - A new website called Deathfeed.com launched today with a clickbait list titled 101 Ways To Immanentize The Eschaton (You Won't Believe Number 57), but the site went offline moments after going live, and there are no archives or screenshots—or any other record for that matter—to prove that the list (or the site) existed.
- Libretto for Atrocity. An apparent recounting of the Battle of the Somme, down to the breath and the bullet. The score is theoretically playable by machine; however, the manuscript is tear-stained and the notes distorted.
- The Chronicle of the Droning Queen is the entire history of the Buzzing Empress, laid out carefully in wax and honey in the layered chambers of the Cyclopean Hive. Preserved inside is the gestalt wisdom of ages, carefully-observed ephemera of flora long-extinct, encoded within the arrangement of those waxen cells. Of course, the only way for a scholar to pursue such knowledge would be to either become queen themselves, or carefully dismantle the cathedral-sized hive, one layer at a time.
- 5—6 The Déjà Reve. Write a word in the Déjà Reve, tear the page out and put it under your pillow. Your dreams that evening will be shaped by that word. If you write a word that has already been written, you will be visited by a nightmare instead.

- The Elder Sign by The Kings in Yellow: a 12-inch vinyl LP stereo record in a torn paper sleeve with no album jacket. The printed center label indicates ©1987 by Primordial Stew Publishing, but no record of that company exists. Side A has four tracks: "Yellow Lovin" (3:44), "The Stars Are All Right" (3:08), "Hellburners" (6:50), and "Streets of Fire and Blood" (7:44). Side B is a single track, "The Elder Sign" (22:39). The four Side A tracks are late-80s hair-metal songs of mediocre quality; the singer doesn't articulate well, and the lyrics are nearly impossible to parse. The Side B track consists of 22 minutes 30 seconds of silence, followed by a 9-second dissonant chord of unknown instrumentation.
- The Down Home Boiled Ham Recipe Collection. Forbidden is such a strong word. It's not that anyone is actively trying to stop people from reading The Down Home Boiled Ham Recipe Collection, it's that nobody wants to. Due to improper comma placement and a far sighted print shop manager, the 2,000,000 copies have been moving through the surplus book market like a boiled ham through a python. Enterprising used book stores have tried offering it for free, but not a single customer has ever accepted it.
- You've gone into your older sister's room looking for that nice pair of scissors you think she keeps in her desk and instead you found her diary. You didn't know she kept a diary. This is gonna be good! But before you open it, take a moment to reflect: do you really want to know her deepest, darkest thoughts, including exactly what she thinks of you and your parents? Things that might forever strain your relationship? Of course you do! You open it and start reading...
- The 1973 catalog from vending machine and arcade amusement company Danford Automatix is noteworthy because there has never been a company registered by that name, nor has anyone ever owned one of the many machines listed in its pages. Pinball machines like Dang Nabbit, Rabbit! and Grimjaur are presented in great detail with numerous color photographs, and extensive gameplay instructions, but otherwise do not seem to exist. There are listings for vending machines full of unknown products like Chippy Chips, a fish-flavored potato snack, and Razzmatazz, a raspberry-flavored soft drink, which takes up numerous pages in the catalog. Equally strange: the Library of Congress has engaged in a decades-long search for every existing copy of the catalog, sometimes paying hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars to get their hands on one, and official explanations for why have been tied up in FOIA requests for years.
- Five filled spiral notebooks and an envelope. The notebooks are the journals from a spelunker. He and two friends were illegally exploring some caves on federal land in Oklahoma when they found themselves in a technologically advanced, but socially degenerate, society. He escaped, his friends did not. The letter in the envelope explains what has happened, and how he will attempt to go back to try to rescue his friends.
- The adventure module *The Seven Kingdoms of Grisfen Moor* has faded into obscurity after many gaming groups banned its play outright. Among its many transgressions is the fabled "23 pages of boxed text" that begin the adventure. It's been described equally as languid, trope-filled, and littered with typos. Topics include: two dead barons' eating habits, three vanquished wizards' love affairs, the trials of one particularly malnourished horse, and lengthy, predictable descriptions of women's bosoms. Absolutely none of the text culminates in any real sense of place or narrative and ultimately leaves the reader confused and bored.



# **Codex Keepers**

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A Thousand Faces of Adventure, Keeper of the Drunken Pirate's Forgotten Wish

Aaron, Keeper of the Child Upon Whom We Dare Not Look Jesse Abelman, Keeper of the Moon's First Memory Rob Abrazado, Keeper of the Purple Falsehood Stras Acimovic, Keeper of the Man Who Dies Every Third Day

Quentin Acord, Keeper of the Word that Binds and Blinds ActualPerson084, Keeper of the Yellow Tree's Oozing Heart John Adamus, Keeper of the Endless Page

Benjamin Adelman, Keeper of the Brotherhood of the Black Dragon's Great Saga

Javitt Adili, Keeper of the Arms of Torg the Blasphemer
Joaquin Aguirrezabalaga, Keeper of the Blood of Lursiss
Jesse Aldrich, Keeper of Azurix, the Blue Dust Planet
John Alexander, Keeper of the Child Whose Face is a Mirror
Zach Alexander, Keeper of the Weeping Cells
Brendan Allison, Keeper of the Child Who Creeps and Crawls
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Bearosaurus, Keeper of the Traveling Notebook of Faina the False

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Ira Grace, Keeper of the Cardinal's Confession
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Blaise Hebert, Keeper of the Living Wick of Gautama's Candle

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Sid Icarus, Keeper of the Box Into Which We Dare Not Reach

Implosion Cycle, Keeper of the Tourmaline Gate of Cygnus the Wise

indistinctdistrict, Keeper of the Mistletoe Arrows of St. Aryndion

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Antonio Ingravallo, Keeper of the Atlas of Vanished Countries

Insanodog, Keeper of the Porcelain Lantern Which Shall Never Be Lit

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Tom Johnson, Keeper of the Puppet That Whispers Truth When You Sleep

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Tim Kuehlhorn, Keeper of the Grand Radiance
Dion Kurczek, Keeper of the Automata Philosophica
Brian Kurtz, Keeper of the Law Library of Maedrovel Urosh
Eli Kurtz, Keeper of the Blade of the One-Armed Swordsman
Ben L., Keeper of the Canoptic Guardians
David LaFreniere, Keeper of the Six Questions
Wade Lahoda, Keeper of the Mountain Troll's Ever-Growing
Hand

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Daniel Lewis, Keeper of the Unspeakable Fixation
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Vasilis Liaskovitis, Keeper of the Eighty-Seven Near-Silent
Years

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Kristen MacLean, Keeper of the Gilded Hour
Rory MacLeod, Srorrim Ni Nees Eb Ylno Nac Hcihw Taht Fo

Rory MacLeod, Srorrim Ni Nees Eb Ylno Nac Hcihw Taht Fo Repeek Kira Magrann, Keeper of the Singing Serpent's Nest

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Malex, Keeper of the Temple of the Golden Sky
Eric Maloof, Keeper of the Child Who is a Nest for Spiders
Ido Magal, Keeper of the Monkey's First Lie
Josh Mannon, Keeper of the Twisted Teeth of Garthuul
Michael Marciano, Keeper of Moonweaver's Celestial Cloth
James Marcucci, Keeper of the Child Whose Flesh is Burlap
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The Dynamis Project, Keeper of the Five Limbs of Acolla
Daniel Kusan, Keeper of the Merry Abbatoir
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Laura Boerth-Dryden, Keeper of the Red Architect's
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