

Gaming notes:

For your character, pick an Occupation: Painter, etc. This will help determine the amount of income you can make.

Characters may have to work to make money. A painter may have to spend time painting, a farmer might have to do chores for someone. This doesn't have to take much game time, but it's important if you expect to make any money, as chasing the supernatural rarely pays off financially. Each character can, once a session, describe what they're going to do for money. If they use a skill, they roll their Skill die x10 (bonus rolls and critical failures apply). This is a great way to get into your character. For example, if you are a painter and you're investigating a seaside village, maybe you make character portraits of tourists when you're not spelunking.

Remember you can select a Knowledge of your choosing just like a Skill, e.g.:

- Occult (magic, etc.)
- Canonical History
- Culture (Specific)
- Archaeology

No "permanent" Extras. I'd like to avoid large parties. All Extras controlled by GM right now.

No bennies! A critical failure is a critical failure!

Characters cannot start out with magic, and can only gain it through very special encounters, if ever.

Goals...these give you experience points:

1. Doing the mission
2. Encountering whatever it is that you're on a quest for
3. Learning certain key elements about the nature of the encounter

For example, if you go on a mission to explore a haunted but never encounter the haunt, you only get one point XP. If you run into the haunt but don't research to find out what it likely is, you get 2 XP. If you find out what it is and the story behind it, you get 3 XP.

Damage: you can only get one Raise's worth of damage at a time...that is, a Wild Card with no wounds, at most, can get 1 wound (1 Shaken, 1 Wound) in the first attack, then two more (3 total) in the next attack, and finally Incapacitated. Works the same for good & bad guys!

Prohibition is in effect

Radio-vision is demonstrated

Scopes Monkey trial commences

First Issue of New Yorker magazine

Mass murders in Germany
Percy Fawcett disappears in the Amazon
Mein Kampf is published
Ku Klux Klan
Mount Rushmore under construction
Tommy Gun first sold
Great Gatsby published
Iditarod

Bootleggers are being hunted by creatures of darkness.
An uninhabited island off the coast of Maine is showing odd signs of activity.

Vernon Eldritch and OGO House

Though largely confined to the campus due to his health, he is an avid reader and keeps abreast of world affairs both through papers and personal contacts. His office is filled with a variety of new-fangled objects like a stock ticker-tape machine, a seismograph, and several other similar devices all slowly transcribing various readings from about the world. He is well versed in many living languages, as well as even more dead ones. His favorite haunts are the Riverhouse Tavern, the Omega Gamma Omega (Old Great Ones?) "OGO House" parlour, and his study, in an alcove adjoining the library and the chapel. He is a devout Christian, but his faith is always cast into heavy doubt as he tries to reconcile the old powers that seem to inhabit the earth, in defiance of Him. "One of my greatest disproofs of our Lord, is that if man is his greatest achievement, it is a poor and miserable achievement indeed. Compare with the constructs of Science and of the Old Ones, and our Almighty God seems but a paltry dabbler indeed. Even as I pray upon my knees, constantly seeking a single desperate Word from Him, I only hear offstage a mocking gurgle."

OGO House is overstaffed for its membership; dwindling since the 1890s, fueled by rumor and superstition, its membership is composed mostly of those willing to take its scholarship and boarding. The "help" is almost entirely black, and each leaves promptly at five, making signs of the cross or similar gestures as they exit.

Backstory:

The Forgers were the a slave class of the Great Old Ones who tended volcanic forges that built the great fires that built the Old Cities. The Forgers are known as F'hren and are almost like nanobots would be in our time--truly insignificant beings whose actions are directed telepathically. The F'hren have lain dormant since the Cretaceous age when they were last woken by the great fires that consumed the carbon wastelands. The long-burning fires of the coal mines have similarly awoken them, and they mindlessly

go about their tasks, as though the Old Cities still must be built. Due to a very small number of them, they are unable to quickly assemble the stones of the cities as in the days of old, and instead are slowly laying individual pieces: headstones, ornamentation, and the like, in places near to their eventual resting spots, to be placed atop the monuments that they will eventually construct. They operate in either day or night, hardly telling the difference. They have thick heat plating that is dark like damask steel, but when they move their joints may show a magma glow underneath. When they chose to do so they can stand still and appear as a stone, immalleable and essentially immobile. They have six legs but are largely bipedal in motion, and have a large "thorax" shield that protects the bulk of their upper body. They have almost no head at all but instead an array of telescoping antennae.

The F'hren have been woken by the mine fires started by the vigilantes, and their presence has spread the fires far beyond the vigilantes' intent. They will not go above ground when there is rain, as heavy rain will turn them dormant.

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It is late April, 1925. You each, through your own various means, have worked your way to the Riverhouse Tavern in Arkham, Mass., a short walk down the hill from Miskatonic University.

You have all responded to one of the following:

- Smarts d4: You heard that Egyptian Mummies have lots of gold
- Smarts d6: You read a posting in the "Tales of the Forbidden" classifieds
- Smarts d8: You have a large collection of paranormal event paper clippings on your wall
- Smarts d10: You read an article by Eldritch in the scientific journal: "Studies in the Paranormal"
- Smarts d12: You heard that Egyptian Mummies have lots of gold

Already seated at the table is **Vernon Eldritch**: Anemic, elderly professor of History at Miskatonic University, specializing in Occult Literature.

Centralia, PA

Mining town with about 2,000 residents, located above a major anthracite coal mine. The Lehigh Valley Coal Company operates about five mines in the area. The town is largely Irish-Catholic, working-class. The Irish mafia/union is strong in this region, and back in the last century the first mayor was assassinated by the Molly Maguires. The Ancient Order of Hibernians was a cover-name for the Mollies, who were accused of much vigilantism.

The Present Day

Eldritch has noticed some very interesting goings-on in Centralia. A number of stone artifacts of unusual origin have suddenly appeared dotted around the city, in no seeming pattern, a combination of "formed stone" architectural sculpture, and immense blocks, sometimes arranged in a seeming order. The large blocks are often up to 30 tons and there seem to be no marks of heavy equipment in the area...just disruption of the earth.

The account of John O'Halloran - A stone block in the side of a barn

One account is from John O'Halloran, a farmer, who heard commotion among his cows and chickens; however, being prone on his back fixing his tractor, could not get up immediately. He heard a protracted crunching sound and when he reached the back yard, he saw an immense rectangle of stone had been slammed into the side of his barn...the barn still largely in place, but the large block reaching almost all the way to the now-slightly-askew roof. It seemed to have come through the nearby forest, as a number of trees seemed severed at about head level, at a width of the block. Following this line of destruction back, he found a gaping pit, but rather than being dug from above, it looked like it had been the site of something spat out. The pit is approximately the dimensions of the block, filled with disturbed earth, with a depth of about eight feet.

A Monstrous Headstone

Eldritch takes the group to the bowels of the library, past an accumulation of irregular artifacts on display, then uses a key to open a large door at the back, leading to a dark room, at the center of which is a large draped object, about seven feet high and several feet wide, under a burlap tarp. The room seems unnaturally hot, and it seems as if the heat is emanating from the mysterious object. "This was found by a hunter and reported to our archaeology department five weeks ago. Hennet, the old fool, was about to throw away the photograph as another piece of sensationalist garbage; luckily an informant slipped me the photograph; I ordered its retrieval at first post. It took a few weeks to make the arrangements, but now it is here." Eldritch pulls aside the tarp with childlike glee, and reveals what appears to be a sculpture in damask of a beast, or perhaps several beasts, emerging from a square block. The depiction shows the body of a beast, both scaly and yet hairy, with serpents emerging from its body--whether as appendages or from having eaten through it, wrapping about the body then around what appears to be a neck, from which emerges what must be a head, from its hideous, glaring eyes, but it seems ill-formed, almost as if the sculptor did not define the face beyond some vague, choppy forms, besides the eyes. At the back of this great batlike wings with talons at their folds tear at the enshrouding serpents. The statue, with its many eyes, gives one the impression of movement, at least of the eyes, for though they too are made of the damasked steel, the sheen causes them to flicker and roll in the light.

"There are three things that are odd about this stone," Eldritch points out. He describes that first, the stone is formed, not carved--only possible at immense temperatures, and with a skill unknown to mankind. Second, the stone precisely matches that of one found in the deep

Himalayas, as he produces a photograph from a temple of a dark and mysterious religion. Third, and this he admits with uncontained childish revelry, the stone is but newly formed...it is still warm at its center, still cooling from the fiery hearth in which it was forged. "It is at most a few weeks old. Seven tons, of unknown origin and craftsmanship, a world away from its ancient counterpart. Either we have found a very clever forgery, else something quite wicked and old lies in those dark valleys."

No Country for Young Men

Eldritch has dispatched one of the Omega Gammas to survey the town and he has received disturbing reports. The boy, **Julius Etherton**, found lodging with a widower, **Anna Bloom**, her miner husband's pension not being enough to sustain her. The boy reports of black cults and evil shrouded in the night; of strange lights in the forest. He writes in his last missive: "Have not slept 5 days for fright." He refuses to leave until others arrive. She offers her daughter **Brava** in marriage for a proper dowry (\$200). In general, Anna will offer up information, etc. for money.

Anna's sitting room, where she spends her day listening to the wireless, is filled with pictures of her husband, each with a black ribbon draped across the upper left corner. Over the mantel hangs a large family photo, with about twelve members in it, but near the center a large man's head and hands have been carefully cut out so only the grey matte background remains. "My father was not a good man" is all she will say, "though his suit was very nice."

GAMEPLAY: Roll the Attitude Die to ascertain the daughter's personality. Age 16+d10.

Arson Strikes the Mining Company

A series of mine fires and apparent arson at the various mine-houses and outbuildings has struck the area. The local officials, namely **Boss Flannery**, suspect a resurgence of unionist activities, and there are even breaths spoken of the Molly Maguires and the Ancient Order of Hibernia, vigilante groups thought to have been disbanded almost fifty years ago.

Ancient Valleys

GAMEPLAY: The team may take a series of trains to the town, which will take two days, and cost \$20 each, or they may take a series of buses that costs \$10 a head, or they may hitchhike which takes 1+d6 days. The closer they get they can learn more about the surrounding area.

The Appalachian mountains are an old and much eroded chain, and is inhabited by those most home nestled away from the reaches of polite society, content to wheedle their existence from the artifacts of eras long gone, before man, or anything like him, walked the earth. Most of the old religions are those of man, and recent; others are ancient as the earth itself.

On the train, one of the passengers is **Ronan**, a traveling healer (spiritual/physical), who is planning to sell his services to the residents in time for their May Day (**Bealtaine**) celebrations. Ronan is of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Celebration: Mummers Play, Bonfires, Yellow Flowers in Doors, etc.

Blackfaced men are performing a mummers play in the middle of the village; the greater part of the crowd is standing about watching: Saint George (Clog) and Beelzebub/Dragon, a man with (fabric) tentacles/claws protruding from his vestments. Saint George is slain; Saint Patrick, the Doctor (Ronan), drives Beelzebub from the village and reanimates Saint George.

Characters About Town

Father Kelly - Speaks to a disturbing rise in unease in the town - "things that have almost made me turn in my collar"

Dan Donn - Union leader & leader of the "New Maguires" (fires)

Siobhan Cleary - Teacher (history of the town)

Malley - Barkeep at Malley's (history of the town, but money first)

Mumbles - Vagrant, cannot speak (ancient order)

Boss Flannery - Mine Foreman (fires, blames New Maguires)

Anna Bloom - Widow (nothing)

Danger Befalls the Student

If still around, Julius is in a terrible state when the team arrives. He stammers as he repeats phrases about "it must be built" and awesome wonder at "its immense grace and deadly beauty." He speaks of pinnacles that reach as far down as they do up, and of walls that fold into each other in impossible dimensions. "Brick by brick" he repeats, "brice ag brice."

The New Maguires figure the team is a band of government spies or company men looking to break the miners' unions or otherwise rabble-rouse. They may sneak around in the night in blackface to cause trouble for the team.

Either the night the train arrives, or the night before the bus arrives, the student (and any companions) is attacked. They first try to scare him from outside the house with noises, lights and masks, while at the same time try to bust in the door in order to cut him up.

GAMEPLAY: Spirit for outside frightening, Notice to see the door opening in time to do anything, Spirit again when he is attacked.

Quid Pro Quo

Boss Flannery doesn't just want the company of Lillian and the team for pretty faces: he wants to run the bootlegging business for Centralia--it would give him a firmer grip of control over the town. He suspects the outsiders are here for this reason--what else could they want, asking all kinds of questions like they were? He wants several things: information about who is making the liquor locally and some contacts that he can work with to both import and export within Lehigh Valley. He suggests that if they don't do as he says "things will get pretty ugly for you in town," but says otherwise maybe they can work out something mutually beneficial. He will call his three "boys" back from the bar if he wants to intimidate them, or for protection.

Rustling in the Reeds

Julius (Roll Spirit -2 for him to sleep), Aggie, and Iris roll Notice at -2 (awake) or -4 (asleep) to hear rustling as the AOoH members make their way to their gathering place.

Faces in the Coal (Os sa Gual)

If the team trails the mummers, they will eventually find them sneaking off into the night, convening at a ruined church, where there is a bonfire. The Ancient Order of Hibernians grew out of the group of the same name dozens of years before, but, convinced of a dark presence in the town, has collected members who have vowed to seek out and fight any evils they can find. Their leader is **Clog** ("bell"), a man in his 70s who was young in the early days of the order. If persuaded to tell the stories, he will tell the group of the "faces in the coal."

The Faces in the Coal had long been a legend of the natives that had lived in the land when Clog was a boy. Before coal was mined, there were outcroppings in the craggy hills where seams were exposed, and in violent storms lightning would ignite the seams. As the blue flames cooled, sometimes hideous faces could be seen, woken by the flame. Sometimes the faces would emerge as bodies from the walls and clamber about the face of the outcropping, but would steam in the rain and fall as boulders on the terrain below, lifeless.

These were thought to be legends, Clog continued, until the first mine fires, accidentally set by the use of dynamite. Enduring heat and noxious fumes, the first miners saw much the same as the natives had described, running in terror. The foremen scoffed at their claims and ordered them back to clear the seams, but several perished in "accidents" that the survivors said were ghastly attacks. They spoke of a heroic sacrifice by a one of the men in dousing an entire chamber with the flood-waters from a spill that erupted into a massive jet of steam--scalding the man horribly--and though he had been pulled alive from the mines minutes later, his body could only hold out another horrid two days, the entire time the only words he could sputter being gibberish, the only phrase that Clog recognized being "F'hren! F'hren!" From that day, fires in the mines were extinguished at great cost...until just recently.

It is believed that a group of vigilantes called the New Maguires, after the infamous rebels of the previous century, started some of the fires purposefully, to make a strike against the tyrannical

foremen and owners of the mining company; but Clog's fears were that these fires have now caused a great many of these "F'hren" to wake, to what evil purpose, he knows not; but he suspects they are involved in the appearance of these otherworldly, incomprehensible monoliths.

The F'hren March On

The F'hren may be observed at any time of the day; the town of Centralia is not itself on the paths they take to build, at first. The F'hren have no regard for humans and will give no pause in dispatching them. When they become Fatigued they simply turn to stone, stones that bear little resemblance to their "living" state; if they are Incapacitated they suffer some sort of destruction.

An Ominous Sight

As they begin to leave town, they watch as the coal fires burn, their noxious fumes at times filling the car. Several miles outside of the town, about a mile from the fires, they see an ominous site: an entire field filled with the peculiar shapes of the dormant F'hren.

Map Notes

There is a guard shack outside, where one guard is standing vigil at all times. There is also a defunct steam engine that was used in older days to run the drive shaft for the mining carts; it can be made operative with a Repair roll, for 2 hours of fixing. The drive shaft runs continuously along the ceiling of the chamber. Otherwise there is electricity going into the mines, as noted with the yellow marked line. The floor depicted in the map actually slopes down as you cross diagonally from the side with the guard shack to the back corner of the map.

There is a reservoir that is used for various operations, including cleaning but also for occasional slurry. To the left there is an overlook and further to the left is a small concrete dam that was constructed. The entrances to the old mines are boarded up; anyone entering these must roll Vigor or suffer a Fatigue level due to fumes. To toss a bucket of water (3 gal): range 2/4/8, Throwing, otherwise must be adjacent (dump). SBT Steam damage (Vigor) or Fatigue level. Takes an Action to fill a bucket with water.

Darkness: Where there is Lighting is normal lighting. It is Dim in the Lava chamber, so -1 for Attack rolls (high-contrast situation even with brightly glowing F'hren). In chambers without lighting it is Pitch Darkness. (p76 darkness).

There are a number of tools lying about:

New:

- 2 Electric Jackhammer - 80 lbs
- Electric lighting

- 2 Electric carts - Vehicle: 7 (2) Toughness, 4/10 Speed
- 2 Flashlights - 2 lbs
- 4 3-gal Buckets - 1 lb each, 25 lb with water
- 2 Gas Masks (Notice -1) - 5 lbs

Old:

- 4 Dynamite bundles (30 second delay) - 8 lbs each
- 8 Oil Torches - 5 lbs each
- 2 Drive shaft carts - Vehicle: 7 (2) Toughness, 8/8 Speed
- 4 Shovels - 10 lbs - Str+d6, -1 Attack/Parry, d6 Min str
- 4 pickaxes - 30 lbs - Str+d8, -1 Attack/Parry, d8 Min str
- 2 Hard hats with oil lamps - 6 lbs (acts as steel pot helmet) +4 armor (head only)
- 4 3-gal Buckets - 1 lb each, 25 lb with water

F'hren:

Roll for Fear! (p97)

Kind of a mix between a horseshoe crab, a roly-poly/sow bug, and a bipedal creature. It has a dorsal shell covering the entirety of the back in a crescent that seems to be made as of stone. One of them seems to be leading the others in their activities.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Str d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace 4, Parry 6, Toughness 11 (4)

Special Abilities:

Armor +4 Rocky Hide

Fiery Touch: Str+d6, chance of catching fire (6 of a d6)

Burrow: 6" - In a single turn, go 6" and Stealth v. Notice for +2 Hit/Dam or +4 Hit/Dam

No Damage from called shots - Fearless - Immune to Disease and Poison

1d6 fatigue/gallon of water (e.g. 3d6 for 3-gallon bucket)...causing 3 Fatigue will cause to return to rocky state

When they die, it takes 3 turns (18 seconds) including the one being taken, for them to roll up into a slightly elongated stone ball (think: roly-poly). During this time you can attempt to salvage one of their members (once per turn), and requires a successful Strength roll. On the last turn, an Agility roll is necessary to keep from completely crushing the hand in the stone as it closes.

Cool items:

- Grip claws - Climbing +2
- Telepathy helmet - made from small mantel above the eyes - gives some telepathic ability to control others, but at the same time makes the wearer subject to certain telepathic control
- Eversight goggles - made of eye covers - can see clearly in any light, bright or dim, except Pitch Dark

Experience:

1. Participated, but not much more
2. Generally survived the mission
3. Figured out the story of the F'hren or figured out what they were doing