Project Cthulhu World

If you wish to get involved with this project, contact me at projectcthulhuworld@gmail.com and I will add you to the list in order that you can make comments.

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I Introduction

This project came about because of my love for the **World (*W)* series of games, which started with *Apocalypse World*, though which first came to my attention with the advent of *Dungeon World*. Other **W* games soon appeared, including many hacks of the *AW* and *DW* systems, another favourite of mine being *tremulous*. I have long been interested in games featuring Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, beginning more than a couple of decades ago with *Call of Cthulhu (CoC)*, and more recently reinvigorated by the arrival of *Trail of Cthulhu (ToC)*. While I adore these games, I have been searching for a game which would allow me to more easily play Cthulhoid campaigns on a PBP (play by post) basis. There are many fora out there where such games are played, and I have played in dozens of *CoC*, *ToC*, *AW* and *DW* PBP games over the years, but I have found that while *CoC* and *ToC* are wonderful games when played face to face, they can both occasionally get bogged down in PBP games (particularly when several rolls have to be made dependent on prior rolls, or spends made in combat and the like), and I wanted something simpler, but which I could also use for my own face to face games. Because I absolutely adore how the **W* games play (especially in PBP games), I wanted to use that as a basis for my epic Cthulhoid games.

While *tremulous* is a great game which incorporates much Lovecraftian weirdness, it did not entirely fit what I wanted. The core game, set in the small town of Ebon Eaves, is a true delight to play that I heartily endorse and recommend. It is perfect for those games where you and your fellow players wish to explore and discover the hidden weirdness concealed within the town, but what I was looking for was a system in which I could more easily run world-spanning epic campaigns on a scale found in Chaosium's *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*, *Horror on the Orient Express*, and what is possibly the greatest roleplaying campaign of all time, *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, as well as the more recent addition by Pelgrane Press, and possible challenger to Masks' title, the *Eternal Lies* campaign.

With this in mind, I set about creating Cthulhu World, a **W* game in which these Lovecraftian epics could be more easily portrayed. The rules that follow have been heavily influenced by the aforementioned games. In its current state, this document is very much unfinished, and one or more of the **W* games will help you in understanding these rules; this is very much a hack of the existing **W* systems rather than a stand-alone system. Similarly, for information on the 1920s/1930s (the standard background for most Cthulhoid games, including this one), *CoC* and *ToC* will prove to be invaluable, especially the many supplements both games have published that help to recreate the period. Lastly, of course, historical research will help your game immensely.

These rules may never be "finished" and may always remain a work in progress, but I hope that what results is useful in some way, if only to be picked over and scavenged for future, better endeavours by creators far more talented than myself.

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II Primary and Secondary Stats

There are six primary stats and 4 secondary stats in Cthulhu World. Each primary stat has at least two important uses - in two cases, they affect secondary stats - though most are connected with the Basic Moves that follow this section.The four secondary stats are also important - in some ways more important than the primary stats - but they are dependent on either the primary stats or the occupation you choose for your character.

Primary Stats

The six primary stats are Awareness, Brain, Bravery, Brawn, Charm and Co-ordination.

Awareness is a combination of several things, including your senses (eyesight, hearing, etc), general perception and ability to notice things, and judgement of character. It is connected to the **Read the Scene** and **Read the Crowd** basic moves.

Brain is the power of your reasoning, fast wits, your education and intellect. It is connected to the **Express your Erudition** and **Raid the Library** basic moves.

Bravery is your mental fortitude, your coolness under fire, your determination. It is connected to the **Keep it Together** basic move and affects your **Sanity** secondary Stat.

Brawn represents your physical might, your endurance and toughness. It is connected to the **Get Stuck In** basic move and affects your **Health** secondary stat.

Charm is your charisma, affinity and empathy, maybe a measure of your appearance and looks that affect your personal relationships. It is connected to the **Make Friends and Influence People** and **Make it Alright** basic moves.

Co-ordination represents your manual dexterity, your agility, stealth and balance. It is connected to the **Go Ballistic** and **Stay in the Shadows** basic moves.

Secondary Stats

The four secondary stats are Health, Mythos, Sanity and Wealth.

Health is an indication of how well you are doing physically. It has a base of 5 plus or minus your **Brawn** primary stat (giving a value from 3 to 7 in total). As you take physical damage, this score is reduced. For more on this stat, see section VI.

Mythos represents your knowledge of the Lovecraftian entities out there and the rituals and cults associated with them. It normally begins at -2 and rises as you witness the bizarre and ineffable secret world that threatens humanity's mundane existence. When **Mythos** reaches positive numbers, your maximum **Sanity** secondary stat is reduced by a similar amount. It is connected with the **Cast Spells and Conduct Rituals** and **Reveal Secrets** peripheral moves.

Sanity is an indication of how well you are doing mentally. It has a base of 5 plus or minus your **Bravery** primary stat (giving a value from 3 to 7 in total). As you witness shocking events or scenes, this score is reduced. For more on this stat, see section VI.

Wealth is a measure of your savings, income, lifestyle and the social circles you run around in. It varies according to your occupation and can be reduced temporarily (or even permanently) by your actions. It is connected to the **Spread the Wealth** peripheral move. A **Wealth** score of -2 suggests deep poverty, perhaps a squat or homelessness for shelter, cheap clothing that is long past its best and which marks you out as a member of the lowest social class around. **Wealth** of -1 might suggest a tenement in a bad area, or a dilapidated shack in some rural boondock, though you just about get by. **Wealth** of 0 is the average - an apartment or small house, enough money put aside for a rainy day (or more likely, in case of an emergency), and perhaps a used car but sudden unemployment would put your place in jeopardy. **Wealth** of +1 is where you find the higher echelons of the middle classes, the professionals who have fancy houses, a decent car (or maybe two), perhaps a maid to do the cleaning. **Wealth** of +2 denotes those who have really made it - you may have a pied-a-terre in the city as well as your lavish house in the sticks; your chauffeur drives you around, you take foreign holidays and are on nodding terms with your senators at the club. **Wealth** of +3 denotes someone for whom money is no longer an issue - your investment portfolio is overseen by your accountant, and so far you haven't found the limit to how much you can spend without causing him ire.

A note on Mythos: Why doesn't it start at 0?

Most people when shown a glimpse of the weirdness that is concealed around them will fall back on rational explanations (even if they don't make total sense of a situation) and attempt to seek a 'normal' explanation (an indication of Mythos at -2). When they begin to realise that there are greater things out there that they can't explain, they will try to package them away as "acceptable" superstitious occurrences (ghosts, devil worshippers, etc which portrays Mythos at -1). Eventually as they understand the significance of such things, they will try not to think about them but start to come to an understanding that there are Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know (Mythos at 0). After that, however, they start the slide into insanity, with the growing realisation about man's insignificance (Mythos at +1), followed by the understanding that no matter what man attempts, the elder gods will one day prevail (Mythos at +2), until finally they begin the path to attempt deals with these strange entities in the vain hope that they will be spared in the coming end of days or do what they can to stop them even if that means they hasten that very end (Mythos at +3).

III Basic Moves and Peripheral Moves

There are eleven basic moves that everyone can do, plus several peripheral moves that are only used in certain situations. All rolls are made using 2D6 and adding a relevant stat modifier. On a 6-, you have generally failed in whatever you aimed for; some moves give details of how you fail. Regardless of whether or not there is any suggestion for the result of the failure, the GM also has the opportunity to use one of his or her GM Moves (See section X for more details). On a 7-9, you have been somewhat successful, but there is usually a complication of some sort. On a 10+, you have generally succeeded without any complications.

Basic Moves

Defy Danger (varies) is used when you are in a sticky situation and need to get out of it. Pairing a **primary stat** with **Defy Danger** will depend on the exact situation, and how you are attempting to get out of it. **Awareness** allows you to spot the danger before it happens (noticing the dust falling from the mine ceiling), allowing you to escape unscathed; **Brain** shows quick thinking (knowing which wire to cut as the timer counts down to zero); **Bravery** allows you to use your willpower (no matter how much you are tempted, you try to ignore those come to bed eyes); **Brawn** is avoidance by endurance or sheer power (smashing that door down to escape the smoke-filled room); **Charm** uses the art of the fast talk (misdirecting the mob to give yourself time to get away), and **Co-ordination** allows you to use your agility to evade some hazard (diving to the ground as the trap springs and the darts fly over your prone body). In some cases, other basic moves are more specialised versions of this move, but this is a more general move used for all sorts of perils.

When you roll 6-, you fail miserably, and take the full effect of the peril you were attempting to avoid. On a 7-9, you mostly succeed, but not entirely - your GM will offer you a choice of outcomes - *Into the Frying Pan* (another situation equally as bad); *A Great Loss* (you lose an item of value in your escape); or *The Devil's Bargain* (You can succeed but only at the expense of another (your friend gets caught by the wolf pack as you sprint past him) or at the benefit of an enemy (the cultist makes his escape while you cling to the precipice)). On a 10+, you escape unharmed.

Express your Erudition (Brain) is used when you want to show off your knowledge of a subject. Make a roll and ask your GM to give you information on a subject. On a 6-, you don't know anything useful or interesting about the subject at hand. On a 7-9, you remember something interesting, but it doesn't necessarily help you immediately (though it may help you down the line). On a 10+, it's both interesting and useful.

Get Stuck In (Brawn) is used when you need to put the boot in. It covers all forms of hand to hand combat, whether using punches, kicks and bites to assorted hand weapons (knives, billy clubs, woodman's axes). If it includes getting up close and personal (and not in a sexy way), then you use Get Stuck In. See section VI for more detail on combat.

Go Ballistic (Co-ordination) is the use of ranged weapons, whether they are throwing knives, grenades, or guns such as rifles or shotguns. If you aim to harm your enemies from a safe distance, this is the move for you. See section VI for more detail on combat.

Keep it Together (Bravery) is what you use in the face of sudden mental shock to the system, such as coming face to face with a corpse - or worse, a corpse *that's still moving*. See section VI for more detail on sanity shocks.

Make Friends and Influence People (Charm) is the art of persuasion, manipulation, lying and seduction. If you want someone to do something for you, this is the move you use. On a 6-, they refuse point blank to help you - it's more than their job's worth; they just don't like the look of you; someone else has made a better offer. On a 7-9, the person is willing to do what you want, but you need to repay them up front - either in monetary terms or a favour they ask of you, perhaps. On a 10+, they will do as you wish, but require a promise from you of future repayment of some sort. Whether you follow up on your promise is between you and your conscience, of course, but reneging on your promises can lead to trouble down the road.

Make it Alright (Charm) can be used to comfort grieving widows, calm hysterical witnesses, and generally calm others. It is perhaps most useful in ameliorating the effects of sanity shock, where a successful roll can reduce the time spent at a penalty due to shock. See section VI for more detail on sanity shocks. For the other uses of this move mentioned above, on a 6- you make no effect on the person you are attempting to comfort. On a 7-9, you can temporarily give them respite from their worries and fears, while on a 10+ your words give them true comfort, and that person will see you in friendlier light from that point on.

Raid the Library (Brain) is the move you use where **Express your Erudition** has failed you but where you have access to a considerable archive for other research. Obviously the collection has to have some relation to the topic you wish to learn about - the public records office for town planning isn't going to have much info on Polynesian rituals, for example - but this move allows you to sift through archives of all kinds in order to research or gather information. On a 6-, you spend hours poring over dusty files but find nothing. On a 7-9, you find what you are looking for, but it takes you more time than you wanted to spend, or you have to rely on the help of archive staff or librarians to help you - and who knows who they'll talk to about your search? On a 10+ you find the information you were looking for.

Read the Crowd (Awareness) allows you to gain subtle clues about the person or people in the scene from the subconscious manner in which they react to their surroundings. On a 6-, you learn nothing about them. On a 7-9 you can ask your GM one of the following questions, and on a 10+ you can ask 3 of the following questions:

What do they wish I would do?
What would be the best approach to persuade them?
What is their underlying emotion at the moment?
Are they trying to hide something?
Who here is most dangerous?

Read the Scene (Awareness) is the move used to gather clues and insight from a scene. Spotting things out of place, locating hidden objects, and possessing a general sense of unease about a situation are all covered by this move. On a 6-, you learn nothing. On a 7-9, ask one, and on a 10+, ask three of the following questions of your GM:

What happened here?
What is going to happen here?
What here should I beware of?
What clues can I pick up here?

What's the easiest way in / out / around this?

Stay in the Shadows (Co-ordination) is used when you need to do something sneaky or underhand. Need to stay hidden, or tiptoe across the creaky wooden floorboards without giving yourself away? Trying to palm that notebook without the detective noticing? Or take that key dangling from his belt? This is the move for you! On a 6-, your attempt fails, and you are noticed. on a 7-9, you are succesfull but you have a problem - someone is suspicious and will probably investigate further, and on a 10+ no-one is any the wiser.

Peripheral Moves

Cast Spells and Conduct Rituals (Mythos) is used when you have gained access to spells and rituals in order to cast them. See section IX for more details on magic.

Learn Esoteric Lore (Mythos) is the move you use when you pick up one of the perfidious texts that cults like to have around in order to learn more about the dangers of the elder gods, learn one of their blasphemous rituals, and otherwise damage your fragile psyche. See section IX for more details on magic.

Reveal Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know (Mythos) is similar to **Express your Erudition**, but deals with Mythos lore concerning the cults of the elder gods, their rituals, strange objects and texts, and all sorts of awfulness. Of course, you need to know about your enemy, but by doing so, you slide closer to insanity yourself… On a 6-, you don't know anything useful or interesting about the subject at hand. On a 7-9, you remember something interesting, but it doesn't necessarily help you immediately (though it may help you down the line). On a 10+, it's both interesting and useful.

Spread the Wealth (Wealth) is what you use when you want to buy stuff. Don't sweat the small stuff - most people will be able to buy everyday necessities (though the devil is in the details - the guy with **Wealth** +2 might drink his coffee at the swanky hotel, while you on **Wealth** -1 get a cup of lukewarm day-old joe at the local place on the corner). When you wish to buy something expensive that might affect your savings in a significant way however, this move comes into play. When you wish to purchase a car, tickets for the next ship to Europe, or hard to come by gear, roll + **Wealth**. On a 6-, either you can't afford or find what you're looking for, or you can, but buying it will permanently reduce your **Wealth** by 1 (to a minimum of -2) as you spend all your savings to do so. On a 7-9, you can buy the item, but it will temporarily reduce your **Wealth** by 1 (to a minimum of -2) for the next month. On a 10+, you don't need to worry -take a -1 forward to your next **Spread the Wealth** roll if you make another within the next week.

Help your Friends (Bond level) if you seek to offer aid to one of the other characters in your group, use this move. The level of your **Bond** adds to your roll. On a 6-, your help is worthless, and they receive no meaningful assistance from you. If your GM is evil, they may even say that you get in the way and use one of their Evil GM Moves against the target of your help. On a 7-9 you manage to help them to some degree - they carry +1 forward to their next move as long as you are still able to help them (you can't **Help your Friends** then wait 2 months before they use that forwarded bonus). On a 10+, you really help them, and provide a +2 forward for their next move. For more on **Bonds** see section V.

IV Occupations and Occupation Groups

There are currently 21 occupations available in 7 categories or occupation groups.When you are creating your character (see section V) with the other players, you should try to choose an occupation from a different occupation group to the others if at all possible. If your GM decides that a group centred on Academia sounds just the thing, however, then feel free to disregard that advice. Likewise, if there is a Military Veteran in your group but you really, really want to play a Handyman, then ask your GM; most will be fine with that. If they aren't then remind them of the Golden Rule: *BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS*.

Each occupation group gathers three occupations together that are similar in some way (hence the advice to select only one occupation from each group). If the GM wishes to swap one in or out, or add a new occupation they have come up with, they should feel absolutely free to do so. Since all epic Cthulhoid campaigns require the characters to travel the globe, I have tried where possible to suggest reasons why they might choose to do so or be able to do so rather than tie them down to a particular place. Most occupations have two or three stats that are particularly important for them. Playbooks for each of these occupations can be found in section IX.

Occupation Groups

Academics: These occupations are often found within the confines of the university campus, but they are known to break out of the Ivory Tower from time to time. They include the **Archaeologist**, the **Professor**, and the **Scientist**.

Adventurers: These occupations are known for their willingness to pursue (some may even say mania for) adventure, excitement, and travel to the back of beyond (and beyond that). They include the **Anthropologist**, **Dilettante** and the **Explorer**.

Bookworms: The three occupations within this group have a connection to the written word or can be found leafing through catalogues and texts in order to research exotic *objets d'art*. They are the **Antiquarian**, **Author**, and **Librarian**.

Comfort-Givers: These occupations give hope to others and seek to heal their wounds, whether physical, mental or spiritual. The three occupations within this group are the **Alienist**, **Clergy** and **Doctor**.

Investigators: These occupations are most useful at discovering clues,investigating what has occurred, and putting those clues together. They are the **Journalist**, **Private Detective**, and **Retired Cop**.

Muscle: Ths group includes those who often rely on their physical presence in some way, or have some way to persuade that might involve the darker side of interpersonal relationships. They are the **Criminal**, **Handyman** and **Military Veteran**.

Outsiders: These occupations are somewhat disreputable or suspect in the minds of normal, honest middle class citizens. Of course, not everyone belongs to that category, so each of these occupations have their own networks of friends and comrades. They include the **Drifter**, **Occultist** and the **Radical**.

Occupations

Alienist: The **Alienist** uses psychoanalysis to diagnose maladies of the mind in their patients. While some have fancy offices or work in an asylum, some are content to travel to visit high-class patients (or to learn from particularly well-regarded experts in the field) or from one mental institution to another in search of test cases for their own theories. Important stats for the **Alienist** include **Brain** to reflect their education and learning, **Charm** to represent their ability to get their patients to talk, and **Awareness** to pick up on external clues that might hint as to the basis for their patient's woes.

Anthropologist: The **Anthropologist** has travelled extensively, though may have made one culture in particular the object of their study. Still, you would jump at the chance to examine another culture in detail, especially if little has been published on the matter. Important stats for the **Anthropologist** are **Brain** to reflect their education, **Awareness** to note cultural practices whose meanings you might otherwise mistake, and **Brawn** to survive what are sometimes quite tough environments.

Antiquarian: The **Antiquarian** specialises in objects or books, and possesses a great deal of knowledge of dead or exotic cultures in regards to those objects, and often has access to catalogues with which he or she might be able to identify unknown relics. While many have their own shops, others work as buyers, travelling extensively and meeting with sellers in order to purchase stock, either for shop owners or for high-paying wealthy private clients. Important stats for the **Antiquarian** include **Brain** to denote their knowledge of artifacts, **Charm** in order to get the best price, and **Awareness** to spot those items which will make you rich.

Archaeologist: The **Archaeologist** is used to travelling from dig to dig in search of dead cultures, though may also have a tenured position at some university or other where they teach occasionally between expeditions. Important stats for the **Archaeologist** are **Brain** to reflect their education and knowledge of dead cultures, **Awareness** to spot traces of ancient artifacts, and **Co-ordination** in order to be gentle with the often fragile relics they discover.

Author: The **Author** may be a penniless hack who is willing to travel anywhere to do an article for a magazine, a wandering poet seeking his muse, or a respected writer who likes to experience at first hand the subject of his books and has the advances to pay for his travels. Important stats for the **Author** include **Brain** to scour libraries as part of their research, and **Charm** in order to persuade publishers to give you that advance. **Awareness** can also be useful for noticing detail with which to decorate your words.

Clergy: The **Clergy** could be of any faith; a missionary used to travelling where need is felt most, or an itinerant preacher conducting revivals wherever he or she sets foot, perhap even a member of the church who seeks to strengthen their faith with a sabbatical, their own 40 days in the desert. Important stats for the **Clergy** are **Charm** to represent their comforting words to their flocks, **Bravery** to represent their firm faith, and **Awareness** to denote their ability to perceive the best way to bring an errant sheep back to the fold.

Criminal: The **Criminal** may be a silver-tongued con man, hired goon for the mob, or a lithe cat burglar. You may be on the lam from the police (or a rival mob), prefer to travel to avoid the trail of victims you leave behind, or simply go where the money is. Important stats for the **Criminal** are **Co-ordination** to support your stealthiness, **Awareness** to keep an eye out for trouble or a nice earner, and either **Brawn**

or **Charm** depending on whether you skew more to the fast talking chancer or the hired muscle.

Dilettante: The **Dilettante** lives a life of leisure, and if he or she chooses to leave everything behind for a month to laze on the beaches of France or go on safari in Africa, then nothing can stop them. Your team of lawyers and accountants can manage your affairs while you are gone, after all. Any stat can be important for the **Dilettante**, but **Wealth** is the most important. Other than that, feel free to choose your own path.

Doctor: The **Doctor** tends to physical wounds, and while many have their own practices or work in a hospital, others are private physicians on retainer to wealthy patients, are on sabbatical while working on medical journal articles that require them to travel to meet patients who exhibit particular symptoms, or are experts in their particular surgical field who travel where they are needed. Important stats for the Doctor are **Charm** for that bedside manner, **Brain** to represent medical knowledge or **Co-ordination** to act quickly to save lives, and **Awareness** to represent the ability to spot the early symptoms of illness.

Drifter: The **Drifter** might be a hobo, a travelling salesman or simply someone who gets antsy staying around the same place for too long. Money tends not to stick with them, and possessions are kept light, which means they can come and go as they please. While the better elements might turn their noses up at you or ignore you entirely, your own kind will usually support you, and you can always get a crust from a kind-hearted stranger. Important stats for the **Drifter** are **Charm** to beg for work, food or money, **Brawn** where you have become inured to the hard life of the road, and **Co-ordination** when you have to take charity into your own hands.

Explorer: The **Explorer** might seek to be the first to sketch out that empty spot on the map, find the elusive source of the river or simple be a hired guide leading rich clients on safari, but a boring life in an office in some stuffy city just won't cut it for you. You go where the adventure is most likely, especially if no-one has gotten there first - or at least hasn't made it back alive. Important stats for the **Explorer** are **Brawn** to withstand the harshness of the environment you travel in, **Bravery** to stand up to the dangers of the wild world, and **Awareness** to look out for those perils.

Handyman: The Handyman may be a mechanic who goes where the jobs are, an itinerant construction worker, or even a chauffeur or pilot on retainer to a rich employer, who needs to keep the vehicles entrusted to him or her in good repair. Important stats for the Handyman are **Brawn** since you need muscles to turn that wrench or swing that hammer, and **Co-ordination** so that when you swing it, you don't hit your own thumb. **Charm** might come in handy if you wear the uniform of that rich employer, or **Brain** if you fancy yourself as a would-be inventor or engineer.

Journalist: The **Journalist** is a hard-hitting reporter who goes where the story is, follows the scoop, or is in the process of investigating some story that's going to blow the usual crap off the front page. Important stats for the **Journalist** include **Charm** to persuade people to talk to you, **Awareness** to spot that break in the story that the others have missed, and **Brain** to put it all together.

Librarian: The **Librarian** might be tied to a desk in some book-filled hall of knowledge, but could just as easily be a researcher traveling from library to library, private collection to records office. Whatever the reason, you know your way around the stacks better than anyone. the most important stat for the **Librarian** is **Brain** to represent all that knowledge you've picked up, and your research skills in the library. **Charm** might come in handy if you need to wangle your way into a private collection somewhere, but the rest are up for grabs.

Military Veteran: The **Military Veteran** is no longer in the armed forces - perhaps injury sent you off with an honourable discharge, age saw you retiring with an adequate pension, or perhaps you were drummed out of the service and now make ends meet as hired muscle. Whether you are available to the highest bidder or have the leisure to do what *you* want for the first time, your time is your own now. Important stats for the **Military Veteran** are **Brawn** for the physical training you undertook, **Co-ordination** enough to have survived the field of battle, and **Bravery** to keep a cool head while bullets whizz around it.

Occultist: The **Occultist** may be part of a secret society interested in unearthing esoteric lore wherever it may be found, a travelling theosophist or proponent of spiritualism or similar doing the circuit, or simply following a family tradition - one not mentioned in public, obviously, though one which might be whispered about by those who know your family history. In the latter case, sometimes discretion is the better form of valour, and you may have decided to relocate more than once before the flaming torches and pitchforks come out. Important stats for the **Occultist** are **Bravery** for the mental strength you possess, and **Mythos** (which for you starts at -1 rather than -2) to represent the dark knowledge you already possess. **Brain** is useful to show the more mundane knowledge you have picked up along the way.

Private Detective: The **Private Detective**'s usual jobs see him or her travelling a lot, usually on the trail of cheating spouses or in search of some missing person. As your own boss, you decide which cases to follow up on, and your clients pay the expenses so it's all good. Important stats for the **Private Detective** are **Awareness**, since keeping your eyes peeled is the most important part, **Co-ordination** for when you need to use less legal methods to break a case open, and sadly often **Brawn** when the object of your investigation decides to play rough in order to get you off their back.

Professor: The **Professor** may study anything from History or Art History to Linguistics or any other discipline you can find in the university. Despite having to give lectures, a professor could be on sabbatical working on a new book, going on the guest lecture circuit, or simply attending conferences, researching and doing some field study. Important stats for the **Professor** are **Brain** (the most important by far) for the mass of education they have, and often **Charm** to persuade others of their pet theory, though the other stats are not as important.

Radical: The **Radical** might be a rabble-rousing anarchist, a communist party member or a union organiser. Whatever form their politics take, you can often find them on the road - whether travelling to a strike to shore up support against strike breakers and scabs, run out of town by the rich and their lackeys amongst the local police, or simply on a recruitment drive on a whistlestop tour giving lectures to the common man (and woman). Important stats for the **Radical** are **Bravery** for their steadfast principles, **Charm** to get the crowds on their side, and either **Brawn** or **Co-ordination**, depending on whether you try to escape the paid mobs who attack your meetings or try to fight back against the oppressors.

Retired Cop: The **Retired Cop** may have left because he was no longer fit enough for duty, because he took a bullet that meant either a desk job (never!) or retirement, or because he looked the other way in return for a bribe just once too often. Whatever his reasons, he's probably still on good terms with some of the others in the force at least, but now has the freedom to do what he wants. Important stats for the **Retired Cop** are **Brawn** from swinging that baton and plodding the streets so much, **Awareness** for spotting clues at crime scenes, and **Co-ordination** from the gun training and shadowing criminals.

Scientist: The **Scientist** may work at a prestigious university, be an oft-travelled natural historian specialising in botany and biology, or may fancy him- or herself as an inventor in the vein of Tesla,

travelling from place to place trying to sell their ideas. Important stats for the **Scientist** are **Brain** to cover the scientific knowledge he or she possesses, and **Awareness** to keep an eye out for any changes when experimenting. Other stats are less important to them.

V Creating a Character

Character creation is often better (and more importantly, more fun) when done as a group. When you decide to create a character along with the other players, take a look at the preceding sections so you have a decent idea of what choices are available to you, then discuss the campaign you are going to play. Your GM may have a decent idea of a particular campaign they want to take you through, or might have a more open, freeform idea that depends much more on player input. If the latter, spend some time just chatting about what you want to see in a game - and if you're going to GM, *LISTEN* and take notes. Remember that golden rule: *BE A FAN OF THE CHARACTERS*. If you have something in mind, give them a spiel to sell the idea to them (and to make sure they're interested in the campaign - the worst thing you can do is try to railroad our players into a campaign they aren't really interested in). Explain some of the concepts of your campaign, let them know what sort of characters would be perfect and which might be out of their depth. A campaign featuring a cult that has taken over the local university and that spends more time on dissecting blasphemous theories and discovering their origin, and which then leaps off to other universities across the world as you discover that this is only one cell in the secret society that plans something wicked might have a focus on academia, investigators, bookworms and the like, and hardly (if ever) have any need for muscle or adventure in places far off the beaten track where an explorer might come in handy. On the other hand, a tightly focused group taking the fight to the enemy, assaulting bastions of Deep Ones or Serpent Men wherever they are found would by necessity want to include one or more from the Muscle occupation group and might not need a Bookworm or a Comfort-Giver (though if it's that action-orientated, a Doctor might come in very handy after all).

After you have all had a conversation about the campaign, and you're ready to start work on your characters, then follow the following guidelines:

1. First scan through the playbooks and then look through the occupation groups and choose one so that hopefully you each choose a different occupation group.
2. Pick one of the three occupations within that group.
3. Assign values to each of the primary stats. Keep in mind which stats are useful for each occupation. Choose one of the stat profiles offered below and assign them to the primary stats as you wish:
    a. +2, +1, +1, 0, 0, -1
    b. +2, +2, +1, 0, -1, -2
    c. +2, +2, 0, 0, 0, -2
4. Work out the secondary stats (Health and Sanity are based on whatever values you assign to Brawn and Bravery respectively, Wealth and Mythos vary by occupation and are found on the playbook).
5. Choose two Occupation Moves from the list on your playbook.
6. Look at the descriptions of your character's appearance and choose whichever options appeal to you, and choose a name too - some suggestions are given, but you can choose your own in you prefer.
7. Note what gear you have, and if given any choices, choose them.
8. If you think of some background to your character, make note of it and share it with the others. Why did your Military Veteran leave the service? What speciality does your Professor pursue?
9. Choose a Motivation from the list at the end of this section.
10. Work out your bonds with the other characters.

Bonds

You will have a bond with each of the other characters, which will give you a numerical value from 0 to +3. Choose one other character and give them a +2 Bond. Choose two others and give them +1 Bonds. Everyone else has a 0 Bond with you. If there are only two other characters, one gets a +2 Bond, the other gets +1. If there is only one other character, then you get a +2 with that character. If you are the only player, then good luck - you're probably going to need it! Each player marks their own bonds down, and does not have to reciprocate - you may have a +2 Bond with Alfred the Handyman because you feel you owe him a debt of gratitude for saving your father in the war, while he may have a 0 bond with you because he thinks that your adherence to Marxist dogma is dangerous. Some Occupation Moves may affect your bonds too.

Bonds will increase as you work together, though a Bond on +3 can be reduced to 0 in exchange for an experience point if you find yourself in dire need of one more point in order to fund an advance. For more on this and other advances, see section VII.

Languages

Each character is expected to know English, and possibly another language too. A **Brain** score of -2 suggests that you know only English and are unlikely to ever pick up another language. A **Brain** score of -1 may suggest you have a smattering of foreign words in your vocabulary, maybe enough to eventually make yourself understood to a speaker of that language, but not enough to read a text written in that language. A **Brain** score of 0 will enable the character to be able to understand simple concepts in a foreign tongue and to be able to decipher a text written in that language with the aid of a dictionary and enough time. With **Brain** +1, you will know 2 other languages; **Brain** +2 will provide you with 3 other languages, and **Brain** +3 will provide you with 4 other languages. You do not have to choose these languages at the time of character creation, but at any time in the game when literacy in a particular tongue is desirable, you can announce to the GM that you understand that language and mark it as one of your language picks. You cannot then change it, of course. When you do choose to do so, your GM should ask you how or why you came to learn that language.

Motivations

Every character has something which compels them to act. Most of us might just go home, dive under the covers and stay there, or hit the bar and drink ourselves into oblivion when we discover that our world is not as it seems and that the elder gods are coming for us. For some reason or another, this is not the case for you. Some stronger notion drives you to act. Each of the following Motivations, if acted on within a session, will gain you 1 XP at the end of that session (See section VII for more details). You may only ever have one Motivation, which you choose when creating your character. An easy-going GM may allow you to switch Motivations at some stage (particularly if the one you currently have seems to have been superceded or is no longer applicable to your case), but you may never (never I say) have more than one Motivation. You do not need to choose a different Motivation to the other characters, but it might be a good idea to have a range of Motivations amongst your group.

- **Adrenalin Junkie**: Don't take the staid, boring path. Take the way that offers excitement and

action.

- **Autonomy is Key**: No gods, no masters. Especially not those who would make you slaves to inhuman desires.

- **Cursed Blood**: Your family history is a litany of disappearances, mob justice, and evil reputations. Do what you can to break the curse; Be the hero this time.

- **Deus Vult**: Your faith is an important part of you. To give in to the elder gods is to give in to Satan.

- **Escape the Mundane**: Seek the bizarre, the weird, the unknowable.

- **Into the Void**: The unknown draws you close, do not resist your curiosity.

- **Knowledge is Power**: Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know are only secrets if few know them. You aim to be one of those few.

- **Preserve Order**: Chaos must not be allowed to stand.

- **Protect the Innocent**: You might think twice about getting involved, but if they're going to investigate, you're going to go too to make sure they stay safe.

- **Purity and Light**: Humanity must be kept pure. Destroy the Unnatural. Cleanse the Earth of this alien menace.

- **Science will Prevail**: Conquer the irrational, prove that Reason is stronger. And if that fails, use technology to defeat them.

- **Sense of Justice**: There is too much injustice in the world. Do what is right.

- **Stand and Fight**: Others might try to pretend nothing is wrong, or hope someone else will deal with it. You just aren't like that.

- **Strive to be First**: Go where no-one has been before, or at least where few have been. Make your own path.

- **The Quiet Life**: It's all you ask for, peace and tranquility. You know you can't have it unless you make it happen though, by ridding the world of these disturbing entities.

- **The Will to Power**: Influence and Dominate, do not be influenced or dominated. Be strong, not weak.

- **Time to Shine**: You have always taken a back seat in life, and you have many regrets for what could have been. No longer.

- **Unearth the Past**: Discover something about the past, whether that be an ancient relic or a dusty long-forgotten text.

- **Vengeance is Mine**: Anyone who wrongs you or your loved ones will pay.
- **Wanderlust**: This town is too small for you. Life is out there, not cooped up here.
- **Your own Personal Demons**: You have done bad things in your past. Now is the time for atonement.

VI Health, Sanity, Harm, Healing and Debilities

Health and Harm

Your **Health** score starts at a base 5, and your initial **Brawn** value is added or subtracted from that number to give you your maximum **Health** score giving a number between 3 and 7. That number will go down far too easily and rapidly for your liking, and be careful that it doesn't slip to 0. You can heal up to maximum **Health** again, which might take a while if you're horrendously injured, but you cannot heal more than your maximum. Of course, if your **Health** drops to 0 and you survive, your maximum **Health** will decrease, but that's not going to happen to you, is it? You're going to take much better care for your character than those other schmucks.

When your character gets into a fight, someone is going to get hurt. Hopefully it's going to be the other guy, but from time to time, the hurt is going to be put on you. This section is all about those times. There are two fighting moves that you're going to be using, **Go Ballistic** (for ranged attacks) and **Get Stuck In** (for hand to hand combat). Whichever you use, the same process is used. This is not a game where you need to get the battle mats out, think about attacks of opportunity and measure exact movement allowances and facing degrees. All you do is roll your usual 2D6 and add your **Co-ordination** (for **Go Ballistic**) or your **Brawn** (for **Get Stuck In**) and check to see what the result is.

On a 6-, you miss with your attack, and your GM gets to make a move in retaliation. That doesn't necessarily mean you're going to get hurt, but more than likely, you're going to get hit.

On a 7-9, you hit your opponent, doing the damage for your weapon, but your opponent will also make a move against you, probably resulting in him or her doing damage to you. Hope you didn't bring a knife to an axe fight. If you are **Going Ballistic**, choose one of the following:

- It's a flesh wound - you miss anything vital, do -1 **Damage**.
- Uh-oh - You get a shot off but have to move to do so, putting yourself in a more dangerous position.
- Click-click - you use up 1 **Ammo**.

On a 10+, not only do you hit your opponent nicely, but you get a choice - you can either do your normal damage to your opponent, while you are able to dance away from his or her retaliatory attack unharmed, or you can choose to open yourself up to a counter attack but do an additional point of damage to your opponent.

Of course, if you're standing 50 feet away from a cultist armed with a machete and you have a pistol, chances are that even with a 7-9 you're going to be fine, but don't forget that GMs can be sneaky bastards, and he could easily use one of his Evil GM Moves on you.

Weapons and Damage

So, what sort of damage do various weapons do exactly?

1 Damage

Unarmed brawling; falling down a short flight of stairs; no food or water for a day; being hit with a burning torch; smoke inhalation or drowning (ongoing damage).

2 Damage
Knife; handgun or rifle; falling 10-15'; being pushed onto a small campfire.

3 Damage
Axe; shotgun; falling 16-30'; being hit by a car; your clothes are on fire.

4 Damage
A full burst from a Thompson SMG; hand grenade; falling 31-45'; being hit by a truck; trying to run out of a building on fire.

5 Damage
Dynamite; falling 46+'; trapped in a room on fire; being hit by a train; a building or mine collapsing on you.

Occasionally armour will be a factor too. Sadly, in the 1920s and 1930s there is little in the way of armour for you, but some of the monstrous creatures you fight will have armour. If that's the case, any damage you do will be reduced by the same amount of points as the armour is worth. So shooting an armour 3 critter with a handgun? Not going to do you much good. Offence isn't always the best form of defence; running away screaming works too.

Weapons and Tags

The following tags can be found attached to various weapons.

n-Damage: How much damage they do normally.
n-Ammo: The weapon has a limited supply of ammunition. When out of *Ammo*, you must *Reload*.
Area: The effect of the weapon affects more than one target.
Auto: By using up 1 Ammo, the weapon can be used to make an area attack or if aimed at a single target, does +1 Damage.
Hand: The weapon can only be used if you are up close and personal with your target.
Near: The weapon can be used against someone nearby but still within shouting distance.
Far: The weapon can be used against someone at a distance, as long as you can still see them.
Loud: People will hear when this weapon is used.
Messy: When this weapon hits, it leaves a real mess behind. We're talking guts all over the place not just a few drops of blood.
Reload: This weapon uses up all its *Ammo* when you use it, and so you must use an action to reload it before it can be used again. In the midst of a fight, this will probably allow the GM to use one of his or her Moves.
Two-Handed: Both hands are needed to use the weapon.

Sample Weapons

Fist / Kick: 1-Damage, Hand
Brass Knuckles: 2-Damage, Hand
Nightstick: 2-Damage, Hand

Baseball Bat: 2-Damage, Hand, Two-Handed
Sharp Scalpel: 2-Damage, Hand
Large Knife: 2-Damage, Hand
Sword Cane: 2-Damage, Hand
Machete / Axe: 3-Damage, Hand, Messy
Derringer Pistol: 1-Damage, Hand, Reload, Loud
Pistol: 2-Damage, Hand / Near, Loud, 2-Ammo
Rifle: 2-Damage, Near / Far, Loud, Two-Handed, 2-Ammo
Sawn off Shotgun: 3-Damage, Near, Area, Reload, Loud, Messy, Two-Handed
Thompson SMG: 2-Damage, Near / Far, Auto, Loud, Two-Handed, 3-Ammo
Grenade: 4-Damage, Near, Area, Loud, Messy
Dynamite / Explosives: 5-Damage, Near, Area, Loud, Messy

Other Gear

Each investigator should have equipment relevant to their occupation available to them, and according to their **Wealth** stat. If they are near their home base, then they can get access to such gear easily. Otherwise, they will have to state that they are taking certain equipment with them in order to be able to use it (though some occupations have Moves which allow them to find just the right thing in their pockets). Gear that is not usual to their occupation and **Wealth** stat needs to be purchased using the **Spread the Wealth** Move.

Sanity and Harm

Your **Sanity** stat works just like your **Health** stat, and starts off with a base 5 adjusted by your initial **Bravery** value to give a number between 3 and 7, just like above. Like **Health**, as you suffer shocks to your **Sanity** it will be reduced (hopefully only temporarily). Likewise, if your **Sanity** drops to 0, you're in for a world of mental anguish and your maximum **Sanity** will be permanently reduced.

When you come across some vile scene, unhealthy tome or get accosted by some unnatural creature, take a **Sanity Shock** test. To do so, you will make a **Keep it Together** roll of 2D6 modified by your **Bravery** stat. Some shocks are easier to deal with than others. Each vile scene, unhealthy tome or unnatural creature will be given a **Sanity Shock** score usually varying from 1 to 6. The effects you face will depend on that score and your **Keep it Together** roll as follows:

For Sanity Shock tests of 1-3:

On a roll of 6-, you take the full **Sanity Shock** loss (eg on a **Sanity Shock** 2 test, you will lose 2 **Sanity**). For each point of **Sanity** that you lose in this way, you must also pick one option from the following list:

- Drop whatever you are holding
- Run in the opposite direction
- Cower and take an additional -1 forward to your next Move
- Scream loudly
- Lash out or clutch at those around you (-1 forward to an ally's next Move)
- Lose control of your bowels or vomit at the sight

On a roll of 7-9, you are able to take the sight in your stride to a larger degree. The **Sanity** you would

normally lose is reduced by 2 points to a minimum of 0 (so on a **Sanity Shock** 1 test, you can't gain a **Sanity** point). In effect, this means that a **Sanity Shock** 1 or 2 test will result in no **Sanity** loss, while a **Sanity Shock** 3 test will result in only 1 **Sanity** being lost. If you do take any Sanity loss, then you must also choose one of the options in the list given above for 6-.

On a roll of 10+, you are not affected by the sight at all.

For Sanity Shock tests of 4-6:

On a 6- you take the full **Sanity** loss equal to the **Sanity Shock** test (for example a failed **Sanity Shock** 5 test will see you losing 5 **Sanity**. Ouch). In addition, you must choose one of the following options:

- Faint dead away
- Take a number of options from the 6- results for **Sanity Shock** 1-3 tests above equal to the level of **Sanity Shock** test you have just failed. For example, if you fail a **Sanity Shock** 5 test, you would pick 5 of the options given above.
- Take a **Phobia** related to what you have just undergone. When in a similar situation, your phobia will be triggered, and you will carry -2 forward until you are no longer in that situation. For example, after almost being buried alive by the cultists, you gain claustrophobia. When later you discover that you must crawl down a dark, narrow tunnel to escape the cult, all of your Moves will be at a -2 penalty until you make it out of there.

On a roll of 7-9, you may reduce the **Sanity** loss by 3, in effect giving you a total loss of 1-3 from a 4-6 test. It's still a loss, but nowhere near as bad as it could have been. You must also choose a number of options from the 6- results for **Sanity Shock** tests of 1-3 above equal to the final **Sanity** loss you are subjected to.

On a 10+, the **Sanity** loss you take from the test is reduced by 5. In other words, only a **Sanity Shock** 6 test will result in you losing any **Sanity** (and then only one point). Some things are just too horrific to entirely recover from. Whether you suffer any **Sanity** loss or not, you also have to choose one option from the 6- results for **Sanity Shock** 1-3 tests above.

Ongoing Shock and Making it Alright

No matter how many **Sanity** you lose, you will also carry -1 forward for every 3 points or part thereof of **Sanity** loss for the entirety of the scene. For example, if you miserably fail a **Sanity Shock** 4 test, for the rest of the scene you will be at -2 for all your Moves.

If another character attempts the **Make it Alright** Move, they can alleviate this penalty to some degree. On a 6-, they fail to help you. On a 7-9, one point of penalty is taken forward to your next Move only rather than for the scene. If you were at a -2 penalty, the other point would still count, in effect giving you a -2 penalty forward to your next Move and then a -1 forward for the rest of the scene. On a 10+, two points are carried forward to your next Move only, and will not affect you for the rest of the scene at all. You can only be helped by the **Make it Alright** Move once per **Sanity Shock** test. If you end up with a -2 penalty carried forward for the scene and your friend Gloria the Librarian attempts to **Make it Alright** but fails, you can't then ask Sidney the Drifter to comfort you.

Sanity Shock Test Numbers

So what are some common test numbers?

Sanity Shock 1
A dead body; seeing someone seriously wounded, killed or tortured (even an enemy); someone or something attempts to kill you.

Sanity Shock 2
A grisly murder scene or several dead bodies; you witness an unnatural event; you see an unnatural creature at a distance.

Sanity Shock 3
Seeing a dead loved one, or seeing one killed or tortured; you see an unnatural creature up close; you torture or kill someone in cold blood.

Sanity Shock 4
A loved one tries to kill you; an unnatural creature attacks you; you experience an unnatural event; you are tortured; you see a gigantic unnatural creature at a distance.

Sanity Shock 5
You discover that you have committed cannibalism; you are possessed and conscious but unable to act; you see a gigantic unnatural creature up close.

Sanity Shock 6
A gigantic unnatural creature attacks you; you kill a loved one; you witness destruction on a massive scale (for example, the entire city is destroyed or a rift opens at the culmination of the ritual and thousands of unnatural creatures pour out).

Healing

Fortunately, both physical and mental wounds can be healed, with time. Slight wounds and shocks will wear off gradually. If you have lost up to 3 **Health** or **Sanity**, then you will regain them at a rate of 1 per scene. In addition, medical or psychoanalytical attention can help too - see the **Doctor** and **Alienist** playbooks for more detail. If you lost 4 or more points of **Health** or **Sanity**, things are going to take a little longer. At least a week must pass before you can recover a point. If after time you have regained enough **Health** or **Sanity** so that you are only down by 3 points, then you can recover at the usual 1 per scene rate. For example, after a rather severe shock, Gerald is down to 2 **Sanity** from his usual 7, having lost 5 points. After a week, he regains a point putting him on 3 **Sanity** (4 points down on his maximum). Another week goes by, and he regains another point putting him on 4 **Sanity** (3 points down). At the start of the next scene he will regain another point; two more new scenes and he will be fine again. Medical and psychoanalytical rolls can only be made once per wound (whether mental or physical).

Death and Debility

So, what happens if you find your **Health** or **Sanity** reduced to 0? You have a choice. Firstly, you can opt for your character to die (**Health**) or go incurably insane (**Sanity**). In either case, your character is removed from play and you must start afresh with a new character. Your other choice, if you feel that your

character's story has not yet fully been told, is to choose a permanent **Debility** instead. Your character will play no further part in the rest of the scene - hopefully in the aftermath of whatever fight you were taking part in, your friends will recover you and get you the serious help you need. Perhaps you are unconscious from your wounds, or maybe you are a gibbering wreck unable to do anything at all except be led away by the men in white coats. Secondly, you must permanently reduce your **Health** or **Sanity** (whichever is applicable) by 1. If because of the permanent loss to your **Health** or **Sanity** stat you find that your **Health** or **Sanity** maximum is now 0, then you are finally dead or insane. Nothing can be done for you. Next, you must choose a **Debility** from the following list. You may only choose each Debility once, regardless of whether it is caused by **Sanity** or **Health** loss. If you reach the unenviable position of having Debilities in each of your 6 primary stats, then the seventh time will be the charm - you will be dead or incurably insane.

Debilities

Each Debility brings with it a permanent reduction in that stat by 1 point to a minimum of -2. If you had a -2 in a stat already, you cannot take a Debility in that stat. If you cannot take any more Debilities because of this, then it counts as your lucky seventh Debility described above.

Awareness: Shrapnel has done permanent damage to your eyes or hearing (**Health**) or the whispers you hear in the shadows distract you too much (**Sanity**).

Brain: Your mind makes irrational leaps affecting your reasoning (**Sanity**), or your brain functions have been permanently affected by the knock you took to your head (**Health**).

Bravery: Your PTSD gives you flashbacks which make you freeze in combat (**Health**) or your confidence has taken a hit knowing there are things out there that are beyond your understanding, and they are coming for you (**Sanity**).

Brawn: The long hours you spend simply staring into space have led to your muscles atrophying (**Sanity**), or the aches and pains of your many wounds have taken a toll on your body (**Health**).

Charm: Gibbering to yourself does not endear you to others (**Sanity**), or the scars you have sustained discomfort people (**Health**).

Co-ordination: The tics you have gained from jumping at every shadow mess with your hand-eye co-ordination (**Sanity**), or you have sustained nerve damage that affects your balance (**Health**).

VII Advancement

After the end of each session, your GM will call for a short break while you see how many XP your characters have gained. If you have 5 or more XP, you may spend 5 in order to gain an Advance. Advances allow you to increase your primary stats, take more Moves (either from your own playbook or another playbook) or gain access to Advanced Moves.

What is a session?

A session is usually a few scenes that make a cohesive whole, with a readily observable beginning and end. From discovering the body of your friend, to tracking down information on the cultists responsible from clues gathered, finding where they are planning on enacting their next ritual, and finally crashing the party to stop them from their nefarious goals would count as a session. You may, of course, discover in the aftermath of the disrupted ritual that the head of the cult has escaped to report back to his shadowy masters, leading to another session of several scenes; after you have tracked him down, dealt with his masters and discovered that they are similarly only a smaller cog in a greater global conspiracy, the GM may call the end of another session, and so on.

Starting a session

When you start playing for the first time, or at the start of every new session after you have undergone any advances, your GM will highlight one of your 6 primary stats, and you will choose another of your 6 primary stats to highlight too. If you successfully use a Move based on that stat in the following session, then mark it - at the end of the current session, you will gain 1 XP for each of these. You cannot choose the same stat that your GM has chosen, and GMs who are reading this are advised to change the highlighted stat they choose each time. By doing so, you may wish to drop a hint concerning what sort of actions are likely to be undertaken in the next session, though conversely any Evil GMs out there may wish to obfuscate and pick a stat whose Moves are less likely to be used in the following session. Having said that, by the nature of being incorporated of several scenes, it is likely each session will involve the usage of each of the primary stats at some point.

Gaining XP

When the GM calls the end of a session, each character should answer the following questions. Some are personal, some are group questions. For the former, if the player has fulfilled the conditions of that question, then he or she gains 1 XP for each “yes” answer. For the latter, if the group as a whole decide that they have fulfilled the conditions of that question, then each of them gains 1 XP. In addition, at the end of each session, each player may increase one Bond by +1. If you have a +3 Bond with another character, you can if you wish instead of increasing a Bond cancel that Bond (you now have a 0 Bond with that character) in return for 1 XP. If you have at least 5 XP, you can spend 5 for an Advance, or retain them for future use, though it is much more useful to spend them.

Personal XP Questions

- Did you fulfill the conditions of your Motivation?
- Did you successfully use the stat highlighted by the GM this session?

- Did you successfully use the stat highlighted by yourself this session?

Group XP Questions

- Did we make progress in our quest?
- Did we help preserve humanity / the world in some way?
- Did we pick up any useful items or knowledge about our foes?

Advances

Each playbook has different Advances available to it, though some are held in common. Each Advance may only be taken once (though some are repeated, so in effect you may take some Advances twice or three times). Some Advances can only be taken after you have already taken 5 other advances; these will be noted on each playbook. Advances take the following form:

- Add +1 to any stat (to a maximum of +Z): If you choose this Advance, increase any stat you wish by +1. If you are already at +Z in a stat, then you cannot taken this Advance for that stat.
- Take any 3 (sometimes 4) Advanced Moves: Each of the 11 Basic Moves has an Advanced form. By choosing this Advance, you may choose any 3 of these Moves and use the Advanced forms instead. This gives you a further result option (12+) when you roll which adds to the 10+ result. A list of Advanced Moves follows at the end of the section.
- Take a new Move from your Occupation list: Look at the other Moves available to your occupation in the playbook (remember you chose a number of them when you created your character) and add it to the list of Moves you can do.
- Take a new Move from another playbook within your Occupation Group: Look at the playbooks of the other two occupations within your Occupation Group and add that to the list of Moves you can do. For example, an **Alienist** may decide to take a Move from the **Clergy's** playbook.
- Take a new Move from any other playbook: Look at all of the other playbooks and add it to the list of your available Moves. For example, your **Alienist** may decide that he really wants one of the Moves available to the **Drifter** for some reason.

Advanced Moves

Each of the Basic Moves has an Advanced form. You still use the same stat to roll, and obey any results for 6-, 7-9 and 10+, but in addition, if you roll 12+, you get an added bonus to the 10+ result. Peripheral Moves do not have any form of Advanced Move. These Advanced Moves are given below:

Defy Danger (varies): On a 12+, you escape danger magnificently. You may choose to either give all of your allies a +1 to their attempts, ensure that one other character also escapes unharmed, or escape with such elegance and style that everyone who witnesses it is impressed.

Express your Erudition (Brain): On a 12+, you make a connection. Your GM will work with you to reveal a connection between clues that you may have missed or to give you an idea of what avenue of investigation to pursue next.

Get Stuck In (Brawn): On a 12+, you do an extra +1 Damage on this attack.

Go Ballistic (Co-ordination): On a 12+, you do an extra +1 Damage on this attack.

Keep it Together (Bravery): On a 12+, the Sanity Shock test you are rolling to avoid is reduced by 1. For example, if you are rolling for a Sanity Shock 4 test, it becomes a Sanity Shock 3 test instead.

Make Friends and Influence People (Charm): Your target does as you wish, with no promises needed, and no questions asked.

Make it Alright (Charm): You can temporarily remove a phobia from that person for the remainder of the scene.

Raid the Library (Brain): You find something else unexpected that will help you in your investigations. Your GM will give you another clue or give you some sort of help.

Read the Crowd (Awareness): You may ask one further question of the GM, which may be anything you wish to ask.

Read the Scene (Awareness): You may ask one further question of the GM, which may be anything you wish to ask.

Stay in the Shadows (Co-ordination): You get where you want to be, stay hidden, or take whatever item you were attempting to steal without any bad consequences whatsoever, and in fact you manage to pick up something else - perhaps an overheard conversation, or a note in the same pocket as the key - that will help you in some way.

VIII Magic

Your characters may eventually gain access to the fell magic that cultists use, in order to turn it against your enemies, but be wary lest you fall into the same insanity that possesses them. The main way to do so is to find one of the forbidden tomes they collect and hoard in which you may find dark rituals inscribed within.

Forbidden Tomes

When you read one of these weird texts, and know the language it is written in, make a **Learn Esoteric Lore** test. On a 6-, you learn nothing of value, but you must make a **Sanity Shock** test (each book has its own Sanity Shock test level). On a 7-9, the GM will tell you what spells are to be found in the book, and you may carry a +1 forward to your next **Mythos** roll (which could be **Learn Esoteric Lore**, **Cast Spells and Conduct Rituals**, or **Reveal Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know**). In addition, you will also have to make the **Sanity Shock** test described for the 6- result. On a 10+, you still have to make the **Sanity Shock** test, learn what spells are available in the book, and may choose: You may either add +1 to your **Mythos** stat (to a maximum of +3) or learn one of the spells found within the book or take the +1 forward to your next **Mythos** roll as for 7-9 above.

You may re-read a book several times in order to learn more spells or take the +1 to your **Mythos** score, but you can only learn each spell once and take the +1 to your **Mythos** stat once per book. It takes quite a while to read a book, so you will need to set time aside to read, at least several hours and more likely a day or two, possibly even a week.

Casting Spells and Conducting Rituals

If you successfully learn a spell or ritual, you may then cast it. Spells tend to be fairly easy, a matter of knowing the correct intonations to utter, while rituals tend to require specific components too, often a blood sacrifice of some sort. Each ritual will describe these components, or if a blood sacrifice is needed, tell you how many **Health** points need to be sacrificed in order to power up the ritual. Whether casting a spell or ritual, you are almost certainly required to make a **Sanity Shock** test too, which varies from spell to spell.

When you make a **Cast a Spell or Conduct a Ritual** Move, on a 6- nothing happens, but you must make the **Sanity Shock** test given in the spells description. On a 7-9, the spell is successfully cast but you must still make the **Sanity Shock** test. On a 10+, the spell is successful and you may take the **Sanity Shock** test as if it was 2 levels lower. For example, if you were to cast the **Withering** spell and roll 9, you would have to make a **Sanity Shock** 3 test. If you rolled 10, however, you would only have to make a **Sanity Shock** 1 test.

IX Playbooks

Playbooks for each of the Occupations can be found HERE. They are in a tri-fold format, and are double-sided (2 pages per playbook) in a landscape format.

X GM Agenda, Principles, and Moves

Cthulhu World has several defining traits for the GM to consider. A good GM will try to incorporate these into his or her agenda when starting a campaign, keep track of the principles in play, and use GM Moves to make life interesting for the characters. At the beginning of each session, it could be a good idea to look over these again in order to keep on track.

Agenda

- ★ ***Make the world seem real***. The setting is the real world in the 1920s or 1930s, but there are fantastical and supernatural elements. To the characters as they start out, the world should seem mundane, but as time goes on and strange events and entities occur, they should start to understand that *Man Is Not Alone*. Make the weirdness seem real, coexisting with our world but still out of reach and unknown to the vast majority of the world's inhabitants. Things have effects, police will investigate murder; trying to persuade people that there are *Things Man Was Not Meant To Know* will land you in the psych ward, but on the other hand, if the characters do not act, *Things Will Rapidly Go To Hell*.
- ★ ***Give the characters things to do***. Make it plain that without them, the world will suffer, as will all things they hold dear. This means giving them the opportunity to save the world (or die trying). They still might not succeed, but hopefully they'll have a great time getting there. Don't worry about the boring stuff. You don't need to track each and every minor detail of their lives. Concentrate on the the important stuff, and give them plenty of options. Get the characters involved and they'll help you come up with stuff, give you ideas about what they want to do, and encourage them to act. This means giving them all the relevant important clues in a scene so they can move on rather than get stuck. Reward them with more detail or additional minor clues that will help them.
- ★ ***Play to find out what happens***. Don't try to railroad the group, don't get too attached to your NPCs, and don't come up with a far-reaching plot that depends on the characters doing exactly what you want them to. Let them find their own solutions. Let them decide their priorities, what they think is most important. If the group know of three other locations to investigate, don't tell them where to go first, let them decide amongst themselves what they think the next logical step should be.

Principles

- ❖ ***Be a fan of the characters***. This doesn't mean always letting them get their way, but if they want to try something that's really cool, let them. They might not succeed, but give them the opportunity and encourage them to go with what they think is cool. If they succeed, cheer along with them. If they fail miserably, console them (and use some of your evil GM moves to give them other options, even if it means they face a new and more terrible obstacle - then cheer when they overcome that threat).

- ❖ ***Talk to the characters, not the players***. Inculcate a sense of belonging to the world by facing the characters rather than the players. Keep focused on the game and not the outside world. We all invariably end up bringing in some of real world's events into our games - keeping such a tight

focus over hours of play is just not possible - but try to keep it to a minimum and try to keep attention on the game world. The characters and the fiction comes first.

- ***Bring the horror***. You're all playing in a campaign where *Threats From Beyond* are very real, and which the characters are quickly going to get involved with. These entities will not just stand by while the characters act, and their methods aren't always going to be subtle or non-threatening. They're going to affect the characters, physically or mentally (probably both). Use evocative language when you describe them, make the group understand that these are weird things not of this world. Don't just say "it's a kinda fish guy." Mention the cloying stink of rotten fish clinging to the bloated, rough-skinned half-human creature slithering menacingly toward them, the guttural sounds coming from it's spiny-toothed mouth and the icy coldness of its webbed talons that stretch out to grasp your leg as it tries to drag you down into the dark pool from which it suddenly erupted.

- ***Moves always follow fiction***. The fiction comes first, and last, and always. If something happens, if the characters try something, if they fail a roll (or succeed - setting off an explosion successfully is going to have an effect), then make a move. The move you make should reflect what's going on, and should lead to further action. Always return to the fiction after you move, giving the characters the chance to show you what they've got. Don't simply tell the group you're making a GM Move, show them what's going on. For example, don't say "I'm making a Foreshadow Trouble Move, or say "the cultists are leaving the house and heading your way" say "the muffled voices you thought you could hear as you arrived at the manor house seem louder, more clearer now." Let the group put two and two together themselves.

- ***Causes have effects***. When things happen, they don't happen in a void. If the investigators successfully shut down a major branch of the cult, the other branches are going to hear about it and want to do something about it. If the investigators decide to watch the ritual rather than disrupt it, bad things will happen that they'll then have to deal with. If they leave a trail of corpses behind them (especially if those corpses include innocents), the authorities are going to get involved, and they won't listen to deluded or cockamamy excuses about some alien entity that has to be stopped with more bloodshed. If the investigators turn to inhuman methods such as torture in order to get information, then they'll lose their humanity.

- ***Let the characters in***. Ask questions of the characters, and use their answers. If they make an **Express your Erudition** Move, ask how they knew that, or where they got that information, and make a note of it. If they want to get hold of something or someone and ask if they can have a contact, let them, and ask about how they know that person, why that person is likely to help even though they last met on difficult terms. Turn questions back on the characters too - and again use their answers. Good players won't always choose the easiest path, especially if they're getting into the game, so if one asks "have we accounted for all the risen dead?" ask them if they have. "Oh shit, no, one crawled out of the yard while we were dealing with the sorceror!" is a sure sign that the players are having fun even if it brings them another complication to deal with. Even relatively mundane questions can bring something up - asking what emotions the sight of the bedraggled cat brings up to a character can be effective.

- ***Make NPCs real***. Give them names, consider their motivations and their own idiosyncracies, and let them act as you think they would in a given situation. Sure, those hoods sent to give the investigators a warning of the physical variety might seem tough, but they aren't fanatical, and if

the beating turns the other way, they'll run. Make them come alive. Intimidate the little old lady and you'll get your information, but play up her tears, her trembling hands as she points to the garage where she knows the guy next door makes trips to in the night, and make the investigators feel like crap for how they treated her.

- ***Think Globally, Act Locally***. Cthulhu World is intended for those sprawling epic campaigns. When thinking about the **Fronts** you want for your campaign, make them a global threat with local branches, or at least local connections to other groups. One section of your campaign might take place in and around the Everglades; other parts might take place in Tunguska, Carcassonne, Tahiti, Lima and Marrakesh. That doesn't mean the characters will face the same threats in each place, or that there's a railroad leading from one place to the next (always give them options and let them decide where to go next). If communications suddenly die between the local **Fronts** at Lima, Everglades and Marrakesh, then the other **Fronts** are likely to take notice and make sure their defences are secure, or send their own investigators to find out what has been happening there.

GM Moves

GM Moves are moved whenever the investigators give you an opportunity. Often this is when they roll a 6- on a Move, but in some situations they can be triggered when a 7-9 is rolled as a complication that occurs alongside a success. In other situations, perhaps when there is a lull in the action and the characters aren't sure what to do next, a GM Move can be used - Raymond Chandler's advice to authors to have a man with a gun in his hand appear when they aren't certain what to write next comes to mind. These GM Moves are examples; if you come up with another that you like, then add it to the list.

- ***Keep them Separated***: Split the group in some way, either by having someone or something drag one of the characters away, a trap triggering that blocks the way after a couple of them have passed it, or some other way. Through whichever way is used, the group are now split and can no longer aid each other until they find way to regroup.

- ***Take their Gear***: They find that they forgot to reload their gun after cleaning it, perhaps, or the sudden lurch as the creature bursts through the floor makes them drop their lantern. Or maybe there's a wide open window and that creepy book you were going to look at later is now gone.

- ***Inflict Damage***: Usually as a reaction to a 6- (or a 7-9 roll) in combat, with the character's opponent getting his own licks in, but it could come about through some other reason, such as a failed **Defy Danger** roll to escape a house on fire, or, if the GM is feeling particularly evil, when a sudden ambush stops the group in their tracks. This latter example is particularly mean though, and should really only be used if the group have ignored their security concerns in a place that is known to be dangerous to them.

- ***Foreshadow Trouble***: This could be as simple as announcing that the group hear the barn door slam shut over the sounds of the dogs barking as they charge over the fields in their direction, or as subtle as commenting that the stars are shining very brightly through the cloudless night sky (the stars are right and the ritual to free Cthulhu is about to start).

- ***Use a Front Move***: Your Fronts and the servitors of the dangers the group faces have their own moves. Perhaps the Ghoul Pack don't inflict their damage on the Librarian as she flails at them with her umbrella, but instead use their "drag someone into the catacombs" move instead.

- ***Provide an Opportunity***: Set a scene and offer the characters the chance to get the drop on someone, make a new contact or get hold of some gear that will provide them with an advantage. There may or may not be a cost if they take you up, but they have a choice nevertheless.

- ***Present a Complication***: Some unforeseen hurdle is put in their way. This is not necessarily a bad thing for them - it may be something that they can use to highlight their strengths for example, so that the other players (and you) applaud their skill or talents in overcoming the problem.

- ***Reveal an Unknown***: This could be as varied as an NPC coming clean and revealing the Great Plan (perhaps gloatingly having captured the investigators), a sudden revelation coming from reading an esoteric text, or rather nastily revealing that the centre of the dais has a trapdoor as the investigator hurtles down towards the shoggoth waiting at the bottom...