



protodimension magazine



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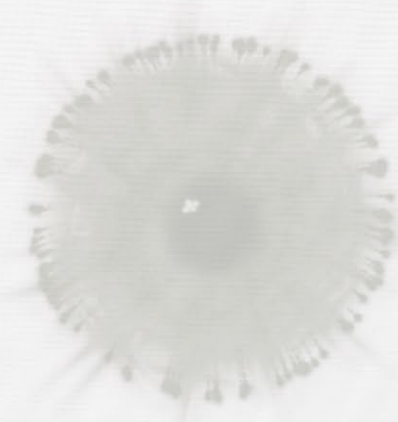
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# Anglerfish

It's been twenty years since this happened, so my memories are a bit hazy in some parts.

For the longest time I've tried to tell myself I had made it all up. That's what my therapist had told me anyway. That what I told my family and the police was a fantasy I made up to protect myself from the truth. To hide my guilt.

When I was twelve, my mom, my aunt, my cousin, and I moved to a new house in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Dad had left us, and Mom wanted to get away and make a fresh start. My aunt had just gone through a messy divorce and also wanted to leave the bad memories behind. So they pooled their funds and bought the new house.

It was a small ranch style house with a big, grassy backyard. There were neighbors nearby on one side, but we never saw them. There was about an acre of woods on the other side that didn't really belong to anyone.

It was a hard summer for me. I have never made friends easily, so moving away from the few I had was hard. Not to mention that since we were now basically in the country, my asthma was worse than ever. I did manage to make friends with a kid down the road. We were both huge Star Wars geeks, and the woods by my house

were our Endor, except when it rained and became Dagobah. It rained a lot that summer, and we found out the basement tended to flood.

It was a dirt and gravel floor, and quite damp all the time, so I stayed out of it because it would set off my asthma worse than usual. The wooden stairs to the basement looked like they were rotting through. Mom and my aunt didn't really have money to get them fixed, and we didn't need the space that much anyway, so no one went down there and the door stayed locked.

My cousin Annie had just turned five, and she stuck by me constantly. She had always been close to her dad, and now that he was gone I was the only male in her world. She and I were both used to street lights at night, and the new place was miles away from any light sources. At night, the absolute darkness and lack of noise from cars and trucks scared her at first. To try and help, I would take her outside when the skies were clear at night to look at the stars, and I tried to teach her about the constellations, and how to tell the difference between a star and a planet. She always mispronounced "Orion" as "O-rye-ron."

Money was tight, and neither Annie nor I had many toys. That's why it was strange to me when one day I found Annie playing

Fiction  
By Neil A. Armstrong



with an old baby doll. I hadn't seen it before, and it was one of the older types with the porcelain face, not her usual Cabbage Patch Kid.

I asked her where she got the new doll, and she simply said she had found it in her closet after we had moved in. Over time, she would talk to it and play with it more and more, having tea parties and whatnot. None of us thought anything of it as that was pretty normal for a child her age to have an active imagination. I was secretly glad she had stopped clinging to me so much as it gave me more time to hang out with my new friend.

Fast forward about a month. Annie was playing with the doll, which she told us was named Karen, all the time now. Sleeping with it, having one-way conversations with it, sitting it at its own chair during meals, stuff like that. We all figured she was just being a normal five year old, but something about the doll bothered me. When she would bring it near me, my allergies would always act up, and I thought it smelled funny. I tried to get her to get rid of it, or at least let me clean it, but she would have a fit if anyone but her touched it.

My aunt caught Annie trying to unlock the basement door one day. When





she asked her why she wanted to go down there, Annie said that Karen wanted her to.

I was always a light sleeper, and one of the good things about moving out in the rural area where we did was that at last I could sleep through the night without being woken up by car horns or semi trucks braking at the red light by my old house in town. Which is why I remember it was about this time that I kept waking up at about three in the morning by a scampering sound. I told mom about it, but she told me it was probably just a mouse or squirrel on the roof that I was hearing.

One night I forgot to close my bedroom door before I went to bed. Mom said I was just dreaming when I told her I woke up to see Annie's doll on all fours skittering down the hall past my bedroom. I believed her. My God how I wish I hadn't believed her.

Mom and my aunt were going out for the night, and I was to baby-sit my cousin. It was raining, so we were stuck indoors. I didn't mind anyway because AIRPLANE was on TV that night, and I hadn't seen it before.

It's funny how the mind makes connections like that. Most people think of the movie AIRPLANE and start to laugh,

remembering funny parts from it. I hear mention of it and want to cry, even to this day.

The movie was at the flashback to the main character's time in the hospital, and I heard Annie trying to unlock the basement door. She had her doll under her arm and a package of Oreos in her hand. I asked her what she was doing, and she told me Karen wanted to show her something down there. I told her to stay away, that the stairs were not safe and she could get hurt, but she insisted that she had to go there.

"Karen said her friend is down there and she is really hungry and needs help."

I couldn't help but to play along. I figured I would just open the door and once she saw how nasty and dark it was down there she would never try to go in the basement again.

I opened the door. Annie took off down the rickety steps before I could stop her. I followed slowly; worried the rotting lumber wouldn't hold my weight. The floor was soaking wet, and Annie stood at the bottom of the stairs.

Karen was not in her arms anymore.

Something was coming up through the muddy floor. At first I thought it was a

tree stump, with roots snaking across the floor. Then I realized the roots were slowly twitching.

The doll was walking across the floor. It climbed onto the mound, turned, and looked at me with its dead glassy doll eyes. I think they were glowing slightly but I'm not sure.

Annie and I couldn't move. I could see her mouth was open, but I think she was too terrified to scream.

I know I was.

The root-like things moved toward Annie, and wrapped around her leg. They started pulling her toward the mound, and something that must have been a mouth opened in the center of its mass. The last thing I remember is hearing Annie screaming "help me" before I passed out.

Mom and my aunt found me unconscious on the basement steps a few hours later. Annie was gone.

The mud floor of the basement looked normal. I think the mud flowed back and resettled after that thing burrowed deeper. I tried to explain what I had seen to my family, the police, and the therapist I was sent to. The official story is that someone had entered the house and kidnapped my





cousin, and I had imagined a story about a monster in the basement to cope with the trauma.

Mom and I moved away, back to the same old town we had lived in before. My aunt lost her mind with grief. She is still institutionalized, though she briefly came to live with my mother a few years ago. She had to go back after she was caught breaking into the neighbors house, looking for her daughter.

I've tried to forget about all of this, and had been doing a good job of it until a year ago.

There was a story on the news, from the old town. Another child was missing, a boy this time. Six years old. I had been flipping through channels and saw the old house. There was no mistaking it.

The news crew was in the house, interviewing the family. And there, in the little boys bedroom, sat Karen on the toy chest.

I went back through records of the town. Another child had vanished from the house back in 1972. No body was ever found.

I have a theory. Whatever that thing is, it sleeps, buried in the dirt like a Cicada. And like a cicada, it wakes up on a cycle, every

two decades or so. But instead of waking to breed, it wakes up to feed.

There is an animal called an Anglerfish. It has a little fleshy bit attached to its head that it uses to lure in prey while it sits, camouflaged, in the mud.

I think that's what the doll is. Bait. It explains one thing I've wondered all these years. Why didn't it eat me also? I finally figured it out. The bait you use depends on what it is you are trying to catch. It didn't want to eat a stringy twelve year old, just starting puberty. It likes its meat more tender. It prefers veal instead of steak.

I did some snooping and learned the house is abandoned now. Makes it easier for me to do what I have to.

I finished loading my truck. Picks, shovels, gasoline. Rat poison; weed killer, any kind of poison I could find, and some other things. It's scary how easy it is to learn how to make explosives on the internet. Getting the recipe for home made Thermite took a bit longer. I am not taking any chances here. I'm going after it with everything I can.

I'm going back to that house. I'm going to dig the basement up until I either find the damned thing or I die from exhaustion. If I'm lucky, since it just fed a year ago, it'll

be asleep now, and when I find it I will kill it.

Or, God forbid, I'm wrong and it's not asleep, or I wake it up with my digging, and it will kill me. That's ok, maybe then at least then I will see Annie again, and can tell her how sorry I am. I was too afraid to move, let alone try and save her. At least this story is out there now. If I don't make it back, maybe someone else will have to finish what I couldn't.

The thing that worries me is that the creature isn't just some dumb animal. It could talk to Annie, through the doll-thing. That implies at least a measure of intelligence. And how it knew to create the doll in the first place, I don't know. Maybe the doll belonged to someone who used to live there, and somehow the thing in the basement assimilated it. That's probably why it smelled of rot. Under the stuffing and cloth was a piece of the creature.

I'm still afraid. It's just my guilt outweighs my fear now. I'd rather be dead than live with this anymore. Though if I'm going to die, I am taking that son of a bitch with me.





## ANGLERFISH: CODA

Long story short.

I failed.

I was as quiet as I could be when I went back to the house. I waited until it was dark. Didn't want anyone to see me carrying in all the gear I had gathered together. I should have waited a bit longer, come up with some kind of cover story for why I was carrying in drums of poison and chemicals. Maybe if I had just waited for sunlight.

It doesn't matter now I guess. Too late for could have beens.

I had carried in the second drum of gasoline when I heard the skittering. I froze. Tried so hard not to breathe, to keep silent. It was so quiet all I could hear was that damn ringing in my ears. Waited until I couldn't stand it anymore. Nothing but silence.

It's so patient. Inhumanly patient. I guess that goes without saying.

I had a revolver in my coat pocket. A .357 my father had given me before he died. I slowly pulled it out and cocked the hammer. With my left hand I pulled the small Maglite out of my back pocket.

There was still some furniture in the house. An old couch, a rocking chair. I scanned the room quickly. No sign of what I knew had caused that sound.

I should have run. Damn it to hell. Kick over the gas, light the place on fire, run away. More should have / would have / could have.

All useless.

I tried the light switch. Nothing. Put the gun away, Went outside and grabbed the crate of dynamite. Came back inside. Then I heard a creak.

The rocking chair was moving. And I caught a whiff of that stink of mold and filth and corruption.

Karen was here.

The sound of porcelain on hardwood floor skittered behind me, and then something grabbed my leg.

I screamed. I kicked. I punched and cursed. In between striking the doll with my Maglite I could catch glimpses of it in the flashlight beam. Tendrils of spongy rot wriggled from its mouth and eyes. Its porcelain face shattered and something that looked like moldy spaghetti fell out.

I don't know how long I stomped on the creature that was in the doll. I screamed the entire time.

I decided that I had to finish this. If my screams didn't wake the monster, they would have woken up the neighbors. I grabbed the dynamite and made for the basement.

It was waiting.

Let me tell you what I've learned.

It reproduces by fission, like a bacterium, or a slime mold. It never really grows old the way we think of growing old. It just makes a copy of itself. It's basically immortal.

It may be the last of its kind. It hasn't communicated to another like itself in many, many years.

I was right when I said it preferred its food to be young and tender. Adult humans have too many impurities. Chemicals. Preservatives from the food we eat.

It makes the meat taste bad. But that's not to say that it can't find a use for an adult body.





The old rotten cellar steps broke through halfway down, and I landed hard. Felt my left arm break. Tendrils of the creature grabbed me before I could get up, and pulled me to the main mass. I got my pistol out and fired all six shots into it.

Should have saved the last for myself. It probably wouldn't have mattered; the creature would have just repaired the damage anyway. Though maybe if I had put a bullet in my brain I wouldn't be aware of what was happening to me now.

Smaller tendrils emerged from the creatures' body. Slimmer than the ones that gripped me. Translucent. They snaked towards my face, and burrowed up my nostrils. Slipped in behind my eyeballs, caressed my optic nerves. I blacked out from the pain.

I don't know how long I was unconscious. I don't know how much longer I have. I'm typing this on my cell phone, and I can feel the broken off piece of the creature, inside me. It's taking over.

It hurts. Oh god does it hurt. If I could move my legs I would go upstairs and set the gasoline on fire but it won't let me. It fixed my arm while I was out. It needs me mobile. I have a purpose.

It's still hungry. It's almost time for it to reproduce, and it needs food. And to get that food, it will need something better than a doll for bait. It needs an extension that can travel, actively capture food, and bring it back.

The worst part is, it feels joy, knowing how much I wish I could kill myself for what it will make me do. Maybe If I'm lucky I'll get caught, or killed, before I can hurt anyone.

There is one last thing.

I said it was intelligent. I wondered before how it knew to use a doll for a lure, or how it knew how to speak.

They are all still in here. The victims. The food. Memories. Hopes. Dreams. All trapped inside this rotting, sedentary thing in the basement.

At least I was finally able to tell Annie how sorry I am.





# BEASTIES OF THE GREAT WHITE NORTH



*Max leaned up against the car, as he waited for Frank, Goner and Wraith to finish up exploring the old Quick Stop Shoppe. It was his turn to keep watch as the others were salvaging what they could from the store. A spring breeze was blowing in from a southerly direction and it felt good to feel the hint of summer in it, his eyes caught sight of a plastic bag drifting along like a tumbleweed.*

*He did a second look as the bag seemed to hover for several seconds and then go against the breeze and appeared to be fluttering towards him...*



## **Baggers**

<b>#Appearing</b>	1-6	<b>Initiative</b>	3	<b>Agility</b>	8
<b>Attack</b>	90%	<b>Strength</b>	1	<b>Skill/Dam.</b>	5/1D6
<b>Move</b>	10/20	<b>Constitution</b>	2	<b>Hits</b>	5/10

Baggers look like discarded plastic bags floating in the breeze. Like tumbleweed riding the air current, many minion hunters ignore these creatures taking them in as part of the debris in the outlaws. In truth these sentient creatures are much like the Pale and feed on warmth. They are drawn to warm beings if they pass within a 5 meter radius.

No one really knows how these creatures came about, but rumour has it that these bags were created in demongrounds and unleashed to the world.

In combat a bagger will attack a target and once a successful hit will fasten itself to his opponent. It's much like the feel of a melted marshmallow on the skin. Once attached this way the damage is automatic until the Bagger is destroyed.

Canadian Critters  
By Tim Bisailon  
For Dark Conspiracy 1st ed.





*Angst couldn't sleep so she got up and decided to have a cup of coffee, she reached inside her backpack and pulled out a CoffQuick can and slapped the bottom of it to activate the self heating. She placed it on the table while taking out two sugar packets to add to it once the 15 seconds it took to brew the coffee. When she turned around she saw the house centipede on the table, and she let out a surprised scream which alerted the others...*

### House Centipedes

#Appearing	1	Initiative	6	Agility	4
Attack	80%	Strength	1	Skill/Dam.	6/1
Move	10/20	Constitution	2	Hits	2

House Centipedes are one of the creepiest insects ever seen and can scare the bejesus out of you the first time you see these long legged monstrosities. They populated the South American region and have migrated to the north, though they are rare in the cold climates.

These mutated insects have 15 pairs of legs and long antennae, and are about 10-12cm long. They are born with four pairs of legs and will mature over three years, adding more body sections and legs at each moult. They can move quickly and will hide in cracks, crevices, and behind baseboards. They sometimes like to hide under the bark of firewood stored inside the home and usually have a surprise attack.

They have a flight instinct though it makes it hard to sleep at night knowing that one of these critters is in the room.





The logo for the video game 'Left 4 Dead', featuring the title in a white, distressed font with a red splatter effect behind the number '4'.

A Savage Worlds Adventure  
By Jason Paul McCartan  
For Savage Worlds

LEFT 4 DEAD REDUX #1:

# THE CABIN IN THE WOODS

## THE INFECTION

A military think tank has created The Green Flu and is testing it out on a sample population: namely the people of Marrin's Island. Marrin's Island, located off the coast of Canada, is a small island several miles from the mainland, which has a close-knit population. Most of the residents stay on the island throughout the year and rarely leave it, with the exception of Janos Czbecki, who acts as the island's courier and delivery person, and ferryman for visitors to the island campsite. This has made it the perfect isolated test location for Project Green.

The military is aware that there is a form of immunity that may exist, and they have identified a genetic marker indicating this, but need to test the theory. Through searching DNA databases submitted to medical facilities throughout the U.S., four test subjects carrying that marker have been identi-

fied, and will be captured and placed on the island after everyone else has been infected. Although simple laboratory testing would have sufficed to see how the infection grew amongst these subjects, data also needed to be collected upon the survivability during an extended plague of those with the immunity. All possible escape routes apart from one or two from the island will be removed, and the island will be monitored via hidden cameras and spy satellites. If anyone should escape the island, they will be captured by the military for follow-up investigation and examination.

As soon as the Infection started spreading through the island, the military plans to destroy the island ferry boat and incapacitate any other boats there; previous experiments with The Infected indicated a loss of higher brain functions among the affected, and the expectation is those





infected would be unable to escape the island. This is Phase I of Project Green. Once the island is secured, the military will capture the targets with the genetic marker (the player characters) in their homes and bring them to the island clandestinely, depositing them in an unoccupied cabin in the middle of the woods and leaving them to regain consciousness. All communications with the mainland via radio or satellite phone will be jammed. The test subjects will awake together in a cabin, with a cache of weapons, some first aid supplies and a small map indicating a "Safe House". (Player Map A). This is Phase II of Project Green.

The final phase of Project Green, Phase III, involves collecting surviving test subjects from the island after 48 hours exposure to the infection, and destroying any Infected.

### **Marrin's Island Locale & Information**

It is early fall, and cold and damp. The sea surrounding the island is unusually choppy due to wind and currents. The mainland is 15 miles away. The island is approximately 10 miles wide by 25 miles long. A single tarmac ring road runs around the entire island, and roads lead off it to individual residences and to the Briskay

Campsite. The weather is typically rainy, with a sharp coldness to the air, and squalls sometimes hit quickly and without much warning. All of the buildings on the island have storm shutters on them.

### **Communications on the island**

Most communication from the island to the mainland is through either maritime radios, satellite phones or a satellite uplink that Rob Bryant has set up for the island's Internet access. Satellite communication is being jammed by the military, so there is no external access to the mainland through either of those. However, the island computer network is still operational as it uses a mesh network that Bryant built, allowing all of the buildings on the island to be connected to a local intranet called MarrinNet. Most of the houses contain computers that can access this, if power can be re-established to them. The MarrinNet servers are located in Bryant's house. Each of the houses has a landline that routes through a central PBX system located in the center of the town. The phones are still operational as they use a separate power source. Maritime radios, including portable ones, in each of the houses can speak to others on the island, but not beyond it, because of the military jamming.

### **Design Notes**

Although this adventure has been written with the *Savage Worlds* rules in mind, it can easily be converted through to your favorite system. Both PCs and NPCs are provided for the adventure, and all NPCs use one of the Infected creatures, as they've all contracted The Green Flu by the time that the adventure starts.

In the game world setting of *Left 4 Dead*, there is never any specific clarification about how The Infection starts and spreads. In the first video game itself, it simply states that the game starts "Two weeks after first infection". A virus, called the Green Flu, has infected humans, destroying some higher brain functions and making those infected become highly aggressive. These are the Infected, and the majority of them are similar in traits, although there are some with special abilities. There are a few people who are genetically inclined to be carriers but not succumb to the virus. These are the Survivors.

This adventure was designed to be a possible interpretation of how the Infection starts. If any player survives this adventure, it is they who will eventually unwittingly infect and doom humanity. Bummer.

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Images of the Infected are from the *Left 4 Dead* Wiki at Wikia, which can be found at [left4dead.wikia.com](http://left4dead.wikia.com), and are from the actual video game.

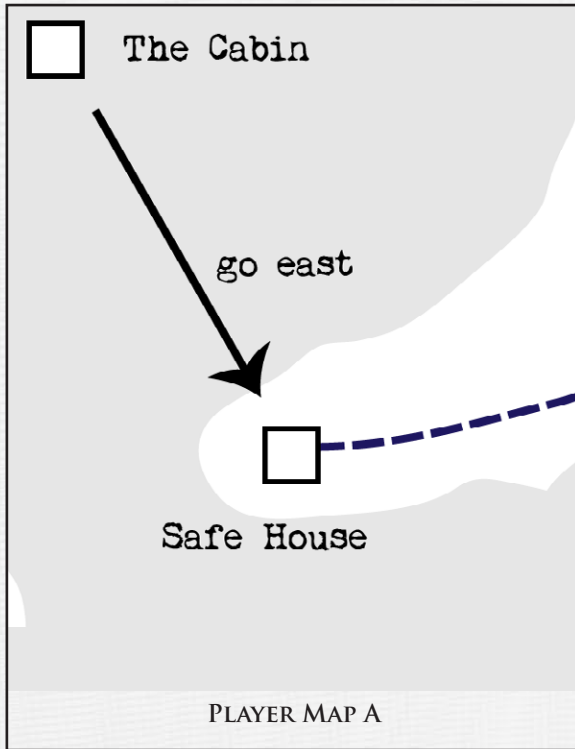
Everything else is © 2011 Jason Paul McCartan. Contact me at [teh.bagder@gmail.com](mailto:teh.bagder@gmail.com).





## THE MAPS

There are three maps that the players can gain access to (Player Maps A, B & C) and one for the GM that shows the locations of the different Special Infected (GM Map Z). Larger copies of these maps are included at the end of this adventure as handouts.



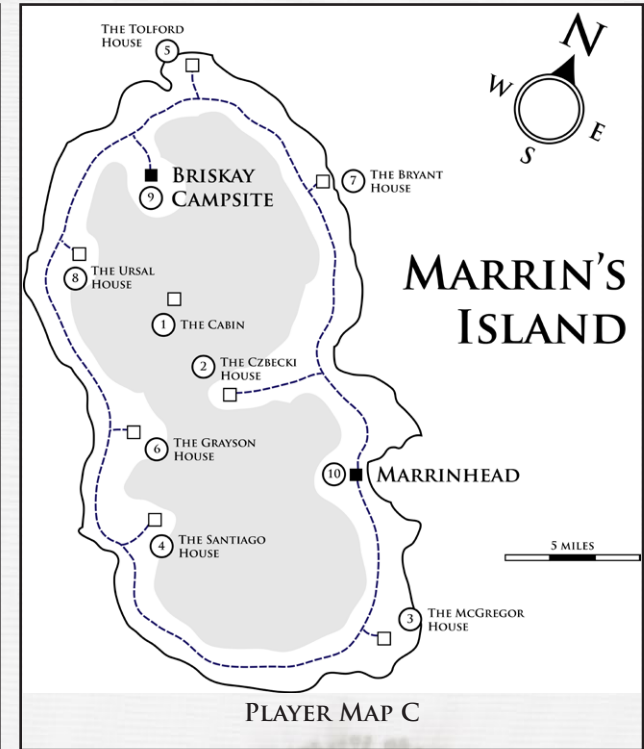
**THE CABIN MAP**  
(PLAYER MAP A)

This map looks as if it has been torn from an atlas and typed upon with a typewriter. Two locations are marked: the cabin and the Czbecki House, which is marked as the “Safe House”. The map does not give any indication that the players are on an island, as the Czbecki House is at the edge of the forest to the east, and is the nearest house.



**THE ISLAND MAP**  
(PLAYER MAP B)

This map shows the outline of the entire island and the village of Marrin's Island from an aerial view. The Czbecki house has been marked on it with a pin saying “Our house”. The rest of the island locations, apart from the village, are clearly defined but not marked as such on the map.



**MAP IN ANNIE'S STORE**  
(PLAYER MAP C)

The following map can be found in Annie's store if the players look around for it. Annie acts as the unofficial post office for the island and collects all of the mail. To help her keep track of mail, she has allocated a particular mailbox in the store to each of the locations on the island that she serves.





## PAULA CZBECKI'S DIARY

Everything up to the last few entries are standard teenager musings on life and lack of romance on the island. The last entries relate to the change in her father. These entries can be handed to the players with Player Handout A.

### ENTRY #127 – FRIDAY 4TH

*Dad got home from the mainland today after picking up more supplies for the campsite and Annie. He also picked up a new set of headphones for me! Fantastic! He went to bed early though, complaining of a sore head. He was running a temperature, so I made him some hot cocoa and sent him to bed.*

### ENTRY #128 – SATURDAY 5TH

*Dad doesn't look so hot this morning, and his bed sheets were covered in sweat. It didn't look like he got any sleep at all last night. He said he got his usual flu shot on the mainland and this is just his body getting used it. I hope he's right. He looks like crap. I'm going to get Doc Grayson to check on him.*

### ENTRY #129 – SATURDAY 5TH

*Dad bit Doc! WTF??! Doc put it down to delirium from the flu shot and a very high temperature. Dad's taken a nasty reaction to his flu shot. Doc says that's why he never gets a flu shot. Doc had us tie Dad down for his own safety and then Doc went home.*

*Dad's still sweating in bed, and his temperature is still high. He seems to be sleeping better now.*

### ENTRY #130 – SUNDAY 6TH

*Doc checked on Dad, who has been sleeping mostly through the night and said he looked better. I feel snifflely too, like I've caught Dad's flu. Doc had a*

*Friday 4th*

*Dad got home from the mainland today after picking up more supplies for the campsite and Annie. He also picked up a new set of headphones for me! Fantastic! He went to bed early though, complaining of a sore head. He was running a temperature, so I made him some hot cocoa and sent him to bed.*

*Saturday 5th*

*Dad doesn't look so hot this morning, and his bed sheets were covered in sweat. It didn't look like he got any sleep at all last night. He said he got his usual flu shot on the mainland and this is just his body getting used it. I hope he's right. He looks like crap. I'm going to get Doc Grayson to check on him.*

*Saturday 5th*

*Dad bit Doc! WTF??! Doc put it down to delirium from the flu shot and a very high temperature. Dad's taken a nasty reaction to his flu shot. Doc says that's why he never gets a flu shot. Doc had us tie Dad down for his own safety and then Doc went home.*

*Dad's still sweating in bed, and his temperature is still high. He seems to be sleeping better now.*

*Sunday 6th*

*Doc checked on Dad, who has been sleeping mostly through the night and said he looked better. I feel snifflely too, like I've caught Dad's flu. Doc had a bandage on his hand where Dad bit him. He seemed to be sweating a lot. Hope Dad's bite wasn't rabid! Ha! We untied Dad. His temperature was down.*

*Monday 7th*

*Woke to find Dad out of the house. His truck was still in the driveway. He must have walked to town. He must be feeling better. I'm not. Checked my temperature, and it's way too high.*

*Went to Doc's to let him know I was feeling crappy. He wasn't home, and must have been doing his rounds.*

### PLAYER HANDOUT A

*bandage on his hand where Dad bit him. He seemed to be sweating a lot. Hope Dad's bite wasn't rabid! Ha! We untied Dad. His temperature was down.*

### ENTRY #131 – MONDAY 7TH

*Woke to find Dad out of the house. His truck was still in the driveway. He must have walked to town. He must*

*be feeling better. I'm not. Checked my temperature, and it's way too high.*

*Went to Doc's to let him know I was feeling crappy. He wasn't home, and must have been doing his rounds.*





## DR. GRAYSON'S MEDICAL FILES

Dr. Frank Grayson, like any good medical practitioner, keeps medical notes on all of his patients. As Janos Czbecki's (and his own) infection spreads, he has kept notes. These notes can be given to players as Player Handout B.

### JANOS CZBECKI FILE

#### ENTRY #378

*Janos seems to be suffering from a reaction to the flu shot he received on the mainland. His temperature is elevated at 103F, and he is presenting with both fever and chills, and possible delirium, which caused him to bite my hand. With appropriate bed rest and some time to recover he should be fine.*

#### ENTRY #379

*Janos seems to be recovering. His temperature is no longer within dangerous levels, but he has been sleeping mostly, according to Paula. I've urged her to keep giving him fluids and to contact me should he worsen again. Looks like a strong flu variant this year.*

### FRANK GRAYSON FILE

#### ENTRY #572

*The area on my hand where Janos Czbecki bit me has become infected and inflamed. I have treated it with iodine and covered it with a bandage.*

#### ENTRY #573

*The infection on my hand has become pustular. I have lanced it and used sterile gauze upon it. My temperature seems to be rising, though whether because of the bite, or because I may have been exposed to his flu vaccine, I cannot tell.*

#### ENTRY #574

*The infection on my hand has worsened, and my temperature has risen to 103.5F. I feel like I have the flu, and probably do. If this gets worse, I'll be without the means to treat it on the island and I should go to the mainland.*

### JANOS CZBECKI

Saturday 5th

Janos seems to be suffering from a reaction to the flu shot he received on the mainland. His temperature is elevated at 103F, and he is presenting with both fever and chills, and possible delirium, which caused him to bite my hand. With appropriate bed rest and some time to recover he should be fine.

Sunday 6th

Janos seems to be recovering. His temperature is no longer within dangerous levels, but he has been sleeping mostly, according to Paula. I've urged her to keep giving him fluids and to contact me should he worsen again. Looks like a strong flu variant this year.

### FRANK GRAYSON

Saturday 5th

The area on my hand where Janos Czbecki bit me has become infected and inflamed. I have treated it with iodine and covered it with a bandage.

Sunday 6th

The infection on my hand has become pustular. I have lanced it and used sterile gauze upon it. My temperature seems to be rising, though whether because of the bite, or because I may have been exposed to his flu vaccine, I cannot tell.

Monday 7th

The infection on my hand has worsened, and my temperature has risen to 103.5F. I feel like I have the flu, and probably do. If this gets worse, I'll be without the means to treat it on the island and I should go to the mainland.

PLAYER HANDOUT B





## THE INFECTED

The Green Flu has infected all of the islanders, and all have become one of The Infected of some sort, with the majority becoming Common Infected. A few have become Special Infected. The Special Infected locations are listed below and show on the map GM Map Z. Statistics for all of the Infected are at the end of the adventure.

### WITCH (WILD CARD)

Annie has turned into a Witch. She is at her store in the village (location 10A). This Infected is a GM Wild Card.

### HUNTER

Rob Bryant has turned into a Hunter, and he is lurking at his old house (Location 7). Alternatively, he is included in one of the roving packs of the GM's choice, or can make an appearance in Marrinhead.

### SMOKER

This Special Infected can be included in one of the roving packs, possibly with the Hunter at the same time if the player characters are doing well at surviving. The Smoker hides in the forest and hunts down the players using the trees to travel, and pulls the players into the trees with

its tongue, though he will travel into Marrinhead to team up with the Hunter.

### TANK (WILD CARD)

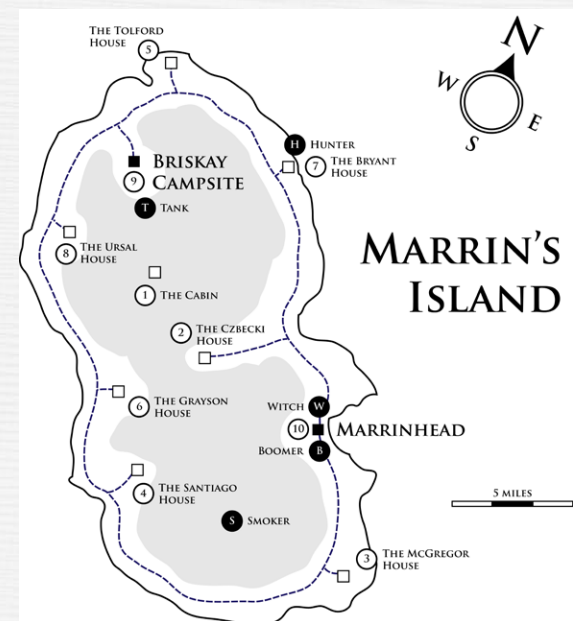
Originally one of the campers at the Briskay Campsite (Location 9), it has been staying around that area, hiding in the tree line. It may or may not be alone, depending upon how well the Survivors are doing. It may be supported by a group of roving Common Infected. This NPC is a GM Wild Card.

### BOOMER

Frank Grayson has become a Boomer and can be found wandering throughout Marrinhead (Location 10) or the Briskay Campsite (Location 9). If he ejects Boomer Bile, all of the nearby Common Infected will attack the Survivors, and they will attack in a full Raging Run.

### COMMON INFECTED

Packs of up to a 10-12 Infected stick together throughout the island and can appear at any location. Most of the packs are made up of hikers and campers who were visiting the island, but some islanders are also included in the packs. There are enough Infected roving to make 3-4 groups, but more can be added as needed.



GM MAP Z

## TIMELINE

The following is a rough timeline for the adventure. The events of the adventure are expected to unfold over a 48 hour period, when the military will return to the island to pick up any Survivors still alive, and take out any Infected.

### DAY 1 – FRIDAY 4TH

Janos Czbecki visits the mainland and gathers supplies for the island, specifically the campsite. He receives what he thinks





is his flu shot from a local clinic. He returns home to the island, makes his deliveries to Annie McGregor at her store and to the campsite, and returns home to his daughter Paula.

## DAY 2 – SATURDAY 5TH

Janos Czbecki contracts The Green Flu, and takes bed rest. His daughter Paula has Frank Grayson examine him. Czbecki bites Grayson. Grayson and Paula restrain him. Paula writes entry #129 in her diary. Annie McGregor delivers mail to all of the residents on the island, including the campsite.

## DAY 3 – SUNDAY 6TH

Grayson notices symptoms of the flu, and an infection in his hand. He checks on Czbecki, who is now sleeping soundly, and he removes the restraints. Paula seems to have contracted the flu also. Annie McGregor has symptoms of the flu. Paula writes her diary entry #130.

## DAY 4 – MONDAY 7TH

Grayson's infection in his hand worsens, and he treats it with antibiotics. He lies down in his bed. Czbecki leaves his house, and Paula thinks he's gone into town. Paula writes diary entry #131. Jack Tolford and his family come down the flu, as does the

Santiago family. Frank Grayson collapses in his bed from the infection.

## DAY 5 – TUESDAY 8TH

Everyone on the island becomes infected from exposure to those who are carrying it. Paula succumbs to the Infection and doesn't write any more diary entries.

## DAY 6 – WEDNESDAY 9TH

Confident that the Green Flu has taken hold, the military destroy the Czbecki ferryboat during the night.

## DAY 12 – TUESDAY 15TH 0200 HOURS

The Survivors awake in The Cabin. All hell breaks loose as they fend off the first of the Infected that they encounter.

## MILITARY PRESENCE

The military have established listening posts throughout the entire island and buildings, and will be listening in on all conversations. Their base of operations is a converted cargo ship that is currently near the mainland, out of sight of the island. The main deck and foredeck of the cargo ship have been customized to allow for six Huey Cobra helicopters to be able to be stationed and secured on it. The military will not interfere with any activity on the island until

after 48 hours, but will pick up Survivors who escape or who outlast the Infected.

## LOCATIONS

Each of the locations on the island is detailed below. First, an overview of the location is given, as well as details on rooms and special information for players. Equipment that can be used by players can be found here. The final information details any specific enemies that will be found at the location.

### 1. THE CABIN

The players awake in this cabin, suffering slight headaches from the drugs they were given during their kidnapping. They find themselves lying in the living room of the cabin, dressed as they were in their pajamas and bedclothes. The cabin is made up of a single living room, a kitchen and a small laundry room on the lower level. Upstairs, there are two bedrooms. None of the bedrooms contain anything of consequence and are empty of pretty much everything. One of the bedrooms looks over the front of the cabin, and the other the rear of the cabin. The front and rear doors are locked, but can be unlocked from inside the building.

**Equipment:** Flashlights (4), knives (4), baseball





bat (1), 9mm pistols (4), shotgun (1), rifle (1), compass, Player Map A, Ammo Cache.

**Enemies:** There are 5 Common Infected outside the cabin. After the Survivors wake up and start moving around, the Infected investigate the cabin, but cannot get in through the locked doors. If the players wish to leave the cabin, they'll have to take care of the Infected first. The Infected may become frenzied and attempt to come through any opening that is made, including broken windows.

## 2. THE CZBECKI HOUSE

The outside of this single ranch is in reasonable repair, but the garden is over-run with weeds, and doesn't look as if it has been tended to for some time. There is a map of island on a wall in study room, showing the Marrinhead, the main town of Marrin's Island (Player's Map B). The map can be removed from the wall and taken out of the frame. Also on wall is a Canadian flag. There is a desktop maritime radio here. Jack Tolford's truck is still here, although the battery is drained. Janos Czbecki's truck is here and in working order. The keys are on a side table in the hallway.

**Equipment:** Hunting rifle (1), ham radio, First Aid (11), Painkillers (1), Paula Czbecki's Dairy (see above), Jack Tolford's truck (keys in ignition, battery

dead), Janos Czbecki's truck, keys to Czbecki truck on dresser, desktop maritime radio.

## 3. THE MCGREGOR HOUSE

This is Annie McGregor's house. It has a rustic charm and sits high on the cliff on the highest part of the island. Outside it are a number of tended garden areas, which include covered vegetable areas, and off to one side are metal clothes poles with rope clotheslines attached to them. Pegged clothes are blowing in the wind on the lines. The inside of the house is fashioned in Americana style and it is obvious that an older woman lives alone in the house due to the kitsch that permeates the entire house. It has a living room, small kitchen and two bedrooms. One of the bedrooms is full of what looks to be various supplies you would typically find in a store.

**Equipment:** Knife (1), Painkillers (1), various supplies found in a store.

## 4. THE SANTIAGO HOUSE

The Santiago's house looks like a standard ranch until you step inside to find a more Latin style of internal architecture and coloring. There are framed children's drawings and photographs of the Santiagos all over the house: Hugo, his wife Lorena, and the three children Ramona, Pablo, and Sariel. The house has a living room, a

dining room, kitchen and three bedrooms. Two of the bedrooms are obviously children's rooms. In what seems to be a boy's room there are two dead hamsters in a cage that seemed to have died of malnourishment. To the right of the house is a large garage and workshop. On the front of the double doors to the workshop is a large padlock. Inside the workshop is a 70-75% complete custom wood boat that can sit 3 people. There is no sealant, pitch or varnish on the wood, so it leaks easily, but these items are available in the workshop area, although it will take time to set them. A key to the padlock for the workshop can be found in the house on a key rack in the hallway, as well as on the key ring for Hugo's truck in Marrinhead.

**Equipment:** Almost-finished boat, trailer hitch, sealant, pitch.

**Enemies:** The Santiagos are here. They are all Common Infected. They are all in the house, and the children are the first to rush out to meet the Survivors.

## 5. THE TOLFORD HOUSE

This is the house of Jack Tolford, his wife Sue, and his two children Marcus and Louisa. The house is a two-story building with a large living room, study, kitchen, media room, and three upstairs bedrooms. The study has a locked filing cabinet that





contains what seem to be police reports. On the desk in the study is a desktop computer and printer. The Tolfords are in the roving pack. Jack Tolford operated as the island Deputy, and kept dogs, and enjoyed hunting using bows in the woods on the island as well as on the mainland. The dogs are currently staying close to the house, but are starving and are liable to attack the players as they approach.

**Equipment:** Bow (1), quiver of arrows (12), computer (Study), toolkit (kitchen), working outboard motor (garage), welding torch (garage), welding mask (garage), Oxy tank (garage), shotgun (1), hunting rifle (1), desktop marine radio.

**Enemies:** Starving dogs (3) – found in Savage Worlds Bestiary.

### 6. THE GRAYSON HOUSE

Frank Grayson is a retired doctor who lived on the island and took care of the residents. A solitary man, his house was immaculately taken care of until he became Infected. In a fit of rage as The Infection took hold Frank trashed every room in the house before escaping and rushing into Marrinhead. The building is made up of a living room, kitchen, study and two bedrooms. The bed is heavily sweat-stained. He has an antique writing desk that has a

locked drawer in it. Breaking the lock will allow the Survivors to find an old Selectrix typewriter in it, along with medical files on all of the islanders. This includes recent medical notes on Janos Czbecki and Grayson's own infection.

**Equipment:** First Aid Kit (1), Painkillers (1), Player Handout B.

### 7. THE BRYANT HOUSE

Rob Bryant is a lone software developer who found success writing mobile software applications, and moved to the island. He was responsible for setting up the island's mesh wireless network and Internet system (MarrinNet) through a satellite uplink at the house. The server of MarrinNet is located in his side office. Bryant's house is a simple Cape Cod with two bedrooms, one of which has been converted into the office.

**Equipment:** Laptops (2) in one of the rooms, MarrinNet server in office.

### 8. THE URSAL HOUSE

The Ursals rent out a bed and breakfast, as well as run the small café called "Sound Bites" in the town. Their house is a small cottage with a simple living room, kitchen and three small bedrooms. One of the bedrooms is theirs and they rent out the other two. Searching the bedrooms finds all

three of them have been occupied recently. The Ursals and their guests have all been turned into Common Infected and have joined the roaming groups.

**Equipment:** Desktop computer in living room.

### 9. BRISKAY CAMPSITE

The campsite has a single dirt track leading up to the main camping area, and the office building for the campsite. The main camping area has slightly over a dozen tents of various styles and sizes in it. Some of them are ripped apart, whilst others are still standing. The contents of most of the tents are scattered all around the tents as if something rushed through and demolished the area.

The office building is made up of two rooms. The first is the public area, and the second is a closed office that attaches to it. There is a cash register on the counter in the public area, and fire-fighting equipment (axe, fire extinguisher) up against one wall. In the office is a computer and some first aid supplies.

A large contingent of campers had been staying on the island before the Infection. They have all become Infected, and one of them has turned into the Tank.

**Equipment:** SUV, truck, camping gear such as





small camping stoves, computer, First Aid Kit (1), Painkillers (1), axe (1), fire extinguisher (1).

**Enemies:** The Tank is here, hiding behind the campsite office building. Roving packs of Common Infected may also be here. The Tank will attack as soon as anyone goes near the office.

## 10. MARRINHEAD

Marrinhead is the main settlement of Marrin's Island, and is made up of three small buildings and a jetty. "Annie's" and "Sound Bites" are next door to each other on the inland side of the street, while "Hugo's Barcos and Bait" is next to the jetty.

**Enemies:** Frank Grayson is wandering around the buildings randomly. The Survivors may encounter him at any time. If he manages to spit bile or is exploded, a group of roaming Infected will charge the Survivors.

### A. "ANNIE'S "

This is the island's general store and is run by Annie McGregor. It also operates as the island's post office and shipping center. Along one wall is a series of wooden crates stacked on their sides in a 5x3 configuration. Each of these has a number attached to them, as well as a label. The numbers and labels for the most part match those on Player's Map C, with additional boxes for

the locations of businesses in Marrinhead. There is no mail in the mailboxes, as Annie delivered it a few days ago, but there is mail in the "Mainland" mailbox, which are mostly outgoing bill payments from islanders. There is a large map of the island next to the mailboxes with all of the appropriate locations and numbers drawn onto it for all the residences and the buildings.

**Equipment:** Map of the island (Player's Map C), various items generally found in a general store, keys to Annie's Cadillac, Annie's 1974 Cadillac (outside).

**Enemies:** The Witch (Annie) is here, crouching down at the back of the store. She won't immediately attack anyone who enters the store, but if they head towards the back of the store, she'll let out a warning growl.

### B. "HUGO'S BARCOS AND BAIT"

This is the island fishing supplies store, run by Hugo Santiago, and it is two stories tall. The main floor is made up of a counter area and a series of shelves that have fishing tackle and bait on them. There is a ladder on the exterior of the building that leads onto the roof of the building. Hugo also rented out a number of small aluminum boats that have are normally stacked off to the side of the jetty, but that have all been dropped into water, missing their drain-

age plugs. The plugs are in a box under the counter. There is an external metal stairway to the roof of the building here.

**Equipment.** Ammo Cache (1), plugs for aluminum boats.

### C. "SOUND BITES"

This is a small cafe with a retro look that was run by the Ursals and used to serve campers and other visitors to the island. Along all of the walls vintage vinyl records, LP covers and old posters from the 1940s and beyond are displayed. The building is made up of a kitchen, a shared restroom, and the main public room, which contains a counter and an opening to the kitchen to pass orders. The kitchen is fully stocked with a lot of food. Fridges and freezers, although not operational, still have a good quantity of food in them that has not spoiled.

**Equipment:** Kitchen equipment, knives (12), various foods.

### D. THE JETTY

Tied to the jetty are boats, although a number of them have been sunk, and none of them have working motors. Each of the boats are missing their base plugs. It's possible to add the motor from the Tolford House boat to allow the party to escape. If





they do, see “Escaping The Island” below. About half a mile out into the bay, the remains of Janos Czbecki’s ferry boat can be seen sticking out of the water. The ferry boat, which was used to travel to the mainland, is hopelessly damaged, and there is now way to use it to escape the island.

**Equipment:** Sunk aluminum boats (missing base plugs from the boat store.).

## ESCAPING THE ISLAND

There are only several ways to escape the island, although some will prove more of a challenge than others. All of them, if successful, result in being picked up by the military, who are operating out of a converted transportation tanker holding position off from the island and the mainland.

### USE A BOAT

Using the boats at the Marrinhead jetty and the outboard engine and boat repair kit from the Tolford’s house, they can escape the island. If they do escape the island, then as soon as they are in the middle of the bay, the military pick them up in a boat that has helicopters for support. If the Survivors attempt to use the boat from the Santiago’s workshop, it will sink out in the bay without proper treatment, and they will need to attempt to swim back to the

island with three swimming TNs of 4,6,8 as the cold affects their swimming ability.

### SWIM OFF THE ISLAND

The first way off is to attempt to swim, but this requires five Swimming rolls with TNs of 4,6,8,10,12 as the cold water saps their physical heat and strength. If any player manages to make it to the final dice roll, they are picked up by the military in the water, who collect them in rescue boats before they drown, and take them to the cargo ship.

### DESTROY THE INFECTED

If the majority of the Infected are destroyed, the military will utilize their Hueys (one for each Survivor, and two for support filled with armed soldiers) and land just to the outside of the village. Soldiers and scientists in full biohazard gear will attempt to “rescue” the players. They will not attempt to use deadly force, and will instead use gas and rubber bullets to capture any Survivors that remain. Once they have them captured, they will take them off the island in their Hueys and take them to the cargo ship.

## CONTINUING THE STORY

What happens after the adventure ends is up to you, but there will be a Left 4 Dead Redux #2 that will continue the “official” story, and incorporate the Infected from Left 4 Dead 2. Keep an eye out for it!

## LEFT 4 DEAD EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is non-standard equipment in the Savage Worlds setting, but is prominent in the first Left 4 Dead video game. Rules for using each of the pieces of equipment are below:

### PAINKILLERS

They will temporarily reduce Wounds by 1 level for 4 hours, and do stack. They can be used after The Golden Hour, and even if a Heal check has been failed.

### FIRST AID KIT

Permanently reduces Wounds received by 1. Can only be used during The Golden Hour, and if a Heal check has been failed.

### AMMO CACHE

This allows players to stock up on fully on ammunition, and re-supplies them with





twice the maximum amount of ammunition for any weapons they have.

## USING YOUR OWN PCs

You can easily create and use your own Survivors. All of the Survivor PCs for this adventure were created at the base Seasoned level of play, so create any character with 20 points of XP. Make sure you try and diversify them a little so that they're all a bit different and round out various skill sets.

## THE SURVIVOR PCs

The following Survivors can be played as either male or female characters.

### ADAM/AISHA

Adam/Aisha works as middle school teacher in a challenging public school in central Ohio. The pay is lousy, but the work is gratifying and challenging, and he/she has a deal to pay back all of his/her student loans after working in the school for five years. Technically and mechanically challenged, Adam/Aisha has kindled a love for all things Renaissance, and has become a prime mover at many of the local Renaissance festivals. Years of Archery

have lent him/her some recognition as a good shot, and he/she often takes part in festival competitions.

**Attributes:** Agility D4, Smarts D10, Spirit D8, Strength D4, Vigor D4

**Skills:** Driving D4, Investigation D4, Knowledge: History D4, Knowledge: Geography D4, Knowledge: Mathematics D4, Persuasion D6, Shooting D8, Streetwise D4, Swimming D4, Throwing D4

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 2, **Toughness:** 4, **Charisma:** 2

**Weapons:** Unarmed Strike D4-2 (Str)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- ☒ All Thumbs: -2 Repair; Break devices on 1s.
- ☒ Cautious: Plot things out in detail before any action.
- ☒ Charismatic: +2 Charisma
- ☒ Jack-of-all-Trades: Unskilled Smarts-based skill rolls at D4.

### KELLY

Kelly has the best of both worlds: he/she can beat people up as a regional mixed martial artist, and then treat their injuries after doing so. When not training or participating in regional fights, Kelly works as a paramedic at a local hospital, driving ambulances faster than he/she should, and having the overconfidence to deal with any trauma situation that occurs during any

day he/she is in the field. Kelly isn't "can do", but "does do".

**Attributes:** Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D8, Strength D6, Vigor D6

**Skills:** Driving D8, Fighting D10, Healing D10+2, Investigation D6, Knowledge: Medicine D6, Streetwise D4

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 6, **Charisma:** 0

**Weapons:** Unarmed Strike D10 (Str+D4)

#### **Special Abilities:**

- ☒ Arrogant: Flaunt superiority; Seek master in battle.
- ☒ Brawny: +1 Tough; Load limit is 8 times Str.
- ☒ Healer: +2 on all Healing rolls; 5 companions gain +2 natural healing.
- ☒ Martial Artist: Considered armed, +D4 unarmed damage.

### CHERRY/CHUCK

Cherry/Chuck used to run her/his own boating business years ago, but retired recently once the economy started to show signs of a downturn. Glad to have just got out in time, Cherry/Chuck moved to the Louisiana bayous where she/he could spend time on the houseboat with the proceeds of the boating business sale. When not sitting back and enjoying retirement, Cherry/Chuck gets together with other survivalist friends in the local militia, performing simulated combat maneuvers and preparing to defend the homeland.



**Attributes:** Agility D6, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D6

**Skills:** Boating D4, Intimidation D6, Notice D6+2, Repair D4, Shooting D8, Stealth D4, Survival D8, Tracking D8

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 2, **Toughness:** 6, **Charisma:** -2

**Weapons:** Unarmed Strike D4-2 (Str)

**Special Abilities:**

- ☠ Mean: Ill-tempered and disagreeable; -2 Charisma.
- ☠ Stubborn: Always wants her/his way; Never admits she/he's wrong.
- ☠ Alertness: Very perceptive; +2 Notice.
- ☠ Marksman: If no movement, gain Aim maneuver; Max ROF is 1.
- ☠ Tough As Nails: +1 Toughness.

**JIM/JANE**

Jim/Jane grew up an army brat, following Dad around from base to base, and spending too much time hanging around in the vehicle pools with all the mechanics learning not only how to fix cars, but how to fight the right way - dirty. When Dad was honorably discharged after a weapons exercise went wrong, he set up a mechanic's business, and Jim/Jane helped out when not in school. After graduation, the grunt work was handed to him/her while Dad runs the business end. Jim/Jane

seems to be able to speak pure machine; there's no engine that he/she can't coax back to life or supercharge, and there's no object that he/she can't turn into a weapon, especially vehicle parts.

**Attributes:** Agility D8, Smarts D8, Spirit D6, Strength D6, Vigor D4

**Skills:** Driving D8, Fighting D8, Healing D4, Knowledge: Cars and bikes D4, Notice D8, Repair D10, Shooting D4, Survival D4

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 4, **Charisma:** 0

**Weapons:** Unarmed Strike D8 (Str)

**Special Abilities:**

- ☠ Heroic: Never says no to a person in need.
- ☠ Brave: +2 to Fear tests.
- ☠ Improvisational Fighter: Ignore -1 penalty for improvised.
- ☠ Level Headed: Draw two initiative cards and keep the best.

**THE INFECTED NPCs**

**WITCH (WILD CARD)**



**Attributes:** Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D6, Strength D8, Vigor D10

**Skills:** Climbing D6, Fighting D10, Intimidation D6, Notice D4

**Pace:** 1/4/8, **Parry:** 7, **Toughness:** 9

**Special Abilities:**

- ☠ Claw: Str+D6
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- ☠ Hardy: The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.
- ☠ Sobbing Fear: The Witch sobs continually when staying still. She can easily

be heard with a Notice roll, and if heard, Survivors must make a Guts roll to continue going near her.

- ☠ Terror Attack: Any survivor attacked by a Witch must make a check against Terror.
- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Warning Growl: If the Witch detects a Survivor nearby with a Notice check or has a flashlight shone on her, she will issue a growl at them. If they do not back from her, she will attack.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.



**HUNTER**



**Attributes:** Agility D8, Smarts D4, Spirit D4, Strength D6, Vigor D6

**Skills:** Climbing D8, Fighting D8, Intimidation D6, Notice D8, Stealth D6, Tracking D6

**Pace:** 1/4/8, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- ☠ Claw: Str
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- ☠ Grapple Attack: While Grappling a character, the Hunter does D6+D4 damage. The Hunter can maintain the grapple without needing to roll. A character that is grappled is at -4 to escape the grapple.
- ☠ Growl: Hunters have a very distinctive growl that may alert Survivors to their presence with a successful Notice check.
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Pounce: Hunters can leap 1d6ft towards a target as part of a

Fighting attack, and it gains a +4 to attack when it does so. Its parry is reduced by -2 until the next action. If it succeeds in the attack, it has Grappled the unfortunate target, and performs a Grapple Attack.

- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.
- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

**SMOKER**



**Attributes:** Agility D6, Smarts D6, Spirit D4, Strength D6, Vigor D6

**Skills:** Climbing D8, Fighting D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D6, Shooting D8, Stealth D6, Tracking D6

**Pace:** 1/4/8, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- ☠ Claw: Str
- ☠ Cough: The Smoker has a persistent cough. Survivors nearby can hear it with a Notice check.
- ☠ Explosive: Killing the Boomer causing it to explode, covering an area the size of the Large Burst template in smoke, blinding everyone in the area. It takes 3 actions for the area to clear.
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When

it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.

- ☠ Tongue Attack: The Smoker can attack using its tongue at range 8/16/24 using Shooting. If it succeeds, it will pull its target towards it 1d6 ft each action. When the target is adjacent to the Smoker, it will instead perform D6 strangulation damage per action. The Smoker does not need to reroll to maintain the grapple, and characters who are grappled are at -4 to escape it.
- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.



**TANK (WILD CARD)**



Attributes: Agility D6, Smarts D4, Spirit D6, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2  
 Skills: Climbing D8, Fighting D10, Intimidation D6, Notice D4, Throwing D10

Pace: 1/4/8, Parry: 7, Toughness: 15(2)

**Special Abilities:**

- ☠ Claw: Str+D8
- ☠ Fear Attack: Any survivor attacked by a Witch must make a check against Fear.
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- ☠ Hardy: The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.
- ☠ Size +2: Adds +2 Toughness.
- ☠ Strength: The Tank can throw items over the range 8/16/24, doing base damage of Str + additional from the item's weight. Cannot move when throwing.
- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.

**BOOMER**



Attributes: Agility D4, Smarts D6, Spirit D4, Strength D6, Vigor D8

Skills: Climbing D6, Fighting D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D4, Shooting D8

Pace: 1/4/8; Parry, 5, Toughness: 7

**Special Abilities:**

- ☠ Boomer Bile: Boomer Bile attracts other Infected in the nearby area. It takes 3 actions to remove the Boomer Bile. During this time, a character covered in Boomer Bile is blinded at a negative value for the number of attempts left to clear it off (-3, -2, -1). They cannot see further than 2 feet around them as they attempt to remove it.
- ☠ Boomer Vomit: The Boomer shoots Boomer Bile at targets using the Cone Template. They can do this once per encounter.
- ☠ Claw: Str+D4
- ☠ Explosive: Killing the Boomer causing it to explode, covering everyone within the Large Burst template in Boomer Bile.
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.
- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.



**COMMON INFECTED**



**Attributes:** Agility D6, Smarts D4, Spirit D4, Strength D6, Vigor D6

**Skills:** Climbing D6, Fighting D6, Intimidation D6, Notice D4

**Pace:** 1/4/8, **Parry:** 5, **Toughness:** 7

**Special Abilities:**

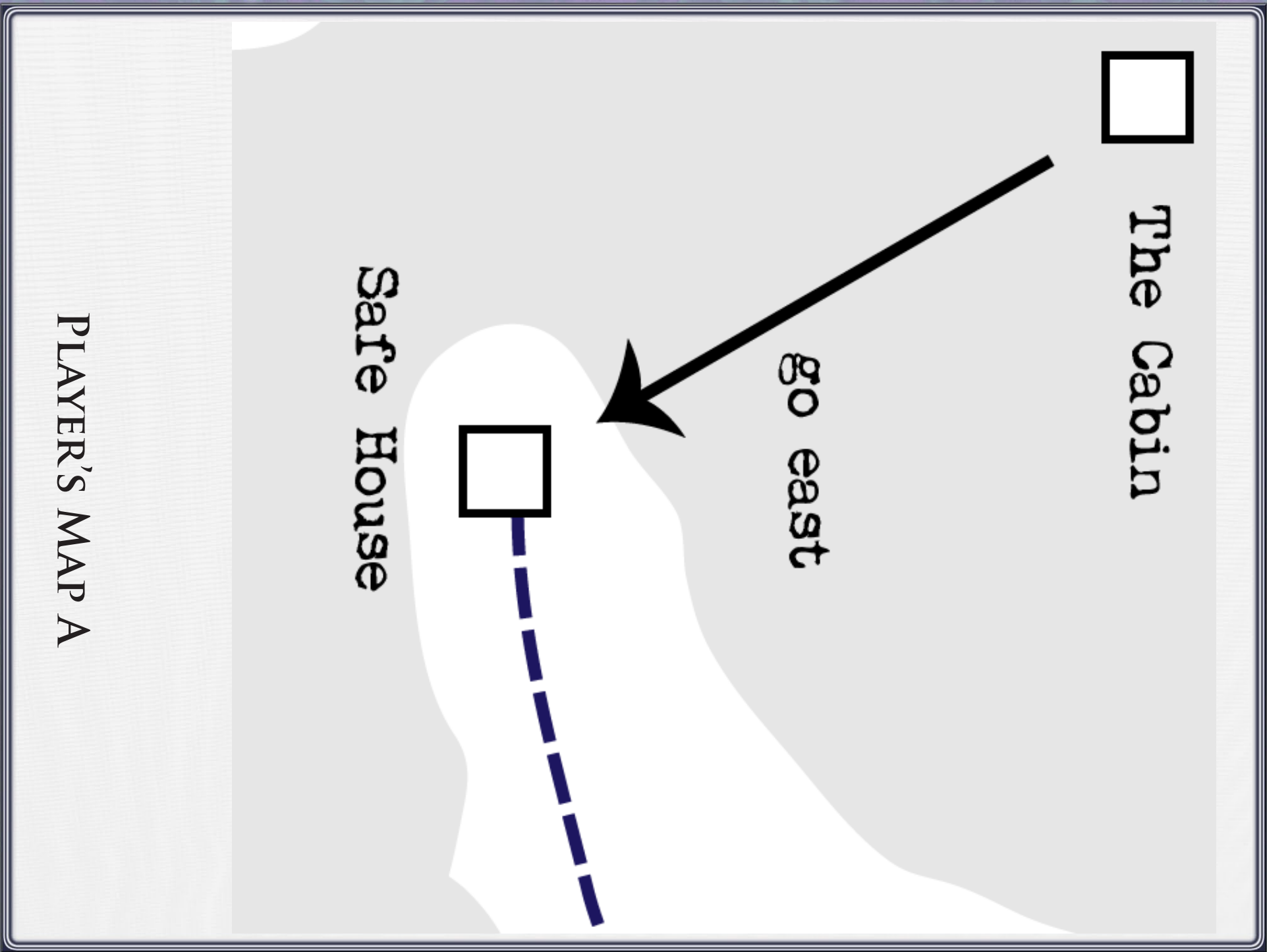
- ☠ Claw: Str
- ☠ Fearless: Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- ☠ Low Light Vision: Ignores penalties for all Low and Dark lighting.
- ☠ Raging Run: While an Infected does not move or has not detected Survivors its speed is 1. When

Survivors are nearby and it has noticed them it is 4. When it has detected Survivors raging it will run at 8.

- ☠ Undead: +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, called shots do no extra damage.
- ☠ Weakness (Head): Shots to a zombie's head are +2 damage.







The Cabin

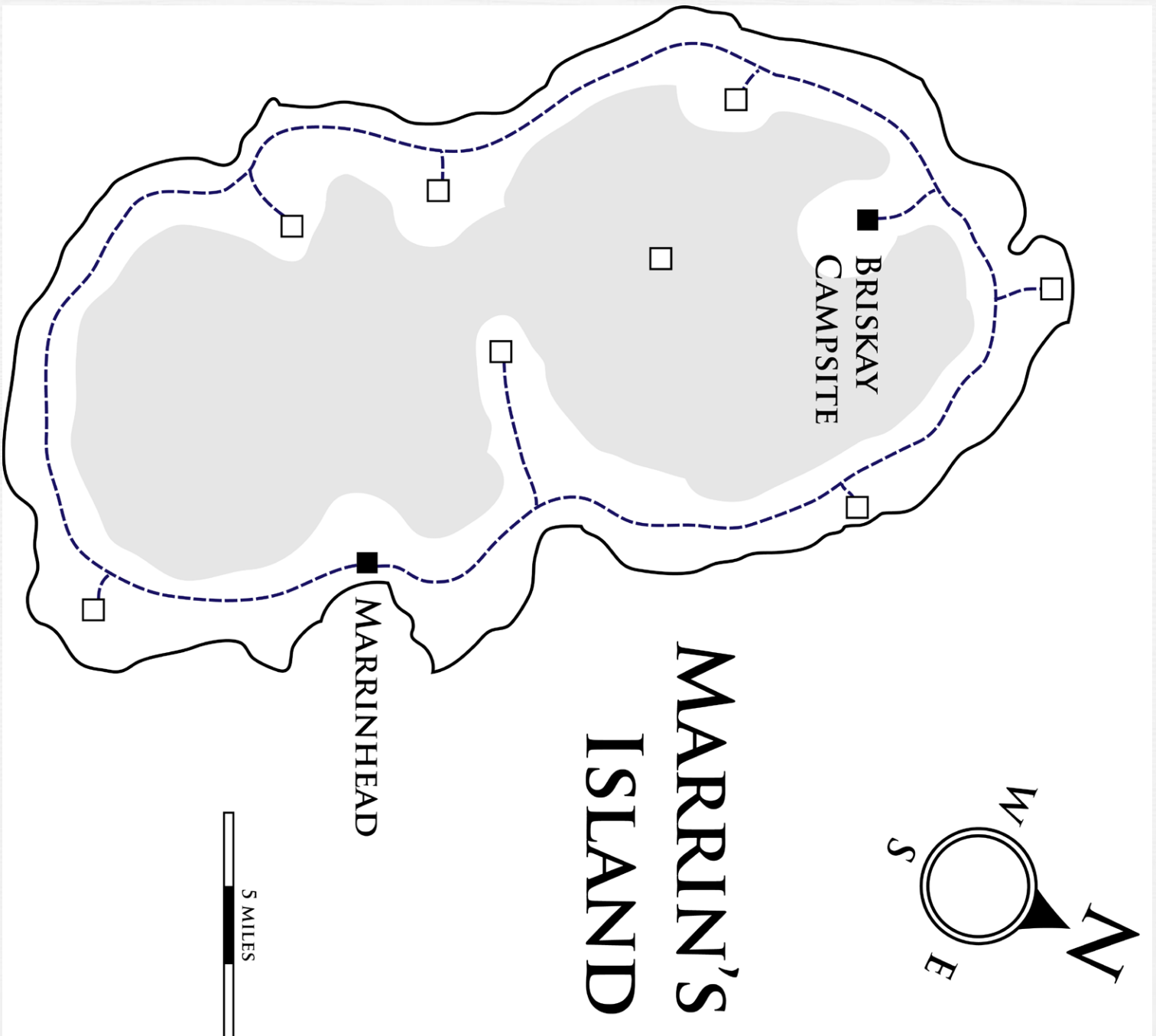
go east



Safe House

PLAYER'S MAP A

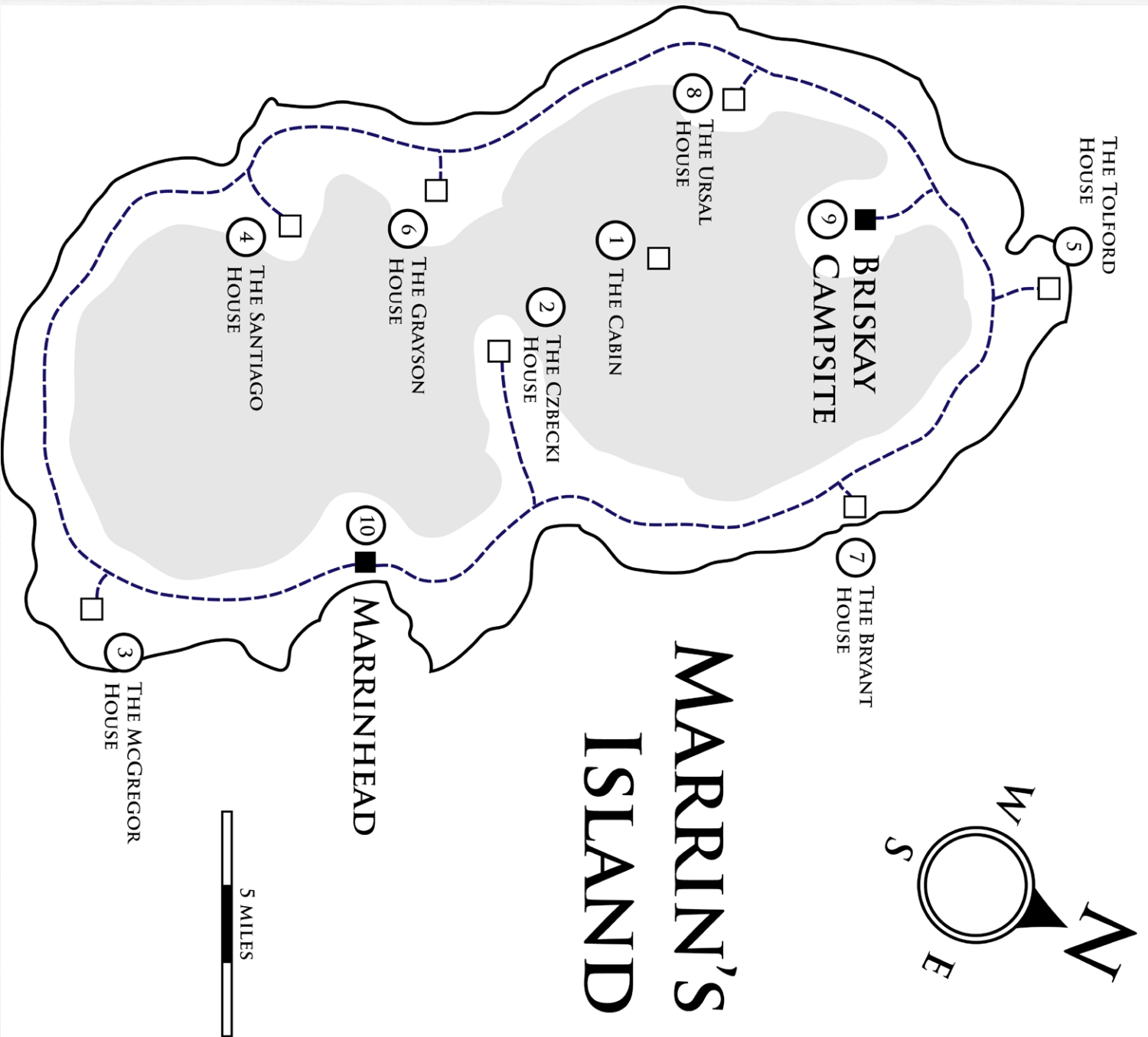




# MARRIN'S ISLAND

PLAYER'S MAP B





PLAYER'S MAP C



Friday 4th

Dad got home from the mainland today after picking up more supplies for the campsite and himie. We also picked up a new set of headphones for me! Fantastic! We went to bed early though, complaining of a sore head. We was running a temperature, so I made him some hot cocoa and sent him to bed.

Saturday 5th

Dad doesn't look so hot this morning, and his bed sheets were covered in sweat. It didn't look like he got any sleep at all last night. We said he got his usual flu shot on the mainland and this is just his body getting used to it. I hope he's right. He looks like crap. I'm going to get Doc Grayson to check on him.

Saturday 5th

Dad bit Doc! WTF??! Doc put it down to delirium from the flu shot and a very high temperature. Dad's taken a nasty reaction to his flu shot. Doc says that's why he never gets a flu shot. Doc had us tie Dad down for his own safety and then Doc went home.

Dad's still sweating in bed, and his temperature is still high. We seems to be sleeping better now.

Sunday 6th

Doc checked on Dad, who has been sleeping mostly through the night and said he looked better. I feel sniffly too, like I've caught Dad's flu. Doc had a bandage on his hand where Dad bit him. We seemed to be sweating a lot. Yope Dad's bite wasn't rabid! Yay! We untied Dad. His temperature was down.

Monday 7th

Wake to find Dad out of the house. His truck was still in the driveway. We must have walked to town. We must be feeling better. I'm not. Checked my temperature, and it's way too high. Went to Doc's to let him know I was feeling crappy. He wasn't home, and must have been doing his rounds.

## PLAYER'S HANDOUT A



## JANOS CZBECKI

Saturday 5th

Janos seems to be suffering from a reaction to the flu shot he received on the mainland. His temperature is elevated at 103F, and he is presenting with both fever and chills, and possible delirium, which caused him to bite my hand. With appropriate bed rest and some time to recover he should be fine.

Sunday 6th

Janos seems to be recovering. His temperature is no longer within dangerous levels, but he has been sleeping mostly, according to Paula. I've urged her to keep giving him fluids and to contact me should he worsen again. Looks like a strong flu variant this year.

## FRANK GRAYSON

Saturday 5th

The area on my hand where Janos Czbecki bit me has become infected and inflamed. I have treated it with iodine and covered it with a bandage.

Sunday 6th

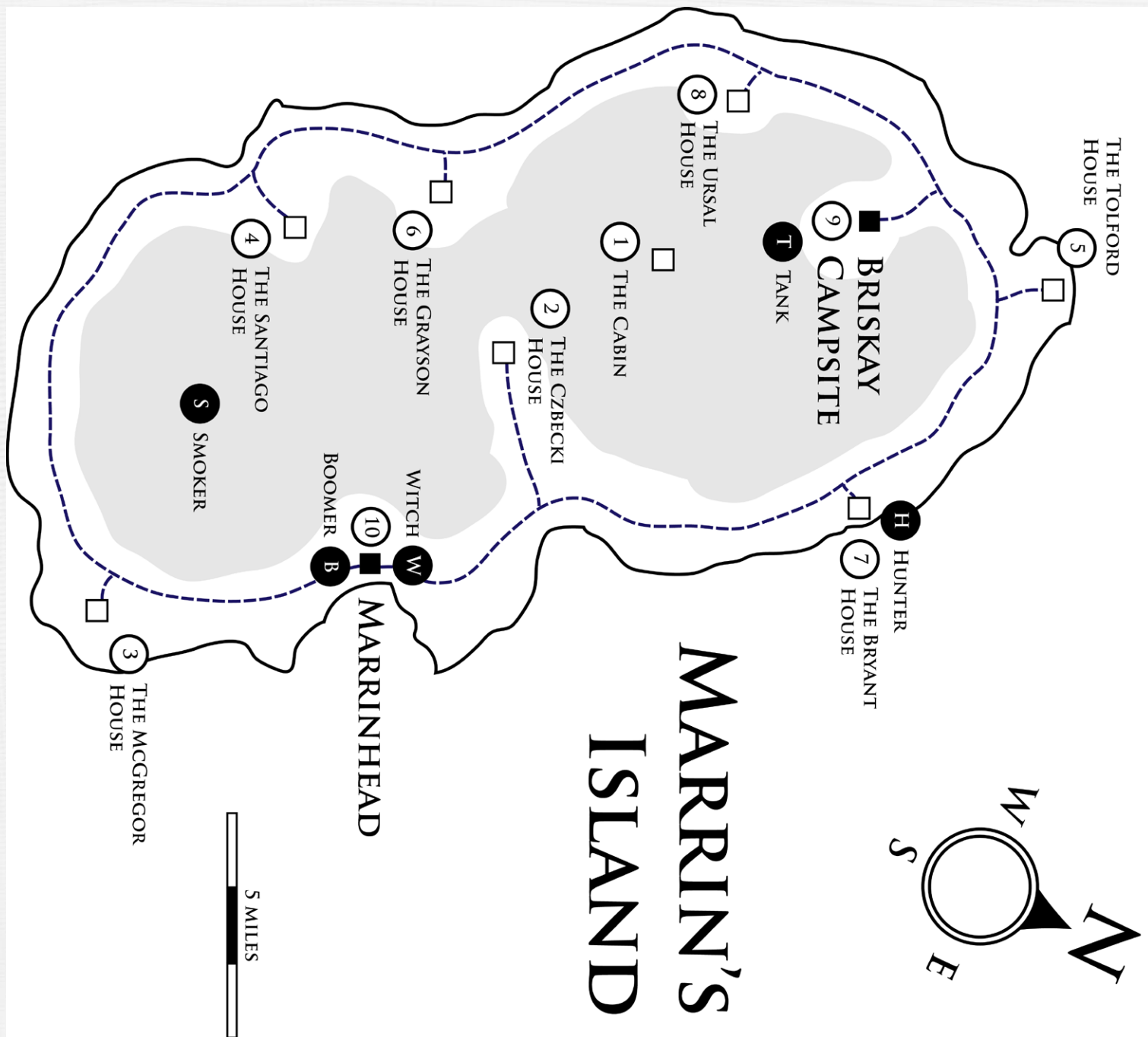
The infection on my hand has become pustular. I have lanced it and used sterile gauze upon it. My temperature seems to be rising, though whether because of the bite, or because I may have been exposed to his flu vaccine, I cannot tell.

Monday 7th

The infection on my hand has worsened, and my temperature has risen to 103.5F. I feel like I have the flu, and probably do. If this gets worse, I'll be without the means to treat it on the island and I should go to the mainland.

## PLAYER'S HANDOUT B





GM'S MAP Z



# GET AROUND TOWN

The player-characters are traveling through the southwestern USA and happen across a town that is not shown or named on their maps. The whole town appears deserted. On a successful check of Intelligence one of the PCs recalls reading about a town that was built purely to test domestic and business technologies. The federal portion of the funding dried up and the corps moved out.

- 1 - The town is completely deserted, having never been lived in. All the utilities are off and there is nothing here of note save shelter from adverse weather or any pursuers they might be avoiding.
- 2 - The town is devoid of life but the utilities are still turned on. The automated control systems are still functioning, but faulty after years without servicing



and 2 security robots are summoned to deal with the trespassers.

- 3 - As #1 but the town has become a base for Darklings (Referee's choice) and their Igors. They will remain hidden until nightfall and will then attempt to rob/kidnap/eat/experiment upon/sacrifice the PCs as appropriate to the Darkling type.

A Demon Seed  
By Lee Williams  
For Dark Conspiracy

Inspired by this news article: <http://apnews.excite.com/article/20110907/D9PJBS000.html>.  
Title courtesy of the Human League.





# DUST

**D**ust is like a summer road trip through the empty stretches of Africa, Australia or the United States - long ribbons of hot asphalt, dirt or gravel tracks, rocky outcrops, dry creek beds, sparse trees, heat haze and old buildings that appear abandoned. Nothing moves except the branches of trees or the stalks of long grass. Sometimes an empty can is blown onto the road and dust devils blow sand and leaf litter about. No matter what time your watch says, it always appears to be around mid-afternoon and the daylight is constant - there is no night.

Dust appears to be deserted. Anyone travelling through this splinterland will find the only living beings other than themselves are other unfortunates who have entered the proto-dimension. While plants can be found in many forms, trees, shrubs, grasses etc. etc. animals are not represented, even insects are absent. Sand, dried clumps of earth, dust, abandoned buildings and the plants, that's all there is to see and the dust gets into everything, your hair, your eyes, your nose, your car and your clothes. Sand piles up against rocks, walls and cars, dust lays over every surface. In some places drifting sand has almost buried buildings or vehicles.

**Name:** Dust

**Type:** Splinterland

**Discontinuity:** 1

**Assimilation Effect Value:** 0

There are, however, many artefacts of humanity. Numerous small towns can be found on any of the roads and rail lines that crisscross the landscape along with small farms and even mine sites. Cars, trucks, buses and even railway rolling stock sit in place as if they were abandoned years or decades earlier. Examining any of the vehicles or buildings is like stepping back into your grandparent's era, there are no examples of digital technology anywhere and magazines & posters advertise products discontinued many years ago. Everything is faded from long exposure to the sun.

Of all the impressions that a visitor may receive, heat, dust, emptiness, dried-up creeks, the bleached colours and so on, the overwhelming feeling is of dryness. Spend enough time in Dust and you'll feel parched and no amount of water seems to quench your thirst. Stay too long in Dust and you'll never leave as the moisture is leached from

A Proto-Dimension  
By Kevin O'Neill  
For Dark Conspiracy







your body and your desiccated corpse is rendered into smaller and smaller particles until you too become part of the ever-present dust.

### THE WORLD OF DUST

Dust renders most organic material down to minute particles but metal, stone and glass are untouched. Clothes, hair, bones and even plastics are broken down in a matter of days. While the plants living in Dust are immune to these effects, plants brought into Dust will be broken down. Liquids will evaporate or at best be reduced to sludge or paste, generally becoming worthless.

Petroleum products become a gummy residue that clogs fuel filters and injection systems or clogs up gears and driveshafts.

While the terrain of Dust covers hundreds of kilometres, it is bounded on some sides by high, impassable mountains while all the roads, trails, tracks and railway lines suffer from “curvature”, they appear to connect back to their start points (see Proto-Dimensions, Boundaries page 15 for further explanation of curvature).

Metals do not rust as there is no moisture in the air to assist the corrosion process. Explorers can find all manner of tools, vehicle parts, machine parts and even weapons left by others who have travelled through Dust. In some cases explorers might find it worthwhile to salvage various original Dust items for sale although they should be wary about claiming the car engine they’re selling is, for example, a genuine 1950s Cadillac 346 L-head V8 motor – it might be exactly the same in all respects but this includes serial numbers, the items originally from Dust are all replicas of those from Earth. Only those items brought in by travelers will be authentic Earth manufacture.

The danger of Dust, as mentioned earlier, is that the proto-dimension draws all the moisture out of any object. It would appear that this liquid gives life to the plants found there (as they seem to thrive when large quantities of water are poured onto the ground around them). This dehydration process takes a day or two for human sized creatures but will occur far faster for larger creatures. Aside from the chance for salvage, this is one of the only benefits to be had from Dust; larger creatures suffer damage faster than



humans will. That and the fact that very few Darklings will enter Dust because they too fear its hazards.

## THE GAME MECHANICS OF DUST

Any human sized creature will lose one point of Constitution for every four hours spent in the proto-dimension. Once their CON has reached zero, they die from dehydration. Larger creatures e.g. up to twice the size of a human, will lose two points of CON for every four hours spent in Dust. Larger creatures, e.g. African elephant sized, will lose three points and massive creatures will lose four points of CON (i.e. one point per hour).

Dust can provide a small period of respite for Minion Hunters hard pressed by the enemy. It can even offer up some equipment that may be useful to them but it is by no means a safe place.





## NOW BATTING...

An Interview with Angus Abranson  
By Lee Williams

# CHRONICLE CITY

**Angus Abranson** is a long-standing fixture of the UK and European gaming scene. He has worked in every aspect of RPGs, from selling them retail right through to writing and design. Lee caught up with him recently as he was setting up a new company, **Chronicle City**.

**Lee:** *For starters, tell us a bit about yourself in your own words and how you first got into gaming?*

**Angus:** As a kid I was always playing, and developing my own, board games and writing stories. When I was about 10 or 11 I discovered Warlock of Firetop Mountain, the first of the Fighting Fantasy books by Ian Livingstone & Steve Jackson, and loved it. I proceeded to devour the few titles in the series that were out at that time – as well as some of the American ‘Choose Your Own Adventure’ books which I also then stumbled across. It wasn’t until I moved to the States and lived with my cousins that I was introduced to an actual role playing game though.

When I was 12 I moved to the States to go to school for a while and was living at my aunts there. The first day my uncle took me out shooting, the second day two of my cousins introduced me to Dungeons & Dragons. I was absolutely hooked

on D&D from the moment we started to play. Having read the Fighting Fantasy series I think it helped me as I knew more or less what to do – but the freedom of not being given set options was great as it left it all up to your imagination. Within a few weeks I had not only played D&D but also Top Secret and by the time I came back to the UK at Christmas I was a RPG addict. Armed with my very own PHB and DMG I didn’t look back.

I started visiting the Virgin games store on Oxford Street and the old Games Workshop in Hammersmith and my games collection started to grow. I also got involved in a games group at school during lunch and also, through a school friend, a regular Saturday group that met in the Swiss Cottage library. Although D&D was certainly our main game at the time we played a load of other games too – Paranoia, MERP, Twilight 2000, Golden Heroes, Judge Dredd, etc.



I was then told of a new store that had open just a few miles from where I lived called Leisure Games. I remember the first time I went there. It was after school and I had some money my grandfather had given me and I got a taxi to Finchley Central, not having a clue where the store was and thinking it closed at 5. The taxi dropped me off but none of the shops I popped in to ask where this new gaming mecca was knew it, because it was so new. I finally found it, having run halfway down Ballards Lane and came crashing through the door, only to find it didn't shut until 6! Thus I spent the next hour glued to the shelves looking through the books and miniature ranges and left with a copy of Legends & Lore. I pretty much became a permanent fixture at the shop from that point, spending most of the afternoons after school in the shop and ended up helping out as it was only Tony (the founder of the shop) who worked there at the time. I then got a Saturday job there and went fulltime when I was 18 and had left school. The rest, as they say, is history.

**Lee:** *You have been working in the gaming industry for a good while, starting I think at Leisure Games. What made you decide to set up your own publishing outfit, Cubicle 7?*

**Angus:** I had dabbled with publishing on and off for a while. I helped launch Valkyrie magazine back in 1994 and had also been part of a company called Network X in the early 90's that was primarily a student outfit that produced a cyberpunk miniatures skirmish game with role playing elements called Dark Winter (we sold about 2000 copies at the time). I was also one of the owners of Nightfall Games, who own SLA Industries, and was eager to do more.

I'd been putting off starting up Cubicle 7 for a number of years because I was very heavily involved with the Camarilla, an

international LARP society and White Wolfs Fan Club. I was on the international board of directors for the society looking after international development and that, combined with my in-character roles, took up a lot of my free time in conjunction with being Manager of Leisure Games.

I had stepped down from the Camarilla, to concentrate on new ventures, when White Wolf then took over the running of the society (which caused some friction with the then Board of Directors of the Fan Club). Mike Tinney, the President of White Wolf, asked if I could come back on board to help with the transition and I agreed to do so, but only for a year to help stabilise things. Once that year was up I then left and started putting together Cubicle 7.

The main reason I wanted to run my own publishing company was so I could help, and see, games that I wanted to play come out. Like many gamers I had a head full of ideas and wanted to put my money where my mouth was and give it a shot.

**Lee:** *How did you come to leave Cubicle 7 behind and start up Chronicle City?*

**Angus:** There were a number of reasons behind my departure from Cubicle 7. At the core though I just felt the time was right to move on. Cubicle 7 had taught me a lot, especially in the last 2 ½ years of running the company fulltime, and there were things we (Dom, my partner at C7, and myself) had learned that if we'd known at the beginning of going fulltime we'd have done different. It was a great Apprenticeship if you like. Leaving the company when I did allowed me to put that experience to use in starting up a new company and build-



ing things up knowing what to try and avoid and what also worked.

**Lee:** *What sort of products can we expect to see from Chronicle City, if you can tell us that is!*

**Angus:** Chronicle City will be publishing some of our own home-grown products as well as a number of products from a variety of companies and designers that have partnered with us. We're currently developing Genesis Descent, which is a dark future techno-thriller cyberpunk setting that I originally started working on for Cubicle 7 but the rights reverted to me when I left the company, and a game called Project Victoria, which is a Victorian era superhero setting. There are a few other projects 'in the works' but none of them are really ready to be hinted at at present. We've also got a number of card and board games in the works – mainly Eurostyle family/hobby games – the first of which should come out this summer.

As far as our partners are concerned there's a wide range of games across a variety of genres including Eldritch Skies (a Cthonian science fiction game using the UniSystem by Battlefield Press), Dungeonslayers (a fantasy game from German publishers Uhrwerk Verlag), Bulletproof Blues (a superhero game by Brandon Blackmoor), Cold & Dark (a new dark science fiction game from Sweden's Wicked World), Witch Girls Adventures from Channel M (based upon the comic book series), Hellspawn (a cool superhero-alien invasion game using the Savage Worlds system from Daring Entertainment), and games from companies such as Gun Metal Games, Greywood Publishing, Alephtar Games, Sixtystone Press and Radical Approach, amongst others.

**Lee:** *Leaving the business side of things alone now, what are some of your personal favourite RPGs and board games, and why?*

**Angus:** I always have trouble saying what my favourite games are – mainly because there are so many of them. You'd probably get a different Top Ten on any given day. My old favourites certainly include Marvel (the TSR version), TORG, Amber, Deadlands, Kult, Warhammer FRPG, the World of Darkness series (especially Vampire: The Masquerade and Hunter: The Reckoning), Cyberpunk and Call of Cthulhu. I tend to prefer darker, more gritty, games.

There are a lot of great games on the Indie scene too – I love Cold War and Hot City for instance, and Victoriana and Airship Pirates (which were both published through Cubicle 7) are both favourites of mine too.

Board game wise my favourites range from longer games such as Civilisation, Supremacy and Diplomacy to family favourites such as Ticket To Ride, Carcassonne, Settlers of Catan and Dominion. We've also been playing a lot of the '10 Days...' series by Out of the Box recently, as well as Iello's great 'King of Tokyo' board game.

**Lee:** *You have lived in several different countries. What variations do you find in the way gamers of different nations approach gaming, if there are any?*

**Angus:** There are regional differences, but then it changes a fair amount between groups too. I wouldn't say that there is too much difference overall, although you could make some generic sweeping statements about styles of play, but they'd come up anywhere. I would say that some of the other markets (Brazil especially springs to mind here) have a much



better male-to-female ratio of gamers and also a far younger audience than you generally get in the US or UK, which tends to be an aging one on the whole.

**Lee:** *On a related note, I asked this next question when we interviewed James "Grim" Desborough: Do you find that being British informs your creativity?*

**Angus:** Definitely. I think British companies, and writers, tend to have a bleaker outlook that comes through in their games over many American games. If you look at the games that have come out of the UK over the years – SLA Industries, Warhammer, A\*State, Cold City, Hot War, Tales of Gargenthir, etc – they tend to be much darker and gritty. I believe a lot of that has to do with the national psyche. Many of the writers grew up during the 70's and 80's and it shines through not only in games but in TV and literature too. If you compare the most popular UK shows when we were growing up in the UK (Eastenders, Coronation Street – shows about the working classes and hardship) to those popular in America at the time (Dallas, Dynasty – shows about the megarich) I think that sets the tone very nicely. If you look at the comics industry many of the British writers (Alan Moore, Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison, Garth Ennis, Warren Ellis) have a much darker style to them.

**Lee:** *Which product that you have been involved with are you most proud of, or happiest with?*

**Angus:** If I had to pick only two I'd say Victoriana and Airship Pirates that we published under Cubicle 7.

**Lee:** *What other interests do you have outside of gaming? What else floats your boat, to use the vernacular?*

**Angus:** Music, comics, books and film. If you combined those with gaming I'd say that probably equates to 95% of everything I own or do in one way or another. I'm a massive music fan – both live and recorded – and love going to gigs and festivals when I can. I used to DJ (many years ago) and if I hadn't gone down the games route I like to think I'd have done something involving music instead.

**Lee:** *Finally, are there any games from other publishers that you have seen and thought "Wow! Wish I had come up with that!"?*

**Angus:** I'd love to have gotten the Dresden Files license (which Evil Hat published) and also the license for China Mieville's Perdido Street Station and related novels (which Adamant Entertainment are working on), as they are some of my favourite books. Whenever a company is about to announce a license I'm always secretly hoping it isn't one that I'm looking or thinking about!

As far as settings are concerned, I certainly would have loved to have come up with Cold City as I think it's got a lot of potential. I also wish I had thought about approaching Abney Park about creating a game based on their music and when Ken Walton (of Cakebread & Walton) approached me about the idea of doing Airship Pirates I loved it but was very much "Duh! Why didn't I already think of this!"

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Many thanks to Angus for taking the time to answer our questions. If you want to keep up with what he is doing then check out the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chroniclecity> (company [website](#) to follow soon!).





# NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

Fiction  
By CW Kelson III (Tad)

Got that brick tied to the steering wheel keeping me straight on the road to Wichita from where I started at. It curves at times, little rolling elements once in a while, still it works well enough for me. Cell Phone reception sucks in spots, still barely enough bars to hold onto for my hotspot action. All alone in the car and the wide blue sky reaching into all the eight corners of the compass.

The asphalt rolled beneath the tires, 4 MP3 players with 4 tracks rolling on continuous, Gangsta, Mario Takes A Walk, Japan to Kenya & Back, and Beyond Despair. Still there I am sitting in the car seat, heat searing while I am rolling on and on under the wide blue sky reaching to all the corners of vision.

Mental cacophony to match the ceaseless monotony of the scenery passing to either side, while in front and behind is nothing but the same for hour after hour after hour after hour. The music and words all melded together into an alteration of self for the duration. Just the four songs over and over the same and changing, with the different durations of each song adding onto the monotonous difference as well.

The road passes along and along and along, the four some hours it should take taking more than the four some hours it should take taking longer than the four some hours it should take. The sun sits there above the car roof while the drums play and the violins ache and repeat over and over and the string holding my car on the road becomes the lifeline to which sanity clings in ever lengthening dribs and drabs.

The car drives its self while I take a nap and the car just drives its self along the road and I am utterly unconcerned. Wakening from the impromptu nap with visions of trailer park witches transformed into blue hairs and Loas whispering tales of krews along with recipes as well.

Daylight remained above and the road stretched in a sold straight line ahead and behind. The cattle that were there before are gone now. The clouds that were there are gone now. The sound of the motor engine is gone now. The air rushing past the open windows remains the same, the heat beating down remains the same, the music remains the same, hours past the arrival time and the MP3s remain the same the same the same the same echoing the finality of the wastelands between one place and another.





Falling asleep again at the wheel, shoes wedged to hold the gas pedal down while the tank never runs dry and it all echoes around inside the skull showing the inner workings of thoughts turned on their sides. The notebook sits there calling out with blank pages to write down what is not happening at all.

The day turns into day once more and it all stays the same while the car moves down the arrow straight road between Kansas City and Wichita and the road signs all say the same as well. Nothing changes at all on the road.

Gas gauge stays the same, sun stays the same, heat stays the same, no clouds at all in the sky and the road stays the same.

Not sleepy anymore, not hungry either, no thirst exists while the music plays on and on, over and over again. No longer does change exist in this world in which existence consists of pleather seats, dashboard of dials that never move, a single red brick tied to the steering wheel and a road that stretched past the horizon from the past into the future as well. Harmonics from the interactions of the music are making the never endings in my feet and hands tingle and move of their own accord in little circles and arcs of twitches and minor fit like episodes. The inner flesh of my eyelids are starting to itch and burn as well as lift away from the dry orbs that sit inside the hollows where the eyeballs have been sitting this entire trip. Reaching up ascertains that the little grape like balloons of eyeballs are deflating, softening and deforming under the pressure of moving along at 370 thousand feet an hour over the course of a lifetime spent sitting in the front seat of a car moving from one place to another having forgotten the reason why it all started off.

Fingers slowly elongating to make it easier to wrap around the hot plastic steering wheel sitting in the sun standing silent vigil

overhead of the moving vehicle going endlessly along the roadway, where the mile markers all look the same and it is a blurred procession of tumbleweeds moving in the same direction only slightly faster, slightly out of focus all the while the music loops around and around into a single continuous stream of converted impressions of analog and digital into digital into analog into auditory into visually stimulating simulations of multiple layers of never be there ever again in a loop all around the place. Fingers wrapped around the steering wheel, looping around and around several times, ring fingers wrapping about and knotting in each other while the wheels spin along in endless hiss of rubber on asphalt in a fetish sentimentality of brutal conversion from flesh to oil to plastic to flesh to plastic to oil secreted from pore opening under the beating down rays of ultraviolet crisping tender flesh past medium till nearly well done and black strips flake away in the rushing torrent of slipstream airflow crashing in from 4 open windows and vents set to pull in via openings in the body of the car while the body in the front seat moves a single step closer to symbiosis and the fingers are turned into simple flaked away tendons and ligaments, lightly tanning in the sun, with bones bleaching white in the Midwestern Sun and cattle skulls are the closest approximates after time spent searching.

In the last service attended visions of large wild cattle, humps full of fat to sustain them, horns as wide as a plain, moved in endless herds while the first men offered their young in sacrifice in the hunt. Afterwards the mixed bones bleached together in common midden heaps until such a time as a car passed along and made echo of then and now and until such a time as flesh baked away leaving a car running with shoes wedged to hold the gas pedal down and a lonely red brick held on a string, a piece of twine to be more precise, held the course straight and narrow.





# PAID IN BLOOD

There is a time and a place ruled by superstition and rumour, where the residents fear the dark and what it holds. Perhaps it is a village in Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; perhaps it is a town in the American Midwest during the Depression; perhaps it is a modern day high school. In all these places, unusual things happen: whispers are heard, shadows move by themselves and animals die inexplicably. Some of the residents believe an evil presence walks amongst them and blame all these events on a vampire...

## GETTING READY

Sit down comfortably around a table with some friends; place paper, pencils and a pack of playing cards on the table. Discuss with your friends what place this game is set in (there are three suggestions above, but use whatever you like) then decide who you are going to play in the game; choose someone who has a place in that setting, an ordinary person with a role to fill and no supernatural elements about them. Write down a name for your character and a very short description, such as 'Mr. Jones, the Mayor' or 'Dr. Smith, town physician.' As other players choose their characters, talk about how they relate to one another: are they family, friends or rivals?

You also need to pose a question about your character: this should be phrased as a yes/no question whose outcome can be influenced through their actions, therefore it should be something they want to achieve, such as "Will I marry my sweetheart?", "Will I become Head Cheerleader?" or "Will I avoid going to jail for murder?" Phrase it as an ambition, so that the character actively wants the answer to be "Yes." Write down your question alongside your character description.

There are also two questions hanging over the whole community which must be answered before the end of the game; no matter where the game is set or who the characters are, these two questions are always the same:

**Are Vampires real?:** Superstition and rumour may prove to be true or false.

**Will there be bloodshed?:** The community may resort to violence to resolve their problems or come to a peaceful resolution.

Write these two questions boldly on pieces of paper and place them in the centre of the table where everyone can see and reach them.

A Mini-RPG of Superstition and  
Settling Scores  
By James Mullen





## PLAYING

The game proceeds in turn order; starting from any player, everyone takes one turn at framing a scene involving their character and at least one other. You frame a scene by targeting another character and negotiating a Deal with them:

Decide what it is you want to achieve in this scene: this is the Product. The Product is the outcome or goal you are immediately aiming for, such as:

*Gain possession of an object, location or someone's approval.*

*Eliminate a threat, rival or annoyance.*

*Fulfil a duty, obligation or desire.*

In order to obtain the Product, you need something from the target character; this can be as simple as their cooperation, whether coerced or freely given, but it could also require neutralising them in some way so that they do not obstruct you in your purpose.

The targeted player then sets a Price: this is a consequence that could be incurred by attempting to obtain the Product, such as:

*There are witnesses to this.*

*You are injured while doing this.*

*You must give up another asset to achieve this.*

A neutral player acts as dealer for the conflict and deals one card face down to each player, starting a conflict pile in front of each of them.

Next, starting with the acting player, each side takes it in turn to Draw, Give or Push.

**Draw:** Add a detail to this conflict and draw a card from the deck; look at it, then put it face down in your conflict pile. If you cannot think of a detail to add, you cannot Draw and must Give or Push.

**Give:** You let your opponent succeed at their half of the Deal, e.g. the Product or the Price. You then each pick up the conflict pile in front of the other player.

**Push:** You declare that your half of the Deal is successful, e.g. the Product or the Price. You then each pick up the conflict pile in front of you.

Both sides now choose a card from the conflict pile they have picked up and play them face down; once both players have played a card, the cards are turned face up.

The winner is the player whose card has the highest rank, with Aces low; in a tie, the player who Gave or Pushed is the winner.

If the winner's card is red, the other half of the deal succeeds, so the Product is obtained and the Price is paid.

If the winner's card is black; the other half of the deal fails, so the Product might be obtained without paying a Price, or a Price might be paid without obtaining a Product.

The winner narrates the outcome accordingly, adding details to wrap up the scene.

The highest red card played goes face down in front of the winner, as part of their destiny pile; the highest black card played goes face down in the loser's destiny pile.

If there is a spare card (e.g. both cards played were the same colour), the loser puts it face down in the destiny pile of one of the two shared questions, narrating an appropriate detail between scenes. For example, if they play the spare card on "Are Vampires real?", then they might narrate a cutaway-scene where a shadowy figure is seen watching from the mist...



All other cards drawn for this conflict are returned to the bottom of the deck.

### A SAMPLE TURN

We are playing a game set on a Russian naval submarine in the 1990s, which has just been nearly crippled by a mysterious explosion. My character, the Political Officer, believes the Captain is planning to defect to the Americans and has arranged the explosion as a pretext to requesting assistance from them. On my turn, I target the Captain for a scene, with the Product I want being that he will confess to sabotaging his own submarine; as the Price for this, the Captain declares that the Political Officer will realise he is surrounded by enemies!

A neutral player is appointed dealer and my character and the Captain each receive a face-down card to start our conflict piles, but we may not look at those cards. As I am the acting player, I have to make the first move, followed by the Captain:

**Political Officer (Draw):** "I point to the intercom, telling the Captain that his next words will be heard all over the ship."

The card I get is the 10 of Hearts, a high positive card; I don't want the Captain to get any successes here though and I plan to Push soon, so I put the card in his pile.

**Captain (Draw):** "Don't be a fool; the men are loyal to me, no matter what; I have their absolute faith!"

He draws the King of Clubs, a high negative card; the player doesn't mind if the Captain is planning to defect, so he might well Give; if he puts this in his own pile, there's a chance his Price might fail, but he decides to take the risk.

**Political Officer (Push):** "OK, let's resolve this: I'm pushing, so you will confess to the sabotage."

We each now pick up the pile in front of our opponent; the Captain only gets one card, the 9 of Diamonds; I get three, including the two drawn during the conflict and the one dealt at the start, the King of Diamonds.

The Captain plays his 9 and I play my King of Clubs; the King is highest, so I win the conflict and, as my card was black, the other half of the deal fails, so I pay no Price for getting the Captain's confession. I get to narrate how the Captain reveals his plan to me, but the support he was expecting from his crew is not forthcoming.

At the end of the conflict, the Captain's card goes into my destiny pile (the highest red card goes to the winner) whereas my King of Clubs goes into his destiny pile (the highest black card goes to the loser.)

Now let's reconsider what might have happened; if I'd played the King of Diamonds instead of the King of Clubs, I would still have won, but I would also have had to pay the Captain's Price. As winner though, I still get to narrate, so I can state that the crew comes to the Captain's support but I keep them at bay by holding him at gunpoint. Now the King goes into my destiny pile and the Captain can choose to put his 9 into the destiny pile of either of the shared questions; he chooses "Will there be bloodshed?" and adds a cutaway before the next scene depicting the crew of the ship taking sides, some supporting the Captain and some standing against him.

### ENDING

The game ends if either of two conditions are met: either

Every destiny pile has at least 3 cards in it or there are not enough cards left in the deck to resolve another scene, e.g. there are less than 3 left.

At this point, it is time to answer all the questions in the game, starting with the shared ones:

**Are Vampires real?** Appoint a player to shuffle this destiny pile and draw a card from it at random.





**Red: Vampires are real.** Everyone adds up the value of all cards in their destiny piles that match the suit drawn, e.g. if the Four of Hearts was drawn, then everybody adds up the total value of all Hearts in their destiny pile. All Court cards (Jack, Queen and King) are considered to have a value of zero and add nothing to your total. Whoever has the highest total is the Vampire; in a tie, the Vampire is whoever has the highest ranked card of that suit, including Court cards.

**Black: Vampires are not real.** As above, e.g. if the Nine of Clubs was drawn, everybody adds up all their clubs, with the Jack, Queen and King counting as zero. Whoever has the highest total is the Scapegoat; in a tie, the Scapegoat is whoever has that highest ranked card of that suit, including Court cards.

**Will there be bloodshed?** Appoint a player to shuffle this destiny pile and draw a card from it at random.

**Red: There will be bloodshed.** As before, so everyone adds up their cards of that suit, except the Vampire/Scapegoat; whoever 'wins' is the Executioner.

**Black: There will not be bloodshed.** As before, so everyone adds up their cards of that suit, except the Vampire/Scapegoat; whoever 'wins' is the Negotiator.

The overall outcome of the game depends on which combination of results are obtained from this process:

**Vampire & Executioner:** The evil is identified and one brave soul rises up or is appointed by the community to strike down the Vampire; Justice is done.

**Vampire & Negotiator:** Losing hope, the community capitulates and one amongst them becomes the Vampire's quisling, carrying out his will over his cattle; the Horror persists.

**Scapegoat & Executioner:** The community finds someone to blame for all their ills and kills them; the Shame will haunt them forever.

**Scapegoat & Negotiator:** Between them, the two most influential members of the community find a way for reason to triumph; Hope is restored.

Once the overall outcome is known, players can resolve their individual character questions.

**Character Question:** Each player draws a card at random from their destiny pile, with two exceptions:

**Surviving Vampire:** If you were the Vampire but you were not killed, you get to draw 2 cards from your destiny pile and pick either result.

**Murdered Scapegoat:** If you were the Scapegoat but you were killed, you may pick any card from your destiny pile, but you can only apply the results posthumously.

The result for each character depends on the colour of the card they draw and how its rank compares to that of the highest card drawn from the two shared questions.

**Red & Equal or Higher:** You get what you wanted from your character question, plus a little bit more; narrate your personal success with an extra benefit.

**Red & Lower:** You get what you wanted from your character question, but there is a price for success; narrate your personal success with an extra complication.

**Black & Higher:** You don't get what you wanted, but you do get some form of consolation; narrate your personal failure with an extra benefit.

**Black & Equal or Lower:** You don't get what you wanted, in fact things get even worse; narrate your personal failure with an extra complication.

Everyone may make suggestions as to how each character's personal story should turn out, but it is the player of that character who has the final say on what happens to them.





# The Gepard M6 Lynx Anti-Materiel Rifle

The Hungarian company Sero Ltd was established in 2000 to deal in foreign trade of military equipment and also in military technology. One of their primary interests is the development & manufacture of small arms and they have garnered a lot of attention for their range of anti-materiel rifles. Materiel is a French-loan word and means the equipment & supplies used by the military and so anti-materiel is the task of damaging or destroying that equipment. Rifles tasked to this role typically use large calibre ammunition such as the .50cal BMG (12.7x99mm) or the .50cal Soviet (12.7x108mm) rounds and this normally requires a heavy platform to help absorb some of the recoil generated by these rounds (more on the rifle weight below)

According to their website, the Hungarian word *gepard* translates as cheetah and this name has been given to the family of rifles they've developed for the anti-materiel role. This article addresses the latest offering of the Gepard family, the Gepard M6 Lynx (also written as GM6 Lynx in some of Sero's company literature).

The most noticeable thing about the GM6 is that it's a bullpup rifle, it's large and it's for right-handed shooters only. However Sero have kept the weight low in comparison to many other anti-materiel rifles, the GM6 weighs in at just over 10kg unloaded compared to the 16kg plus of most other rifles in this class. For combat troops, this means the GM6 weighs approximately the same as medium machineguns such as the MAG58, M60 and PKM, (video footage



GM6 firing configuration

A heavy hitting rifle for the war against  
the Darklings  
By Kevin O'Neill  
For Dark Conspiracy®







*GM6 transit configuration*

from Sero shows shooters walking forward and firing the GM6, something quite unlikely with many other anti-materiel rifles – see web links below)

What isn't so readily noticeable is the recoil mechanism. The GM6 utilizes long recoil operation meaning that the barrel recoils along with the bolt carrier group. Video from Sero illustrates this dramatically but it also illustrates how controllable the rifle is.

The telescoping barrel also gives the rifle another benefit other than helping to control recoil – it allows the barrel to be pushed back into the body of the rifle to shorten its overall length.

This means that the GM6 is reduced from a firing length of 1125mm to a transport length of 915mm, that's a little less

than the length of the M16A2 rifle. The barrel is kept under tension so that with a flick of the barrel retention lever, the rifle can be brought into firing configuration within seconds. Again, Sero has video footage

illustrating this feature (it can be seen near the end of the video showing the GM6 eye monitor and camera sight, look for the soldier in full camouflage uniform and wearing a helmet).

The GM6 does not come equipped with open sights (AKA iron sights) but instead uses various telescopic sights, the most commonly offered sight being a 3-12 x 50 magnification scope or a 5-25 x 56 magnification scope. In terms of the game mechanics, these scopes would give range increments of just 15m to the base weapon range but I recommend using the Optical Device/Modifier table from Paul Mulcahy's comprehensive Twilight: 2000 fan site to get more realistic increases – I'm sure the players will not mind! (Note that on the table at the bottom of the page MER mean Maximum Effective Range, that is, the

maximum range you can use that optical device and see something clearly enough to identify it).

Sero also offers scopes that can be plugged into a video camera to record what the shooter sees but of much more interest is Sero's own development, the EOP. This is a head or helmet mounted eye monitor and a rifle mounted CCD camera sight much along the lines of the SmartSights beloved of Cyberpunk gaming. This allows the shooter to see exactly where the rifle is pointed and allows firing the weapon without bringing it to the shoulder or more usefully, from around corners so that the shooter is not exposed to enemy fire. The magnification is a fixed 1 power so the effective range of the EOP is from 10-300m only but it also allows aiming in low-light conditions.

Although information has not been released by Sero about the weight of the EOP package, a lightweight eye monitor and lightweight CCD camera along with the associated battery pack and cables would not weigh more than 1kg. The rifle is fitted with a large muzzle brake but muzzle blast is still impressive and will raise a small cloud of dust if fired from the prone position. This can easily give away the shooters position if not managed and can also inter-



fare with any image capture when using the camera options.

Other features included on the GM6 are a large, recoil-absorbing shoulder pad, a lightweight, fixed length bipod, a Picatinny-type rail (see weblink for explanation of Picatinny rail) for optical devices on the top of the rifle and also another Picatinny rail below the barrel just forward of the trigger. This allows the shooter to attach such things as a laser designator or a forward hand grip but the block this rail mounts to can also carry an additional rail on the left and right sides giving a total of three rails below the barrel. Magazine size is just five rounds for both models.

**WEB LINKS**

Walking forward while shooting:

<http://www.sero.hu/lynx/videos9.html>

Standing and crouching while shooting:

<http://www.sero.hu/lynx/videos10.html>

Eye monitor and camera sight:

<http://www.sero.hu/lynx/videos4.html>

Paul Mulcahy's Twilight: 2000 website, vision devices page:

[http://www.pmulcahy.com/equipment/vision\\_devices.html](http://www.pmulcahy.com/equipment/vision_devices.html)

Picatinny rail wiki:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picatinny\\_rail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picatinny_rail)



GM6 transit configuration, forward pistol grip

**Gepard M6 Lynx Anti-Materiel Rifle**

Weapon: Gepard M6 Lynx						Recoil		
Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Burst	Range
.50BMG	SA	8	2-2-3*	5/6	5	4	—	40
Bipod	SA	8	2-2-3*	5/6	5	2	—	100
12.7mm B	SA	9	2-2-3	5/6	5	4	—	40
Bipod	SA	9	2-2-3	5/6	5	2	—	90

\* .50 SLAP ammunition has a penetration of 1-1-2

*Ammo: .50 BMG or 12.7mm B (Note that in the main rules, 12.7mm B is listed as 12.7x83mmR, this is incorrect and it should be 12.7x108mm)*

*Weight: 11.5kg including empty magazine*

*Mag: 5*

*Price: \$13,500 (-/R)*

Image Notes:

Taken from [http://www.sero.hu/spec/download/sero\\_gm6lynx.pdf](http://www.sero.hu/spec/download/sero_gm6lynx.pdf)

Licensing Information: Sero Ltd, Budapest, Hungary, publicity literature



# Good Dog

I tossed the coffee pot back in the van and kicked my little campfire into the dust. I used to love, love, love my penny loafers. Now I was sportin' some kick-ass Carhartt work boots that I stripped off of some little dude who wouldn't be needing them anymore. Funny how minor fashion changes go with major life changes.

I stood up, shifting my grip on the Remington 870 and whistled softly. The sun was up, last night's drama was over and the only thing left to do was decide which way to drive. The van was in good shape, ready to go. So was I.

I peeled back the Princesses' styling green satin scarf and checked my bicep. No more bleeding. Things were looking up, for once. I still didn't have an appetite. Funny, that.

The paint on the passenger door was almost dry. I couldn't write out their full names. Chalk it up to PTSD, but I don't even think I'll be able to say them - at least not for a long time. It'd hurt too much.

Still no dog.

For a minute, I got that panicky feeling that he was gone and never coming back. Two seconds later, he comes trotting out of the bushes with a new trophy. It looked

like a man's forearm, with most of the flesh missing from the radius and ulna. "Hey, Killer—watchya got there?"

The Dane growled and wuffed, made sure I saw his prize.

Showoff.

"Nice. You're not going to keep that, are you?"

The dog didn't say anything. He'd turned into quite the silent, angry type, like a canine version of a geriatric Clint Eastwood. Considering what we'd been through over the last week, I could respect that.

Fact is, Killer—and I refused to call him by that stupid old name—had gotten exponentially smarter over the last seven days. I chalked it up to a massive infusion of canine adrenaline while going cold turkey from his forced drug habit. His Stoner 'owner' used to hotbox the poor dog while driving our van around and I must have threatened to report him to PETA or the SPCA a thousand times.

I miss that dope—the guy, not his drug habit. Fact is, his dulled senses are probably why he was the first to be shredded and everything started to unravel.

Killer had dropped some weight, too, since he no longer had a slobbering desire

Fido Fiction  
By Captain Obvious





to eat everything in sight. Lean, mean fighting machine he is now. I was in the same boat—hard to have an appetite when three of your friends have been murdered by screaming psychopaths and you’ve embraced dropping suburbanites without blinking an eye.

Those other two took the dooper’s death hard. Real hard.

Our fearless leader, the Jock and his girlfriend, the Princess, were always coming up with new jobs. These days, I didn’t turn up my nose at any steady source of income and for the most part, the work sounded way more dangerous than it actually was. Truth be told, things had gotten darker over the last few years—weirder, more violent and far fewer happy endings. We’d even changed our corporate logo.

But even a week ago, I was still the perky one doing my best to keep the other two from spiraling off into terminal depression, mostly because I needed them to get out of there and see another day.

I’m still alive. They aren’t.

It’s not that they were stupid—far from it. It’s just that they both walked through life with this insufferable “nothing can touch me” attitude, whereas I find that a healthy dose of paranoia gives me an ad-

vantageous edge. So when I suggested that we really should be leaving after the Doper got pureed, I was outvoted by the Vigilante Revenge Couple from Hell.

Since they had the van keys, I was along for the ride to the bitter end. Fine. At least I’d made my peace with my Creator.

Boss man pulled his usual stunt and Macgyver’d up a plan, which predictably turned into a massive fail. The last fifteen minutes of his screaming almost turned the Princess into a basket case but she finally listened to reason and we both ran like the Devil was after us. I could see Killer look back at the Boss twice, before he came bolting after us.

Live again to fight another day, I always say.

I thought we were free and clear when we got near the van. I caught my breath enough to joke “it’s 186 miles to Chicago, it’s dark out...” just to lighten the mood some, when a dozen of them came out of the woods.

I’ll give it to her—for a Princess, she went down fighting. Ever since Topeka, she’d started lugging around useful things in that Coach purse. I could almost laugh at the memory of her with a 9mm in each

hand, screaming obscenities and slaying bodies left and right.

Ok, I did laugh. You had to be there. “There is no such thing as zombies!”

True enough, unless you take into account that these poor mopes had been dosed with tetradotoxin (TTX) synched out of puffer fish liver and ovaries, followed by a cocktail of atropine and scopolamine. Their puppet master merely had to suggest that disemboweling trespassers was a pretty neat idea and the howling mob were off to the races. Still, 12-gauge buckshot did a wicked neat job of stopping them in their tracks.

Killer and I did our parts, but it wasn’t enough. Truth be told, I don’t think the Princess wanted to live anymore so she went all Kamikaze.

Who thinks purple, pink and green is an appetizing color combination for their entire wardrobe?

Seriously.

The dog dropped his chunk of arm and hopped up into the passenger seat.

Killer must have felt he’d made his point.

I climbed in behind the wheel and fired up the van. Time to go.



# SECOND CENTURY, NEW MILLENNIUM



Packing Minion-Hunter Heat  
By Lee Williams  
For Dark Conspiracy®



## Arsenal Firearms AF2011-A1 "Second Century"

Weapon Name: AF2011-A1

Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Burst	Range
.45 ACP	SA	2	Nil	1	16*	2	—	12
.45 ACP	SA	4	Nil	1	8*	4	—	12

\*Magazine has 2 separate stacks in one clip, one stack for each barrel.

The upper values given are for a single trigger pull, the lower values for firing both at once.

The AF2011-A1 is the first ever mass-production double barrel semiautomatic pistol. It was originally inspired by the work of Swiss armourer Vivian Mueller who built a double barreled Sig P210 around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Arsenal Firearms decided to commemorate the legendary Colt 1911-A1's centenary year by making a double barrel version, which they achieved in six months from drawing board to production.

The AF2011-A1 is accurate enough to group all 16 rounds held in the duplex single column magazines in a target of the size of an orange at 15 yards and of a water melon at 25. The ability to use both barrels at once offers tremendous stopping power: at close range it is capable of taking down large animals. This also has obvious advantages to the minion Hunter. With two separate triggers the 2011-A1 can also be used as a large-capacity "normal" pistol. There is a version available with both trigger mechanisms permanently locked together, but this is technically illegal under US law as it fires more than one cartridge at a time.

Weight: 1.9kg

Price: \$1,800 (-/R)





# Ampney Down

## HOWARD'S MINE AMPNEY DOWN, WILTSHIRE

Ampney Down is a low hill lying a few miles east of Bath, part of the pleasant wooded valley landscape that characterises the area where the southern Cotswolds meet the chalklands of north Wiltshire. It is owned by Natural England, an agency of the UK government, which maintains a nature reserve on the broad plateau that forms its summit. The slopes of Ampney Down are scarred and pitted by old quarry workings. These are the legacy of extensive mining in the 1700s when much of the honey coloured stone used to build Bath's famous regency buildings was extracted from beneath the hill. Below the surface of Ampney Down lies Howard's Mine, a fifty-acre-plus labyrinth of tunnels created by the men who quarried the stone. There are several entrances into the mine but these have been barred with metal gates by Natural England. The reason given for this is that due to age and neglect the tunnels are in a dangerous condition and the agency is responsible for the safety of people on its property. Some local people from the villages near Ampney Down counter that the mine has always been dangerous. They point to the murder of Charles Howard, the mine's original owner, in 1755 and the deaths of two soldiers during World War

Two when the War Office re-opened the mine for ammunition storage.

In recent times Ampney Down has attracted the attention of urban explorers, enthusiasts who enjoy looking around derelict buildings and other sites that are secret or forbidden some way. Former hospitals and lunatic asylums are particular favourites but the term urban explorer can be something of a misnomer: Rural features such as old railway tunnels or disused Cornish tin mines also appeal to those with an appetite for clandestine exploration. Ampney Down has become a magnet to these more rustically inclined adventurers. Despite Natural England's best efforts to deny access to the mine people have managed to gain access. Photographs of the mine's interior have already appeared on one urban exploration website. This has piqued the interest of others eager to experience Ampney Down's secret underworld for themselves.

### KEEPER'S INFORMATION

Below Ampney Down, in the deepest part of the complex, lies a chamber that predates the mine's construction by nearly two thousand years. It was excavated by a Tsathoggua worshipping faction of the ancient British Dobunni tribe as a temple to the Great Old One. The cultists were

Eldritch Horror  
By Linden Dunham  
For Call of Cthulhu®





exterminated by the Romans in the AD50s, a notably violent episode in the otherwise largely peaceful incorporation of Dobunni territory into the empire. Although the cultists were dispatched relatively easily the temple's guardian, a Child of Tsathoggua, joined in the battle and drove the Romans back. Faced with the prospect of fighting a near invulnerable enemy in confined quarters the Romans decided on a policy of containment: They collapsed the roof of the temple's entry passage in the hope that it would trap the monster underground.

The temple remained undisturbed until 1755 when miners working for local quarrying magnate Charles Howard broke through into the chamber. Inside they found a carpet of human bones surrounding a black basalt altar on which rested a crude statue of a toad like creature, a knife and a golden goblet. Howard himself arrived on the scene not long afterwards and impounded all three artifacts. He had little liking for the idol but thought that the other two items might be valuable as they were finely wrought and inlaid with gold. Although wealthy by the standards of the day Howard was always greedy for more riches.

Howard didn't live to enjoy his ill gotten gains. That night he was murdered in his



*Ampney Down*

Bath mansion house. Servants heard the screaming coming from his bedroom and broke down the door to find their master's crushed and mutilated body lying in his bed. At the far end of the room a huge bulky shape squeezed itself through a shattered window frame, launched itself into the air and took flight on leathery wings.

The artifacts taken from the mine were gone.

With Howard's death his business collapsed. He left no heirs and the strange circumstances of his killing made it difficult for his executors to find a buyer for the mine, while other mines and quarries in the region were able to provide sufficient



stone to meet Bath's needs. The Ampney Down mine became derelict and remained so for the better part of 150 years, the events of 1755 giving it an evil reputation that caused it to be shunned by those living in the locality. Occasionally children or drunks might venture into the mine for a bet or a dare but none ever made it in as far as the temple. The tunnels were unsafe and some explorers returned with tales of having seen Howard's ghost and/or the demon that killed him. Although these stories could be discounted as the product of over excited or drink addled imaginations they helped cement the mine's reputation in local folklore as a bad place, shunned by all those with any sense.

In 1942 the War Office requisitioned Howard's Mine to act as additional storage for the nearby Corsham central ammunition depot. The authorities weren't remotely interested in local legends about an evil presence haunting the mine. Royal Engineers moved in with orders to convert the mine into a storage facility for the TNT used in the payloads carried by Royal Air Force bombers. The engineers carried out extensive renovation works, converting the mine's rough stone passages and galleries into smooth walled corridors and storage chambers. One three man work crew, composed of Corporal Bill Mason and privates

Bob Lewis and Frank Leonard was detailed to clear rubble from a tunnel in the deepest section of the mine. Progressing to the far end of the tunnel the three men came across the entrance to the temple created by Charles Howard's men in 1755. They entered the chamber and soon found the altar to Tsathoggua on which stood the knife, cup and idol. Corporal Mason proposed "confiscating" the items (i.e. stealing them and trying to sell them on the basis that the gold used in their construction must make the knife and cup valuable). Lewis was opposed to the theft while Leonard was willing to go along with Mason provided any profits were divided equally. The men argued for some time before Mason won through with by a combination of pulling rank and force of personality. He placed the artifacts in a backpack and smuggled them back to the engineers camp.

Later that night raised voices were heard coming from Mason's quarters. Witnesses stated later that the corporal and Private Leonard were engaged in a heated argument, possibly over the ownership of some items of jewellery. Shortly afterwards the sound of splintering wood and breaking glass was heard, followed by screaming from both men. Sentries rushed to the scene and saw a large bat like shape emerge from the wreckage of the corporal's quar-

ters. Shots were fired at the apparition with no effect. It rose into the air and flew off.

Bob Lewis was questioned by both military police and intelligence concerning Mason and Leonard's deaths. Afterwards the tunnel where the three men had been working was sealed up and the mine closed.

In the years following the war Ampney Down remained in the ownership of the War Office and its successor the Ministry of Defence (from 1964). In 1973 it was transferred to the newly created Nature Conservancy Council which designated the hill a nature reserve. Ampney Down seemed destined to become a quiet local beauty spot; a sanctuary for wildlife and picnic place for families. However, the modern craze of urban exploring has made Corsham central ammunition depot a popular destination for those wishing to investigate man made subterranean complexes. Some of these explorers have started to take an interest in Ampney Down and have found a way in that Natural England don't know about - a section of mine roof located in a remote corner of the reserve has collapsed inwards and the resulting crater gives access into the upper tunnels and galleries of Howard's Mine.



## DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE

1. **Mine Tunnel:** The only entrance to the Temple. It is reached by traversing the World War Two era storage complex which can be entered via a fallen in roof in a wooded section of the nature reserve. A locked metal door painted institutional green [STR: 75, HP:100 Armour: 20 points ] separates the complex from the tunnel excavated by Howard's miners in the eighteenth century. Those who manage to get past the door find themselves in a short mine tunnel leading to a larger chamber. The tunnel can be dangerous having been left untended for over two centuries. Keepers may wish to make investigators make Dodge rolls with the consequences of failure ranging from a stubbed toe to a full blown cave in as the clumsy investigator dislodges a rotten pit prop. There is also the chance that any noisy movement will alert the temple's guardian if it is nearby.
2. **Temple:** Originally excavated by the Dobunni cultists, this is a roughly oval shaped chamber approximately 20 metres in length at its longest point. The ceiling is around two metres high. The floor is of brown oolitic lime-

stone and is strewn with bones, bits of armour and weapons all leftover from the Romans' massacre of the cultists.

3. **Altar:** A plain cube of black basalt measuring a roughly a metre square. On top of the altar stand the ceremonial artifacts: A dagger, cup and an idol. The former two items are of iron age manufacture and are in exceptionally good condition.

The dagger provides a 10% bonus when used to cast the spell Summon Child of Tsathoggua, provided a human sacrifice is carried out as part of the ritual. The cup, if filled with blood taken from the sacrificial victim will store half of the victim's magic points (the remainder is taken by the Child of Tsathoggua) which can then be used in further spell casting. The idol is a crude representation of Tsathoggua carved in grey stone, about twenty centimetres in length and around eight centimetres high. The general outline is toadlike, with crude detailing of such features as eyes, mouth and nostrils. All three items are subject to an enchantment that enables them to be located by Tsathoggua and his servants. If the artefacts are removed from the tem-

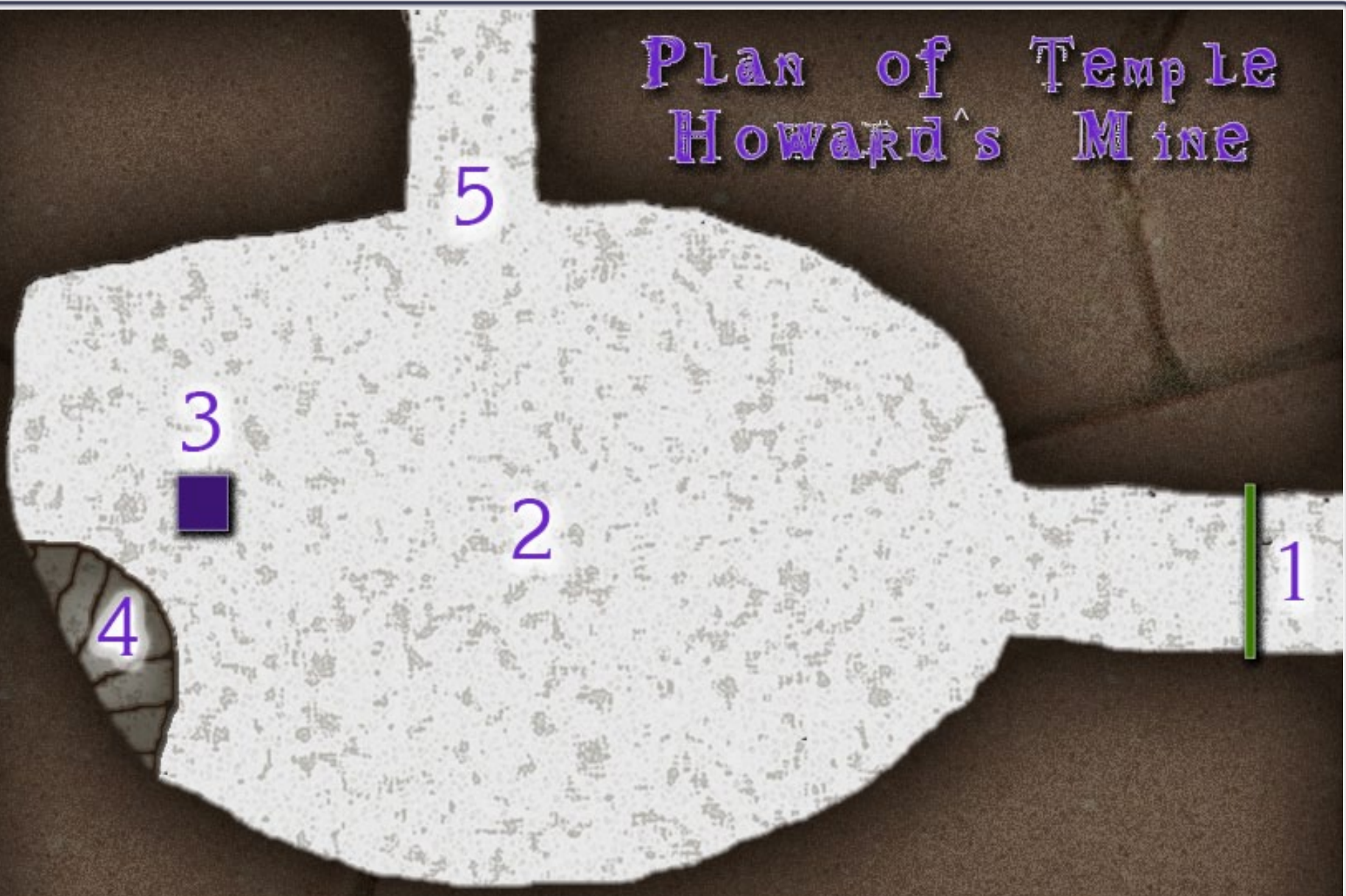
ple, the Great Old One will know and steps taken to return them to their rightful place on the altar.

4. **Guardian's Burrow:** A depression in the ground leads to a tunnel that descends at a gentle gradient through the rock, its sides worn smooth by the coming and going of the guardian. The tunnel continues down several miles then joins a network of passageways that connect myriad other temples, ritual sites and exit/entrance points together and ultimately lead to the Gulf of N'kai, home to Tsathoggua and its spawn.

There is a 10% chance at any one time that the temple's guardian is occupying its burrow in close proximity to the temple. It will be alerted if anyone attempts to remove the ritual artifacts from the altar, arriving in the temple chamber within 1D6 rounds. Replacing the items before the guardian arrives may mollify the creature but it will still take up station near the altar to prevent any further attempts at removal. If the guardian is abroad in the larger tunnel complex it will not be able to react quickly to any theft but it will attempt to retrieve the items. Thieves have 1D6 days to



# Plan of Temple Howard's Mine



*Ampney Down*



prepare themselves for the guardian's visit, assuming they know enough to expect it.

**5. Original Entrance:** This is the passageway that was blocked by the Romans following their battle with the Dobunni cult. The roof was collapsed along a third of the passageway's length. Persons entering the temple via the mine and encountering the guardian may flee up this tunnel thinking it offers a way out only to find that it's a dead end.

#### ADVENTURE IDEA - BREAKING THE (UNWRITTEN) LAW

Carl York has been found dead in his ground floor flat in Swindon. His upstairs neighbours report being woken in the small hours by the sound of smashing glass and falling masonry. Fearing that the building was about to collapse they rushed downstairs and into the street, just in time to see a huge toadlike creature emerge from a hole in the wall where York's front window used to be. The apparition then rose into the air, extended a set of bat like wings and flew off.

Carl York was an urban explorer who operated on his own. Unlike most of his peers who adhere to the maxim "take

nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints" he liked to take mementoes from the places he visited. Often the items had little intrinsic value, York just liked having a tangible reminder of where he'd been. On the occasions when he did remove anything of value he usually sold the item on to an acquaintance in the art and antiques trade.

York's last expedition was to Howard's Mine. After sneaking into the complex and exploring for several hours York discovered the door to the tunnel leading to Tsathoggua's temple. The door had become partially dislodged due to subsidence, creating a gap big enough for York to squeeze through. Reaching the temple chamber he discovered the altar and purloined the ritual artifacts. Two nights later he was killed at home by the temple's guardian seeking to return the items to their place on the altar. It took the idol, but York had sold the other two items on which means that someone else is due to receive a visit from the guardian in the very near future.

For those investigating York's death clues to his fate can be found at his flat. In amongst the wreckage are numerous souvenirs of his expeditions as well as information about sites he had explored or planned to visit. York was aware that

Charles Howard died in mysterious circumstances and that the mine was sealed off during World War Two but didn't take the rumours about the place very seriously. Many of the other sites he's visited over the years have similar stories attached to them. A digital camera provides a photographic record of York's visit to Howard's Mine with images of the partially constructed military complex, broken door, the tunnel, the temple and altar. Several photos depict the knife, cup and idol.

A few hours spent looking through the material in the flat enables the investigators to deduce that York's last expedition was to Howard's Mine and while in the mine he removed some items from the temple chamber. The items are not in the house.

Checking York's mobile phone shows that the last call he made was to a landline. A quick check of directory enquiries reveals that the number belongs to Burgess Antiques in the north Cotswold village of Broadway. Proprietor Jeremy Burgess runs one of the many antique shops in the village. The majority of his business is completely above board, but he isn't averse to the illegal transactions when he thinks the balance between risk and profit is worth it. York was part of his extensive network of dubious sellers, middlemen and collectors.



If the PCs contact Burgess and lean on him he will admit purchasing the sacrificial dagger and cup from York the previous day. They are currently stored in a safe in the flat above his shop. The temple guardian will visit the premises that evening, kill Howard and retrieve the two artifacts. If the investigators take the items the guardian comes looking for them instead.

Investigators who make successful Library Use or History rolls find a variety of historical and folklore sources that when taken together strongly suggest that there is something in Howard's Mine that enacts swift and terrible retribution on trespassers.

Astute investigators will be able track down Bob Lewis, now in his eighties and living in sheltered accommodation on the South Devon coast. Although elderly he remembers the events of 1942 and can provide a perfectly lucid account of what happened. He also warns the investigators against venturing into the temple themselves: "Whatever's in there is best left alone." Whether or not the investigators heed his advice is entirely up to them.

#### ADVENTURE IDEA — BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Professor Roger Strickland a leading light of Brichester University's Archaeology department has been killed in a car crash. He apparently suffered an epileptic fit while driving home and careered off the A46 road near his home village of Painswick. The car left the carriageway and plunged down a steep hillside suffering catastrophic damage, the Professor dying of multiple injuries. An inquest into the death has been opened (and adjourned) but the police are treating the matter as an accident. Professor Strickland's wife Kate isn't convinced and approaches the investigators for help. She tells them her husband had no history of epilepsy (he would probably have faced to restrictions on his driving licence if he had). Kate Strickland fears that her husband was murdered and there is some kind of cover up by the authorities. She has spoken with the driver of the car that was behind her husband who was first on the scene of the accident. He claims to have seen a bright green flash or beam strike Professor Strickland's car just before the accident, but police aren't taking the man seriously, saying it was probably just a trick of the light.

Roger had become paranoid in the week before his death claiming that he was being followed. He believed that he might have upset someone "high up" after he'd given an interview to the Brichester Herald criticising the cancellation of a proposed excavation of Roman remains at Ampney Down, near Bath. Urban explorers seeking a back way into Howard's Mine had uncovered Roman remains in a patch of gorse on the slopes of Ampney Down - a stone doorway surrounding a mosaic composed primarily of green tiles. The explorers made their find known to English Nature and Brichester University's Archaeology department were commissioned to excavate the site. The excavation was then cancelled at short notice by Natural England claiming budget cuts. Brichester University tried to salvage the situation by offering to explore other methods of funding but Natural England was adamant that the dig could not proceed, much to Professor Strickland's annoyance. He contacted the Herald and gave an interview in which he was highly critical of Natural England's decision and promised to take the matter further rather than give up the chance to excavate a unique historical site. A week after giving the interview Professor Strickland told his wife that he thought he was being followed. A week after that he was dead. Kate Strickland





## Guardian of the Temple Child of Tsathoggua

**STR:** 20

**CON:** 20

**SIZ:** 30

**INT:** 15

**POW:** 15

**DEX:** 10

**Hit Points:** 25

**Move:** 7/10 flying

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Weapons:** 2D6 Tentacles 45%,  
damage: db

**Trample** 35%, damage: 2D10+db

**Bite** 25%, damage 1D6

**Armour:** Minimum damage from non-enchanted physical weapons

**Spells:** Contact Tsathoggua, Contact Spawn of Tsathoggua, Call Ossagadowah, Power Drain

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D10

**Optional:** Replace the Child of Tsathoggua with one of the great old one's spawn. The two creatures' functions are very similar, and a near invulnerable blob of living darkness arguably makes for a more frightening adversary than an overgrown flying toad.

has no idea who the "high up" people that her late husband alluded to are. Many of Professor Strickland's colleagues regarded his interview as outspoken, ill advised and possibly even unprofessional. University management had also become distinctly cool to him, but the idea that someone at the University was spying on him and then had him murdered just seems incredible.

Professor Strickland was killed by a PISCES Jaguar team acting on information provided by Section H. The proposed excavation originally came to their attention via English Heritage which maintains a memorandum of understanding with Natural England on archaeological matters. Section H ran its usual checks and found that Ampney Down, and more specifically Howard's Mine, merited several entries in the Chronicle database. Deciding that there was a high risk of releasing a mythos threat Section H employed its usual bureaucratic methods to block the dig.

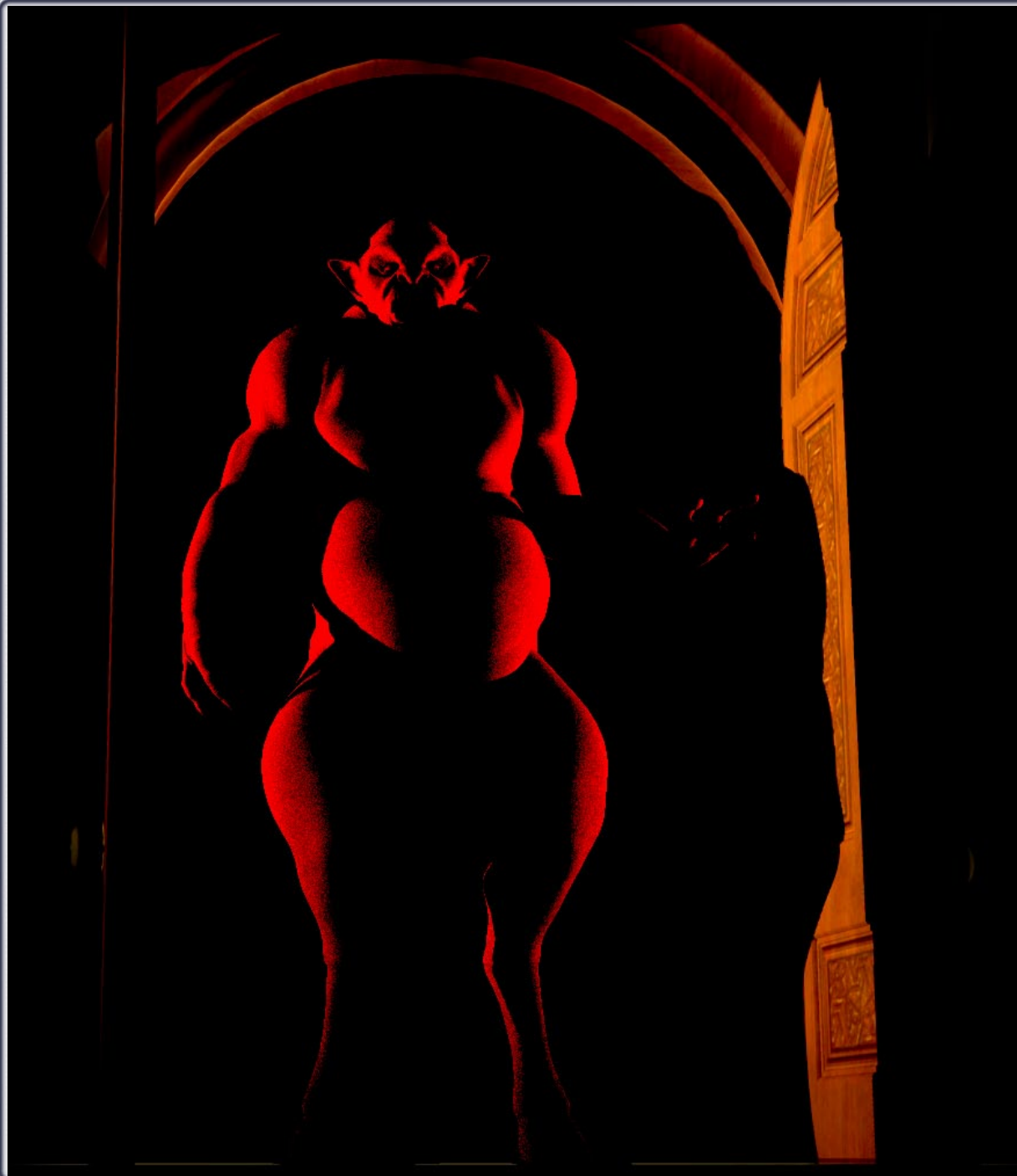
Professor Strickland took the cancellation badly and made his feelings known to the local press. Section H suggested to the PISCES leadership that the Professor was something of a loose cannon and might cause further trouble over Ampney Down. PISCES decided to neutralise Professor Strickland, permanently. The Jaguar team

tasked with the job watched him for a few days to familiarise themselves with his routine then made their move. Lying in wait at the roadside on the A46 they used a neural whip to incapacitate him while he was driving home causing him to crash.

If the investigators look into Professor Strickland's death a day spent in research reveals the history of Howard's Mine. The investigators may be tempted to visit the mine, which is of course extremely dangerous. The other main threat to the investigators' wellbeing comes from the risk of attracting the attention of PISCES. Making enquiries with officialdom eventually results in word filtering back to PISCES which assigns another Jaguar team to deal with the matter: The investigators are followed, their homes broken into, they may have problems with the police, witnesses go missing or turn up dead in bizarre circumstances. Ultimately the Jaguar team closes in on the investigators, perhaps hunting them down in the dark tunnels of Howard's Mine.







(from *Ampney Down*, page 69)

## SOURCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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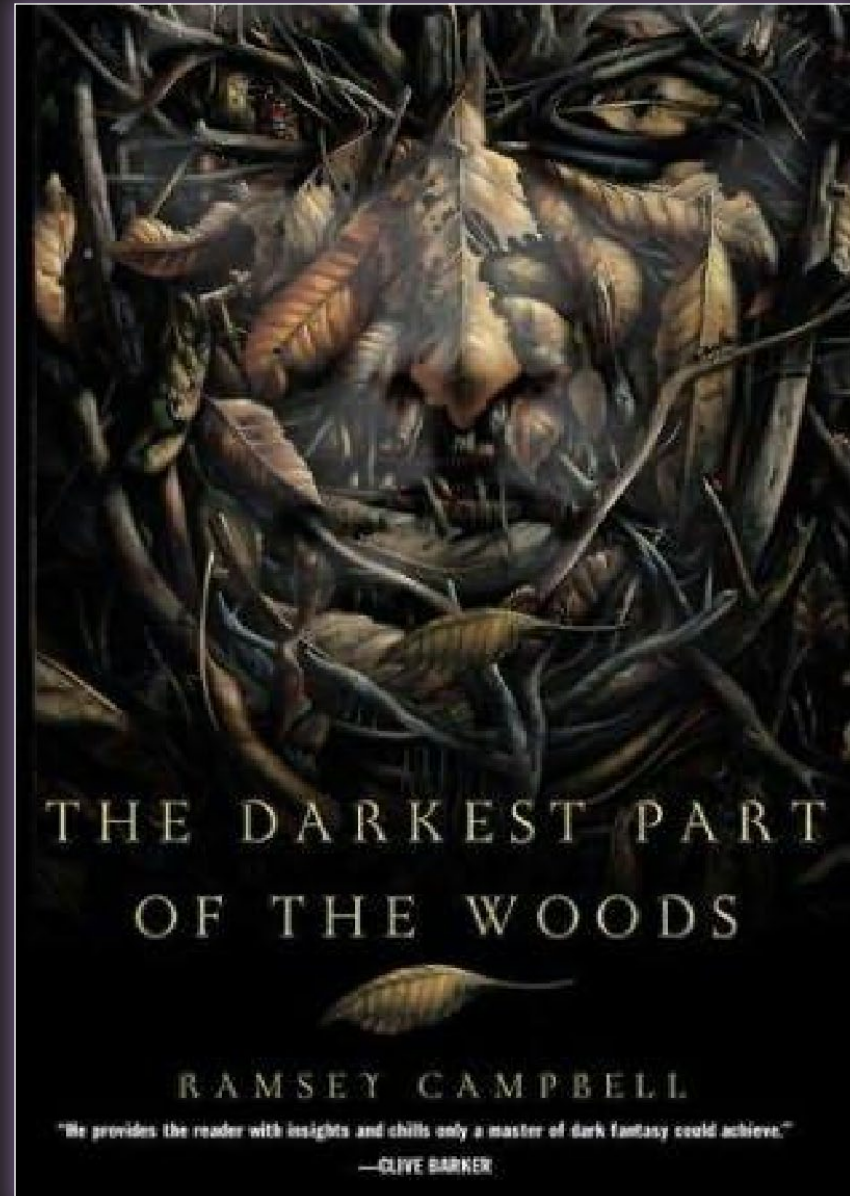


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