

# Adventure Street Omnibus

(VERY MUCH UNDER RE-CONSTRUCTION)

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### **Introduction**

Pulp is the literary equivalent of "junk food." It is not high art, but it is a lot of fun nonetheless.

#### **► What Are Pulp Adventures?**

Pulp adventures take their name from the publishing method of choice for the popular press from, say the turn of the century to the 1950's. Cheap paper made of pressed wood pulp was used to print magazines affordable to the working class. These magazines covered a wide range of genres: science fiction and fantasy, horror, detective mystery, globe-trotting adventure, sports, wild west, and even romance.

No matter what genre was featured, there were some near-universal conventions: clear-cut heroes and villains, an insidious plot, a mystery, "deathtraps" and the triumph of the Right over the Wrong.

Pulp magazines were published regularly from the 1920's through the 1950's, peaking during the 30's and 40's. Eventually, paper quality improved, but because the stories were all written along a certain style, the name "pulp" became associated with the adventures themselves rather than the medium.

Pulp authors wrote stories featuring simple, almost visceral themes such as good vs. evil, order vs. anarchy and the like. As gritty as the stories could become, they almost always offered an escape from the grim realities of the day. Although they were simple stories in terms of theme, often they featured rather complicated characters. The "heroes" of hard-boiled detective pulps were hard-drinking, chain-smoking, skirt-chasing, acid-tongued insomniacs. The protagonists of gangster pulps were, well, *gangsters*. But no matter how rough such anti-heroes were, there was always something redeemable about them, which again fits in with the underlying black-and-white themes.

Many readers, when discovering the pulps for the first time, are shocked to discover that the pulps are often full of latent and sometimes overt sexism and racism. This can be blamed on the fact that they are products of their times, in which gender roles were very rigid and anyone who differed from the average "White Anglo-Saxon Protestant" template of an "All-American" was either locked into subservient roles or held in deep suspicion, or both.

### Pulp Heroes

Pulp heroes in general are "All-American-Boy (or Girl)-Next-Door" types. They are not motivated by a desire for personal glory, but by an almost overdeveloped sense of right and wrong, justice, and fair play.

As an example, take a look at the personal code of Doc Savage, one of the greatest pulp heroes:

*Let me strive every moment of my life, to make myself better and better, to the best of my ability, that all may profit by it.*

*Let me think of the right and lend all my assistance to those who need it, with no regard for anything but justice.*

*Let me take what comes with a smile, without loss of courage.*

*Let me be considerate of my country, of my fellow citizens and my associates in everything I say and do.*

*Let me do right to all, and wrong no man.*

Pulp heroes stand as paragons of clean living, education, and morality. Although they appear on the surface to be the "hometown boy or girl done good," there is a presence about them, a charisma that causes them to stand out from the crowd.

They are not superheroes. That is, they are not "endowed with powers and abilities far beyond those of mortal man." Rather, they are highly trained, educated and motivated. They succeed not because they have super-powers, but because they are determined, clever, and possess a strong moral character.

To roleplay these heroes, the player must "buy in" to the concept that the PC is deeply committed to preserving the ideals of Western (specifically American) civilization. These ideals of justice, fair play, humility, "stick-to-it-iveness," ingenuity, humor, and, when necessary, self-sacrifice.

Players should not expect to be showered with wealth at the end of a successful adventure or campaign. Rather, their reward is the satisfaction that they have helped humanity.

### ► What is [Risus](#)?

[Risus](#) is a FREE rules-lite role-playing game (rpg) that focuses on clichés to describe characters, rather than stats, skills, and attributes. Its features are extreme fast play, flexibility, and humor. In fact, it is billed as a "comedy rpg", but the author, S. John Ross allows that it can be used to play serious games "if you insist." For more information, and to download your own FREE copy, go to the [Risus](#) site at <http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/risus.htm>.

► [Master Pulp Cliché List](#)

► [Guy Hoyle's Article on clichés](#)

The best way to *really* get the most out of [Risus](#) is to customize your character's cliché. [Here](#) is a great article that explains how clichés work, and may give you a good idea for how to put your character together.

### *Character Creation Guidelines*

Typically, Characters using the Adventure Street Omnibus series of pulp settings will use the standard [Risus](#). In other words, players will have 10 dice to allocate among various clichés. There is a limit of 4 dice allocated to anyone cliché. I personally like the idea of an rpg where regular, ol' fashioned six-sided dice stolen from an old board game can be used to play, so there Funky Dice will not be used. As players create their characters, they might want to add a Hook and a Tale. A Hook is a character flaw, a physical/mental/social disability that the GM could use to his great advantage. A Tale is just what it sounds like: a detailed background story that breathes life into your character. Hooks and Tales each give a bonus of one (1) die that can be allocated among either clichés or Lucky Shots or Questing Dice, which are explained below. Language skills must be specified in either the clichés or in the tale. character creation rules.

A player can elect to use one cliché die to buy three Lucky Shots. These "shots" allow the player to add one die to any roll that the character really, really has to make. Questing Dice are similar, with two glaring exceptions: A player can buy five (5) Questing Dice for every one cliché die he spends, and while Lucky shots can be applied to any roll, Questing Dice must be applied to a task related to a specific Quest that the character is engaged in. This will be explained in more detail with the sample Character from *Ripping Air Yarns*.

If a player decides to forgo Lucky Shots and Questing Dice, he may choose to Pump a cliché or Double Pump one. These rules are carefully explained in Advanced Option II of the free [Risus](#) Rules set available from <http://www222.pair.com/sjohn/risus.htm>.

Finally, in *Adventure Street Omnibus*, Boxcars and Breakthroughs from the [Risus Companion](#) are used. If a player rolls the dice for any given cliché, and they all come up sixes ("boxcars"), he may roll the dice again adding the second total to the first. If he rolls boxcars again, he continues as above.

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# Daring Adventure Tales

*“Two-Fisted Globe-Trotting Adventure!”*

## v **Setting Notes**

Daring Adventure Tales is the basic setting for this sourcebook. Players can explore lost worlds, solve puzzling mysteries, don mask and cloak and avenge crime on the mean streets, and save the world for democracy.

## v **Pulp Examples**

- The Shadow
- Doc Savage
- Secret Agent “X”
- Justice, Inc.

## v **Helpful Clichés**

- Big Game Hunter
- Explorer
- All-American Athlete
- Inventor/Gadgeteer
- Gentleman Spy
- Spy
- Ace Reporter
- News Photographer
- Agency Detective
- Costumed Vigilante
- Vigilante
- Private Investigator
- Scientific Detective
- Foreign Legionnaire
- Military Veteran
- Marine
- Sailor
- Ship’s Captain
- Escape Artist
- Stage Magician
- Bon Vivant/Dilettante/Socialite

## v **Sample Character**

### **Jackson Dare**

Rugged Soldier-For-Hire (4)

Fearless Outdoor Survival Guide (3)

Beer-Swilling, Cigar-Chomping Tall Tale Teller (2)

Lucky Shots [] [] []

## v **House Rules**

### - **Why No Magic Rules?**

Players may be surprised to find that magic rules are not included in the basic setting, *Daring Adventure Tales*. This is because in the classic adventure pulps of the 1930’s magic makes almost no appearance. What is first taken for evidence of the supernatural is nearly always shown to have reasonable explanations.

Magic does make appearances in other genres of the pulps, and *Strange Western Stories* and *Weird Crime Report* both contain a set of rules for emulating pulp

magic in *Risus*.

- **Why No Weapon or Vehicle Rules?**

*Risus* tends to emphasize story over mechanics. Combat is designed to be fast, and additional rules covering weapon types and damage modifiers are unnecessary. *Risus* combat, which can be anything from a high school debate to a running firefight among rival street gangs, is predicated on two concepts: combat is essentially wearing an opponent down in order to gain an advantage and “to the victor go the spoils,” i.e., the winner gets to decide the loser’s fate.

Again, this fits ideally with the spirit of the pulps. Combat is fast and furious, with incredible feats of derring-do, and occasionally, little regard for reason (how else could you get 11 shots out of a six-shooter without reloading?). However, there is not much detail in the narration of the combat sequence (one possible exception is in the Air Pulp, where the types of engines and machine guns were described in almost excruciating detail).

Vehicle rules follow the same rationale. The fewer the rules, the quicker the action. Personal vehicles can be created using the “Sidekicks and Shieldmates” rules from the *Risus Companion*. Players can spend one die from their 10-dice limit at character creation to create a three-dice vehicle (car, plane, boat, jet pack, whatever). A good example of this is found in *Ripping Air Yarns* with the sample character, “The Phoneix.”

If necessary, GM’s may assign dice to a vehicle during the course of a sequence in order to help play out the scenario.

# Ripping Air Yarns

*Featuring “The Phoenix”*

v **Setting Notes** These pulps deal with air piracy, espionage, sabotage, smuggling, etc.

v **Pulp Examples**

- G-8 and his Battle Aces
- Bill Barnes
- Kerry Keen

v **Helpful Clichés**

- Aviator/Aviatrix
- Spy
- Gadgeteer
- Explorer
- Bootlegger (Smuggler)
- Flying Ace
- Foreign Legionnaire
- Marine
- Military Veteran
- Soldier of Fortune/Mercenary
- Trusty Greasmonkey (Mechanic)
- Gambler
- Bon Vivant/Dilettante/Socialite

v **Sample Character**

**John Scipio – “The Phoenix”**

Masked Avenger (4)  
Daredevil Aviator (3)  
Crack Airplane Mechanic (2)  
Lucky Shots [] [] []

Personal Aircraft (as per Sidekicks rule in the [Risque Companion](#)) – “The Phoenix”  
Tri-phantom Fighter-Bomber Made From Salvaged Airplane Parts (3)

**Backstory (Tale):** As a young man, John Scipio was fascinated by the miracle of flight, in its youth even as he was. At the age of 15, John managed to find a way to and joined the Lafayette Escadrille, a squadron of American pilots flying for the French government in the Great War.

Although he was not a pilot when he arrived, and served in a variety of subordinate roles in the squadron, he displayed an aptitude for flying and due to losses was soon pressed into flying in the waning days of the war. After the Armistice, he could not satisfy his hankering for flying stunts, so he joined up with a barnstorming tours at air shows.

However, the tours proved to not be a steady income producer, so John started a business as a commercial air courier. One day, John was flying over the U.S.-Canadian Border when he was attacked by air pirates. His plane was forced to crash-land. The pirates raided his cargo while John lay unconscious and bleeding. They left him for dead, but he survived. Finding an



abandoned airfield, he began building a fighter-bomber capable of landing on land, water, or ice. Once it became operational, John dubbed it “the Phoenix” and set off to find the air pirates. When he meets them again, “The Phoenix” will have the upper hand, and the air pirates will be put out of commission – permanently. Until that time, John has adopted the identity of “The Phoenix” after his aircraft. Although he is determined to make the pirates pay, John takes on spies, saboteurs, and smugglers, fighting crime while he searches for his sworn enemies.

The plane bears no markings other than an illustration of a phoenix rising from the flames.

#### **v House Rules**

Vehicle rules – Compare cliché of pilot with cliché rating of aircraft. Use whichever dice is higher for rolls. This simulates two things: A good pilot can get the most out of even a bad aircraft, and a good aircraft can make an average pilot better.

Creation: Use “Sidekicks and Shieldmates” rules from [Risus Companion](#)

*Questing Dice* Another Advanced Option presented in [Risus Companion](#) is Questing Dice. This option allows a player to spend one of his cliché dice to purchase up to five (5) Questing Dice. Each one can be used to supplement any roll related to a particular quest that the character may be on. For example, using the above sample character, John Scipio, instead of spending one die to purchase three Lucky Shots, we buy five Questing Dice. The limitation is that these can *only* be used to supplement rolls related to his quest of discovering the air pirates who tried to kill him. However, they would not always be used in rolls related to his vigilante cliché.

# Stellar Space Magazine

*Featuring The Space Rangers*

## v Setting Notes

Science Fiction Pulp initiated the “Golden Age” of Science Fiction, mostly through the efforts of John W. Campbell (editor of *Astounding*) and Hugo Gernsback (editor of *Amazing Stories*). Isaac Asimov, in a discussion of the history of modern (post 1926) science fiction, notes that between the years 1926 and 1938, adventure themes were dominant in the “Sci-Fi” pulps. This is evident in the fact that the original American science fiction hero, Buck Rogers, was first introduced to the public as “Anthony Rogers” in the short story “Armageddon 2419 AD” by Philip Francis Nowlen and published in the August 1928 issue of *Amazing Stories*. Less than a year later, the story was picked up and turned into a comic strip and Buck Rogers’ fame took off. Imitators quickly followed Buck, the most notable of which was Flash Gordon.

The comics were then turned into movie serials starring Buster Crabbe. The serials gave us the beloved images of bulbous, finned art deco rocketships, rayguns and alien princess femme fatales.

Stellar Space Magazine is a setting dedicated to reliving the adventurous spirit of 1930’s pulp sci-fi.

## v Pulp Examples

- *Amazing Stories*
- *Astounding*
- *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* serials and comics
- *Flash Gordon* (1980 movie)

## v Helpful Clichés

- Spy
- Gadeteer
- Explorer
- Bootlegger (Smuggler)
- Marine
- Military Veteran
- Soldier of Fortune/Mercenary
- Trusty Greasmonkey (Ship’s Engineer)
- Gambler
- Bon Vivant/Dilettante/Socialite

### *Additional Clichés*

- Space Pilot
- Space Ranger
- Radio Operator
- Rocket Scientist
- Alien Prince/Princess
- Alien Warrior
- Robot

## v Sample Character

### **Captain Stella “Blaze” Bannister of the Space Rangers**

Beautiful, But Tough-As-Nails Space Ranger (4)

Cliché (3)

Cliché (2)

Lucky Shots [] [] []

## v House Rules

Vehicle rules – Compare cliché of pilot with cliché rating of spacecraft. Use whichever dice is higher for rolls. This simulates two things: A good pilot can get the most out of even a bad spacecraft, and a good spacecraft can make an average pilot better.

Creation: Use “Sidekicks and Shieldmates” rules from [Risus Companion](#)

## v Background – The Space Rangers

The year is 2219. It has been 150 years since earth, Luna, Mars and the Asteroid Belt established the United Terran Space Federation. Prior to that time, missions from earth colonized the moon (Luna), Mars and the Belt. With earth, these three make up the Four Member Worlds.

When the first manned mission reached Mars, the crew discovered the remains of a technologically advanced society. After many years of close study of records and relics of the Martian civilization, leading scientists and engineers introduced a “next generation space engine,” capable of traveling the solar system in a matter of hours and minutes, as opposed to weeks and months.

At about the same time as the Mars mission, a mission also traveled to Venus and discovered a race of sentient beings. The Venusians, while friendly to the earthmen, have thus far declined entry into the Federation.

The Space Rangers were formed to be the law enforcement and military force of the Federation. Various moons of Jupiter have been set aside as penal colonies for the Federation, inmates sentenced to hard labor in the mines, digging out solarite ore, which is used to fuel the next generation space engines.

# Strange Western Stories

*“Weird West” Adventures*

## v **Setting Notes**

## v **Pulp Example**

- Deputy Marshall Lee Winters, *written by Lon Williams, appearing in Real Western Stories*

## v **Helpful Clichés**

- Western Lawman
- Cowboy
- Gambler
- Bartender (Saloon keeper)
- Native Guide (Indian Scout)
- Clergyman (Preacher)
- Banker
- Bank Robber (Train robber)
- Judge
- Noble Savage (Indian Chief, Indian Brave)

*Additional Clichés*

- Gunslinger
- Bounty Hunter
- Trick Rider
- Rifleman
- Cavalry Officer
- Cavalry Trooper
- Sod Buster
- Ranch Hand
- Prospector/Miner
- Schoolmarm
- Indian Medicine Man

## v **Sample Character**

### **Sheriff Hiram Parish**

- Steely-eyed Western Lawman (3)
- Cowboy Horseman with an Uncanny Relationship with His Horse (3)
- Rifle Marksman (2)
- Rational Skeptic Who Sometimes Fears He May Be Wrong (1)
- (Sidekick) Horse, Amigo
- Trained Wild West Saddle Horse (2)
- Stubborn Mule When Faced With Supernatural (1)

## v **House Rules**

## **Magic and The Supernatural in *Strange Western Stories***

The only “magic” available to players in *Strange Western Stories* is that gained from the “Medicine Man” cliché. The basic mechanic from [Risus](#), Target Numbers, is used to determine the success or failure of the use of Indian “Medicine.” If more “magical” options are desired, please consult the more detailed rules contained in *Weird Crime Report*, as well as the notes for American Indian Medicine, below.

### **American Indian Medicine –**

American Indian “medicine” is a blending of folk magic, mysticism, luck, personal charisma, and a knowledge of treating illnesses and injuries.

For the individual Indian, it was seen as a charm of protection that would be unique to that person. Often, it took the form of an animal or other natural phenomena. Among many tribes, a boy approaching puberty would undergo a rite of passage that involved a solitary fast and ordeal. The first animal that appeared to the young man in his dreams during this vigil would become the totem of his “medicine.” This totem could sometimes be reflected in the name the boy chooses for himself upon entering adult society.

Occasionally, a totem may carry a ritual prohibition. Breaking this taboo would carry with it the penalty of negating the medicine. The medicine would be restore, but only after a lengthy and complicated purification ritual. In [Risus](#) terms, this prohibition would count as a Hook.

Medicine Men were those individuals within the tribe who understood and accessed the rituals of the tribe’s medicine in order to ensure the success of the tribe. They would be called upon to treat the sick and injured, drive away evil spirits and control the weather. They could also be accomplished and fierce warriors, and battle chiefs often looked to them for advice and inspiration in the face of battle.

Medicine Men were also responsible for producing “medicine bags,” which were pouches of various components produced in a ritual fashion as a protective amulet for the wearer. In [Risus](#), should a medicine man wish to create a medicine bag, he would expend one die from his “medicine man” cliché for each medicine bag. The bag then functions as a temporary set of three “Lucky Shots.” Once the shots from the bag are used, they do not heal; after the third shot has been expended, the bag is depleted. The medicine man’s cliché can be healed at a rate set by the GM, or it can be “healed” using the character advancement rules from the main [Risus](#) rules at the end of the adventure.

### **v Locale – Point Blank, pop. 312**

Backstory – Point Blank is a small town nearby to Forlorn Gap, where Deputy Marshall Lee Winters is the chief lawman. Technically, Winters has jurisdiction over Lonesome Gulch, but tends to allow Sheriff Parish free range in enforcing the law in his county.

### **Buildings:**

- Saloon
- Hotel/Stage Office
- Telegraph Office
- Jail/Sheriff’s Office
- General Store
- Assayer
- Bank
- Livery Stables
- Newspaper Office

- Schoolhouse
- Church
- Doctor's Office
- Barber
- Shoenfrau House, or "Miss Violet's Home for Wayward Girls"

I am indebted to David E. North's [Risus](#) adaptation [Wild West!](#) and to Tim Ballew's [Silverlode 1908](#)  
For inspiration on this setting.

# Weird Crime Report

Featuring "The Spook Squad"

## v Setting Notes

Horror pulps are just what the name implies: ghost, vampire, werewolf, and monster stories written to give you a good chill and lead you to sleep with the lights on. There were several leading authors known for their work in this area: H. P. Lovecraft,

"Shudder Pulps," a.k.a. "Weird Menace" stories are a subgenre that uses many of the elements of the Horror story. There is a villain, at first thought to be supernatural in either origin or power that threatens the well-being of the city/country/world. This villain kidnaps a beautiful girl and subjects her to extreme cruel and sadistic torture. Her boyfriend manages to rescue her and defeat the villain, which is usually shown to be an ordinary mortal being, albeit an evil genius. "Weird Menace" was a theme prominently featured in the radio drama *I Love A Mystery*. That radio drama later inspired the Saturday morning cartoon, *Scooby-Doo* (the original series). If you think of the old *Scooby Doo* cartoons ("I'd have gotten away with it if wasn't for you pesky kids!"), then you pretty much have an idea of what "Shudder Pulps" are like.

## v Pulp Examples

Some of the magazines that featured horror stories:

*Unknown*

*Weird Tales*

Some of the magazines that featured "Weird Menace" tales:

*Dime Mystery*

*Horror Stories*

*Terror Tales*

## v Helpful Clichés

- Ghost Chaser
- Occult Scholar
- Psychic Investigator
- G-Man

## v House Rules

Character Creation

As per standard [Risus](#) rules, with the following Advanced Options:

Pumps and Double Pumps, Sidekicks, Lucky Shots, and Boxcars

## v Sample Character

### Special Agent Laurents Gilchrist

Psychically Sensitive G-Man [3]

Erudite Connoisseur of World Literature (2)

Short Tempered Martial Arts Student (2)

House Rules

## v Magic and the Supernatural

### ***Guiding Principles***

Outside of the Horror Pulps, there is almost no mention of magic and the supernatural. Occasionally, there may be a hint of something otherworldly, but these hints are later proven to have rational, mundane, non-magical explanations (giving them more in common with the Shudder Pulps than the Horror Pulps).

On the other hand, the Horror Pulps provide just about the only evidence of magic and the supernatural. In these stories, magic is performed by following a formulaic ritual. There is usually a sacred locale, specially prepared components, an arcane symbol or two, and a verbal incantation. Because of this formulaic approach to magic, it was not necessarily limited to “trained mages.” Anyone could pick up a book of spells, so to speak, and provided they followed the instructions accurately, could cast a spell.

This actually translates well to [Risus](#). It follows one of the cardinal rules: Anyone Can Try Anything. In addition, GM’s will assign target numbers based on the cliché being used to read the formula and cast the spell. Grimoires, or spell books, are considered bonus die gear in the hands of a character with a cliché appropriate for reading and/or casting the listed spell. Characters using clichés not appropriate to the reading/casting will face higher Target Numbers, thus negating the advantage of the bonus die.

### ***Magic and Character Creation***

Remember, Pulp heroes are, for the most part, red-blooded Americans committed to preserving the “Natural Order of Things.” Since magic violates “The Natural Order,” and deals with “Things Man Was Not Meant To Know,” no Pulp Hero can take a witch doctor or voodoo priest cliché. The only exception is the Indian Medicine Man cliché from *Strange Western Stories*. However, players are free to take clichés from the Academic Section of the Master List that deal with arcane studies. These do allow a character to read/cast from a grimoire, as well as maybe remember some small charm that could be helpful in certain circumstances. The Pulp Hero may have a psychic ability, but these are generally low-level: danger sense, limited telepathy/ESP, etc. – no “Jedi mind control” techniques!

### ***The Mechanic***

This is no different from the basic mechanic in [Risus](#). When a player decides that his character will attempt to cast a spell from either a memorized charm or from a musty tome, or a hieroglyphic text on the wall of a pyramid tomb, the GM will assign a target number to the spell. I’m borrowing the table from Tim Ballew’s excellent game [Silverlode 1908](#) -- this was one of the inspirations for *Strange Western Stories*). He actually lifted it from S John Ross’ (the Venerable Creator of [Risus](#)) essay on [Elemental Magic](#):

<b>Simple (TN 5)</b>	Any effect up to and including that which helps the party achieve something as a whole, or that acts as a tool to facilitate another activity.
<b>Ordinary (TN 10)</b>	A standard effect that is meant to overcome a single obstacle that faces the character, or handle the character's share of an obstacle that faces the party.
<b>Complex (TN 15)</b>	The effect would hog the scene a bit.
<b>Difficult (TN 20)</b>	The effect would entirely upstage the other players, turning the other characters into bystanders for the rest of the scene and then some.



<b>Dangerous (TN 25)</b>	The effect would shortcut (or instantly rewrite) the whole scenario.
<b>Impossible (TN 30)</b>	The effect would utterly wreck the campaign world or campaign plotline.

In deciding the TN for a given spell attempt, the GM will consider two factors: Dramatic Necessity and Spotlight Sharing (Hogging). Higher numbers will be given to those actions which limit the involvement of the other players and which suck the fun out of the adventure for everyone (including the GM). Should a player fail a roll in casting a spell, the text from the grimoire mysteriously disappears, leaving only pages of blank paper, and any other nasty badness the GM can devise for the failed caster.

- **Insanity**-- In *Weird Crime Report*, GM's may elect to use a set of sanity rules adapted from <http://home.triad.rr.com/flintlocklaser/sleep/rules.html>. When confronted directly by the supernatural, GM's may require the player to roll against the cliché most closely associated to paranormal investigator. If the character has nothing resembling “paranormal investigator,” then the GM may allow the player to roll two dice, following the *Risus* principle for “When Somebody Can't Participate” from page 4 of the basic rules.

The following table is adapted from the Sleepwalkers rules at the above url:

Event	TN
Performing a minor arcane ritual/Reading minor text	5
Discovering evidence of supernatural creature	10
Performing a significant ritual/Reading a significant text	15
Witnessing an unbelievable atrocity/supernatural attack	20
Performing a major ritual/Reading a major text	25
Confronting a supernatural creature	30

If the player fails the roll, one die is deducted from the cliché. The loss is permanent, although advancement is possible as per standard *Risus* rules. If the cliché is reduced to zero, then the character is determined to have descended into madness, and any recovery is at that point is up to the GM.

- **Background** – The Supernatural, Paranormal and Otherwise Unknown Criminal Division was established in 1928 by the personal authority of Director J. Edgar Hoover of the F.B.I.

During the 1920's, there was a rise in crime on a national scale in connection with National Prohibition. Along with increased activity of bootleggers, the Ku Klux Klan and agents of foreign governments, there were some crimes that had no rational explanation. Hoover authorized the S.P.O.U.C.D. (pronounced “Spooked”) to investigate these crimes and to “neutralize or suppress beings and energies with malevolent intent.” Their field reports go directly to Director Hoover, who after reading them, order them permanently sealed. Agents have a great deal of latitude and possess the highest of security clearances.

In order to maintain cover for the S.P.O.U.C.D., or “Spook Squad,” as it is known within the Bureau, critical information and training is issued nationally to field agents by so-called

“horror films.” Many scriptwriters and directors have been recruited for this purpose. Directors James Whale and Tod Browning have been especially helpful.