Noir characters:

The Narrator:

The narrator is a very gruff voiced, masculine character. I’d like to cast the narrator as an American, with a smoky, Bogart-esque voice. Character is older than most of the detectives. At least in his 40s.

The Detectives:

The detectives are a varied lot, with some voice actors remaining constant over multiple endings. Most voice actors only voice three endings at most. Detectives can be male or female, young or old.

The Dame:

The dame is one of several women (). Her initial appearance is obscured by an a-line trenchcoat which has a fairly low hemline and a hat with a lot of netting. The crappy lighting in the office helps obscure her features further, so when she finally removes the hat and coat she can have a variety of facial and physical appearances. She wears gloves because it wasn’t considered polite then to go out without them (or touch a man bare handed that wasn’t your husband).

The ring-branch Dame is a much more lively personality than her paper-branch counter-part.

The paper-branch Dame has been ground down by life considerably, and is mourning the death of her friend.

Her V.A. can be any woman who has enough range to be brassy or mousy, as is required.

Aaron and Nichola:

Origin: An homage to Nora and Nick from the Thin Man.

Appearance: Nichola is slim but soft bodied, in keeping with a lot of belles of noir film. Her face doesn’t have any sharp edges (her cheek bones are undefined, her chin lightly pointed). She keeps her hair short and permed and her expression is usually sardonic but becomes hungry when she witnesses something awful. She’s in her twenties.

Aaron is fairly fine as well but much more physically active. He keeps to suits but usually has his tie or the band of his hat matching what Nichola is wearing. His expressions usually mirror Nichola’s but tend to look more indulgent. His face is fairly square and clean shaven. He’s in his late twenties.

Character: Nichola and Aaron spend all of their spare time drinking. They are usually seen with a glass in hand or a flask peering out from somewhere. They attend all the best parties but don’t particularly care for any of their friends. They act as if they are vapid but their dedication to each other is rock solid. Threatening one causes the other to act immediately, but they enjoy insulting each other. They find it amusing when their partner is taken down a peg socially, but are quick to make sure that goes no further.

Interaction with protagonist: Aaron and Nichola are sleuths themselves, and when they first meet the protagonist will view them warmly. They’ve retired to the lives of socialites, otherwise they might be more competitive. They want to follow the protagonist around and, depending on how they’re interacted with, might hit on the protagonist. They’ll be involved heavily in at least one ending.

The Ex-Partner:

The Ex-Partner shows up in part 3.5, in a branch of the story that becomes obviously set in a post-WWII period. He’s an honourable person who tried to work his way up in the police force, but found he couldn’t get very far as a black man (I have specific resources on being a black policeman in the US, but I need to reread the section relevant to this time period, and get Ed to read it as well). He’s now a P.I. of sorts in a neighbourhood that suffers under corrupt cops and lack of resources. It’s clear from the setting that he plays a part in community leadership that keeps his part of the city a nicer place to live (but gentrification is creeping up on him).

He’s pissed at the Detective in the beginning, for his disloyalty. The Detective’s manner with his old partner influences whether or not he dies or survives in this story branch. He’s willing to let the detective die if he’s an absolute asshole, he has priorities that don’t involve sticking his neck out for no good reason. He’s forgiving, but he has a threshold. The detective is capable of nettling him considerably, and when he does, his hurt shows on his face. He is, aside from anything else, an incredibly weary man. He doesn’t bother hiding it when he’s alone with the Detective.

I want fifty people to check this character out. The specificity and historical aspect (also how I’m going to ignore some historical aspects…) could fuck me here. I need some noir-or-related writing by black authors around that time period. I think there might have been a comic artist or two who could help me.

He’s a black man, so his V.A. needs to be as well. Given the clearly American setting, I think he should have an American accent (but, if somebody has the talent…). For US accents I’d lean towards something with a bit of east-coast basis to it. Something endemic to the North, maybe. Needs to be able to balance the mixed resentment, authority and occasional fondness that comes with being who he is and interacting with the Detective again.

Setting:

The setting is an idealized or degraded version of the 40s and 50s.