



THE HAUNTING

This scenario is designed for new Keepers and players. Advice for the Keeper is included within the text (**Keeper's Notes**) on how and when to use dice and rules, as well as guidance on how to run the scenario. Once you have read through this scenario, copy or print out the ready-made investigators and ask your players to each choose one to play.

The boxed text within the scenario is meant to be read aloud to the players—paraphrase these lines in your own words or just read out what is written.

Player handouts are marked in the text and have been collected at the end of the scenario to allow Keepers to copy them for presentation to the players when directed.

The year is 1920 and the location is Boston, Massachusetts, although this scenario could be transported to a modern setting if desired.

THE KEEPER'S SECRET

The body of Walter Corbitt is buried in the basement of the Corbitt house. The mind of Walter Corbitt still lives, aware of events within the house. He haunts the place. Corbitt knows Mythos magic that preserves his identity and enables him to animate his body after death. He sometimes vampirically preys upon residents of the house, driving away or slaying those who learn his secret.

To solve the mystery posed to them, the investigators must learn about Corbitt. While they do this, Corbitt will be aware of the investigators and will try to mislead them and scare them away. Failing that, he will try to murder them.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

Give each of your players one of the four ready-made investigators (pages 34–41). If you have more than four players, just duplicate the sheets as necessary. Each player can decide their character's name and gender. When ready, tell the players the premise of the scenario.

You are going to be hired to investigate an old house in 1920s Boston—rumor has it that it may be haunted!

The players are a team of professional and amateur detectives who have volunteered for the task. Encourage the players to introduce their characters and write a few notes about their backgrounds in the My Story box, and discuss how they know each other. Keep it all reasonably brisk and avoid getting bogged down with unnecessary details.

Note down each investigator's name, appearance (APP), Credit Rating score, and any notable aspects of their backstory for your reference during play.

LOCATION 1: INTRODUCTION

KEEPER'S NOTE: This introduction takes place with the investigators meeting up with the landlord. Perhaps in his home or in a café. The location isn't overly important, but take a moment to set the scene. Then read the following aloud, roleplaying the landlord's discussion with the players.



A landlord, Mr. Knott, asks you to examine an old house in central Boston, known as the Corbitt House. The former tenants, the Macario family, were involved in a tragedy and the owner wishes to understand the mysterious happenings at the house and set matters straight. Mr. Knott has been unable to rent the house out since the tragedy and hopes that you can clear things up and restore its good name. He offers to pay for your time and trouble, at a rate of \$20 per day. The landlord gives you the keys, the address, and \$20 cash in advance.

Knowing your jobs, you will want to conduct some research before you head to the house. You could check out old newspaper articles at the offices of the Boston Globe, head to the Central Library, or go to The Hall of Records. The choice is yours.

Pass **Handout 1** (page 29) to the players in case they wish to refer to it later. Give them time to absorb the information, discuss matters, and decide on a course of action. Some players will be keen to head straight to the house, but you should suggest that they would be better off conducting some research first.

Mr. Steven Knott recently inherited the property and would like to make a profit on the place somehow, either by renting it or selling it, but has been unable to do either due to the terrible reputation of the place.

Proceed to Location 2, 3 or 4, depending where the players decide to go next.

KEEPER'S NOTE: It is up to you to describe the locations as you wish. Use your imagination and try to evoke the feel of the places; the smell and noise of the printing presses at the Boston Globe, for example. There is no need to go in to detail when it comes to moving between locations—just cut to the investigators arriving at the a new location.

LOCATION 2: THE BOSTON GLOBE

A DAILY NEWSPAPER OF GOOD REPUTE

KEEPER'S NOTE: As the players make their initial enquiries at the newspaper offices, roleplay the people they could meet—the desk clerk, a journalist, or one of the editors. Be sure to mention the "morgue" (the newspaper clippings files) in the basement of the Boston Globe.

The clippings files are not open to the general public and the investigators will have to **Persuade** Arty Wilmot (a Boston *Globe* editor) of their case for access. Arty enjoys the little power he has and will try to deny the investigators access; play up his pomposity and encourage the players to strive to gain access to the morgue.

Using Dice To...
Gain Access To The Clippings Files

KEEPER'S NOTE: Usually when encountering a neutral non-player character you should roll versus the investigator's APP or Credit Rating; however in Arty's case the decision is preordained—he's unhelpful.

First, establish a goal with the players, along the lines of "gain access to the clippings files."

Roleplay the interaction between Arty and the investigators. Based on the way the roleplay goes, choose one of the following options:

- If the investigator is trying to win Arty round with friendliness, use the **Charm** skill.
- If the investigator is being aggressive towards Arty, use the Intimidate skill.
- If the investigator is using rational arguments to persuade Arty, use the Persuade skill.
- If the investigator is trying to con Arty, use the Fast Talk

Ask the player doing most of the talking to roll percentage dice (1D100) and compare the result with his or her investigator's Persuade, Fast Talk, Charm, or Intimidate skill, as appropriate. If the roll is equal to or lower than the skill, the investigator has succeeded in gaining access for the group.

KEEPER'S NOTE: Notice here how the difficulty level for the players versus Arty is Regular; Arty's profession does not require a professional level (50%+) in Persuade, Charm, Intimidate or Psychology. If it did, the difficulty level would be Hard.

Pick up the roleplay again and incorporate the outcome of the skill roll in to what Arty says:

- If the investigators have won, have Arty back down in a way that seems appropriate to you and allow them access to the files.
- If the investigators failed, have Arty puff himself up and tell the investigators to leave.



If the players fail the roll, ask if they want to persist in their efforts to gain access to the clippings files. If they choose to do so, they may attempt a Pushed roll by continuing to pressure Arty in some way (they may change their approach and use an alternate method at this point).

Depending on their course of action you should decide on what will happen if they fail (a consequence); for example:

- If the investigators are using Intimidate, the consequence might be that Arty calls their bluff, leading to an exchange of blows.
- If the investigators are using Charm or Persuade, the consequence might be that Arty takes offence and screams at them to leave.

Whatever the consequence, ensure that it escalates beyond Arty just asking them to leave—for example, have Arty call on some strong-armed maintenance men for backup.

The Clippings Files

If the investigators gain access, describe the dusty shelves of the clippings files morgue.

You are taken down some steps by Ruth Blake, the records keeper, into a dusty basement filled with filing cabinets and stacked high with old newspapers and other assorted junk. The whole room smells musty and the boiler system in the corner gives out a lot of heat.

The pertinent clippings are filed by street address. Since the players have already had to succeed in dice rolls to get in to the morgue it would be churlish stop them getting the one clue that is here, so it should be made obvious. **Pass Handout 2** (page 30) to a player.

Handout 2

Unpublished Story, Boston *Globe* **1918:** A feature story, which was never published. It states that in 1880, a family of French immigrants moved into the house but fled after a series of violent accidents left the parents dead and three children crippled. The house long stood vacant.

In 1909, another family moved in and immediately fell prey to illnesses. In 1914, the oldest brother went mad and killed himself with a kitchen knife, and the heartbroken family moved out. In 1918, a third family, the Macarios, rented the house, but they left almost immediately under mysterious circumstances.

If an investigator flirts with or befriends Ruth Blake, the record keeper in the clippings file (don't bother with dice here, the information isn't crucial), she remarks that the *Globe* files go back no further than a fire in 1878. If the Corbitt House is mentioned earlier than that, there is no record of it here.

LOCATION 3: THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

This worthy institution has several interesting items tucked away. For each half-day spent in research at the library, ask each player to make a **Library Use** roll (rolling equal to or less than their skill on 1D100). If failed, there is no need to push the roll; the players can simply keep trying again and again, but each roll means they have spent half a day more in research. If they spend more than a day researching, have their employer, Mr. Knott, contact them to ask how things are progressing, urging them to resolve their investigations—time is money after all.

For each success, give out one of the following **Handouts** (in order).

Handout 3

In 1835, a prosperous merchant builds the house, but immediately falls ill and sells it to a Mr. Walter Corbitt, esquire.

Handout 4

In 1852, Walter Corbitt is sued by neighbours, who petition to force him to leave the area "in consequence of his surious [sic] habits and unauspicious demeanor."

Handout 5

Evidently Corbitt wins the lawsuit. His obituary in 1866 states that he still lived in the same place. It also states that a second lawsuit was being waged to prevent Corbitt from being buried in his basement, as provided by his will.

Handout 6

No outcome to the second lawsuit is recorded.





Ask for a **Library Use** roll. If successful, pass **Handout 7** to the players. Use the same guidelines as for the Central Library.

Handout 7

Civil court records show that the executor of Walter Corbitt's will was Reverend Michael Thomas, pastor of the Chapel of Contemplation and Church of Our Lord Granter of Secrets. The register of churches (also available in the Hall of Records) notes the closure of the Chapel of Contemplation in 1912.

If the players think to look up the Chapel of Contemplation in criminal court records, they find references to actions taken in 1912; however, the actual records are not present. If the investigators have been courteous to the clerk, he points out that serious crimes would be handled in the county, commonwealth, or federal courts. A successful Law skill roll can indicate the same thing. The records of city officers participating in arrests or seizures are filed at the Central Police Station.

LOCATION 5: HIGHER COURTS; CENTRAL POLICE STATION

Gaining access to these records will prove difficult, requiring at least one player to make a successful skill roll. Players can use one of the following:

- Law skill: To establish that an investigator has an existing contact within the courts who will grant access. If failed, the player can ask to Push the Law skill roll to establish a contact. You should make a concealed roll on behalf of the player. Do not inform the players of the outcome of the roll. Regardless of the dice roll, the investigator knows Kim Debrun, a clerk in the Court offices. If the roll is successful, Kim is warm and friendly and will allow the investigators access to the file (Handout 8). If the roll is a failure, Kim is unscrupulous and will demand a bribe before reneging on the deal and claiming not to know the investigators.
- Credit Rating: If the player makes a successful roll and has a Credit Rating score of 75 or more, they may impress a clerk sufficiently to gain access.
- Persuade skill: The player should present a good case for why access should be granted.

- Charm skill: A flutter of eyelids might gain access for a charming investigator.
- Fast Talk skill: Perhaps this involves flashing a fake I.D. This is a risky approach given the location.

If the roll is successful, pass Handout 8 to the player.

If the players fail their roll, ask if they wish to continue their efforts. They need to justify a Pushed roll. If using Credit Rating, Persuade, or Charm, they risk overstepping the mark, leading to a consequence such as causing offence and earning the antipathy of the police (perhaps receiving a shakedown or threats).

Handout 8

The file concerns a secret raid on the Chapel of Contemplation. The police raid was occasioned by affidavits swearing that members of the church were responsible for the disappearances of neighborhood children. During the raid, three policemen and seventeen cult members were killed by gunplay or fire. Autopsy reports are singularly lacking detail and uninformative, as though the coroner had not actually performed examinations.

Though 54 members of the church were arrested, all but eight were released. The records hint of illegal intervention in the proceedings by an important local official offering stories of the battle—the biggest criminal action in the city's history—that never appeared in print.

Pastor Michael Thomas was arrested and sentenced to 40 years in prison on five counts of second-degree murder. He escaped from prison in 1917 and fled the state.

LOCATION 6: THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Most of the people who lived in the area before the Great War have moved away or died. New offices and businesses have replaced the nineteenth-century homes, and the house in question (the "Corbitt House") with its overgrown front yard is now the only private residence on the block. If the investigators ask around they find a Mr. Dooley, a vendor of cigars and newspapers, who knows the area.

Using Dice To ...

Gauge Mr. Dooley's Reaction to the Investigators Establish Mr. Dooley's reaction to investigators who speak to him by rolling 1D100 and comparing it with the investigator's APP or Credit Rating. A dice roll that is equal to or lower than one of these yields a positive reaction from Mr. Dooley. Otherwise Dooley is less than forthcoming to

that particular investigator. A different investigator may try a **Charm, Fast Talk, Persuade,** or **Intimidate** roll to get Dooley to talk.

Dooley Talks

If the players manage to get Dooley talking and ask about the Chapel of Contemplation, he is able to point out where it stood a few blocks distant. If asked about the house, he will refer to it as "the Corbitt House."

Encourage the players to roleplay and engage Mr. Dooley in conversation. Draw upon the following points and incorporate them in to the conversation:

- The Macario family moved into the house a couple of years ago.
- A year after moving in, the father had a serious accident and shortly thereafter went violently mad.
- They say he babbled about a haunting form with burning eyes.
- About a month back, the old lady, Mrs. Macario, also went mad.
- Mrs. Macario is with her husband over in Roxbury Sanitarium, a few miles from Boston.
- The kids were taken in by relatives down in Baltimore.

KEEPER'S NOTE: Portray Dooley as you wish and improvise his dialogue freely—not everything spoken by a non-player character has to be true and he may well exaggerate. He is a salesman and used to engaging in banter and gossip.

LOCATION 7: ROXBURY SANITARIUM

If the players decide to visit the sanitarium, they will find Vittorio Macario is quite mad. He is clasping a bible to his chest. At some point he may open the bible at a random place (you decide where) and point to a passage (apparently quoting), "By his own weapon is the devil worsted!" While not a genuine quotation from the bible, this is a useful clue. If remembered later on in the scenario, an attentive player might realize that Corbitt may be killed with his own dagger. Don't overplay it—leave it up to the players to take note of the clue or not. Nothing more can be gleaned from Vittorio.

Gabriela Macario is conscious and approachable. She can explain that an evil presence lives in the house. At night she would sometimes wake to find "it" leaning over her. When it was angry, the thing might cause dishes or other objects to fly around the room. Mostly, it hated her husband, Vittorio, and concentrated its anger on him.

The Keeper can answer more questions, but Gabriela is unable to give specific information.

The Keeper should end the interview quickly, since the investigator's questions will greatly upset her.

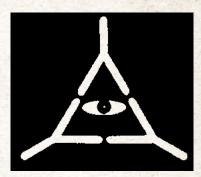
The two young Macario boys are being cared for by relatives in Baltimore. The investigators can visit, but they know nothing except that they miss their parents and that in their former home they often had nightmares of a strange man with burning eyes.

LOCATION 8: THE CHAPEL OF CONTEMPLATION

Read the following to the players:

What is left of the old church stands at the end of a crooked, dingy street. The ruins are so weathered and overgrown with greenery that the grey stone rubble seems more like natural stone than former walls and foundation. You pass a slumping wall bearing white-painted symbols, apparently freshly swabbed—three Y's arranged in a triangle so that the top elements of each Y touch the other two Y's. In the center, so created, is painted a staring eye.

Handout 9 is an image of this symbol. Show it to the players.



While the investigators are near the signs, subtly describe to the players how they begin to feel tingles in their foreheads, like headaches, but not quite. When they leave, the irritation stops.

Encourage the players to explore the ruins; try to describe the scene and ask what they are doing. Prowling the chapel, they find mostly blocks of granite, old half-burned timbers, and ancient rubbish. At some point they should become aware that the earth they stand on is covering weakened floorboards. Call for **Luck** rolls: those that fail their Luck rolls must attempt a **Jump** roll to leap to safety or find themselves falling as the floor gives way. The fall is ten feet into the basement.

If the Jump is failed, ask the players if there's anything they
can do to justify Pushing the Jump roll—perhaps they make
a last minute grab for the edge.

Each falling investigator loses 1D6 hit points. Increase the consequence if a player fails a Pushed roll, though perhaps rather than simply increasing the damage have that investigator lose or break a personal possession.

KEEPER'S NOTE: This fall may be the first incident of physical damage in the game. Tell the players to subtract the damage from their current hit points. Refer to Hit Points, Wounds, and Healing (page 13) as to whether a Major wound has occurred and for rules on treatment, recovery, and healing.

If an investigator falls, read the following aloud:

You've fallen in to a part of the basement that was sealed off from the rest, originally reached by separate stairs now buried under tons of rubble. Within this room, next to a cabinet, are two skeletons dressed in tattered silk robes; perhaps they hid from the police and then perished in the fire.

If the players search the cabinet it is found to contain moldering church records. If they don't think to look under the cabinet, ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll—only point out the journal and tome if player succeeds in the skill roll. Allow the players to Push the **Spot Hidden** roll if they volunteer to conduct a thorough, more time-consuming search. If they fail the pushed Spot Hidden roll, they might step on a nail or ruin their clothing.

With a successful **Spot Hidden** roll allow a player to find a journal (of cult activities) and a tome. Read the following aloud:

The musty old journal falls to pieces as you turn the pages, but the name Walter Corbitt catches your eye. An entry records that Walter Corbitt was buried in the basement of his house, "In accordance with his wishes and with the wishes of that one who waits in the dark".

Alongside the journal is an enormous volume, handwritten in Latin, but so rotten and worm-eaten that whole sections no longer can be understood."

The tome is a copy of the *Liber Ivonis*. A cursory look at the book will show that it is in Latin and deals with matters of an occult nature. An initial reading of this book (requiring either a **Read Latin** skill of 50% or more, or a successful **Read Latin** roll) will take a minimum of three hours. If an investigator takes the time to do this then have that investigator gain 2% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge (and reduce Maximum Sanity by the same amount, from 99 to 97).

LOCATION 9: THE OLD CORBITT PLACE

Read the following aloud to the players:

The brick building is overshadowed by taller, newer office buildings on either side. The house fronts the street. In the rear are overgrown plantings and a half-collapsed arbor. Access to the rear exists on either side of the residence.

Studying the house, the observer is impressed by the way the house seems to withdraw into the shadows cast by the flanking buildings, and how the blank curtained windows hide all understanding of what lies within.

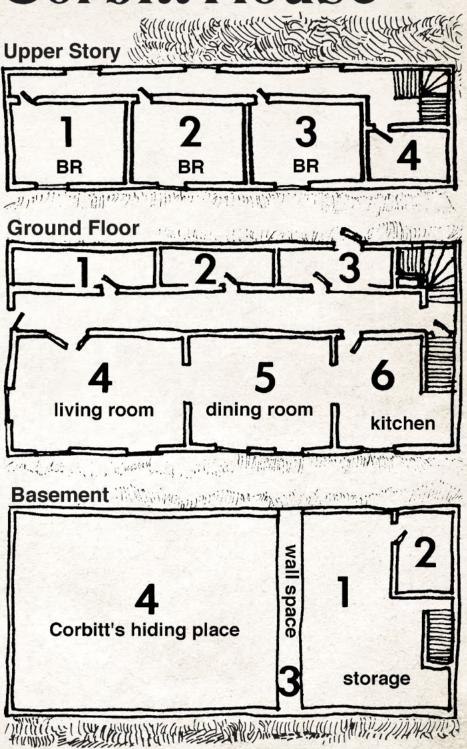
The front door is secured with a single lock. Four additional bolts seem to have been added within the last year or two. If the investigators think to test the ground floor windows, they find them all nailed shut from the inside.

Study the plan provided on the next page. Sketch out each floor on a sheet of paper as the investigators explore it, or use the "investigator" version of the plan provided on page @@.



Corbitt House Map (Keeper Version)

Corbitt House



Scale: 1/4 inch equals 3 feet.



ROOM 1, A Storage Room

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The room is filled with boxes and junk, such as rusted water tanks and old bicycles. At the right end of the room is a cupboard, boarded shut.

If the cupboard is wrenched open, three bound books are found within—the diaries of a certain W. Corbitt, a former inhabitant of the house, as the address on the flyleaf of volume one testifies.

The *Corbitt Diaries* are in English, though sometimes strangely phrased. The three volumes take a total of two days to read, adding +4 to Cthulhu Mythos skill and losing 1D4 Sanity points.

The diaries describe Corbitt's various occult experiments, including the summoning of some unearthly spirit and other magic, and clearly describe a spell entitled "Call Forth the Opener of Ways" (an alternative title for the spell **Summon / Bind Dimensional Shambler**). No other spells exist in the diaries. The spell takes 2D6 weeks to learn after the diaries have been read.

KEEPER'S NOTE: This spell is not intended for use in this scenario and is included as an added feature. It is unlikely that this investigation will continue long enough for this spell to be of use—not that summoning a dimensional shambler is likely to be beneficial in any case! Details of the spell can be found in the full Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook.

ROOM 2, A Second Storage Room

This room contains old furniture that might be broken up to burn in a wood stove.

ROOM 3, The Mud Room

Here hang overcoats, galoshes, hats, and umbrellas. Several bags of coal for the living room's freestanding stove are here. You notice that the side door is secured with three bolts and two locks.

ROOM 4, The Living Room

This room contains conventional furnishings: a radio, couch, stuffed chairs, and shelves laden with gewgaws. You cannot help but notice the unusual quantities of crosses, images of the Virgin and other Catholic artifacts.

KEEPER'S NOTE: Try to build a creepy atmosphere as the players explore the house. Remember Corbitt haunts the place and at any time a noise might be heard upstairs (Bedroom 3).

ROOM 5, The Dining Room

This is the dining room, complete with a long mahogany table, a built-in sideboard, and seven chairs. Three places are set and unused. Scraps of rice soup rot in a tureen.

ROOM 6, Kitchen

A conventional kitchen, with icebox, wood-fed stove and oven, plus a meager larder. Some of the foodstuffs may be edible—there is canned soup and meat, rice kernels, several pastas, and a few bottles of homemade wine. The produce which has not spoiled has been eaten by rats, judging by the spoor left behind.

UPPER FLOOR

ROOM 1, Main Bedroom

An ordinary bedroom, with a double bed, bookshelf and window view. Apparently the room of Vittorio and Gabriela. More crosses and many candles are here, and a rosary and breviary rest on a table beside the bed.

ROOM 2, Children's Bedroom

This room contains two small beds, toys, and dressers. Pictures of aircraft and cowboys mark this as the children's bedroom.

ROOM 3, Spare Bedroom

This room contains a bed frame, bare bedsprings, and a dresser. Though unused, this room looks like the other two bedrooms.

This was once the room of old Corbitt himself. He stayed here so long that his psychic influence lingers on and he is able to will certain deeds to happen in this room. Whenever he does, a horrible smell manifests—a sure sign of the Mythos!

KEEPER'S NOTE: Though Corbitt lays low at first, if the investigators seem determined to learn the secrets of the house then Corbitt tries to convince them that this room is the centre of the psychic disturbance. To this end, he makes pools of blood appear and tries to frighten the investigators off with thumping sounds on the doors and walls. If an investigator is not convinced by Corbitt's haunting routine, Corbitt tries to lure him or her into this room to be killed (see Bed Attack), attracting the investigator to the window by making it rattle.

Pick any of the following events and have them happen as and when you wish:

- Corbitt can cause loud thumping noises to emanate from this room. These noises can be heard from anywhere in the house.
- Corbitt can form a pool of blood on the floor or to drip down from the ceiling or walls.
- Corbitt can make a rattling, scratching sound on the windowpane or door.
- Corbitt can impel the bed at good speed, fast enough to strike a strong blow against anything in the room (see below).

Bed Attack

Corbitt will lure the investigators to inspect the window in the spare bedroom, then make the bed fly across the room at high speed toward an unfortunate investigator. Ask the player of the investigator inspecting the window to make a **Spot Hidden** roll: if successful the player may attempt a **Dodge** roll to avoid being hit by the bed.

KEEPER'S NOTE: It is important to remain impartial as Keeper, so when inflicting a dangerous event on the investigators it is best to pick one of them at random. To do this, choose the investigator with the lowest Luck score or simply roll randomly. When selecting a player to be attacked by the bed, be clear on who is standing next to the window, and select among them at random.

If the investigator is struck by the bed, he or she is thrown through the window. The broken glass and fall costs the victim 1D6 + 2 hit points.

Anyone who witnesses the bed move of its own accord should make a Sanity check (SAN 1/1D4). Those who pass should lose one Sanity point, and those who fail should roll 1D4 to determine how many Sanity points they lose.

KEEPER'S NOTE: The bed attack has the potential to deliver a major wound to an investigator. In the unlikely event of investigator death, have Mr. Knott (the landlord) brought in for use by that player.

ROOM 4, Bathroom

A bathroom containing a sink, bathtub, and a water closet with an overhead tank. Towels and other possessions are still here, typical to a family of four. A brackish pool of water has collected in the bathtub, fed by a dripping faucet which cannot quite be closed off.



THE BASEMENT

ROOM 1: Storage

The door to the basement has a lock and three bolts, able to be opened from the upstairs side only. Below is the main basement storage room. The stairs are in poor repair and the electric light bulb does not work. The walls of the basement are lined with closely fitted boards.

Corbitt has turned off the electricity to the basement at the fuse box upstairs in the kitchen—if the investigators turn it back on, Corbitt can switch it off again when it best suits him.

The stairs are perilous; all the more so because Corbitt can make them move. One at a time, ask each investigator descending the stairs to make a **DEX** or **Climb** roll. Treat this as a Combined roll: the players should roll dice once and compare the result with their **DEX** and **Climb** skills. Rolling equal to or below one of these values counts as a success.

Anyone failing the **DEX** / **Climb** roll should be told that the stairs are too dangerous and that to go further risks injury. They now have a choice: remain upstairs or Push the roll and risk falling. Failing the Pushed roll will result in the loss of **1D6** hit points as the investigator slips and crashes to the basement floor.

KEEPER'S NOTE: In a situation such as this, one investigator (who successfully negotiates the stairs) might volunteer to help another. You need to be a little creative with the rules in such a situation. As one investigator has already been successful, grant the second player a bonus die, but this time if the roll is failed then both fall and take damage. In this way the player who is pushing the roll has an increased chance of success, but both players are sharing the risk. This creates a moment of tension and drama, exactly as dice rolls should do.

Tell the players that in this smallish room are scattered tools, pipe, a trash can lid, lumber, nails, screws, and so forth. If an investigator searches through the mess, ask the player to make a **Spot Hidden** roll. Treat this as an Obscure Clue (don't give the clue out if the player fails the roll). The player might Push the roll by taking time to conduct a more thorough search. You can foreshadow the consequence of failure by pointing out the many sharp things among the mess and the risk of injury.

With a successful **Spot Hidden** roll, the investigator finds Corbitt's knife (see **The Floating Knife**) and may pick it up. Once picked up, the knife will try to wrest itself free from the investigator's grasp and attack the investigator (see **Having Hold of the Knife**).

If the player fails the Pushed **Spot Hidden** roll, the unaware investigator catches a hand on the possessed knife and it slashes him or her for **1D4+2** hit points of damage.

KEEPER'S NOTE: Notice how you can inflict automatic damage as the result of a failed Pushed roll. There's no need for an attack roll in this instance—the harm was the consequence of failing a Pushed roll.

The walls are lined with wooden boards, a cursory inspection of which will reveal hollow areas (**rooms 2 and 3**).

The Floating Knife

An old knife with an ornate hilt, whose blade is coated with oddly thick rust. This is Corbitt's magic dagger and the rust is the dried blood of victims. If the players find it, Corbitt will use it to attack. If they do not find it, he will attack them with it if they begin tearing down the wooden wall that conceals his body.

Attacking With the Knife

The knife floats into the air and stabs at an investigator. This costs Corbitt 1 Magic point per combat round. The knife can make one attack per round.

- Roll 1D100 and compare the result with Corbitt's POW.
- Ask the player to roll 1D100 and compare the result with the investigator's Dodge roll.
- Compare Levels of Success and decide whether the investigator is hit:
- If Corbitt rolls a Fail (91 or over), the investigator has avoided being hit with the knife.
- If Corbitt achieves a Regular success (46 to 90) and the investigator achieves a Fail, inflict 1D4+2 damage.
- If Corbitt achieves a Hard success (19 to 45) and the investigator achieves a Fail or Regular success, inflict 1D4+2 damage.
- If Corbitt achieves an Extreme success (18 or below) and the investigator achieves a Fail, Regular, or Hard success, the attack has impaled, driving deep into the investigator's vitals and inflicting 6+1D4+2 damage.
- If the investigator picks up a garbage can lid for protection, grant a bonus die on the Dodge roll.

- If the investigator is unaware of the attack, ask the player to make a **Spot Hidden** roll to notice the dagger floating into the air. If the investigator fails to notice the dagger, award a bonus die to the attack roll and do not allow a Dodge roll. The attack inflicts 1D4+2 damage, or 6+1D4+2 if an Extreme success is rolled, and only misses if a fumble (100) is rolled.
- Seeing the knife attack in this manner requires a Sanity check (SAN 1/1D4). If successful, the investigator loses 1 Sanity point. If unsuccessful, lose 1D4 Sanity points.

KEEPER'S NOTE: When the knife floats in to the air you should begin a combat round. Corbitt's DEX is low, so the investigators will probably get to act first. If they decide to flee, the knife will attack anyone left in the basement or the last person to get to the stairs (it moves quite fast). Whether it pursues people through the house is up to you.

Using a Fighting Maneuver to Grab the Knife

The investigators can try to grab the knife out of the air using the Fighting Maneuver rules (see **Fighting Maneuvers**, page 13). The player's goal is to grab the knife. The players use their investigator's Fighting (Brawl) skill in an opposed roll against Corbitt's **POW**.

If the player scores a higher level of success than Corbitt then the knife has been grabbed. In the case of a draw, the side whose turn it is wins the roll (if it was Corbitt's action, the knife would hit on a draw; if it was the investigator's action they would grab the knife on a draw). Usually a player would compare his or her investigator's Build with that of the opponent to resolve a fighting maneuver, but since no one is actually holding the dagger this can be ignored. If the players are creative and use a thick coat to help them in catching the knife, you may award a bonus die.

KEEPER'S NOTE: All characters present in the basement get to initiate one action each combat round, and this includes Corbitt, using his floating knife. The one Magic point Corbitt spends to activate the knife covers all actions made with it during that round.

Having Hold of the Knife

If an investigator has hold of the knife, Corbitt may attempt to wrench it away on future rounds: each combat round costs Corbitt another Magic point. To keep hold of the knife the player must succeed in an opposed roll, using the investigator's **STR** versus Corbitt's **POW**.

Room 2:

An Empty Storage Bin

A storage bin, once intended for coal. The door to the outside coal chute has been nailed firmly shut.

ROOM 3: Corbitt's Hidden Lair

If the boards in the cellar are broken or removed, a crawl space is revealed between two wooden walls. Foul odors emanate from the rats that nest here.

A pack of rats live in the wall. If the investigators do not give the rats room to escape, they attack whoever tries to explore this space. The rats will use their Overwhelm attack against one investigator. Once one rat has been killed, those remaining will flee.

Rat Pack

Individual rats are not worthy opponents; however, an infestation of rats can be daunting. Assume ten rats per pack. A successful attack by an investigator kills one or two rats and usually chases away the rest of that pack.

Rat packs exist only for the purposes of gaming.





STR 35 **CON** 55 **SIZ** 35 **POW** 50 **DEX** 70

HP: 9

Average Damage Bonus: -1

Average Build: -1

Move: 9

Combat

Attacks per round: 1.

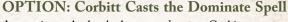
Fighting attacks: Rats attack with teeth and claws.

Overwhelm (fighting maneuver): As a pack they may assault and overwhelm an individual using the Fighting maneuver rules, because of their numbers they gain one bonus die on the attack. Such an attack would involve swarming over the target, biting, and scratching as they do so.

Fighting 40% (Hard 20/Extreme 8), damage 1D3 Overwhelm (fighting maneuver) damage 2D6 Dodge 42% (Hard 21/Extreme 8)

Carved into the inner wall of the crawl space are the words "Chapel of Contemplation" in irregular, scratchy letters (treat this as an Obvious clue, do not ask for a **Spot Hidden** roll—not finding it will not add anything to the game).

If the investigators break through this wall, they find themselves in **Room 4**.



At any time, whether he has moved or not, Corbitt may cast his Dominate spell (see **Corbitt's Spells**). He does not need to move at all to cast the spell. The casting time for the spell is instantaneous. Add 50 to Corbitt's DEX for determining his turn in the round if he is casting this spell. Casting the spell in combat requires him to use his action for the round. He may choose to cast it as the investigators are breaking through the wall.

ROOM 4: CORBITT'S HIDING PLACE

Lying motionless and seemingly dead on a pallet in the centre of the room is a drawn, wooden-looking, wizened figure of some six-feet. Skinny and naked, with ghastly wide-flaring, saucer-like eyes and a nose like a knife blade. Some sort of chain rests around his neck. He has lost all hair and his shrunken gums make his teeth look very long. From him comes a sharp, sweet, churning scent, like rotten corn.

The floor is earthen and there is a table in the southwest corner with some curled papers on it.

The papers on the table crumble to dust if touched. What the investigators can see upon the papers looks like a horoscope. If they retrieve or photograph this material, the Keeper should disclose its true nature in some later adventure—whatever this may be is up to the Keeper to determine and

is placed here as a scenario seed for Keepers to use in future adventures with the same group of investigators.

Corbitt Attacks

By spending 2 Magic points, Corbitt can move his body for five combat rounds. Given the cost, he is reluctant to move at all unless threatened.

SANITYROLLS: When he rises from his pallet, ask all players who have an investigator present to make a Sanity roll (1/1D8). Those who fail the roll make one involuntary action of the Keeper's choice, perhaps dropping their gun or screaming. If an investigator loses 5 or more Sanity points, the player should make an INT roll. If the INT roll is passed, the investigator has understood the full implications of the situation and is driven temporarily insane (see Temporary Insanity as a Result of Meeting Corbitt). If the INT roll is failed, the character is shaken but remains sane.



USING DICE TO RESOLVE COMBAT: A combat round will begin when Corbitt first moves. Draw up a list of the investigators and Corbitt in DEX order, highest first.

- If a character has a gun drawn already, add 50 to the investigator's DEX on the list. If an investigator draws a gun, it will be ready to use on the character's regular DEX this round.
- Start with the first name on the list. Given Corbitt's DEX of 35, it is safe to assume that an investigator will go first, unless Corbitt is casting his Dominate spell, in which case he acts on his DEX + 50 (during rounds in which he does not cast the spell you should continue to use his DEX 35). Ask what the player is doing.
- If an investigator is attacking Corbitt using the Fighting skill, Corbitt fights back using his Fighting skill. Corbitt will also fight back against subsequent attacks in the round using his Fighting skill.
- If an investigator is attacking Corbitt using the Firearms skill, simply roll to hit. Corbitt will not Dive for Cover. If close enough, shots are made at point-blank range, granting a bonus die to the attack.
- The second investigator to attack Corbitt should get a bonus die for outnumbering the target (see Outnumbered, page 13).

Temporary Insanity as a Result of Meeting Corbitt

Bout of Madness: If an investigator goes temporarily insane roll 1D10 and refer to the **Bouts of Madness** table. If the investigator is in the presence of other investigators, play out the result round by round. If the investigator is alone you may use the result to tell how the investigator is found sometime later in a bad way, perhaps locked in a cupboard or drunk in a gutter.

Backstory: Take the investigator sheet and add a suitable entry based upon the nature of the investigator's bout of madness.

Delusions: The investigator will remain insane for 1D10 hours or until leaving the Corbitt House and having a good night's rest. Until then, the investigator will be prone to delusions; however, given that the only event that has the potential to cause insanity in this scenario is likely to occur in the final scene, the scope for using delusions is limited. Here are some suggestions:

 If the deluded investigator flees the cellar, have him or her find a photo in the house that appears to be evidence that Corbitt is his or her ancestor; it shows Corbitt and the investigator's grandfather together and names them as



BOUTS OF MADNESS (CHOOSE OR ROLL 1D10)

- **1. AMNESIA:** The investigator has no memory of events that have taken place since they were last in a place of safety. It seems to them that one moment they were eating breakfast and the next they are facing a monster. This lasts for 1D10 rounds.
- **2. PSYCHOSOMATIC DISABILITY:** The investigator suffers psychosomatic blindness, deafness, or loss of the use of a limb or limbs for 1D10 rounds.
- 3. VIOLENCE: A red mist of rage descends on the afflicted investigator and he or she explodes in a spree of uncontrolled violence and destruction directed at their surroundings, allies and foes alike, for 1D10 rounds.
- **4. PARANOIA:** The investigator suffers severe paranoia for 1D10 rounds. Everyone is out to get them! No one can be trusted! They are being spied on; someone has betrayed them; what they are seeing is a trick.
- 5. SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Review the investigator's background entry for Significant People. The investigator mistakes another person in the scene for their Significant Person. Consider the nature of the relationship; the investigator acts upon it. This lasts 1D10 rounds.
- **6. FAINT:** The investigator faints, recovering after 1D10 rounds
- **7. FLEE IN PANIC:** The investigator is compelled to get as far away as possible by whatever means are available, even if it means taking the only vehicle and leaving everyone else behind. They travel for 1D10 rounds.
- **8. PHYSICAL HYSTERICS OR EMOTIONAL OUTBURST:** The investigator is incapacitated laughing, crying, screaming, etc. for 1D10 rounds.
- **9.PHOBIA:** Investigator gains a new phobia, such as *Claustrophobia* (fear of confined spaces), *Demonophobia* (fear of spirits or demons), or *Katsaridaphobia* (fear of cockroaches). Even if the source of the phobia is not present, the investigator imagines it is there for the next 1D10 rounds.
- 10. MANIA: The investigator gains a new mania, such as *Ablutomania* (compulsion for washing oneself), *Pseudomania* (irrational compulsion for lying), or *Helminthomania* (an excessive liking for worms). The investigator seeks to indulge in this new mania for the next 1D10 rounds.



brothers (though in actuality is nothing more than a scrap of old newspaper).

If the deluded investigator stays in the cellar, pass the player
a note to the effect that another investigator's face and voice
have somehow changed and that he or she is mumbling
something in Latin (this is of course only a delusion).

Reality Checks: If the player questions a delusion, suggest to the player that a Reality Check roll might be made if the investigator wishes to discern the truth. If the player wishes to make a reality check, ask for a **Sanity** roll:

- If successful, drop the delusions and don't present that player with any more.
- If failed, have that investigator lose 1 Sanity point and experience another Bout of Madness, and escalate the delusions.

Given that the temporary insanity is caused by a manifestation of the Cthulhu Mythos, 5% should be added to the investigator's **Cthulhu Mythos** skill.

CONCLUSION

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If the investigators have solved the mystery and overthrown Corbitt, Mr. Knott the landlord pays them promptly and happily.

If they fail to dispose of Corbitt and simply report to Mr. Knott that nothing was wrong, he spends a night in the house to make sure and is stabbed to death in the basement by Corbitt's magic dagger. The investigators will then be sought by the police and must then seek to prove their innocence.

Of course things may not go so well for the investigators. Both the knife and Corbitt are dangerous and, depending how the dice roll, the players may find their investigation ends in death or madness.

One possible ending would be to describe a brief epilogue for each player: dead investigators are perhaps reanimated by Corbitt's magic, to repair the basement walls before their bodies crumble to dust. Insane investigators flee screaming into the night, never to return.

If the investigators are victorious then you may wish to ignore the ongoing effects of Corbitt's Claw attacks.

Rewards

If Corbitt is conquered and destroyed, each participating investigator gains 1D6 Sanity points.

The investigators can claim the worm-eaten book from the Chapel for their own.

Finally, the landlord gladly pays their fee plus a bonus of \$30.

Extension

Keepers will have noticed the freshly painted sign on the rubble at the Chapel, as well as the evidence of the cover-up following the raid in 1912. Connections to what may be a great conspiracy are available and might be returned to at some later time.

Also, consider the strange, crumbling paper that looked like a horoscope—is this connected to the conspiracy or something altogether different?

Both of these clues could lead the way into further adventures of your own devising for this group of investigators.

Walter Corbitt, Undead Fiend

STR 90 **CON** 115 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 80

POW 90 DEX 35 APP 05 EDU 80

SAN: 0 (ignore Sanity costs for spells)

HP: 16

Damage bonus: +1D4

Build: 1 Move: 8

Magic points: 18 (if spent, recover 1 per hour)

Roleplaying hooks:

- Corbitt is full of malice and will seek to divide investigators and turn them against one another.
- Corbitt seeks excitement and perverse amusement at the investigators' expense.
- He will seek to acquire any sources of Mythos knowledge that are bought in to the house (such as the Liber Ivonis).

KEEPER'S NOTE: Keep careful track of Corbitt's Magic points. Be sure to remember that he recovers at the rate of 1 point per hour. Corbitt casts Flesh Ward as soon as anyone enters the house. If intruders head straight to his body, they may encounter Corbitt before he has regained those two points.

Combat

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting attacks: When animated, Corbitt is able to make all regular attacks (kick, punch, etc.). Being wounded by Corbitt's clawed fingernails risks serious disease; if he lands a successful attack upon an investigator, a Luck roll should be made. If it is failed, the investigator has been raked by Corbitt's claws and a day later the victim becomes delirious and must make a CON roll:

- Failure: Delirium lasts 1D10 days; lose 1D10 CON.
- Success: Delirium lasts 1D6 days; no further CON loss.
- Repeat the procedure until the investigator recovers or dies.
 CON lost does not regenerate.

Weapon: Floating magical dagger. See **The Floating Knife** (see page 23). Spending a Magic point to cause the dagger to attack for 1 round counts as Corbitt's combat action for the round.

Fighting 50% (Hard 25%/Extreme10%), damage 1D3 +

damage bonus(1D4) + possible infection (see above).

Dodge 17% (Hard 8%/Extreme 3%).

Skills

Cthulhu Mythos 17%, Intimidate 64%, Listen 60%, Sleight of hand 30%, Stealth 72%.

KEEPER'S NOTE: Only a few skills are listed for Corbitt—those that might come into play. You may improvise others if required.

Armor: Each point of armor reduces the damage received by 1 point. Corbitt has cast Flesh Ward already. Roll 2D6 for his armor. Reduce his armor by one point for each point of damage he suffers.

Spells: Dominate (variant, see below), Flesh Ward, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler.

Magical Artifact: Floating dagger.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8 Sanity points to see him move.

ABOUT W. CORBITT, ESQ

He might be silent at first, but at some point during the confrontation with the investigators it will be more convincing to have him growl, screech, cackle, or mock. He does not breathe at all.

Corbitt is not truly a vampire, nor any recognizable monster he is a sorcerer in the process of transforming himself into something entirely inhuman.

Sunlight causes him pain and is too bright for him to see comfortably. It might kill him, but whether it does so is for the Keeper to determine. Although he drinks blood for food, he could also eat carrots—drinking blood is just more fun.

His Flesh Ward spell operates as described below, but characterise its effect like this: bullets and blows only chip off pieces of his body, making him look even more horrific than he already does. His dried, iron-hard flesh is invulnerable so long as the spell holds. If damage exceeds the armor, his hit points reduce normally. He never heals and cannot be knocked unconscious. Reaching zero hit points, Corbitt crumbles into dust and never returns.

Corbitt controls the floating dagger, but if the investigators manage to wrest control of it and successfully stab Corbitt with it, he will quickly turn to ashes and dust, regardless of any spells.

Corbitt's Spells

DOMINATE (Corbitt's variant): Costs Corbitt 1 Magic point and takes one round to cast.

With his version of the Dominate spell, Corbitt can mentally cloud the mind of one investigator at a time, as long as the target is physically in the Corbitt house. The player should make an opposed **POW** roll versus Corbitt's **POW** of 90.

If Corbitt succeeds, the target is in a daze for 1D6+1 combat rounds. While in this dazed state, the victim is subject to telepathic commands from Corbitt. These may take the form of subtle and creepy hallucinations or direct commands at the Keeper's discretion. He or she will not commit suicidal acts, though homicidal, idiotic, or reckless acts (such as trying to swallow a butcher's knife) might be attempted. Waking, the victim will not recall what happened.

FLESH WARD: Corbitt will already have cast this spell before the investigators get to him, to provide himself with armor (see *Armor* above).

- Cost: variable magic points
- Casting Time: 5 rounds

Grants protection against physical attack. Each magic point spent gives the caster or the chosen target 1D6 points of armor against non-magical attacks. This protection wears off as it blocks damage. For example, if a character has 12 points of Flesh Ward as armor and suffers 8 points of damage, the character suffers no damage but the Flesh Ward is reduced to 4 points. The spell lasts 24 hours or until the protection is used up.

Once cast, the spell may not be reinforced with further magic points, nor recast until the old spell's protection has been used up.







Handout 1

A landlord, Mr. Knott, asks you to examine an old house in central Boston, known as the Corbitt House. The former tenants, the Macario family, were involved in a tragedy and the owner wishes to understand the mysterious happenings at the house and set matters straight. Mr. Knott has been unable to rent the house out since the tragedy and hopes that you can clear things up and restore its good name. He offers to pay for your time and trouble, at a rate of \$20 per day. The landlord gives you the keys, the address, and \$20 cash in advance.

Knowing your jobs, you will want to conduct some research before you head to the house. You could check out old newspaper articles at the offices of the Boston Globe, head to the Central Library, or go to The Hall of Records.

The choice is yours.

Handout 2

Unpublished story, Boston Globe 1918.

1918 feature story, which was never published. It states that in 1880, a family of French immigrants moved into the house but fled after a series of violent accidents left the parents dead and three children crippled. The house long stood vacant.

In 1909 another family moved in, and immediately fell prey to illnesses. In 1914, the oldest brother went mad and killed himself with a kitchen knife, and the heartbroken family moved out. In 1918, a third family, the Macarios, rented the house, but they left almost immediately after they all became ill at the same time.

Handout 3

In 1835, a prosperous merchant builds the house, but immediately falls ill and sells it to a Mr. Walter Corbitt, esquire.

Handout 4

In 1852, Walter Corbitt is sued by neighbors, who petition to force him to leave the area "in consequence of his surious [sic] habits and unauspicious demeanor."

Handout 6

No outcome to the second lawsuit is recorded.

Handout 5

Evidently Corbitt wins the lawsuit. His obituary in 1866 states that he still lived in the same place. It also states that a second lawsuit was being waged to prevent Corbitt from being buried in his basement, as provided by his will.

Handout 7

Civil court records show that the executor of Walter Corbitt's will was Reverend Michael Thomas, pastor of the Chapel of Contemplation & Church of Our Lord Granter of Secrets. The register of churches (also available in the Hall or Records), notes the closure of the Chapel of Contemplation in 1912.

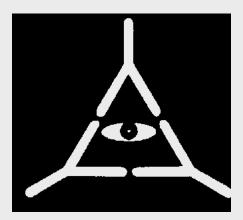
Handout 8

The file concerns a secret raid on the Chapel of Contemplation. The police raid was occasioned by affidavits swearing that members of the church were responsible for the disappearances of neighborhood children. During the raid, three policemen and seventeen cult members were killed by gunplay or fire. Autopsy reports are singularly lacking detail and uninformative, as though the coroner had not actually performed examinations.

Though 54 members of the church were arrested, all but eight were released. The records hint of illegal intervention in the proceedings by an important local official, offering stories of the battle—the biggest criminal action in the city's history—that never appeared in print.

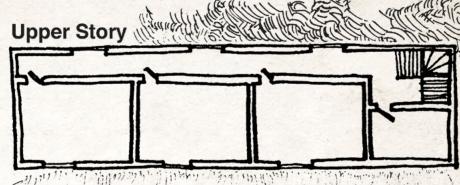
Pastor Michael Thomas was arrested and sentenced to 40 years in prison on five counts of second-degree murder. He escaped from prison in 1917 and fled the state.

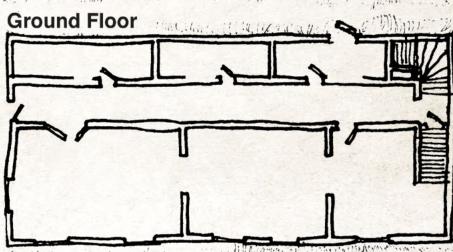
Handout 9



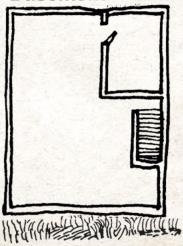
Corbitt House

Investigator Map





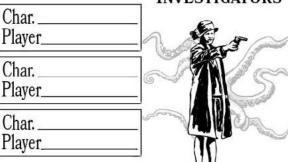
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Wounds & Healing

First Aid heals 1 HP Medicine heals 1D3 HP Major Wounds = loss of ≥ ½ max HP in one attack Reach 0 HP without Major Wound = Unconscious Reach 0 HP with Major Wound = Dying

Dying: First Aid = temp. stabilized; then require Medicine Natural Heal rate (non Major Wound): recover 1 HP per day Natural Heal rate (Major Wound): weekly healing roll

<u></u>