

NIGHTSHADE

A game of dark alleys and smokey bars

How to play

To play this game you'll need:

- All the printed materials provided with the game;
- At least 6 6-sided dice;
- Pen and paper;
- Some post-its.

The goal of this game is to create a plot for an investigative, noir story like those of Dashiell Hammett. It requires imagination and creativity to fill holes and find motivations for actions and results.

Create your Investigator

First of all, put the board at the center of the table, shuffle all your card decks and put them close to the board. Then, draw 1 Investigator card: this will tell you who your Investigator is. The card shows five traits of your Investigator: Intuition (your ability to connect points and find unusual connections between things), Violence (how good you are at throwing punches), Hooks (how good you are at finding useful contacts), Forensics (your ability to analyze your findings) and Seduction (your ability to make others do what you want). Each trait has a score, ranging from -1 to +2: this score is to be added to your future dice rolls. Your card also has three miniature signs on the right: each of them represents a starting Location for your Investigator.

Flesh out your character: give him/her a name, decide where he/she lives, whether he/she has mates, relatives, parents, whatever you feel useful to define your character. Every time

you flesh out a detail, write it down on a post-it and attach it close to your Investigator card. Write down no more than 5 notes.

Location, dice rolling and movement

Choose your starting Location from that list and put a token representing your Investigator there. Check in the appendix the entry corresponding to the Location you chose. In that Location, your Investigator will be assigned to his/her case or will acknowledge it and start to investigate on it. Someone from such Location assigned your Investigator to the case or told him/her about it.

As you can see, two of the six Locations on the board (the Cemetery and the Hospital) cannot be accessed as first Locations for an Investigator. They can be accessed later during the game.

Check your Location entry. You'll see that each Location has three different traits shared with your character. Later during the game you'll have to use them to gain bonuses. In addition, each Location will give you the possibility to roll dice to perform special actions either when entering the Location or by staying there.

Doing actions requires you to do different things during the game. You'll often be asked to "roll on" something by the game: in this case, you need to collect 2 6-sided dice ("2d6"), roll them together and sum their results. After this roll, you have to sum the results of the roll to the bonus or malus related to the trait you're asked to "roll on." This score is then either compared to another one or to a fixed value: in the first scenario, if your score is higher or equal to that of the trait you're comparing it with, you score a success; in the second, if

your score is higher or equal to 7, you score a success.

When you are in a Location, you can do one of the following actions:

- **Gain Intuitions:** you can roll on one of the traits indicated by your Location and if you obtain a success (your score is higher than that of the Location) you can gain an Intuition (a bonus that can be spent later during your investigation to gain bonuses).
- **Use one of the special moves indicated.** In that case, you need to score at least 7 to have a success.

You can move between two points on the board - from Location to Location, from Crime Scene to Crime Scene and from Location to Crime Scene (and back). You can do one step at the time, and only move to and from connected points on the board. For instance, you can go from a Crime Scene to another one, but you cannot directly go from the Bedroom to the Cemetery. Whenever you leave from a Crime Scene for a Location, though, remember to draw a Twist card (see later).

Your case

Before going anywhere, though, you need to receive your case. Roll 2 dice: one for the central and one for the rightmost column on the following table.

| Dice roll | Victim | Crime |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1-2 | A cop or a criminal | The victim has been killed |
| 3 | An average Joe | Something has been stolen from the victim |
| 4 | A politician or businessman | The victim has been battered. |
| 5-6 | A journalist | The victim has been kidnapped |

The “Victim” column will tell you who is the victim, while the “Crime” column will tell you what has been committed. Compare the results of each roll with those from the “Dice roll” column and choose for each the related result in the other two. Again, flesh out the case by taking some notes on it (no more than 5).

On a Crime Scene

When you go to a Crime Scene, draw a Crime Scene card and place it face up on your chosen Crime Scene. Again, roll a die for the right column on the following table.

| Dice roll | Crime |
|-----------|--|
| 1-2 | Draw a Twist card. |
| 3-4 | There’s a corpse on the scene: roll for the Corpse. |
| 5-6 | The Crime Scene is still “warm:” +1 to Intuition rolls on the Scene. |

If there’s a corpse on the scene, roll a die and check the following table: from now on, all Clues on the scene will be found on the corpse and around it. Take notes about it, too.

| Dice roll | Corpse |
|-----------|---|
| 1 | Mutilated corpse, with signs of butchery on the body. |
| 2 | Shot in a vital point, blood on the body. |
| 3-4 | Stabbed, several times. |
| 5 | Set on fire, with most of the skin burnt. |
| 6 | Poisoned, still with foam at the mouth. |

It’s now time to find Clues. Roll a 6-sided die and add your Forensics bonus. This is the number of Clues that you’ll find on the Crime Scene. Now you need to find which Clues will

turn into Evidences. To analyze your Clues, choose between using Intuition (direct reasoning), Forensics (analysis of the evidence) or Hook (hand over the Evidence to someone or ask for help). Turn your Clue cards face up and, once you have chosen the investigation method, roll on it: if your score is higher than the Forensics score of the Evidence card, you found an Evidence! Each Crime Scene also gives you bonuses on one of the traits you can choose: remember to sum it to your dice roll.

Now you can place them on the Evidence Collector. There are four levels in the EC, ranging from Minor to Major Evidences and one Key Evidence. You can place freely your Evidences on the Collector, but remember that:

- you can't add into any level more Evidences than those in the level just below (for instance, you can't have 3 Intermediate Evidences when you only have 2 Minor Evidences);
- to place an Evidence into a level you first have to put at least one Evidence in the one right below;
- you can place the Key Evidence only after having collected all Major and Intermediate Evidences.

Write notes about your Evidences: why they matter, where you found them, and so on and so forth. After these procedures, you can choose between finding Suspects or going away. When you exit from a Crime Scene, you can choose between moving to a connected Location or to another Crime Scene. Each time you find new Evidences, you can add them to your Evidence Collector.

You receive 1 *insight*, other than in the situations that have already been underlined in other sections of this handbook, by having 4 Minor Evidences, 4 Intermediate Evidences or 2 Major Evidences.

If you wish so, while you're in a Crime Scene you can look for Witnesses. To do so, roll on Hooks while you're on the Crime Scene: if your score is higher than the Forensics score of the scene, you have found at least one Witness. A Witness gives you an *insight*.

If you have at least one useful Evidence, place a Cover-up, face down, on the Crime Scene you just left. If you're going to visit it next time, remember to turn it face up when you leave again. You can't visit a Crime Scene with a Cover-up which is face up.

Informers and Suspects

Now it's time to find your Suspects.

To find Suspects, you need to be in a Location. Once in a Location, roll on your Forensics score once per level of Evidences found. For every success obtained, you have found a Suspect. Draw as many Suspect cards as successes you have obtained, and place them covered on the Investigation Grid forming a row right above the Alibi scores, one card per score. Their Alibi score is the number you need to compare your own rolls with during the interrogatory: the higher the Alibi, the lower the chance for a Suspect to have committed the crime. Again, write notes about them.

A Suspect is found guilty (and confesses) if he/she reaches the top row. To move a Suspect upwards, you need to interrogate him/her. At every interrogatory, you can shift your Suspect up or down by one step. You can interrogate one Suspect at a time.

To interrogate a Suspect, turn the card face up and roll on either Intuition, Violence or Seduction. If your score is higher than his/her Alibi score, you can move the card upwards by

one step. If it's lower, you move the card downwards by one step. If it equals the score, you've found an Informer: someone who hasn't committed the crime, but knows who might have, and thus gives you a +1 to your next Forensics roll to find new Suspects.

You cannot interrogate more than 3 Suspects in a row and you cannot interrogate a Suspect more than once in a row. After you interrogate 3 Suspects, you need to do something else. You can interrogate and re-interrogate a Suspect when you find yourself in a Location.

If a Suspect moves below the first row, you're not convinced of his/her culpability. But this is only because you haven't gained enough proofs to prove him/her guilty! Remove the Suspect from the Grid, but keep the card close to it: you might want to recall him/her later.

Write notes about your Suspects and the related interrogatories.

Bonuses and Twists

As you can see, during your investigation you can receive bonuses such as Intuitions and *insights*. They act in different ways.

When you spend an Intuition, you can:

- Remove a Cover-up from a Crime Scene or turn it face down;
- Pick an additional Clue card from a Crime Scene;
- Re-interrogate a Suspect with a +1 to your roll;
- Connect a Suspect with one of your notes.

You can spend *insights* during interrogations, and you can't spend more than 5 *insights* per interrogation. When you spend an *insight*, you can:

- Re-roll a failed interrogatory roll;
- Receive a +1 on the interrogatory roll;
- Recall a previous Suspect;
- Spend a note connected to a Suspect to gain a +1 during the interrogatory.

A Key Evidence works kinda like an insight: it provides you a striking evidence of the culpability of a Suspect. If you have a Key Evidence, you can spend it to move a Suspect upwards by 3 levels.

By contrast, from time to time you must draw a Twist card. Twists are unexpected complications that arise during your investigation. Every time you draw a Twist card, you must do what it compels you to do.

End of the game

The game ends when a Suspect confesses the crime. When an Investigator solves a crime, he/she gains 1 Experience point, which can be spent, in following investigations, in either:

- 1 additional Clue Card in each Crime Scene;
- +1 to rolls during Twists;
- +1 point to add to his/her features.

Home/office

Intuition: 9

Hooks: 8

Forensics: 7

When you're going home, you can:

- find unwanted company: roll on Intuition. On a success, you see traces of someone who broke into your house. Prepare for fight!

When you're at home, you can:

- check your mail or phone: roll on Hooks. On a success, you have an interesting call or mail waiting for you. You have a +1 to your roll for finding Clues in your next Crime Scene.
- call for help: roll on Hooks. On a success, someone gives you an useful *insight*.
- fight an intruder: if you found unwanted company when coming home, roll on Violence or Seduction. On a success, you have found one of your Suspects in your house and subdued him/her. If you haven't found Suspects, yet, you have an *insight* for one of your next Suspects. On a failure, your Suspect subdues you: you wake up at the Hospital and you've lost all your *insights*.

Bar

Intuition: 7

Hooks: 7

Forensics: 10

When you're at the bar, you can:

- have a drink: roll on Intuition. On a success, you can have an interesting intuition on your case, which gives you an *insight*. On a failure, you get drunk: lose all your *insights* and get back home!
- listen to chit-chat: roll on Intuition. On a success, you gain an Intuition by listening at casual conversation.

Police department

Intuition: 7

Hooks: 9

Forensics: 8

When you're at the department, you can:

- get help: roll on Forensics. On a success, you can ask someone from the department for help on your case. You get a +1 to Forensics rolls for your next Crime Scene.
- find information on a Suspect: roll on Forensics. On a success, you can ask someone from the department for some knowledge on one of your Suspects. You get an *insight*.

Bedroom

Intuition: 8

Hooks: 10

Forensics: 6

When you're in your bedroom, you can:

- rest: you can take a full night of rest. This gives you a +1 bonus to your next Intuition roll, but also you need to roll for a Twist when you go to your next Crime Scene.
- have sex: you can have sex with one of your lovers. This gives you a +1 bonus to your next Intuition roll.

Hospital

Intuition: 7

Hooks: 7

Forensics: 10

When you're at the hospital, you can:

- ask a doctor: roll on Hooks. On a success, you can find a doctor with useful information on one of your Suspects, which gives you an *insight*.
- analyze data: roll on Forensics. On a success, you can find a doctor with useful information on one of your Clues, which is raised by 1 category.

Cemetery

Intuition: 9

Hooks: 8

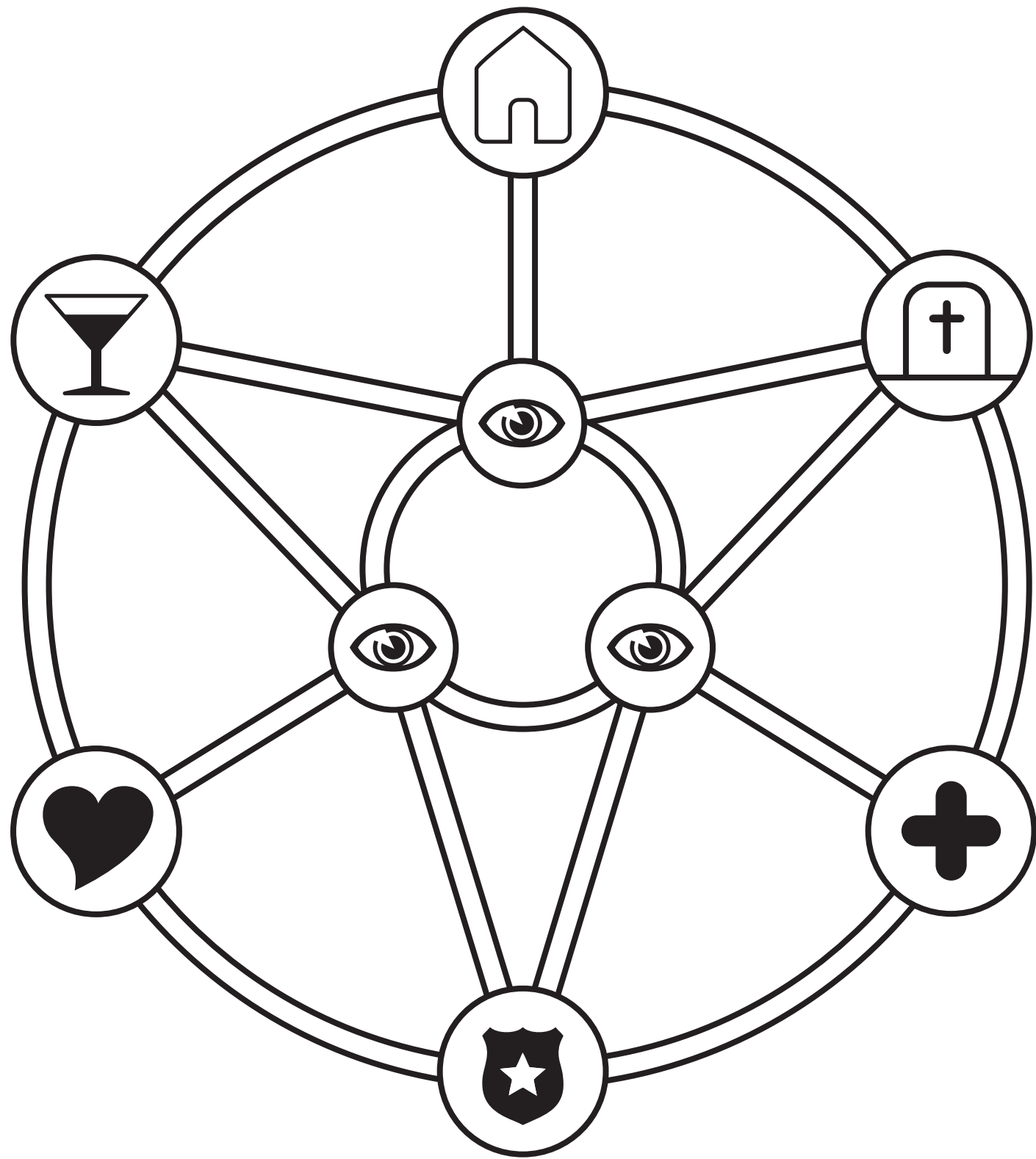
Forensics: 7

When you go to the cemetery, you can:

- check for someone: roll on Hooks. On a success, you can find a Suspect hanging around., which gives you a chance for interrogating him/her immediately. If you haven't found Suspects, yet, you have an *insight* for one of your next Suspects.

When you're at the cemetery, you can:

- take some time to think: roll on Intuition. On a success, you can think of your case freely. You have a +1 to your roll for finding Clues in your next Crime Scene.



Evidence Collector

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Key clue

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Major clues

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Intermediate clues

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Minor clues

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Potential

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Alibi

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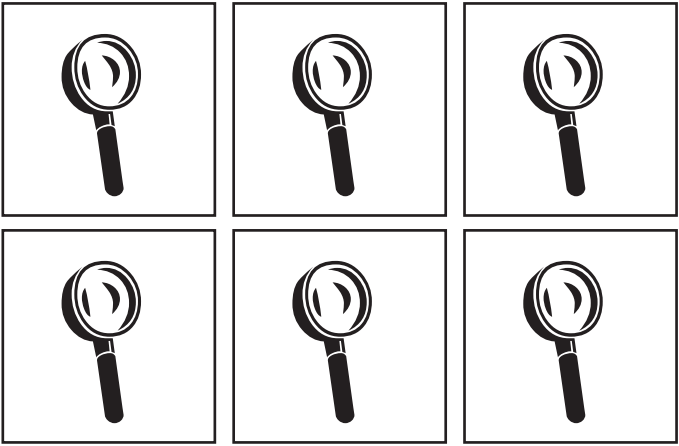
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8

9

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|---|---|---|---|
| <div><div>A hidden laboratory</div><div>Forensics +1</div></div> | <div><div>An art gallery</div><div>Forensics +1</div></div> | <div><div>A casino</div><div>Hook +1</div></div> | <div><div>A restaurant</div><div>Intuition +1</div></div> |
| <div><div>The victim's office</div><div>Hook +1</div></div> | <div><div>The victim's house</div><div>Intuition +1</div></div> | <div><div>A stolen car</div><div>Hook +1</div></div> | <div><div>A jailhouse</div><div>Hook +1</div></div> |
| <div><div>An abandoned warehouse</div><div>Intuition +1</div></div> | <div><div>A nightclub</div><div>Intuition +1</div></div> | <div><div>A dark alley</div><div>Forensics +1</div></div> | <div><div>A bar</div><div>Forensics +1</div></div> |

Crime Scenes



Cover-ups

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| An empty purse Forensics: 7 | An empty wallet Forensics: 8 | Hidden documents Forensics: 7 | A trail of blood Forensics: 7 |
| A severed limb Forensics: 7 | A book with missing pages Forensics: 8 | A diary with missing pages Forensics: 8 | Scattered notes Forensics: 9 |
| Ruptured pillows Forensics: 8 | Things missing from walls Forensics: 8 | A hole in the wall Forensics: 8 | Emptied drawers Forensics: 9 |
| Torn clothes on the ground Forensics: 7 | Blood spatters on furniture Forensics: 7 | A photograph Forensics: 8 | A footprint on the floor Forensics: 8 |
| A fingerprint on a box Forensics: 7 | A torn letter Forensics: 8 | An open box Forensics: 8 | A weapon Forensics: 8 |
| A blood-spattered knife Forensics: 8 | A glove Forensics: 7 | A pair of dirty shoes Forensics: 8 | A hammer Forensics: 9 |
| A crumpled piece of paper Forensics: 7 | A torn notepad Forensics: 8 | A cracked window Forensics: 8 | Chalk marks Forensics: 8 |

The lone wolf

Hardy, cynical, works for money and sex

Intuition: +1



Violence: +2

Hooks: +1



Forensics: -1

Seduction: -



The smart babe

Cunning, sexy, needs no man to work

Intuition: +2



Violence: -1

Hooks: -



Forensics: +1

Seduction: +1



The white collar

Ends up in things bigger than himself

Intuition: +1



Violence: -1

Hooks: +1



Forensics: +2

Seduction: -



The housewife

Always willing to help

Intuition: +1



Violence: -1

Hooks: +2



Forensics: -

Seduction: +1



The good cop

Hopes for a good retirement

Intuition: +1



Violence: +1

Hooks: -



Forensics: +2

Seduction: -1



The troubled artist

She needs someone to save her life

Intuition: +1



Violence: -1

Hooks: +1



Forensics: -

Seduction: +2



The reporter

Needs a scoop to show her worth

Intuition: +2



Violence: -1

Hooks: +1



Forensics: +1

Seduction: -



The Don

Always has someone to do a dirty job

Intuition: -



Violence: +2

Hooks: +1



Forensics: -1

Seduction: +1



Investigator cards

Shootout!

Roll on your Violence score. If you score higher than 9, you fight your way out. Otherwise, you end up in the Hospital; if you roll two 1s, you end up in the Cemetery. Create a new Investigator, who'll start working from that point on. If you fight your way out but you also have a 1, your next Suspect will result dead in the shootout.

Car crash!

Roll on your Violence score. If you score higher than 9, you find your way out. Otherwise, you end up in the Hospital; if you roll two 1s, you end up in the Cemetery. Create a new Investigator, who'll start working from that point on. If you find your way out but you also have a 1, your next Suspect will result dead in the accident.

Kidnapping!

Roll on your Violence score. If you score higher than 9, you find your way out. Otherwise, you end up in the Hospital; if you roll two 1s, you end up in the Cemetery. Create a new Investigator, who'll start working from that point on. If you find your way out but you also rolled a 1, your next Suspect will be one of your kidnappers.

Seduction!

Roll on your Seduction score. If you score higher than 9, you manage to turn the seduction attempt against your seducer. Otherwise, you end up telling too much to your seducer: go back to your Home and put a Cover-up over all the Crime Scenes. If you have a 6, though, your Seducer will be your next Suspect.

Suspect runaway!

Roll on your Violence score. If you score higher than 9, you find back your Suspect. Otherwise, you end up in the Hospital; if you roll two 1s, discard the Suspect card. If you have no Suspect yet, put this card back and draw a new one.

Blackmail!

Roll on your Seduction score. If you score higher than 9, you manage to identify who blackmailed you. Otherwise, you get too afraid: go back to your Home and put a Cover-up over one of the Crime Scenes. If you rolled a 6, though, your next Suspect will be whoever blackmailed you.

Twist cards

Suspect cards

Brother

Brother

Brother

Worker

Burglar

Sister

Sister

Sister

Friend

Smuggler

Mother

Lover

**Drug
dealer**

Friend

Child

Father

Lover

Killer

Employer

Stalker