

## The Strange Case of the Bodies in the Docks

In order to investigate the case of the bodies in the docks, you will need a few items: a piece of paper and a pen or pencil for writing, and two ordinary, six-sided dice (henceforth referred to as d6). If you cannot find more than one, then one will do, but it's better with two.

Firstly, you must create the "core" character using the standard *Fighting Fantasy* rules as set out in *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*. If you are unsure of these rules, please consult one of the *Fighting Fantasy* books to familiarise yourself with these rules.

STAMINA – roll two dice and add 12. This is your Initial STAMINA score, which will not change during your adventure. Write this down. Beneath it, write the number a second time; this indicates your Current STAMINA score, which will change quite a lot during the course of the adventure.

SKILL and LUCK – roll a die and add 6. This is your Initial SKILL score. Repeat the procedure for your LUCK score. Again, the Initial values will not change during the adventure, but your current scores may. Also note that your current scores may *never* increase higher than your Initial scores save for temporarily when using attack bonuses (see later) in combat.

The next thing you must do is flesh out your character. In standard *Fighting Fantasy* books, you have only three or four statistics; because this is an advanced gamebook, your character will have more. Don't worry; I've tried to make it as simple as possible to roll your character, while allowing a great deal of flexibility in personalising him or her.

Your character is represented by a series of numbers, known as Attributes. These values indicate how good in each area your character is. The statistics used in this adventure are:

**Agility** (AGL)

**Education** (EDC)

**Presence** (PRS)

**Problem Solving** (PLS)

**Sanity** (SAN)

*Experience* (XP)

Don't worry – it's not as complicated as it looks!

The five attributes printed in **bold** text are your Attributes. For each of these, roll 1d6+6 and note the value on a piece of paper next to the Attribute. Thus, if on your first roll of the die you roll a 3, on your piece of paper write: AGL: 9. Continue to do this with the remaining four of your Attributes.

To determine your Experience Point score, add together your five primary attributes, multiplied by 2, and add 2d6.

### A GUIDE TO ATTRIBUTES

AGL indicates your reactions, your speed and the grace with which you carry out manoeuvres.

EDC measures how naturally clever you are, and how good you are at applying what you know.

SAN is a measure of your courage, and your belief in yourself, and those around you with whom you share a common goal. If your Sanity score ever reaches 0, you have lost all faith and trust in yourself, and your grip on reality, and are doomed to spend the rest of your life in a sanatorium somewhere, a gibbering, nervous wreck, terrified of the *things best left unknown*.

PRS is a measure of your personality, how witty and charming you are, how good-looking you are, but also how well known you are. A high PRS score can sometimes be a burden, or it could open doors that otherwise might remain closed.

PLS indicates your ability to make sense of information that you have never come across before, including deciphering ancient texts and coded messages.

XP is a measure of how experienced you are (surprise, surprise!). It will increase as you go through the adventure. XPs can be swapped for Proficiency Level increases (see later) at any point during the adventure.

## PROFICIENCIES

At the beginning of the adventure, you will be asked to choose a number of proficiencies. In order to choose a Proficiency, you must “spend” XP to “buy” a level of knowledge of it. The following table shows the XP cost to purchase levels of training.

| Proficiency Level | Description         | XP Cost |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 0                 | Passing Knowledge   | 0       |
| 1                 | Basic Understanding | 5       |
| 2                 | Learner             | 10      |
| 3                 | Average             | 15      |
| 4                 | Competent           | 20      |
| 5                 | Scion               | 30      |
| 6                 | Experienced         | 40      |
| 7                 | Expert              | 50      |
| 8                 | Master              | 65      |
| 9                 | Grand Master        | 80      |
| 10                | God-like            | 100     |

The cost given is non-cumulative: that is, to purchase a Proficiency Level of 3 would cost 15 points, but then to increase your mastery to level 4 will only take 5 more XPs, a **total** cost of 20 points. You may increase your Proficiency Level in any Proficiency at any point during the adventure with one proviso – you cannot increase a Proficiency from 0 during the game, only before or after adventures. This indicates the difficulty of learning the basics of a new talent. If you do not possess the Proficiency that you must roll against, a roll against one of your Attributes may be required instead. However, these rolls are usually much more difficult.

When the paragraph tells you to use a Proficiency, it will indicate a Difficulty Factor. To use the Proficiency correctly, you must roll 2d6 and add your Proficiency Level score for the particular Proficiency in question. If this total is equal to, or greater than the given Difficulty Factor, you have successfully used the Proficiency. If the total is less, you have failed in your attempt, and must face the consequences, which will be indicated in the numbered section.

## COMBAT

Combat is conducted as per normal *Fighting Fantasy* combat rules, with a few alterations. If you are proficient in a fighting technique (and carrying the necessary weapon where appropriate), you have an attack bonus to add to your SKILL score *for combat only*. You may automatically use Knife Usage or Brawling in this way unless the text specifically instructs you otherwise. Details of how to calculate your attack bonus will be given under the appropriate heading in Appendix A. Note that these bonuses are non-cumulative, so you may not use Brawling *and* Knife Usage in the same combat.

Should you engage in combat with an opponent where there is no mention made of how much damage he inflicts, assume the *Fighting Fantasy* standard of 2 points of damage.

The addition of ranged weapons also makes things slightly more complicated. In order to use a ranged weapon you must add to your SKILL score any attack bonuses outlined in Appendix A under the heading appropriate you whichever firearm you are using and conduct the combat using this temporarily modified score. You may only use ranged weapons if the text specifically instructs that you may do so.

LUCK may be used in close combat in the normal way, but note that in ranged combat a successful use of LUCK will double the amount of damage inflicted *to a maximum of 4 extra points*. Thus, if you were to cause 5 points of damage to an opponent, successfully testing your LUCK will cause him 9 points of damage, not 10.

Combat also increases your experience. If you defeat an opponent, add their SKILL and STAMINA scores together and divide this total by 2 (rounding fractions *down*); you may add this value to your XP score.

## **Introduction**

This is a story out of time, yet set in the “real” world of Earth in the 1920s. It is a dark and sinister tale of betrayals and strange goings-on. You are a young man or woman, fresh from the rigours of the First World War, trying to find your feet in a world of lost innocence, where the halcyon days of youth are a distant memory; and you are shocked and disgusted by how low the world around you sank into depravity. Yet there are things happening which you cannot explain. How could man alone have been responsible for such carnage and senseless slaughter? Perhaps there is something else behind this mass murder.

You are also aware that science and technology are advancing at a rapid rate, and that man is discovering much about the present that sheds new light onto the past. Some of these discoveries are made public, yet you are sure many are hidden away from the common man – though for what purpose you are unsure.

At the start of this adventure, you are living somewhere in Great Britain, not too far from a main-line railway. To discover your recent past, you must first decide upon your occupation. Are you an honest doctor, put upon and sickened by the war? Or are you a Detective, always on the lookout for some easy money? Or will you choose to be a Gangster, who, having already made your money, is intrigued by what is happening around you? Think carefully, for your choice of occupation will determine much about what happens during the course of this adventure.

**Turn to 4** if you are the Detective.

**Turn to 5** if you are the Doctor.

**Turn to 6** if you are the Gangster.

### **1**

The Detective may choose a maximum of seven Proficiencies. Consult **Table A** for a full list of all the Proficiencies available to the three classes throughout the game. Bear in mind that some Proficiencies are more readily useful than others so choose carefully.

You will also need to calculate your financial situation. Roll 1d6 and consult **Table B**. This is how much money you have on hand to spend and stored in your bank account. Consult **Table C** for what items you may buy with the money you started with in safekeeping. Bear in mind that you begin the game with nothing unless you specifically buy it

When you are ready to continue, **return to 4**.

### **2**

The Doctor may choose a maximum of seven Proficiencies. Consult **Table A** for a full list of all the Proficiencies available to the three classes throughout the game. Bear in mind that some Proficiencies are more readily useful than others so choose carefully.

You will also need to calculate your financial situation. Roll 1d3 and consult **Table B**. This is how much money you have on hand to spend and stored in your bank account. Consult **Table C** for what items you may buy with the money you started with in safekeeping. Bear in mind that you begin the game with nothing unless you specifically buy it

When you are ready to continue, **return to 5**.

### **3**

The Gangster may choose a maximum of seven Proficiencies. Consult **Table A** for a full list of all the Proficiencies available to the three classes throughout the game. Bear in mind that some Proficiencies are more readily useful than others so choose carefully.

You will also need to calculate your financial situation. Roll 1d6 and add three to the result. Then consult **Table B**. This is how much money you have on hand to spend and stored in your bank account. Consult **Table C** for what items you may buy with the money you started with in safekeeping. Bear in mind that you begin the game with nothing unless you specifically buy it

When you are ready to continue, **return to 6**.

**TABLE A**

| Proficiency         | Requirements                | Not usable by |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| ACUTE EYESIGHT      | None                        |               |
| ACUTE HEARING       | None                        |               |
| BIOLOGY             | None                        | G, D          |
| BRAWLING            | None                        |               |
| CHEMISTRY           | Pocket Microscope           | G, D          |
| DRIVING             | Automobile                  | D, Do         |
| ELEPHANT GUN USAGE  | Elephant Gun & Ammunition   |               |
| FAST-TALK           | None                        | G             |
| FIRST AID           | Medical Bag & Paraphernalia | G             |
| HANDGUN USAGE       | Handgun & Ammunition        |               |
| KNIFE USAGE         | Knife                       |               |
| LIBRARY USE         | None                        |               |
| NAVIGATION          | None                        |               |
| RIFLE USAGE         | Rifle & Ammunition          | Do            |
| TOMMY-GUN USAGE     | Tommy-Gun & Ammunition      | D, Do         |
| UNDERWORLD CONTACTS | None                        | Do            |

For an explanation of each of the Proficiencies listed, see Appendix A at the back of the book. Please also note the following:

- (i) Certain Proficiencies require items for them to be used, so it would be a good idea to purchase the items before beginning the game. (See Table C.)
- (ii) Certain Proficiencies are only available to those engaged in certain occupations. The key to the Not Usable By column is as follows: **D** = Detective; **Do** = Doctor; **G** = Gangster.

**TABLE B**

| Die Roll | Starting Money in Safe-keeping | Money on hand |
|----------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1        | £500                           | £5            |
| 2        | £1000                          | £6            |
| 3        | £1500                          | £7            |
| 4        | £2000                          | £8            |
| 5        | £2500                          | £9            |
| 6        | £3000                          | £10           |
| 7        | £3500                          | £11           |
| 8        | £4000                          | £12           |
| 9        | £4500                          | £13           |

Please note that money in safekeeping is in a bank – you may not access these funds during the course of an adventure unless you are specifically told that you may do so. Money on hand is literally in your pocket – you may use it whenever you wish. Before and after adventures, you may access such banked money and spend it on whatever you wish.

**TABLE C**

| Item   | Cost            |
|--|-----------------|
| Elephant Gun                                 | £10             |
| Elephant Gun Ammunition (per 6 cartridges)   | £2 8s (=£2.40)  |
| Ford Automobile                              | £75             |
| Handgun (Luger)                              | £8              |
| Handgun Ammunition (per 6 bullets)           | £1 2s (=£1.10)  |
| House (Small)                                | £450            |
| House (Large)                                | £2750           |
| Knife – Machete                              | £1              |
| Knife – Throwing*                            | £1              |
| Medical Bag (requires Medical Paraphernalia) | £5              |
| Medical Paraphernalia (requires Medical Bag) | £35             |
| Pocket Microscope                            | £25             |
| Rifle  | £7              |
| Rifle Ammunition (per 10 cartridges)         | 5s (=25p)       |
| Tommy-Gun                                    | £90             |
| Tommy-Gun Ammunition (per 20 rounds)         | £3 15s (=£3.75) |

- \* The Throwing Knife inflicts 1d2 damage. It can be used against an opponent before the start of melee even if the text indicates that you are unable to make use of a ranged weapon. It may be recovered after combat.

Please also note the following points:

- (i) Buying a house is **essential**. The price quoted includes all furnishings.
- (ii) A Gangster **MUST** start with an automobile – no self-respecting Gangster would walk or take the train. A Doctor *cannot* start with a car. A Detective may choose to start with one if he has sufficient funds.
- (iii) Guns *do not work without ammunition* – make sure that you buy sufficient rounds if you intend to use one.
- (iv) Prices quoted during the course of the adventure are in the old-style Pounds-Shillings-Pence, although the price in current money is given in brackets beside it. Therefore £1 2s is one pound and two shillings, (or £1.10 in today's metric system). Ensure that you keep an accurate record of how much money you have on hand during the course of the adventure. Should you find yourself in a position where you cannot afford to pay for something and are required to do so, you are considered to have failed the adventure. See Appendix B for more information.

#### 4

As the detective, you are an investigator, generally employed by clients when the police fail to turn up any evidence. You have contacts all over the country, though not as many as a Gangster. Usually your clientèle is rather wealthy, allowing you to pick and choose which cases you will accept. However, the Spanish Influenza epidemic currently sweeping the world has redirected money people once had for your line of work towards health spas and elixirs. You have had only one call in the past month, from a strange man living in the wilds of Leicestershire, asking to meet with you at his manor house. Usually, you would have ignored such a crank, but needs must as the Devil drives.

Swallowing your pride, you have travelled out to the remote dwelling, miles from anywhere. The narrow country roads seem a million miles from your past existence, and you feel not a little paranoid that there are persons hiding behind each hedge; that a lonely man waits for you at a crossroads, eager to buy your soul. Eventually you find the manor house, entering the grounds through a high gate set into the metal railings. Gravel crunches underfoot as you make your way up to the front door. With one final glance around you step forwards and stand poised on the doorstep.

Before going any further, however, you must choose your Proficiencies and relevant details. Please **turn to 1** to choose your Proficiencies.

When you have chosen your Proficiencies and possessions, **turn to 7**.

#### 5

You are a doctor, recently returned from the war, looking at life with little joy or desire. The things that you witnessed, the atrocities, seem to have numbed you for life, and you no longer care what happens in the world around you. Even medical science seems little able to stop the spread of the near-fatal Spanish Influenza currently sweeping Europe. Having taken sick leave from your practise, you have stayed at home for the past three months, staring at the walls, barely taking an interest in what goes on outside your windows.

Three days ago, however, you received a call from a mysterious man, purporting to live in the wilds of Leicestershire. He seemed to know much about you considering you have been house-ridden for three months. He invited you to his manor to discuss a business proposal involving yourself. At first you told him firmly that you were not interested. And yet something in the back of your mind troubled you. Yesterday, you telephoned this mysterious man, telling him to await your arrival today. You are not sure why, but you feel that

today will be the first day of the rest of your life. You can see light at the end of the tunnel – but you have no idea what seems to be casting it.

After a short walk from the country station where you disembarked, you arrive at a large mansion. Your heart in your mouth, you reach for the door knocker.

Before going any further, however, you must choose your Proficiencies and relevant details. Please **turn to 2** to choose your Proficiencies.

When you have chosen your Proficiencies and possessions, **turn to 7**.

#### 6

After a childhood of petty crime in the East End of London, you became involved with a ruthless gang known as the Hayes, named after the twin brothers in charge of the operation. You were involved in armed robberies and protection rackets, rising high into the upper echelons of underworld society – almost unheard of for one so young. Recently, though, the war has begun to sow doubts in your mind about the ethics of stealing from and abusing people who no longer have anything. The world seems to have been tilted from its axis since 1914, and nothing you can do will ever tilt it back. You gave up your life of crime, much to the amusement and disgust of those around you, and settled down, ‘going straight’ as the saying goes.

Nothing much happened for the next few months, and you began to rue your departure from your previous life – one of danger and adventure. There are few jobs going that you would lower yourself to do, and the Spanish Influenza epidemic currently sweeping the nation makes for little money to be made from house-breaking. Then you received a telephone call from a mysterious man in the wilds of Leicestershire, inviting you over to discuss a business proposal. Out of want for something better to do, you decided to go along.

Driving in the countryside is something you have always disliked, having been brought up in the urban environment of the East End, but you carefully follow the directions given and turn into a drive leading to a large mansion. You park your automobile and get out, amazed at the money the mysterious man must have. You walk to the doorstep and, after a brief hesitation, reach for the door knocker.

Before going any further, however, you must choose your Proficiencies and relevant details. Please **turn to 3** to choose your Proficiencies.

When you have chosen your Proficiencies and possessions, **turn to 7**.

## 7

The door swings silently inwards. Standing before you in the doorway is an aged man dressed in a smart black suit. Behind him you can see a corridor leading off.

“Hello,” intones the man, whom you immediately realise was not the man who telephoned you. “The Master will see you shortly. Please come this way.”

Without waiting for your response he begins to walk down the corridor. Hurriedly, you enter and close the door behind you, trotting to keep up with the surprisingly sprightly man. He leads you along a main corridor and into a large, well-furnished room. The red wallpaper makes the room seem smaller than it really is.

“Please sit,” says the man, whom you guess to be a butler. “The Master will be along shortly.” With that, he retires from the room.

Looking around at the décor you are struck by the lushness of it all. Strange ornaments from far-off places line the mantelpiece, beneath which a cosy fire is burning merrily. Books line the shelves that stretch across one entire wall of the room, while a window looks out over a well-tended garden to the rear of the house opposite. Intrigued, you begin to look at some of the titles of the books, but you are disappointed when they all seem to be in strange languages that you do not know.

You decide to sit in a large, comfortable chair next to the fireplace and await your host. Almost as soon as you sit, the door opens and in walks the mysterious stranger.

He is a stern-looking man apparently in his forties. He is dressed in an embroidered smoking jacket and a dark-coloured suit. However, it is his head that catches your attention; for in his mane of black hair is a lock turned purest white. He smiles graciously at you.

“Thank you so much for coming,” he says. “I have looked forward to our meeting ever since I first heard of you. I am Julian Striker; welcome to my home.” You notice that his voice, while soft carries with it a hint of menace. He walks over to a chair opposite yours, also near to the fireplace. You note at once that he walks with a limp.

When he is seated, he says once more “Thank you again for coming at such short notice. I am in need of your talents.”

You inquire what he means, about how you can help him. “All in good time, my young friend,” he sighs, “all in good time.”

You sit in silence for several minutes before he continues. “I am sure you have noticed the

ornaments on the mantle, *objets d’art* from my many travels. If only I had not been so eager to meddle in things I ought not. There are things going on in the background of this world – things unseen. I know you feel the same way that I do; that is why I contacted you. Things are afoot which man can only dream about, only shiver at in the darkness of light. Before I go any further, I would have your opinion of something. How do you feel about the paranormal? Do you believe that it exists, for example?”

This wealthy, well-dressed man is started to unnerve you. How does he know so much about your recent thoughts? You have taken great pains to hide what you have been doing these past few months. You decide to concentrate on the question, hoping to learn more from him later. How will you respond?

“Science may be discovering much about the universe, but all things are led by order. I cannot believe in fairies and goblins!” (Turn to 8.)

“There is something afoot in the world right now, and I don’t like it at all. However, I would rather have more evidence before planting the blame on the unknowable.” (Turn to 9.)

“Most assuredly there are things manipulating the world around us; things which we can only guess at. Things beyond our mortal comprehension.” (Turn to 10.)

## 8

Julian seems a little disappointed. When he speaks, it is as to a wayward child.

“There is more in this world than can be measured with your scientific instruments, be assured,” he intones. “As man learns more, he is more aware of what he has not learned, of what is un-learnable. Always keep this in mind.”

Turn to 11.

## 9

Julian smiles at your words. “Aye,” he exclaims, “you are where I was some twenty years ago. However, don’t be afraid to believe the unbelievable if the facts point to it. Just be sure that you understand exactly where the facts truly are pointing.” *Gain 3 XP.*

Turn to 11.

## 10

He sits quietly for some moments, apparently thinking over your response. Eventually he speaks:

"I did not think it would be so easy to convert you to my way of thinking. I am relieved, yet also slightly worried that you believe anything that someone might infer. There are many who would seek to twist the facts for their own ends. Do not be too quick and eager to believe everyone who speaks to you – many have their own hidden agenda."

**Turn to 11.**

## 11

"I ask these questions with regard to my business proposal," he says. "I keep my eyes on world events, both local and not-so-local. Many strange things can be explained away by genuine scientific reasoning. I would like you to investigate one that isn't for me."

Your heart thumps steadily in your chest. What does he want you to do? Discover the truth behind voodoo? Unravel the Marie Celeste mystery? Explain the strange face-like edifices on Easter Island? Your apprehension must show on your face as Julian smiles disarmingly.

"Nothing as dreadful as what you are obviously considering – yet. No, I want you to investigate a seemingly ordinary case of murder. People are disappearing regularly in the city of Portsmouth; their bodies are later found near to the docks, horribly mutilated. I have contacted the police with regard to the matter, but they are unwilling to release details to me over the telephone lines. I knew that I needed a protégé to begin the investigation: after all, my adventuring days are over. You have the skills required to look into this matter; but you lack the firm knowledge that I do. That is why I am sending you on a relatively easy assignment first, down to Portsmouth to discover the secrets surrounding these disappearances. I take it from your silence that you are happy to be in my employ?"

You answer nothing. This mysterious Julian Striker makes you nervous when you try to converse with him. Better just to nod. However, you are intrigued by the tale he has just told you. Perhaps the answer to this minor mystery will help you to discover that which is hidden, that which has proved so elusive all of your life. Or perhaps it will prove to you that you are merely paranoid, that there is nothing untoward going on in the world. You nod in acquiescence of his question.

He continues, "Well perhaps you have some questions for me? I would be glad to allay your worries."

You stare into the fire for several minutes before you decide upon what your response will be. How will you answer?

"An interesting proposal, Mr. Striker, but we have yet to decide upon payment for my services. How much can I expect to be paid?" (**Turn to 12**)

"You have indeed piqued my interest, Julian. But can you give me any pointers as to what I might expect to find in Portsmouth?" (**Turn to 13.**)

"With all due respect, Mr Striker, I am still not convinced. I feel that going would be a waste of my time!" (**Turn to 14.**)

## 12

"I am not a poor man as you may have gathered," admits Julian. "And my pay is good. I will pay you £25 now to cover your expenses travelling down to Portsmouth and investigating this case. Should you decide that after this investigation you do not wish to remain in my employ, you are free to go as you please. If you decide to remain employed by me, we will negotiate full-time payment."

He stops before continuing ruefully, "I cannot get about as I once did." You are sure that he is talking about his leg, although you do not have the courage to ask how he was hurt.

**Turn to 15.**

## 13

"What are you *expecting* to find?" he asks. "Answers? No! Far more questions than answers! But you will see glimpses of the truth – a truth which I dare not speak aloud, and nor would you believe my words if I did! You must witness these things first hand."

He stops as if remembering something. Slowly he rises from his chair and walks over to a mahogany writing desk. Opening a small drawer he pulls out a folded-up piece of paper. He hands it to you.

"I purchased this for you," he says. "I thought that you might need it." Looking at the front of the paper, you see that it is a map of the city of Portsmouth and surrounding area. *Add this to your list of possessions.*

Julian slowly eases himself back down into the chair. "As for payment, I will give you £25 up front to cover your expenses. After that, we shall see."

**Turn to 15.**

## 14

Julian sighs deeply. You can tell he is unhappy with your response.

"I urge you to go," he implores. "I will pay you £25 to cover your expenses – I don't expect you to do this out of your own pocket. I also know that you have nothing else to do right now – that is why I sent for you. Surely, a few days' travel and exploration will not adversely affect your plans. Please, go to Portsmouth & investigate this."

You are stunned by the implicit nature with which Julian now speaks to you. Unable to turn down the man, you grudgingly agree that a few days will not make much difference to your future intentions. He seems much happier after he hears you say this.

**Turn to 15.**

## 15

Now that you have accepted his terms, Julian seems to be in a much friendlier mood. He tells you anecdotes and tales of his travels in Africa, India and the Far East, to which you listen, spellbound: Julian Striker is a master storyteller.

When it gets to about five o' clock, a bell rings, and the butler, who's name you find out to be Jeeves, escorts you both into the dining room, where a large dinner of pheasant is served. Afterwards you both retire to the smoking room, where Julian hands you the promised £25 from his wallet. *Don't forget to record this as part of your money 'on hand'.*

When it is quite late, you are shown to a room upstairs which bears your name upon the brass door-plaque, although you are less than surprised. After meeting Julian you realise how persuasive he is.

Morning comes, and with it the exquisite smell of a hearty breakfast. You go down and meet Julian in the dining room. He greets you warmly and you break your fast whilst he reads the morning papers.

After breakfast, you bid farewell to Julian and leave the house intent on making your way down to Portsmouth.

How are you planning on getting down to Portsmouth? If you own an automobile you decide to drive down (**turn to 16**). If you do not own an automobile then you must take the train (**turn to 17**).

## 16

Climbing into your black Ford automobile, you turn the ignition and, hearing the steady ticking over of the engine, pull out from Julian's driveway. Sticking to the major roads, you head south through Northampton, making towards London along the

ancient Roman road known as Watling Street. Around one o' clock, you reach St. Albans, and follow a succession of roads southwards, through Beaconsfield and Guildford, past the War Downs, eventually arriving at Petersfield around five o' clock in the evening. The autumn skies are beginning to turn red as you drive through what remains of the once-great Forest of Bere, chopped down in man's incessant quest for pasturage. When you finally sight Portsmouth on the horizon, the night is well established, and it is only the lights of the distant houses that give any indication of habitation in this out-of-the way city.

As you drive ever closer, you can taste the salty tang of the sea in the air surrounding you. Turning on your headlights, you drive ever closer to your destination, this ancient city, built upon trade. The wind begins to pick up, and a squally rain starts to fall, perhaps a foreboding omen of your stay here, so far from home. You are grateful that Henry Ford has designed the 'window-wipers' that you now turn on to clear your windscreen of the rain.

By the time you have reached the outskirts of Portsmouth, the rain has ceased, leaving behind it a thick, eerie mist, impeding your progress enormously. One street looks just like another as you drive along unfamiliar roads, dumbfounded by the maze-like warren that is Portsmouth. So low is the visibility ahead, you cannot make out the shape of a person walking along the roadside until you are almost upon him. The figure is dressed in a thick, black cloak, and sports a dark-coloured hat, obviously wrapped up well from the elements. The silence around you, save for the irregular spooky drone of ships' foghorns, worries you slightly, although you are unable to pinpoint exactly why.

You may stop the figure to ask for directions if you like (**turn to 19**) or drive on, hoping to come across some kind of signpost (**turn to 18**).

## 17

After a brief walk along deserted country lanes, you arrive at the station at Shenton, some miles from the nearest settlement. You enter the ticket office and purchase a train ticket to take you as far as Portsmouth. This costs you 10 shillings (=50p). You hand two 'crowns' (5 shilling coins) and receive your ticket in return. (*Don't forget to deduct this from your money 'on hand'.*)

You walk out onto the platform, which you had expected to be empty, to be confronted by a strange group of persons: three men with shaved heads, a short bespectacled person, dressed in a heavy leather overcoat of indeterminate gender, and a strikingly attractive woman. She is talking casually to the men, who answer her with short, clipped words of a language foreign to your ears.

She is wearing a hat that reminds you of an Easter bonnet, rather out-of-place on this cool, autumnal morn.

You do not have to wait long before the train pulls into the station. As you board, the ticket collector informs you that the train travels via Euston station, and should arrive at Portsmouth sometime around seven o' clock this evening. Thanking him for this information, you make your way to the nearest compartment.

You enter the compartment and sit, glad to be out of the chill breeze that wafted across the platform. Sitting opposite you is a man dressed in black, *pince-nez* spectacles perched on the end of his nose – obviously a man of the cloth. He is reading from a red leather-bound book in which he seems engrossed. Settling in your seat, you prepare for the long journey, wishing you had borrowed something to read from Julian's extensive collection of writings.

If you would like to, you may try to engage the vicar in conversation (**turn to 37**).

Alternatively, you may decide to settle down and while away the long hours asleep (**turn to 38**).

## 18

The dark narrow roads of Portsmouth all look alike as you trundle slowly through the increasingly thick fog. You will readily settle for any hostelry you can find to spend tonight, but there doesn't seem to be any about – even the streets seem empty and deserted.

Now you must test vs. your Navigation Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 9. If you have in your possession a Map of Portsmouth, you may add **2** to the roll *for this test only*.

If you did not take the Navigation Proficiency, you must roll 2d6 and add 3. Compare this with your SKILL score. If it is less than, or equal to, your SKILL score, you have managed to find your way. Otherwise, you have failed the roll.

If you pass either roll, **turn to 20**. If, however, you fail the roll, you must **turn to 21**.

## 19

You wind down you window. "Hey, there. You!" you call out to the hunched figure, who duly turns and ambles up to the automobile.

"Yes, can I be of any assistance?" he enquires. You note from his helmet, which you can now see clearly, that he is an officer of the law; a

Portsmouth Policeman. The damp fog makes you cough involuntarily, allowing you time to decide what to ask of this man.

Will you be direct and ask about the bodies in Docks (**turn to 22**)? Or will you play it safe and enquire of a room for the night (**turn to 23**)?

## 20

You arrive at a hotel along the main road through Portsmouth. The plaque on the door proclaims the place to be called 'The Green Man'. Going inside, you are welcomed by the owner who immediately prepares dinner for you. It appears that the tourist season is over, and there is only one other couple staying here, an elderly man and his wife, come to live out their twilight years by the sea.

If you have not been here before, the owner informs you that the price per night is 6 shillings (=30p). This is rather more than most hostelries in the area, but, he assures you, you are paying for the quality. *Remember to deduct 30p from your funds on hand each night that you stay here.*

After a delicious dinner, you retire to your room, which is tastefully furnished in the *art deco* style, which seems to be so popular these days. The bed is comfortable, and a fire roars in the grate opposite the bed. After browsing through a complimentary newspaper, you turn off the electric light and fall into a deep, restful sleep. Restore your STAMINA score to its Initial level.

The next morning you rise early and go downstairs for breakfast. When you have eaten, you leave the hotel and get your first glimpse of Portsmouth in the light.

**Turn to 51.**

## 21

After some time you manage to find a small inn down by the docks. The sign outside gives the name of the place as 'The Mariner's Respite'. Pushing open the sticking main door, you enter a poorly lit smoke-filled bar. Walking carefully over to the bar so as to avoid spilling anyone's drink, you enquire of the grizzled-looking owner the price of a room for the night. He pours you a drink and informs you that the price here is the best in Portsmouth: a florin (4 shillings) per night (=20p). He warns you that he wants no 'monkey-business' in this hostelry, as it is his living since he gave up seamanship several years ago. Although you are not really interested, you casually ask why he gave it up. Turning towards you, you notice for the first time that he wears a patch over one eye. "There are strange things at sea," is all he will say of the matter.

You hand over the money and retire upstairs as soon as you have finished the weak brew. *Remember to deduct 20p from your funds 'on hand'*. Locking your door and ensuring that the shutters on the window are tightly sealed as soon as you enter, you do not get a good look at the room until you are sure that no-one can enter without your permission.

The room is dark and a little malodorous. The owner is also seems not to have caught up with the times, as your light source is a gas lamp sitting on the bedside cabinet. You decide to sleep as soon as possible. Undressing, you climb into the cold bed and wait for sleep to overtake you.

In the morning, you wake with a start to the sounds of the clattering as the breakfasts are prepared downstairs. You go down and eat the tasteless food before taking your leave as soon as possible. Add 4 STAMINA points to your total if you are able. Outside, the air hangs thick with the taste of brine, washing the last vestiges of sleep from your eyes, and you get your first glimpse of the city of Portsmouth.

**Turn to 51.**

## 22

The policeman regards you with an unwavering stare. If you are playing a Gangster, **turn to 24**. If you are playing a Detective, **turn to 25**.

## 23

"I'm new here in Portsmouth," you begin, "and am looking for a room for the night. I wonder if you can help me?"

Make a roll vs. your Fast-Talk Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 9. If you did not take this Proficiency, make a roll vs. your Presence Attribute, Difficulty Factor 15.

If you pass either roll **turn to 26**. If you fail your roll, **turn to 27**.

## 24

"Strange," says the officer, ignoring your line of questioning. "I'm sure I've seen your face before. Now where was it?" Suddenly you realise that direct contact with a member of the local constabulary might not be such a good idea.

Now you must make a roll vs. your Underworld Contacts Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 10. If you did not take the Underworld Contacts Proficiency, you must *test your Luck*.

If you *fail* the Proficiency check, or if you are Lucky, **turn to 28**. If, however, you fail your roll, or you are Unlucky, **turn to 29**.

## 25

You ask the policeman outright about the bodies in the docks. "Bodies?" he replies. "What bodies?" He clams up and politely refuses to talk about the subject.

Now you must make a roll vs. Persuasion, Difficulty Factor 7. If you did not take the Persuasion Proficiency, or you would prefer not to test against it, you may elect to make a roll vs. your Fast-Talk Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 9.

If you pass your roll, **turn to 36**. If you fail either roll, or you have neither of the Proficiencies, the policeman frowns and stares at you, deep in thought; **turn to 28**.

## 26

"I like to think that I am a good judge of character," the policeman tells you. "And you seem alright in my books." He proceeds to give you directions to the "nicest guesthouse in town", a swanky affair called The Green Man. You follow his directions closely, although it is situated on the main thoroughfare and shouldn't prove too difficult to locate.

**Turn to 20.**

## 27

He shakes his head. "You have come at the wrong time of the year," he informs you. "Most of the guesthouses are closed for business. Tell you what, though; there are places down by the docks that are open all year round. I'll give you directions."

He needs to run through the directions several times for you as they are so convoluted, but eventually you think that you've got the idea, and you drive off into the night.

**Turn to 21.**

## 28

The policeman seems to give up on his line of thought after several moments. "No," he says, "I think I must be getting you mixed up with somebody else." You ask again about the bodies, and he becomes a little upset.

"We don't need strangers coming down here poking their noses in where it isn't required!" he snaps. "Mind your own business!"

You decide that it would be prudent to take your leave. Bidding him farewell you drive off into the night. Lose 1 LUCK point for annoying the local constabulary.

**Turn to 18.**

### 29

"Hang on!" he says. "I recognise you now. You're involved in protection rackets!" Lose 1 LUCK point. He reaches into his pocket to draw something out. You make a grab for him – and must now make a roll vs. your Agility Attribute, Difficulty Factor 18.

If you manage to pass this roll, **turn to 30.**

If (as is more likely) you fail the roll, **turn to 31.**

### 30

Leaping from the automobile, you bring the policeman crashing to the floor, sending the whistle that he was about to draw from his pocket tumbling into the gutter out of his reach. He curses you and drags a truncheon from his belt. You must fight him.

**Portsmouth Policeman:**  
SKILL 7      STAMINA 8

Because the Policeman is not wearing any form of armour, you may elect to use your Brawling Proficiency (if you took it). As you are in close combat, you are unable to make any use of missile weapons.

If you defeat him **turn to 32.**

### 31

You throw open your automobile door in an effort to prevent the policeman from drawing out whatever he has in his pocket, but he manages to step back in time to avoid your swing. He draws out a shiny whistle and blows hard, signalling to any police who might hear that he is in danger.

If you decide to drive off now, **turn immediately to 35.**

Thinking quickly, you try to bundle the man into your automobile. To do this you must make either a roll vs. Brawling Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 10; or a roll vs. your Agility Attribute, Difficulty Factor 17.

If you pass either roll **turn to 33.** If you fail your roll, you must **turn to 35.**

### 32

Quickly searching through the Policeman's belongings you discover a shiny Brass Whistle and a golden Sovereign coin (=£1). *Don't forget to record the Whistle if you decide to keep it, and to amend your money 'to hand' accordingly.* Add 1 LUCK point for retaining your anonymity.

You decide that it would be a good idea to leave here quickly, before anyone discovers the body.

**Turn to 18.**

### 33

You grab hold of the policeman and wind him with a well-aimed punch. Bundling the man into the back of your automobile, you quickly speed off into the night, the fog now a boon to you. Soon you come to the main promenade that will eventually lead to the docks.

You notice in your rear-view mirror that the policeman is trying to get up, so you lean over the back of your seat and hit him again. His body goes limp and you realise immediately that you have just killed a member of the local law enforcement. Reassessing your predicament, you realise that getting rid of the body has become top priority.

After about a mile and a half, the wide promenade gives way to a narrower, dingy-looking road, and you realise that you have come to Portsmouth Docks, the focal point of your investigation. However, now is not the time to be investigating the disappearances. Bringing your automobile to a halt, you get out and look around, but at this late hour and in this weather there is no one about – fortunately. Releasing the handbrake, you push your automobile through the poorly maintained sea wall and into the depths. The fog deadens the splash it makes on impact, and the body – and your automobile – sinks without trace.

*Remember to delete the automobile from your list of possessions.* Reduce your LUCK score by 2 for having to abandon your automobile.

**Turn to 34.**

### 34

Having lost your means of transportation, you elect to find an inn within walking distance. This area mostly consists of warehouses and abandoned factories; it is not an inviting place to spend the night, and certainly not one on this bleak autumn eve. Turning up your collar, you walk along the wharf and back towards the centre of town.

**Turn to 21.**

### 35

You career off down the road to try to lose him. Turning sharply round corners and accelerating wildly along the straight, you make sure that you are not followed. Soon the houses become smaller and more squalid, and they eventually give way to warehouses and abandoned factories. Realising that you are in the docklands, you have a moment of clarity - you must dump your automobile. Driving down to the seawall, you turn off the engine and leave the safe confines of the automobile. Making sure that the handbrake is disengaged, you push the automobile through the wall and into the sea – the biggest sacrifice you have ever had to make. *Remember to delete the automobile from your list of possessions.* The fog deadens the splash it makes on impact, and your automobile sinks without trace.

You realise that you have endangered your life by your rash actions. Until you leave Portsmouth, you must *temporarily* decrease your Fast-Talk Proficiency by 2, if you took it. However, as long as you are in Portsmouth, you may *temporarily* increase your Underworld Contacts Proficiency by 2, if you took it. Due to this run of bad luck, you must reduce your LUCK score by 1.

Turn to 34.

### 36

He leans forward conspiratorially. Looking around as if worried that he might be seen, he tells you that the bodies have been found in a horrific state, torn apart. People suspect a wild animal escaped from a travelling circus – and this is his particular theory. One thing is clear: strength greater than that of a normal human being would be necessary to do this. He also informs you that the name of the Sergeant in charge of the investigation is Dexter – an able but intimidating man. “I hope you’ll not be hindering our investigations,” he warns. You steer the conversation round to where you will stay tonight. Add 1 LUCK point, if you are able.

Turn to 26.

### 37

The vicar is only too happy to put his book down and talk to you – although you soon realise that the other passengers were probably avoiding him. As he begins to speak, his odious voice immediately puts you in mind of an orderly with an over-inflated opinion of himself. He drones on about his parishioners and how people are giving less money to the church these days. Occasionally you manage to squeeze a riposte in, but more often you are forced to listen to his right-wing views on life, the Universe and Everything.

Just as he is about to begin a monologue on religious imagery in popular contemporary fiction, the door to the compartment slides open. Inclining your head you recognise the attractive woman that you saw standing on the platform earlier. She enters the compartment and, ignoring the vicar, addresses you.

Are you Male (**turn to 48**) or Female (**turn to 49**)?

### 38

You awake with a start, although whether it was the train’s whistle or rolling gait that woke you you do not know. Glancing at the seat opposite, you see that the vicar and his luggage have gone. Wondering where you are, you sit up in your seat sending something tumbling from your lap and onto the floor. Bending down, you retrieve the item, which appears to be a handwritten note addressed to you. It reads:

“I hope you are well-rested. Please meet me in the Dining Car, as we have much to discuss about Portsmouth. I will be wearing a Diamond Brooch.”

The note is unsigned. Will you go along (**turn to 39**) or sit and wait (**turn to 40**)?

### 39

You walk along the narrow carriage passage towards the dining car. There appear to be few passengers in the compartments you pass, probably because of the time of year. A few are businessmen with their black leather briefcases and shiny, polished shoes. Some are elderly spinsters, no doubt going to see their relatives. Of the woman and her unusual entourage, you catch no sight.

Eventually, you arrive at the door to the dining car and, opening it, enter a plush carriage, decked out in the finery that marks it as owned by Great Eastern Railways. Waiters in formal attire wander along the aisle, serving three-course meals – truly life in the lap of luxury.

It takes you several moments to spot the woman, but you recognise her by her unique diamond brooch, which she was wearing earlier. She is occupied with some reading material and has not spotted you yet. Walking over to her, you sit down, and she looks up at you and smiles.

“I have already taken the liberty of ordering for you,” she says. “I hope that what I have ordered will meet with your approval.” Just then, the waiter arrives with a gleaming trolley and proceeds to place three covered trays in front of you. As the covers are removed, your mouth waters at the

sight of the succulent chicken dish laid out before you. Thanking the waiter, you turn to the woman and assert your approval at her order. She is eating the same, though her impeccable table manners do not allow for much discourse until after the main course.

As you are finishing off the last of the sweet, she asks you where you are heading. When you reply that you are heading to Portsmouth, you can tell that her interest is piqued. "Why that is where I am heading!" she says. "But why are you going down to the south coast at this time of year?"

You are suddenly worried about what you may already have let slip. Yet what would this charming lady know about the darker side of Portsmouth, of the murders and the murderers. You are wary of speaking about the reasons for your journey, for fear of ridicule if nothing else, but something puts you ill at ease in her interest in your mission.

Will you tell her that you are working for Julian Striker, **turn to 44?**

Or will you tell her that you are visiting relatives, **turn to 45?**

#### 40

The journey from Euston to Portsmouth is a restful one. Most of the passengers have disembarked, leaving you with an empty compartment. If you have not already done so, you take a trip to the Dining Car and eat lunch, retiring to your seat as you pass through Staines. (*The well-cooked lunch has cost you 15 shillings (=75p). Remember to deduct this from your money 'to hand' total.*)

As the day turns inexorably into evening, you catch your first glimpse of what remains of the Forest of Bede – a testament to man's incessant destruction of the countryside. As you travel through a thicket of trees, you note the light decrease more than it should, and when you emerge on the other side of the trees, a thick mist has descended, inhibiting your view of the surroundings.

When finally you arrive in Portsmouth, dusk and the infernal fog have combined to reduce visibility down to almost nothing. As you disembark, you enquire of the guard where you might find a place to spend the night. He gives you some directions before closing the door to the carriage. Shivering slightly in the chill, damp air, you walk through the deserted station – it seems that only you are disembarking here. Of the mysterious woman you saw earlier there is no sign.

You leave the station and walk out into the fog-enshrouded streets of Portsmouth.

**Turn to 41.**

#### 41

You soon decide Portsmouth to be a damp and dismal city, although the autumn chill and the grey fog probably cloud your judgement. There are not many persons about to ask where you might spend the night, and you are beginning to despair of ever finding shelter when you spot a swinging sign across the street, possibly a hostel, more likely a public house; but either way you will find somewhere to spend tonight by entering the establishment.

**Turn to 50.**

#### 42

You address the woman, "Yes, I'm sorry. I must be confused. Please, go on ahead, and I will be there in a few minutes." The woman catches your eye, and a smile spreads across her lips. "Yes," she agrees, "you don't want to rise too quickly. And you should remember the carriage where your suitcases are."

You agree to meet her in ten minutes, giving her time to go and 'powder her nose'. She leaves the carriage, and you are again alone with the vicar, who appears unnerved by the whole experience. He doesn't address you again, appearing to be engrossed in a book in his hands. Ten minutes later, when you rise to leave the carriage, he doesn't react. You are glad to be away from his tedious company.

**Turn to 39.**

#### 43

The woman regards you with cold eyes, her previous warmth having drained from her face. "Sorry," she snaps, "I appear to have mistaken you for somebody else." She turns and stalks from the carriage, heading along the train towards the dining car.

The vicar looks at you, a worried expression furrowing his brow. When he sees that you have noticed his concern, he stands quickly. "Excuse me," he says, "but I've just remembered I said I'd meet someone on this train." He picks up his trilby and his coat, and reaches up to the racking to retrieve his suitcase. "Dreadfully sorry," he says, facing away from you. "Terrible memory. Known for it." Muttering other such excuses he leaves the carriage, heading in the opposite direction to the one the woman took. Alone with your thoughts, you ponder the motivation of the woman. You are tempted to go and find her, but you would rather avoid making a scene. After an hour, or so, you pull into Euston station, and you watch many passengers disembark.

**Turn to 40.**

## 44

The woman's face shines with a smile that sets her eyes a-sparkle. "Julian!" she exclaims. "My old friend Julian Striker! I thought you looked like someone he'd rely upon." She sits back in her seat, gazing at you intently. "Not a bad choice, even if I do say so myself," she says, before breaking into a merry laugh. You cannot help but warm to this woman, and you find yourself unable to stifle a chuckle.

"Waiter," she calls to a passing *valet*, "some champagne, please." Turning to you, she says, "I feel a toast to Julian is in order." The waiter stares at the woman in some disbelief for a few seconds, expecting this to be some sort of joke. However, when it becomes apparent that she isn't joking, he scurries off along the aisle to find the expensive beverage. He soon returns and, popping the cork expertly, he pours two glasses of the white, sour vintage. The commotion has set tongues wagging throughout the carriage, and certain passengers are turning their heads to get a better view of the strange couple that can afford such luxuries despite the Great War having only been over for a few months.

The woman proffers you a glass. "A toast," she repeats, "to Julian Striker." She raises the glass to her lips.

Will you accept the champagne and drink to Julian's health (**turn to 46**)?

Or will you refuse this display of decadence (**turn to 45**)?

## 45

Her eyes grow cold and her smile turns to a scowl. "Ungrateful fool," she sneers, "how dare you insult me! I am surprised Julian puts so much faith in you!" With that, she stands and stalks off, presumably towards her carriage, in the opposite direction to yours. People are turning from their meals to look at what they must assume to be a public argument. Stern faces regard you with accusing eyes, and you begin to feel unwelcome and exposed. Standing, you make to leave.

"Ahem. Excuse me," says a voice from behind you. You turn to see a short gentleman with a small moustache that curls at either end. He wears a black suit and carries a menu in his hand. He addresses you once more.

"The *mademoiselle* indicated that you would be paying for the grand meal you 'ave just enjoyed. I would be grateful to receive such reparations upfront, in case you should decide to insult me as you have insulted your lady-friend." Mutters begin to

circulate that someone is trying to avoid paying for their meal, something not done in English society. Embarrassed, you manage to ask how much you owe. Removing a pencil from behind his ear, the Frenchman tots up a few figures on a piece of paper, then answers, "You are owing me the sum of five of your English pounds, please."

Stifling a gasp, you pull from your pocket enough money to cover this lavish feast (*remember to deduct £5 from your money 'to hand'*) and quickly walk off back to your carriage, leaving men and women to talk about your callous disregard for your friends and your responsibilities.

**Turn to 40.**

## 46

"To Julian!" you concur, and drink from the delicate wineglass. The champagne is rather dry and bitter, with a taste you cannot place. The woman motions for more Champagne, and although you try to stop her, you feel rather sleepy, and can barely raise your hand from the table. The world seems to spin slowly in front of your eyes, and focusing becomes very difficult. The last thing you see is the woman's expensive-looking brooch, glinting in the sunlight, before darkness overtakes you.

Deduct 3 points of STAMINA and **turn to 47**.

## 47

Suddenly, you are awake. You have no idea how long you have been unconscious, but everywhere is dark. Standing, you are relieved to find that you are not bound, although all your possessions appear to have been removed from you, as well as all of your money. Cursing your naivety, you begin to walk around, trying to return warmth to your aching limbs. The air is chill, and you detect a faint tang of salt on the air, so you decide you are somewhere on the coast. Beneath your feet, the wooden floor creaks in time to your footfalls. The room you are in is quite small, but mostly empty, save for what feels like a tea chest in the middle of one of the walls. As you feel the chest, you notice a faint breeze coming through from behind it, so you resolve to push it to one side. The chest is heavy, and you must lose 2 STAMINA points shifting it.

As it moves, a faint, silvery light begins to streak into the room, although it is faint, as the moon is hidden by a thick fog, which begins billowing into the room as if of its own volition. The heavy tea chest is making dreadful noise as it slides across the untreated floorboards, and this noise attracts the attention of someone nearby. A well-hidden door bursts open, and a man in tattered white robes rushes into the room. "*Cthulhu fhtagn!*" he

screams. "You will never see *Y'hu-nthlei!*" He is surprisingly strong and you must fight him.

**Man In White Robes:**  
SKILL 9 STAMINA 6

If you defeat him, **turn to 74**.

## 48

"Darling!" she cries. "I've been looking all over for you! I've been so worried." Her expression is one of genuine concern. The vicar coughs in an embarrassed fashion. Then you notice her wink at you and for a fraction of a second, a smile graces her ruby-red lips. "I have been waiting for you in the Dining Car," she finishes.

Turning to the vicar, she continues, "Please forgive this intrusion, Father, but I have been so worried about my husband." Her voice drops to a whisper, yet she speaks loud enough for you to catch what she is saying. "He was wounded in the War, Father, and his memory has not been the same since. Sometimes I grieve that I will never again know the man I married." At this point, she begins to sob uncontrollably. The vicar, unsure of how to react, falls back on the subject he knows best. "I am sure that in God's due time his memory will return, child," he says quietly. He motions for you to come to her.

Something is obviously going on here: you have never been married, and nor were you wounded in the Great War. Yet you are anxious to be away from this tedious fellow. How will you respond to this situation?

Will you play along with this ruse, and go along to the Dining Car with this woman (**turn to 42**)?

Or will you respond that you have no idea who she is (**turn to 43**)?

## 49

"Darling!" she cries. "I've been looking all over for you! I've been so worried." Her expression is one of genuine concern. The vicar coughs in an embarrassed fashion. Then you notice her wink at you and for a fraction of a second, a smile gracing her ruby-red lips. "I have been waiting for you in the Dining Car," she finishes.

Turning to the vicar, she continues, "Please forgive this intrusion, Father, but I have been so worried about my friend." Her voice drops to a whisper, yet she speaks loud enough for you to catch what she is saying. "Her husband was lost in the War, Father, and her memory has not been the same since. Sometimes I grieve that she will never again know

the love of a man, nor marry." At this point, she begins to sob uncontrollably. The vicar, unsure of how to react, falls back on the subject he knows best. "I am sure that in God's due time her memories will return, child," he says quietly. He motions for you to come to her.

Something is obviously going on here: you have never been married, let alone lost a spouse during the Great War. Yet you are anxious to be away from this tedious fellow. How will you respond to this situation?

Will you play along with this ruse, and go along to the Dining Car with this woman (**turn to 42**)?

Or will you respond that you have no idea who she is (**turn to 43**)?

## 50

The public house is known as The Railway Tavern on account of its close proximity to Portsmouth's mainline railway station. It is a small affair, but well kept, and the impeccably dressed owner offers you a room for the night at a cost of one 'crown', 5 shillings (=25p). You learn from him that many English holidaymakers come down to Portsmouth during the summer months of the year, but only the docks generate employment and income all year round. He enquires as to your visit to Portsmouth at this unpleasant time of year, though you fob him off with a story about visiting some persons a few miles out from Portsmouth, impossible to find in this infernal weather.

You retire to your room after a pint of the local ale and find it pleasantly furnished and to your satisfaction. You sleep well, your rest untroubled by the demons that have been dogging you for so long. When you wake it is with renewed purpose in life. Restore your STAMINA score to its Initial level.

You eat your breakfast quickly, eager to get out into Portsmouth to look around. The innkeeper warns you of press gangs that will knock unconscious an unsuspecting passer-by who wakes to find himself aboard a ship bound for foreign climes. You thank him and leave.

Outside, you squint in the sunlight, and this is when you get your first glimpse of Portsmouth.

**Turn to 51.**

## 51

Portsmouth was once a thriving centre for commerce, a cosmopolitan Mecca for traders. Ships regularly docked, bringing cargoes from the farthest shores, from India and the Orient, Africa

and the Australias. The Great War did much to alter this once grand city, to abase and humble it. Although few bombing raids were carried out, the world's scene has been irrevocably changed. Where once there were friendly responses to strangers, now there are suspicious glances. Community has been replaced by hostility.

You shake your head to clear from it the dour thoughts, but you seem unable to remove your uneasy feelings. This once great Victorian resort now seems to you as a seaside town teetering on the edge of oblivion. These days the wealthy elite avoid this backwater, looking for their kicks in the cities, notably London and Manchester. The decay you see around you cannot be removed by a mere lick of paint: the town is slowly dying.

As you pass, old women glance uneasily at you, hurrying away, and small groups of roughly dressed men gaze hatefully in your direction. You feel alone, lost within a Godless country. Sighing, you force yourself to concentrate on the matter in hand, wondering why Julian would send you to such a gloomy, decaying backwater as this.

What lines of enquiry will you employ to resolve this mystery?

If you are a Doctor, you may decide to visit the morgue in the hope of speaking to the mortician. He may give you a clue as to who or what is behind these killings (**turn to 77**).

If you are a Detective, you could visit the local constabulary in the hope of speaking with the police chief in charge. Normally, members of the public would not be allowed access to sensitive evidence, but you have wheedled your way into cases uninvited before now (**turn to 87**).

If you are a Gangster, you may try contacting a local "chapter" of the underworld. Despite the old adage, there usually *is* honour among thieves, particularly with those at the top of the tree (**turn to 81**).

You could spend the day down in the Docklands; perhaps see if anything has turned up today (**turn to 59**).

Or maybe a visit to the public Library might allow you to shed some light on the recent goings-on (**turn to 97**).

## 52

As the twilight turns to dusk, you make your way through the eerie and deserted streets of Portsmouth. It seems that no one wants to take their chances with whomever – or whatever – is attacking people in the Docks.

Light spills from the windows of Green Man out onto the pavement, a warm and inviting glow surrounding the building. Upon entering, you are greeted by the owner who asks whether you require the room for a further night. He seems rather anxious, though you decide this is due to the downturn in custom recently. Admitting that you require the room for another night, you pay him the 6 shillings (=30p), and he seems much more relaxed. "If you know of anybody coming to Portsmouth," he says, "please tell them of my modest hostelry here." You agree that you will recommend the Green Man to all your friends.

Dinner is served after about half an hour, and the few guests staying at the Green Man file into the compact dining room. The three-course meal you receive is impeccably cooked, and you ask the owner to convey your respects to the chef. After dinner, you sip a glass of wine for a while before retiring to your bedroom.

If you have somewhere you would like to visit tonight, turn to the section number the same as the address.

Otherwise, you sleep soundly and rise with the dawn. Downstairs, breakfast has been prepared, and you ravenously devour it. Restore up to 6 STAMINA points if you are able. Suitably nourished, you feel ready to face another day and, bidding farewell to the owner, you step outside into the cool morning air.

**Turn to 51.**

## 53

As the twilight turns to dusk, you make your way through the eerie and deserted streets of Portsmouth. It seems that no one wants to take their chances with whomever – or whatever – is attacking people in the Docks.

Going inside the Mariner's Respite, you are asked by the landlord if you require the room for another night. You take the hint and pay him a florin (=20p) in advance.

After a lukewarm meal, you spend the remainder of the evening swapping war stories and anecdotes with the more friendly of the clientèle. Eventually, you decide to retire for the night. Climbing the creaking stairs, you unlock your room and turn on the light. Roll 2d6. If you score 11 or 12, **turn immediately to 56**.

If you have somewhere you would like to visit tonight, turn to the section number the same as the address.

Otherwise, you lock the door firmly behind you and settle down into your bed. Downstairs, the patrons

begin singing bawdy songs, which goes on well into the night. Eventually, you manage to snatch a few hours' sleep before dawn. You rise early to loud noises from the nearby warehouses and quays. Unable to return to your slumber, you get up and go downstairs. Breakfast is a cereal mix of uncertain origin, but you eat ravenously. Restore up to 4 STAMINA points if you are able. Feeling less hungry, and ready to face another day, you bid farewell to the owner and you step outside into the cool morning air.

**Turn to 51.**

## 54

As the twilight turns to dusk, you make your way through the eerie and deserted streets of Portsmouth. It seems that no one wants to take their chances with whomever – or whatever – is attacking people in the Docks.

Upon your arrival back at Railway Tavern, the door is locked and barred behind you by the innkeeper, anxious to protect his family. The few patrons in the bar glance at you briefly, and then return to their pints. The innkeeper asks you for payment in advance for tonight, and you hand over a 'crown' (a 5 shilling coin, =25p). Thanking you, he brings you a meal and a pitcher of the local ale. When you have finished eating, you retire to your bedroom.

If you have somewhere you would like to visit tonight, turn to the section number the same as the address.

When morning comes, you go downstairs and find a hot breakfast waiting for you, which you ravenously devour. Restore up to 6 STAMINA points if you are able. Suitably nourished, you feel ready to face another day and, bidding farewell to the owner, you step outside into the cool morning air.

**Turn to 51.**

## 55

It takes a while researching in the Mythology and Occult section of the library, but you finally turn up something of interest. Taking the book from the shelf, you carry it over to the oaken reading table and begin to read.

Were you searching for information on the Cult of Gilgamesh (**turn to 114**), or for information on mythic Marine Monsters (**turn to 113**)?

## 56

Your stop is shock at the sight before you. Your room has been ransacked! Your bed linen has been pulled from the bed. Drawers have been

opened and their contents have been unceremoniously dumped on the floor. All your belongings (except for a Silver Medallion you might own) and any money you left in the room have been stolen (*remove them from your Adventure Sheet*). You consider complaining to the owner, but you doubt you will meet with a sympathetic ear. Lose 1 LUCK point for being robbed. As you are sorting through the mess, you notice a Scrap of Blue Linen caught on the corner of your dresser, which you may keep as evidence (*add this to your Adventure Sheet*).

Angry at becoming a victim, you lock the door firmly behind you and settle down into your bed. Eventually, you manage to snatch a few hours' sleep before dawn. You rise early to loud noises from the nearby warehouses and quays. Unable to return to your slumber, you get up and go downstairs. Breakfast is a cereal mix of uncertain origin, but you eat ravenously. Restore up to 4 STAMINA points if you are able. Feeling less hungry, and ready to face another day, you bid farewell to the owner and you step outside into the cool morning air.

**Turn to 51.**

## 57

It is midnight in Portsmouth, and you are walking silently through the deserted streets of this decaying city. The sickly light of the moon shines down upon you, investing your surroundings with increased menace. Far beyond the docks and piers, buoys are buffeted by the cruel sea, and their bells ring out eerily, though no one but you hears their plaintive cry.

Following the directions Caine gave you over the telephone, you come at last to the promenade and stalk your way along the seawall, past aging guest houses, some derelict and boarded up, past silent public houses, dark and uninviting, past the public gardens with its forbidding cast iron gates, topped with spikes, until finally you see the pier ahead of you. Climbing over the seawall, you drop the few feet down onto the sandy beach and continue towards the pier, once resplendent, now abandoned, a gloomy reminder of the glory days of this accursed city.

Ahead, crouched beneath the timbers of the pier, you can make out the shape of a man, and as he sees you, he calls out your name, questioningly. You respond, and he beckons you over. "I wasn't sure you'd come," he whispers hoarsely. "People put little trust in the words of drunks. That's why the police – they do nothing! I try telling them, but eventually, they threw me in the cells for a night. So I stopped trying to warn them."

You are intrigued. "Warn them about what?" you

whisper back. "Who is behind all this?" Caine scowls and looks away.

"Portsmouth is cursed," he spits. "It was wonderful before the War. I used to run the pier, y'see. Now look at it! A rotting reminder of past glories. Then *they* started coming." His voice drops down lower, so that you are forced to lean closer. "I seen them," he continues, the stench of cheap whiskey on his breath, "I seen them, in the dark. They only comes out in the dark; things, taller and broader than a man, dark-skinned, almost invisible in the night, with long, sharp claws and large, glowing eyes." He raises a bottle shakily to his lips and takes a deep swig. He offers you the bottle, but you decline.

Eventually he continues, "I was there the night ol' Tom was killed. Stood, right here, seen it with my own eyes. Tom was the worse for wear, so his missus had kicked him out, told him to sleep on the beach. Well, he'd done that often enough, but I kept my eyes open for ol' Tom. Him and me went back years. So I was making sure he was OK, when I sees someone coming along the beach. Before I could do anything, Tom was up and shouting, 'cos he was looking for a fight. I didn't hear exactly what was said back, but I heard Tom scream. When I got over there, he was dead; his belly ripped open, blood everywhere. People though I'd done it, but there's no man could inflict those kinds of wounds, and the police knew me an' Tom went back, so I never got charged. But the next night I come back here, and I seen what done it!" He begins to shake. "Looked like a fish, it did, but with legs and hands, and the head was like a frog or a toad, but those claws... black like obsidian, evil-looking. But what's worse was there was intelligence behind its eyes, intelligence like a man's. Since then, I seen them, coming from the sea, up the beach, going back. Almost like they is *summoned* by someone for some ungodly purpose. So I started snooping, and it seems they always visit the same place, somewhere down in the docks, a warehouse. I'll shows you, if y'like."

You nod in agreement, though none of these creatures seem to have put in an appearance tonight. But as you both step out from beneath the pier, a gunshot rings out like an explosion, and Caine collapses to the ground with a cry. A second shot breaks the peaceful night, but you have already dropped to a crouch, and the projectile whizzes harmlessly over your head. Before you are able to ready a gun and fire back, two men dressed in white robes leap from the seawall and attack you with long, curved knives. Fight both opponents at the same time.

**CULTIST 1:** SKILL 7 STAMINA 7

**CULTIST 2:** SKILL 7 STAMINA 10

If you manage to defeat them, **turn to 58.**

## 58

You rush back to Caine, but it is obviously too late to save him. He lies in a pool of his own blood, pouring from the wound in his belly. You kneel beside him, and his eyes flick open. "Didja get 'em?" he croaks? You nod in affirmation, and the corner of his mouth twitches into something resembling a smile. "Goddam' bastards!" he snorts. "I allus wanted to die in bed, preferably with someone else's wife!" He coughs, choking up gouts of blood.

"The warehouse," he says suddenly. "Damn near forgot! The warehouse them *things* is goin' to is at 115 Nelson's Lane." He reaches for his bottle, which you pass to him. Helping him to sit up, he takes a sip of the whiskey and smiles. "Ahhh, sweet liquor eases the pain," he croaks. You stay with him for about an hour until he dies.

Saddened by the loss of this man, the closest friend you had found in this bleak, hostile city, you cross to the corpses of the cultists. Around the neck of one of them hangs a Silver Medallion, the back of which is inscribed with the emblem of a strange, fish-man creature, similar to Caine's description of what killed Old Tom. You decide to keep it. You also find a Luger Handgun on one of the cultists, containing 4 bullets. You may also take the White Robes from one of the cultists if you wish. *Add these to your list of possessions. Also make a note of the address of the warehouse.* Your mind is racing, and you are unsure as to quite what is going on. Why would these men want to kill an old drunk? Though you are sure that you were really the main target.

If you now want to return to your room and sleep, **turn to 64.**

If you do not feel ready to sleep yet, you may decide to clear your head by walking along the beach for a while, **turn to 60.**

## 59

You walk down the cobbled street, noting the fearful glances you seem to be receiving from the locals. Yet no one approaches you, and you are left to your own devices. After a few hundred yards, the street turns sharply right, and you are walking against the seawall. To your left beyond the seawall, the high tide laps against the beach, the only sound you can hear. Portsmouth, once a thriving resort, is now a deserted ghost town.

Further along the promenade, a pier stretches out to sea, though as you draw nearer, you see that it is roped off, abandoned and derelict: another testimony to the decay of this once great city.

It is another half a mile until the promenade

becomes rougher, and the guest houses are replaced by large, grey buildings, warehouses. Soon you come to the docks, though there are few ships here today. Out to sea, you think you spot a trawler making its way out from the harbour. At the end of a rough wooden jetty you spot a number of fishermen loading a small boat, evidently ready for an excursion upon the majestic sea. Aside from this, there is no movement, no sound in this abandoned and derelict part of town.

If you wish, you may walk over and start a conversation with the fishermen (**turn to 76**). Or you may backtrack and take a look at the beach for any clues (**turn to 75**).

## 60

Despite the wan, silvery moonlight, the beach seems somehow dark and intimidating. You walk carefully across the coarse sand, eager not to make a sound. After a few hundred yards, the beach leaves the town and curves around a headland. The only sound is that of the waves gently lapping the beach, not far to your right. The reflection of the moonlight on the rippling seawaters seems almost sinister, as though a reflection of reality were just below the surface of the water, just out of reach. But what *is* reality? You are no longer sure after talking with Caine.

Further around the headland, the beach becomes rockier, and the moon dips below the cliffs behind you, plunging you into blackness. With trepidation, you continue to pick your way along the beach.

If you have the Proficiency of Acute Eyesight, you must make a roll vs. it, Difficulty Factor 12. If you are successful, **turn to 61**.

If you did not take this Proficiency, or if you are unsuccessful, you must roll vs. your Agility score, Difficulty Factor 16. If you are successful, **turn to 61**. If you are unsuccessful, **turn to 62**.

## 61

The darkness unnerves you somewhat, but you manage to keep your footing, and walk on without a sound. Suddenly, something flashes from further along the beach. Dropping to a crouch, you strain your eyes, desperately trying to catch a glimpse of what is out there. Your pulse quickens, and your breathing becomes shallower, and you *know* fear.

After some moments, your eyes manage to pick out the shape of a man with a rifle. He is not looking in your direction, but seems to be looking out to sea. However, he wears the robes of the cultists you dispatched earlier, so you know him immediately to be your enemy. A strange glow

seems to come from his direction from time to time, and you surmise he is smoking a cigarette. If he is lying in wait for someone, he seems to have given up for tonight.

From this vantage point, you feel you could get a good shot at him, if you are carrying a gun, even a Tommy-Gun, which you could piece together without him hearing you over the rushing sounds of the sea. If you decide to shoot at him, **turn to 63**.

However, if you are not carrying a gun, or you do not wish to enter into combat with another cultist tonight, you must return to your room (**turn to 64**).

## 62

In the sudden darkness you trip over a stone, falling heavily (deduct 2 STAMINA points). Cursing, you stand and brush yourself down. Without warning, an explosion of light and sound further along the beach causes you to gasp in panic: a shot has just been fired.

Roll 2d6 and compare this to your Agility score. If the total is less than, or equal to your AGL score, **turn to 66**.

If it is greater, you must rely on the forces of chance. You must Test your Luck twice. If you are Lucky both times, **turn to 66**. If you are Unlucky even once, **turn to 65**.

## 63

Carefully, you take aim in the poor light. Licking your lips, dry through nervousness, you pull the trigger.

**Cultist Gunman:** STAMINA 12

The SKILL of the Gunman is not mentioned because he is unaware of your attack, and thus unprepared. You may fire at him twice before he can react.

If you defeat him in ranged combat, you walk over to his corpse (**turn to 67**).

If he still lives after two rounds, he draws a dagger and charges at you. You must fight him in close combat. **Turn to 66**, but remember to carry over his current STAMINA point score if you managed to inflict any damage by shooting him.

## 64

Suitably shaken by tonight's encounters, you return to your room and sleep deeply, rising groggily with the dawn. Restore 2 STAMINA points for the few

hours' sleep you managed to grab. Still sleepy, you leave your hostelry and decide where next to investigate.

**Turn to 51.**

## 65

Your reactions are too slow. The bullet hits you in the belly, rupturing your digestive system. Everything seems to blur into dream-like consistency. You collapse to your knees, blood gushing from the wound, which you uselessly try to staunch with your hands. You look up to see your attacker, a cultist like the ones who killed Caine, gloating over you. "You won't be sticking your nose in where you're going!" he sneers. Then he turns and walks away, his feet leaving footprints in the sand.

Unfortunately, your adventure ends here.

## 66

The Cultist curses and drops his Rifle. He does not have time to reload before you are upon him, so he draws a wicked-looking Dagger and runs towards you, his face a mask of hatred.

### Cultist Gunman:

SKILL 9            STAMINA 12

If you have already managed to wound him, remember to carry over his current STAMINA in place of the score given here. He is not armoured, so you may elect to use your Brawling Proficiency if you took it.

If you defeat him, **turn to 67.**

## 67

The Gunman lies dead at your feet, his life's blood oozing from the wounds you have inflicted upon his now-lifeless body. Bile rises in your throat, and once again you feel revulsion at what you have done, taking the life from another human being, and you collapse to your knees, retching. After several moments you have composed yourself, and you swallow your loathing and search through his possessions.

He was carrying a Dagger, Rifle and 1d6 Rifle Cartridges, a Medallion similar to the one you took from the Cultist who shot Caine, and some Rolling Tobacco. If you wish, you may take any or all of these items (*remember to adjust your equipment list accordingly*). Interestingly, you notice that he sported a tattoo on the inside of his left bicep, a strange oriental-looking symbol that you do not

recognise. You make a mental note of it in case it has some significance.

The chill breeze increases, and you turn up the collar of your jacket against it. A few spots of drizzle begin to fall from the inky blackness above you. It is not a night to be far from home. Suddenly overcome with melancholia, you step away from the corpse, leaving it for the sea to remove.

You idly wonder why he was waiting here. Perhaps he was guarding something? Will you walk further along the beach, trying to shake your uncertain thoughts (**turn to 68**)? Or would you prefer to return to your room (**turn to 64**)?

## 68

Further along, the beach swings to the right away from the headland, and once again the wan, sickly light of the moon shines down upon you, illuminating the way before you. You are too lost in your introspective thoughts to take any precautions of stealth, so you present a perfect target for any gunmen who may be lying in wait, but no shot comes. You are all alone; there is not another human in sight. Somehow, for some reason, the solitude pleases you, perhaps a reminder from your past.

*What was that?*

From behind you there comes an unnatural slurping sound, like the dying breath of an old man. Your thoughts turn immediately to Caine. Surely not... Such things cannot happen... can they?

Fighting back the panic you are feeling, you realise you must make a split second decision whether to stand (**turn to 69**) or run (**turn to 70**).

## 69

You pivot on your heel, half-expecting to see Caine's bloated body reaching out to touch you, but your imagination could not possibly prepare you for the monstrosity before you. It is the creature from the Medallion made flesh. The beast is seven feet tall, and resembles a strange, human fish hybrid, with evil-looking eyes, black as the Devil's soul. It opens its mouth and makes some strange noises which sound almost like *speech*.

Roll 2d6 and compare this to your Sanity score. If the roll is *greater* than your SAN score, **turn immediately to 70.**

The creature soon ceases its unintelligible mutterings, and seems to become angry. It roars and begins to step towards you. You are going to have to fight it.

**Deep One:** SKILL 10 STAMINA 25

You may fire your Rifle or your Elephant Gun once, or your Handgun twice, if you are able. You do not have time to assemble your Tommy-Gun, if you have one. The thick hide of the Deep One provides tough armour, so you must deduct 1 from any damage you inflict upon it each successful *Attack Round*, and it also prevents you from using your Brawling Proficiency.

If you manage to defeat it, **turn to 71**.

## 70

Without stopping to turn around, you break into a run, fear grabbing at your heart. You manage to take several steps, but then some seaweed beneath your feet causes you to slip and lose your balance.

Roll 2d6 and compare this to your Agility score. If the roll is less than, or equal to your AGL score, **turn to 72**.

If it is greater than your AGL score, **turn to 73**.

## 71

You step back and collapse to your knees, gasping from the terrifying fight. Your pulse is raging through anger and fear, and you need to stop and compose yourself. A strange sound rouses you from your reverie. The body of the Deep One begins to putrefy before your eyes, giving off a hideous stench. A whimper escapes your lips, and you know you need to get away from here. Choking back a scream, you run away along the beach, away from the decaying body. You don't know for how long you run, but when you again come to your sense, you are standing in Portsmouth, with the beach behind you.

Reduce your Sanity score by 1 for seeing things best left unseen.

**Turn to 64.**

## 72

Somehow you manage to regain your balance. Still too scared to look behind you, the adrenaline flowing through your veins, you race off into the night. After several minutes, you slow to a walking pace, but you can hear no sounds of pursuit. Chancing a look behind you, the beach is empty, still tinted silvery by the gibbous moon. Anxious to be away from here, you find a narrow track through the dunes that leads back into Portsmouth. With one final glance behind, you quickly begin your journey back to town.

**Turn to 64.**

## 73

You are unable to regain your footing, and you collapse onto the rocks, falling badly (deduct 2 STAMINA points). You twist around, half-expecting to see Caine's bloated body reaching out to touch you, but your imagination could not possibly prepare you for the monstrosity before you. It is the creature from the Medallion made flesh. The beast is seven feet tall, and resembles a strange, human fish hybrid, with evil-looking eyes, black as the Devil's soul. It opens its mouth and makes some strange noises which sound almost like *speech*.

The creature soon ceases its unintelligible mutterings, and seems to become angry. It roars and begins to step towards you. You are going to have to fight it.

**Deep One:** SKILL 10 STAMINA 25

The thick hide of the Deep One provides tough armour, so you must deduct 1 from any damage you inflict upon it each successful *Attack Round*, and it also prevents you from using your Brawling Proficiency.

If you manage to defeat it, **turn to 71**.

## 74

You deal the *coup de grace* to the stranger, and he collapses to the ground, dead. Rummaging through his pockets, you find no incriminating evidence, so you carefully creep over to the doorway by which he entered. Stairs lead down into darkness.

Quietly you descend the stairs, although the creaking of the ancient timbers would give away your position to even the deafest or drunkest of your captors; but no one appears, and you reach the ground floor unchallenged. As you hug the wall, you feel a doorknob poking your back, so you push it open and leap inside.

Fortunately, there is no one there. However, a fire burning merrily in the grate provides some light by which to see. Grabbing a lantern from the mantelpiece, you light it and begin to make sense of your surroundings. It appears you are in a warehouse storing tea from India. The room you are in must be a place for night watchmen to sit and guard the precious stock. On a table lies a newspaper, the front page of which proclaims it to be the Portsmouth Herald. It would seem that the mysterious woman has something to do with this affair, then. At the back of the room, in a pile on the floor, you find all your possessions and money.

This is already becoming a very unusual affair. You decide to take the recent copy of the Portsmouth Herald, as the front page contains an article that grabs your attention – a grisly account of another

body found mutilated in the docks. You have no time to read it now, however, as you suddenly realise that you must be in the docklands – where all these poor victims are meeting their fate! Hurriedly, you collect together your possessions and leave via an unlocked side door. Outside, the fog is dense, and you have trouble seeing your hand in front of your face.

Far off to your left you can hear faint sounds, muffled and distorted by the ghostly fog. You decide to head in that direction.

**Turn to 21.**

## 75

As you surmised earlier, the pier is closed, having been abandoned for several years. On the beach itself, very little is stirring. There are no holidaymakers, no deckchairs, no children's happy cries; the beach is deserted. Even for this time of the year, such complete is unusual and unsettling. Eager to be away from this eerie place, you return to the docks. No other ship has put in, and there are none on the horizon. You notice that the fishermen you saw earlier are just finishing loading up. You decide to go over and speak to them.

**Turn to 76.**

## 76

You walk over to the fishermen and introduce yourself as a tourist. They nod and grunt in your direction, but continue with their loading, refusing to be drawn into a conversation with you. After a few minutes of non-committal answers, a bearded fellow appears from below deck and introduces himself as Captain Brimble, owner of the vessel. The men ignore him as he calls out a few random orders in their direction, and he scowls at their obvious insubordination. "I must hire meself a new crew," he muses out loud. "Else I'll end up stranded on some island somewhere!"

He nimbly jumps across to the quay and proffers a hand. "Buy me a drink," he exclaims, "and we can talk." You agree to this, and you fall into step as he walks along the quay and back towards town. Casually, you ask him about whether you are keeping him from his job, but he shakes his head. "We only trawl at night," he mutters, obliquely adding, "for better or worse."

Eventually you arrive at a public house, a run-down shack known as the Rusty Nail. Inside, the clientele are dockers and trawlermen, a rough-looking and coarse-talking bunch. You buy the drinks and sit at a table by the main window, allowing the sun to warm your weary bones. After he takes a hearty

swig from the weak ale, he begins to talk about any and every subject under the sun. You discover that he is recently divorced, and that he misses his son, who is living with his mother in Brighton, further along the coast. He also tells you of his exploits during the war, and how he helped members of the Resistance flee to England when their cover was blown in France. While his stories are entertaining at best (and spurious at worst), listening to a lonely middle-aged man isn't helping your investigation. You are about to take your leave when he begins a new tale, a local legend which makes you sit up and take notice.

"Just recently," he begins, "we been havin' problems with them Deep Ones." He doesn't elaborate, but continues, "Sightin' after sightin'. My men are getting' worried. We used to see them maybe once or twice a year, but it's getting' to be every night. They leave us alone; I mean, we make the offerin's and all that. Just like I was taught by me father: 'To ward off the terrors of the Ancient Ones, you gotta offer them what they want – silver in the deep on Lammas Eve.' They never bothered him, and they are leavin' us alone... for now. Somethin's afoot you mark my words. You'll be wise to leave town while y'still can, before they take back what's rightfully theirs."

You realise you aren't going to wheedle anything else out of him, so you pay up the tab for the afternoon and bid him farewell. Deduct 5 shillings (=25p) from your total money.

**Turn to 104.**

## 77

You arrive at the hospital, a grey, forbidding-looking building built by the Victorians some forty years ago. Their stoicism seems to be imprinted upon every brick, and in every corridor. Walking through the main doors, you enter a large reception area, a high glass dome above you letting the sunlight filter through.

Walking up to the main desk, you introduce yourself to the sister as a mortician from Old Scotland Yard in London, sent to investigate the deaths in this area. Convinced by your plausible story, she gives you directions to the morgue, and asks that you hurry up and solve the case, as she is afraid to go out these days. You assure her that you have assigned it top priority and begin to follow her directions. After several wrong turns along the meandering maze of hallways, you find your way to the top of a flight of stairs leading down into the bowels of this intimidating building.

Carefully you descend the steps, plunging into semi-darkness by the time you have reached the bottom. A single corridor leads off ahead of you,

with several doors leading off, but you ignore these. You reach the door at the end of the passage. A brass plaque on it tells you that this is the office of Dr Karl Hamburg, the Mortician. You knock loudly, and an accented voice calls out for you to enter.

Dr Hamburg welcomes you to his office and asks what your business is. When you repeat your story, he smiles widely and shakes your hand. He tells you that he is happy of all the help he can get, and that it was about time Scotland Yard became involved. After declining a snifter of sherry he offers you, he takes you from the office and back upstairs to the morgue. "We have separated all the victims of this killer into that section," he tells you, pointing to a series of corpses on examination tables. He shows you where the surgical gowns and masks are, and you don these and scrub up before examining the remains of these poor unfortunates.

**Turn to 78.**

## 78

The gruesome remains are a horrific sight, enough to make even you queasy. Only perhaps some things glimpsed during the Great War – things you have blocked from your memory – have affected you more. Several of the corpses were literally ripped apart; you cannot even begin to guess the strength of the murderer. Of those whose bodies are still more-or-less intact, deep gashes have been inflicted by what look like claws, though you are at a loss as to what animal could have inflicted such wounds. You mention this to Dr Hamburg, and he agrees. "We have been looking into the possibility that there is no serial killer, but that a dangerous, wild animal is on the loose," he explains. "But . . . no biologist or zoologist can identify these marks. We are at a loss as to just who or what it is we are looking for."

Make a roll vs. your Chemistry Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 8. If you succeed the roll, **turn to 79**.

If you fail the roll, or if you did not take the Chemistry Proficiency, **turn to 80**.

## 79

Just as you are about to end your examination, you notice several crystalline particles in one of the wounds. Using a pair of long-nosed tweezers that Dr Hamburg hands you, you extract one of these particles and place it on an examination slide. Taking this over to the microscope, you focus on the particle and quickly ascertain that it is common sea-salt. What is interesting is that the body was found in the warehouse district, and tests indicate

that the body had not been moved after death. Going back, you examine the corpses more carefully, and you discover particles of salt on all of them. This common link could prove a helpful clue. *Roll 1d6 and add the total to your Experience score.*

**Turn to 80.**

## 80

"I hope this has helped your investigation," asks Dr Hamburg. You reply that it has, and you make your way over to the washbasin to scrub up. "Ah, before you return to write your report," interjects Dr Hamburg obsequiously, "perhaps you would like to help me in my autopsy of this gentleman here. I do so enjoy working with others rather than alone all the time." You are at a loss as to how to avoid this, so you agree to help him, and spend the remainder of the day assisting with his duties.

As the clock strikes 5 o'clock, you say your goodbyes to Dr Hamburg, scrub up, and leave the cold, depressing hospital.

**Turn to 104.**

## 81

Despite what you have read in what passes for fiction these days, contacting the Underworld is not an exact science. You cannot walk up to just anyone and ask where the local racketeer lives. You spend the morning chatting with the more forthcoming locals, dropping hints and using underworld codes, hoping to catch the attention of the local chapter.

Make a roll vs. your Underworld Contacts Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 10, or your Problem Solving Attribute, Difficulty Factor 14. If you succeed, **turn to 83**. If you have failed your roll, you were unable to contact the correct people; perhaps you should try again tomorrow. **Turn to 82**.

## 82

You are unable to contact anyone else in this neighbourhood today, so you must decide how you will spend the rest of the afternoon.

If you have not already done so, will you visit the Docks, where many of the victims have been discovered (**turn to 59**)?

Or perhaps you would like to visit Portsmouth Library in an effort to unravel this mystery (**turn to 97**)?

### 83

You fall into conversation with a short blonde with a pronounced Cockney accent. She is a singer at an exclusive local businessman's club, she tells you, and she has recognised certain speech patterns and words that mark you out as such a businessman. The club is owned by her fiancée, a certain Antony Fletcher. That rings bells.

Antony "Fat Tony" Fletcher is renown as one of the most successful smugglers in the south of England. His reputation is legendary among your former colleagues, despite his smuggling ammunition to the Germans during the Great War, which made him one of England's "most wanted" villains. Since 1917 he had disappeared from his regular haunts in the east end of London, and none have been able to contact him. Rumour had it that he had fled to the continent, but it would seem such reports were premature.

You ask for directions to the club, and she tells you, asking if you will be there to hear her sing tonight. You assure her that you will, and take your leave. The directions she gave were accurate and easy to follow, and you arrive in a seedy, run-down part of Portsmouth behind the warehousing district. The club is situated in a large building with heavy wooden doors. You walk up to these doors and knock loudly. After several moments, the door opens, and framed in the doorway is a large dark-skinned man dressed in a tuxedo.

"What is your business here?" he asks, his accent impeccable. You tell him that you are here to see Fat Tony, and his eyes narrow. "Your name's not on the list," he says coolly.

If you killed a Policeman on your journey to Portsmouth, you must **turn immediately to 86**.

Make a roll vs. your Fast-Talk Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 7. If you pass this roll, **turn to 86**.

If you fail the roll, or if you did not take the Fast-Talk Proficiency, you may elect to *Test your Luck twice*. If you are successful *both* times, you may **turn to 86**.

If you are Unlucky once or both times, or if you decide not to *Test your Luck* twice, **turn to 84**.

### 84

"Your name's not on the list, *friend*," the Bouncer repeats menacingly. "Perhaps you should come back when you have a better reputation." You protest, but he is beginning to lose his patience. "Get lost, or you'll regret it!" he growls at you.

Will you comply with his request (**turn to 82**), or will you make trouble (**turn to 85**)?

### 85

You begin to cause trouble, hoping to catch the attention of Fat Tony, but the Bouncer pushes you outside and closes the heavy doors. Without warning, two men in trench coats run from behind the building and pull knives. This is getting serious! You must fight them simultaneously. The cruel knives they wield inflict 3 points of damage upon a successful hit. Due to the speed of their ambush, you are unable to make use of a ranged weapon.

|                   |          |            |
|-------------------|----------|------------|
| <b>Bouncer 1:</b> | SKILL 10 | STAMINA 18 |
| <b>Bouncer 2:</b> | SKILL 9  | STAMINA 20 |

If you manage to defeat them, you decide to leave the scene in case anyone witnessed your actions (**turn to 82**).

### 86

The Bouncer stands aside and allows you to enter, closing the heavy doors behind you. Inside, the club is rather dark. Tables and chairs are arrayed before a stage, and several more exclusive booths are against the wall to your left. Directly ahead is the bar, and you can smell food being cooked nearby, reminding you of how hungry you are. You walk over to the bar and order a drink and a meal. The Bouncer then comes over to you, takes your coat, and leads you over to one of the booths. "Tony will be out to see you shortly," he tells you.

As you wait for your meal to arrive, you glance around casually, noting some well-dressed gentlemen drinking cocktails at the bar, smoking cigars and laughing raucously. A number of men arrive through a back door and begin setting up some instruments by the stage. When the waiter arrives with your meal, you begin to devour it ravenously, pleased with the freshness of the seafood in coastal clubs.

After a while, you become aware of someone standing to your right. Looking up, you see a plump gentleman, probably in his early 30s, with black hair and a Mediterranean complexion. You stand; this must be Fat Tony. He accepts your respect graciously and you both sit. He makes polite conversation while you finish your meal, and orders two glasses of Italian wine when you have finished. As you sip the dry Chianti, he regards you with intelligent eyes. "So, why are you here?" he asks, finally. "Are you some kinda lackey-boy from the Scotland Yard come to bring me in?" You sense he is not particularly worried whether you are or not here on his home turf, but you know him to have a dangerous temper, so you speak respectfully to him, assuring him that you have no links with the police, or the Underworld, and that you are here on a purely private matter. Skilfully you steer the conversation around to the murders, and Fat Tony nods.

"I, too, have been looking into this," he says. "I don't need murders on my doorstep. I have been in hiding for almost five years; the last thing I need is for the police to start poking their noses in here!" You know he is telling the truth, that he has nothing to do with the murders. You are relieved, as Tony would be a formidable adversary; but you are also disappointed that another line of enquiry has come to nothing. He senses your frustration, and leans closer. "I tell you this in confidence, OK?" he asks, seriously. You nod.

"I've been keeping an eye on some people here in Portsmouth," he continues. "Stranger people. Call themselves the Cult of Gilgamesh or something. It's since they arrived that people have been going missing. I can't prove any connection, but I don't like them; that's proof enough for me! They're based somewhere in one of the warehouses near the docks. If you can sort out this matter for me, there are doors that can open."

You know what he is hinting at, and you seriously consider accepting his offer, but while the money would be good, Julian's employment is more *spiritually* rewarding, providing answers to your questions. You thank him for his time and ask the waiter for the bill, which comes to 30 shillings (=£1.50). Digging through your pockets, you find a Sovereign and two 'Crowns' and hand them over. *Remember to deduct this from your money total.*

As you are about to leave, Fat Tony adds one more thing. "Beware of them cultists, they are mad and very dangerous. Take care of yourself!" The Bouncer hands you your coat, and you walk out through the doors and squint in the early afternoon sunlight.

**Turn to 82.**

## 87

The local constabulary building is within easy walking distance from your hotel, and you arrive outside it without losing your way. Unlike the imposing buildings of Scotland Yard in London, the small building, built in the Victorian style, seems to be trying to disappear from view, almost as though it is afraid to be here. Indeed, without the ironwork lantern holder proclaiming it to be Portsmouth's constabulary building, you would have taken it for any other run-down hovel in this quiet, abandoned neighbourhood.

Walking up to the thick, heavy, mahogany doors, you get a real sense of decay, that Portsmouth is terminally ill, and that there is nothing anyone can do about it. A horn blows from the docks which, despite being over a mile away, makes you jump in surprise.

You push open the door and walk inside. There are

no windows here, the room being in perpetual gloom, lit by two lanterns hanging from the ceiling. The hardwood floor is varnished in an unusually dark finish, making it seem almost blood red in the flickering lamplight. Several chairs line the wall to your right, empty, deserted. Right ahead of you, facing the door, is a wooden kiosk-type desk, behind which stands a sandy-haired man in his thirties. He looks up from the book he is reading and scowls at you.

"How may I help you?" he enquires in a bored tone.

"Well I'm here to ask about . . ." you begin before you are cut off.

"This is Portsmouth Constabulary Building," he says in a tone that suggests he has repeated himself a thousand times. "If you're here looking for information about the docks' murders, I'm afraid we are not at liberty to comment. The door is behind you."

Obviously he recognises you as an out-of-towner, your accent giving you away, and apparently there are plenty of those asking for information about this case. You feel slightly irate at such a dismissal.

"I'm actually here to see someone," you reply, hoping to catch him off guard.

He looks up from his book and fixes you with a steely gaze. "And who would that be, exactly?" he asks.

Do you know the name of the Police Sergeant in charge of the Docks' Murders case? If so, **turn to 88.**

If you do not, you must make a roll vs. your Fast-Talk Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 9.

If you pass this roll, **turn to 91.**

If you fail the roll, or if you did not take the Fast-Talk proficiency, you must instead **turn to 89.**

## 88

"I'm here to speak with Sergeant Dexter about a rather urgent matter," you say with as much conviction as you can muster. The clerk looks as though he might cause more trouble before he nods in acquiescence of your request.

"Up the stairs, first on the right," he intones before returning to his book.

You can't help but wonder what he is reading that seems to have captivated his interest so much.

**Turn to 92.**

## 89

"I'm here to speak with Sergeant Johnson about a rather urgent matter," you say with as much conviction as you can muster.

"Really?" says the clerk, obviously amused by your response. "Well, when we get someone of that name working here, I'll be sure to inform you. Please leave a forwarding address!" With that, he goes back to his book, patently ignoring you.

Fuming with impotent rage, you turn to leave, noting in passing that the book the clerk is reading so avidly is *'The Book of Lies'* by an author named Aleister Crowley.

**Turn to 90.**

## 90

Having drawn a blank with the local police, you disgustedly stomp through the doors and out into the wan autumn sunlight outside. You blink rapidly at the irritation as your eyes slowly adjust. You look around and are immediately reminded that Portsmouth seems almost deserted, the streets empty of the teeming masses found in London or Birmingham.

Sighing, you decide what your next line of enquiry will be. Will you visit the docks, the site where the bodies are being found, in the hopes of turning up more clues (**turn to 59**), or will you visit the local library to do some research (**turn to 97**)?

## 91

"I'm here to speak with Sergeant Baxter about a rather urgent matter," you say with as much conviction as you can muster. The clerk narrows his eyes for a moment, but your bluff appears to have worked.

"We don't have a Baxter here," he says suspiciously, "but we do have a Sergeant Dexter. Perhaps that is who you are thinking of?"

"Yes, that's who I meant," you quickly say. "I spoke to him over the telephone, and the line was so poor I couldn't make out exactly what he was saying when he gave his name!"

"Indeed?" sneers the clerk, his eyebrow raised in obvious disbelief. However, he doesn't obstruct you any further. "Up the stairs, first on the right," he intones before returning to his book.

You can't help but wonder what he is reading that seems to have captivated his interest so much.

**Turn to 92.**

## 92

Following the clerk's directions, you climb the stairs to the first floor and open the first door on your right to reveal a sparsely furnished office. Opposite you is a desk, behind which sits a moustachioed man, who looks up at you with piercing eyes. You briefly note that filing cabinets take up one wall of the room.

"Sergeant Dexter, I presume," you say, taking the initiative and extending your hand. He stands, and you note his impressive height and wiry frame. He accepts your offer and shakes your hand with a firm grip.

"Good morning," he says in a no-nonsense tone. "What can I do for you?"

You immediately realise that trying to bluff this fellow would be nigh impossible, and telling him the truth is the most likely form of enquiry to yield success. You begin by mentioning your benefactor, that he has sent you to Portsmouth to investigate the Docks' Murders case.

Dexter's eyes narrow and, in a strained voice, he asks you to continue. You tell him of what you have discovered so far and appeal to him to tell you more about the case.

To see if Dexter is interested in your story, you must make a roll vs. your Fast-Talk Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 8. If you did not take this Proficiency, you must make a roll vs. your Presence Attribute, Difficulty Factor 15.

If you pass either roll, **turn to 94**.

If, however, you fail the roll, **turn to 93**.

## 93

Dexter's face fixes into one of determination, his brow furrowing. "I'm a busy man!" he snaps at you. "I don't have time to waste listening to your 'ghost stories' while you play detective and get in our way! Don't interfere in police business, or I'll arrest you, and you'll see whether a night in the cells answers your questions!"

Turning his back to you, he adds, "Now get out of my office and stop wasting my time!"

Fuming with impotent rage, storm out of Dexter's office and back downstairs. Once in the foyer, you make to leave, noting in passing that the book the clerk is reading so avidly is *'The Book of Lies'* by an author named Aleister Crowley.

**Turn to 90.**

## 94

Dexter looks you over before nodding curtly and motioning for you to close the door. As you turn to do so, he walks over to a filing cabinet. He pulls a tiny silver key from his waistcoat pocket and unlocks the cabinet, removing a pile of papers and photographs.

“Here are the reports from the constables at the various crime scenes, and photographs they took,” he whispers. “I cannot bear to look at the photographs; they are too shocking for me. I have had nightmares off-and-on since I took over this case.”

You mention that you were unaware anyone had been in charge of the case before him, and he smiles grimly. There is no hint of humour in his voice as he tells you that his predecessor was one of the victims.

You spend some time poring over the written reports, reading with a sickening revulsion the state of the bodies found. It is no wonder that the police are so careful not to release too much information about what is going on here; it could lead to panic and anarchy the like of which England has never seen. Not even Jack the Ripper was as cold-blooded as the Docks’ murderer seems to be.

The real eye-opener, however, are the photographs, which bring home in graphic detail just how the murderer kills his victims. The gruesome remains are a horrific sight, enough to make even you queasy. Only perhaps some things glimpsed during the Great War – things you have blocked from your memory – have affected you more. Several of the corpses were literally ripped apart; you cannot even begin to guess the strength of the murderer. Of those whose bodies are still more-or-less intact, deep gashes have been inflicted by what look like claws, though you are at a loss as to what animal could have inflicted such wounds.

You turn from your studies to see a pale Dexter wiping his feverish brow with a pocket kerchief. “I’m sorry,” he mumbles. “I can’t believe anyone could do such things.”

“Do we know someone did?” you question, pointing out that some of the marks on the corpses look like they might have come from a wild animal of some kind, adding that you doubt any man has the strength to pull a person apart.

Dexter nods. “It’s an angle we’re certainly looking into,” he says, though he adds, “but we have had no circuses here for almost a year, and they didn’t report any missing animals. There is not even a zoo in Portsmouth, so no wild beast could have escaped from there. I’m afraid I’m stumped.”

You nod in thanks and return to your studies. There must be something in the reports that you have missed.

Make a roll vs. your Acute Eyesight Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 9. If you did not take this Proficiency, you must *Test your Luck*.

If you successfully make the roll, or if you are *Lucky*, **turn to 96**.

If you fail the roll, or if you are *Unlucky*, **turn to 95**.

## 95

You put the final case file down and rub your eyes. The murders are all similar, yet all apparently without motive. You ask Sergeant Dexter about this, and he agrees, admitting that he is fast running out of ideas.

“I know that there is a . . . ‘gentlemen’s club’ which is a front for some underworld crime baron,” he says sadly. “The thing is, we have no hard evidence. We don’t dare just rush in there for fear of reprisals when we can’t prove our case. Perhaps they have something to do with it?”

You thank Sergeant Dexter for the information, apologising that you have taken up so much of his time.

“Think nothing of it,” he says, honestly adding, “I’m stumped on this one, and a fresh perspective can sometimes get the old grey matter working.”

You hope that you have been as helpful to him as he has been to you, but you somehow doubt it. Walking out into the foyer, you speak your goodbye to the reception clerk, who studiously ignores you, still avidly reading his book. You turn to leave, noting in passing that the book the clerk is reading so avidly is ‘*The Book of Lies*’ by an author named Aleister Crowley.

Outside, the sun is setting on the western horizon, and a chill wind blows in from the sea. You pull your coat tighter around you to ward off the cold.

**Turn to 104.**

## 96

As you are re-reading one of the reports, you notice an unusual point squirreled away in the pathologist’s notes. A corpse had been found in a cemetery of a small church, several hundred yards from the promenade. The wounds horrific wounds inflicted upon the poor unfortunate were similar to those on the other bodies, and you had originally skipped the description of the injuries, yet one point

leaps off the page at you: the wounds had sea-salt in them.

You return to the beginning of the document and read through it more carefully. The corpse had been found several hundred yards inland, and there were no suspicions that it had been moved. Neither was there evidence of prior drowning, or any connection with the sea; the victim had been a banker.

Turning to the other reports, you read more carefully the pathologist's notes and find that most of the bodies were found inland; most were dry, indicating no connection with the sea; and yet on nearly all of the reports – written by Dr Karl Hamburg, the local pathologist – sea-salt was present in the wounds.

A further note on one of the reports mentions that the claws that inflicted the damage seem to match no known mammals. The 'hand' that inflicts the wounds seems to have two 'fingers' – each ending in a sharp, piercing claw – and a deposable thumb, also ending in a sharp, yet slightly shorter, claw. The pathologist notes that he has spoken with highly regarded biologists in several academic establishments in London, yet none recognise the descriptions, and the creature doing this is still shrouded in mystery. You note these points in a notebook for further consideration later.

If you wish to follow up on this line of enquiry, you may thank Sergeant Dexter and leave the Constabulary Building to see if Dr Hamburg has anything further to add to his notes (**turn to 77**).

Otherwise, **turn to 95**.

## 97

You find the library with little difficulty and enter through a pair of large, glass doors. You greet the librarian on the desk, who points you through to the main library through a door behind her. You thank her and walk through, pausing briefly to take in the sight.

Portsmouth Library is an impressive building, designed by the architect who created the impressive Crystal Palace in London. Much of the high ceiling is constructed from glass, supported by metal girders. The sunlight shines in, lighting up the whole library. Motes of dust glimmer in this illumination, coupling with the enveloping silence to create an eerie, otherworldly feeling to this place. The layout is loosely based upon the great British Library in London - a massive circular reading area with the shelving following the curve of the wall. Although the main room has only one floor, the ceiling is so high that around the walls are several floors, accessed by narrow stairways, where the

more obscure books and records are kept. The newspaper archive is in a separate room, obviously an extension built much later, lacking the grandiose charm of the main library.

You place your coat on a chair in the reading area. There are few others here, and no one pays you any notice. Such anonymity makes you feel somewhat homesick, though you quickly put such thoughts from your mind.

If you have come here directly from your hostel, make a note that it is 9:00 AM. If you have visited somewhere else today, it is now 1:00 PM. You must make a note of the time, as it is important.

What will you decide to search for information on?

If you wish to take a look through the newspaper archive for local stories which may prove helpful, **turn to 98**.

If you are looking for more general information on strange goings-on in the locality, **turn to 103**.

If you have reason to research any Occult connections, **turn to 112**.

## 98

To determine how successful your research is, you must now make a roll vs. Library Use, Difficulty Factor 7. If you did not take Library Use, you must *Test your Luck* instead.

If you pass the Library Use roll, or if you are Lucky, **turn to 99**. If you fail the roll, or if you are Unlucky, **turn to 100**.

## 99

It takes a while researching in the newspaper archives section of the library, but you finally turn up something of interest. Taking the volume from the shelf, you carry it over to the oaken reading table and begin your study.

Were you searching for information on any survivors or potential suspects (**turn to 101**)?

Or were you wondering when the last circus was in town (**turn to 102**)?

Or are you interested in any general strange goings-on reported by the local press (**turn to 106**)?

## 100

Footsteps echo in a distant part of the library. Your search has taken you two hours.

If it is not yet 5:00 PM, and you wish to research something else, **turn to 97**.

If the time is now 5:00 PM or later, or if you have finished your research for today, **turn to 104**.

## 101

You have found a news report in an old issue of the Portsmouth Herald, dated six months ago. The article was written sometime after the murders had begun, and is an attempt at unravelling the mystery surrounding such serial killing. The article points the finger at Romany Gypsies who were encamped nearby at the time, though these have long-since abandoned this area; scared off by the murders, no doubt. What you do find interesting is the reference to a potential eyewitness survivor of an attack, who the police interviewed, but released without charging. In the interview he speaks of curses and folklore, which the journalist goes on to ridicule at some length; even the police consider him to be just the other side of insane, it would seem. The name of this eyewitness is given as Caine Corey, a Portsmouth resident. If you were to look in the telephone book, you should be able to find his telephone number and ask him some questions.

If you would like to telephone Caine Corey, **turn to 105**.

If you would rather not phone him, **turn to 100**.

## 102

In an edition of the Portsmouth Herald dated just under a year ago, you find reference to Ripley's Circus, which visited from America. Apparently, the audience numbers were very low, and the circus left town after just a few days. Ripley's vowed never to return, and it would seem that no circuses have visited Portsmouth since. There are no references to any animals going missing. Although you scan through some other, more recent editions of the Herald, there are no reported sightings of large, wild animals on the loose. It would seem that a wild animal is not to blame for these grisly attacks.

**Turn to 100.**

## 103

To determine how successful your research is, you must now make a roll vs. Library Use, Difficulty Factor 10. If you did not take Library Use, you must *Test your Luck* instead.

If you pass the Library Use roll, or if you are Lucky, **turn to 106**. If you fail the roll, or if you are Unlucky, **turn to 100**.

## 104

You decide it is now time to rest, and you make preparations to return to your hostelry. Bidding the person on the desk farewell, you step outside into the cold wind and begin making your way back.

If you are staying at the Railway Tavern, **turn to 54**.

If you are staying at the Mariner's Respite, **turn to 53**.

If you are staying at the Green Man, **turn to 52**.

## 105

Are you carrying a Silver Medallion?

If you are, **turn to 107**.

If, however, you do not own such an item, **turn to 108**.

## 106

It takes a while researching in the various sections of the library, but you finally turn up something of interest. Taking the book from the shelf, you carry it over to the oaken reading table and begin to read.

Were you searching for information on strange local cults (**turn to 109**)?

Were you interested in whether there is perhaps an occult connection (**turn to 110**)?

Or, if you are carrying a Silver Medallion, perhaps you are interested in Marine Biology (**turn to 111**)?

## 107

You wait for some time after dialling the number, but there is no answer.

**Turn to 100.**

## 108

You let the telephone ring for some minutes before you hear a *click* and someone picks up at the other end. "Yeah?" comes the slurred greeting. You introduce yourself and tactfully try to initiate a conversation regarding the murders, saying that you read his remarks and were interested in hearing his side of the story. He snorts and coughs as you are talking. "You from the police?" he slurs. "I ain't talking to no coppers!" You assure him that you are working alone, and not for any of the authorities. This seems to mollify him somewhat.

"We should probably meet," he says. "Midnight, by the pier. I'll see you then." The *click* followed by the tone indicates that he has replaced the handset.

Tonight, when you are back at your hostel, if you would like to go and meet with Caine Corey, **turn to 57**. The paragraph will remind you of this. *Add 1 Luck point and add 4 to your Experience total for contacting Caine.*

For now, **turn to 100**.

## 109

In a book by a certain Aleister Crowley, you discover that the Portsmouth area was once the home of a strange, druidic cult known as the Gilgameshites. Long before Christianity, or even the Romans, came to this island, these Gilgameshites worshipped Gilgamesh, Lord of the Waters, whom they believed to be the creator of mankind. He was said to dwell beneath the seas in a strange, perpetual state of sleep, neither alive nor dead. Gilgameshites sought to appease their cruel God by sacrificing men and women to him, drugging and throwing such ones from the bluffs into the seas during storms. For over two thousand years, a small group, the Cult of Gilgamesh, have been perpetuating the beliefs and customs of their ancestors, including blood drinking and black incantations said to appease their God. However, the final chapter of the book presents something much more disturbing. While once the Gilgameshites sought to preserve the sleep-like state of their God, now it would seem they seek to awaken him, that he might judge the world.

You wish you could talk to this Mr Crowley, as it would seem he is an authority on the beliefs and rituals of these Gilgameshites. *Add 2 Luck points for your find.*

**Turn to 100.**

## 110

The book you have found is called "A Treatise on Maritime Folklore" and is almost one hundred years old. You flip through the pages before a chapter heading catches your eye. It is called "Servants of the Sea God" and recounts a folktale that originated in the area now known as Portsmouth almost two and a half thousand years ago.

It is said that the ancient Lord of the Seas, Gilgamesh, was beaten in battle with the Lord of the Wind. Rather than dying, the power of Gilgamesh was such that he fell into a sleep-like state, neither alive nor dead. The primitives who dwelled by the coast thought that storms were a

manifestation of Gilgamesh's wrath, and they sacrificed to him.

Gilgamesh was said to be served by a race of strange, half-man, half-fish creatures known as the Ancient Ones, or Deep Ones. These creatures were said to live under the sea in Gilgamesh's domain, attending to their half-dead God, and doing the bidding of the High Priest of Gilgamesh on land.

**Turn to 100.**

## 111

Eventually, you turn up an relatively modern work of comparative biology discussing marine creatures likely to be found in the English Channel. Aside from the obvious fish by which the trawlermen make their living, there are no unusual marine creatures known to dwell in these waters; certainly not the kinds with claws that could inflict the sort of wounds found on the bodies of the victims. Nothing even remotely resembles the creature on the back of the Medallion you carry. Once again, science has drawn a blank. Perhaps the Occult section might help to shed more light on this matter?

**Turn to 100.**

## 112

To determine how successful your research is, you must now make a roll vs. Library Use, Difficulty Factor 9. If you did not take Library Use, you must *Test your Luck* instead.

If you pass the Library Use roll, or if you are Lucky, **turn to 55**. If you fail the roll, or if you are Unlucky, **turn to 100**.

## 113

"Of all the mythic marine monsters," reports the book *Maritime Legends*, "none are spoken of as frequently along the south coast of England as the Deep Ones. These Deep Ones are said to be the twisted result of those poor unfortunates sacrificed to Gilgamesh, Lord of Waters, during storms. When they sank to the bottom of the sea, Gilgamesh caught them, and altered them to live underwater with him. Thus, he gave them fish-like appearance, and gills for underwater life. But they also retained their limbs for when they needed to travel overland. Their claws provided the ultimate weapon in combat, and their inhuman strength made them terrifying adversaries in the minds of sailors, who used to toss food and ale overboard during storms in an effort to appease Gilgamesh. A more recent superstition has it that these Deep

Ones were susceptible to silver weapons, though no specific reason for this can be gleaned from the legends.”

*Add 1 Luck point for finding this information.*

**Turn to 100.**

## 114

The black tome you are reading purports to be a direct translation of scrolls in ancient Mesopotamian by an Arab who subsequently went insane. It contains much information on various unpleasant cults and secret organisations. Despite its antiquity, much is said of Gilgamesh, indicating that the worship of this God was not restricted to England.

The text indicates that the Cult of Gilgamesh is a separate entity to the primitives who stood on rocky shores, sacrificing men and women to this Lord of Waters. The cult, it would seem, has existed for thousands of years, their main purpose being to resurrect their dead God, to see him claim the earth once more as his own. Their patience over the centuries has been remarkable, and plans made thousands of years ago may be coming to fruition in the near future. The tome also mentions that higher initiates of the secrets of the Cult of Gilgamesh have a tattoo on their left bicep, a strange oriental-looking character. According to the book, this character is the ancient Babylonian symbol for the sea, indicating that Gilgamesh is watching over this one.

*Add 2 Luck points for finding this information.*

**Turn to 100.**

## 115

At dusk you silently leave your hostel and walk the narrow, crooked streets of Portsmouth, heading for the docks, unsure of what to expect. Already the palpable feeling of dread has fallen upon you, and you are fearful of whatever revelations tonight will bring. Nervously you look behind you convincing yourself that you are being followed. You speed up your pace, almost jogging through this dead seaside town. The moon shines down upon you, and you feel exposed somehow, almost as if your plans are known, and the cold lump of rock and dust disapproves of your actions.

You shake your head, trying to clear the intense feelings of paranoia rushing through your mind. Almost before you are aware of it, you have arrived at the docks, and are just a few turns away from your destination. You slow to a more sedate walking pace, wishing that the hammering of your heart would calm similarly.

As you round the final corner, you see the daunting, grey building ahead of you – 115 Nelson’s Lane, the warehouse where you will hopefully find your answers. The door stands open, and seems to lead to some kind of office, though you cannot see much from your vantage point, hiding in the shadows. Outside the door stands a man dressed in white robes. A straggly beard cut into a goatee style is all you can see beneath his hood, and it gives him the appearance of a medieval devil. He is obviously guarding the building.

If you are wearing White Robes, you may walk across to the Guard and attempt to enter (**turn to 117**).

Otherwise, you must fight him. As you do not wish to cause a disturbance, you may not use ranged weapons for this combat. The glaring moonlight makes it impossible for you to ambush the guard, so you must fight him on an even footing.

**Cultist Guard:** SKILL 9                      STAMINA 16

The Guard fights in deathly silence, as if afraid of disturbing someone, which is to your advantage.

If you manage to defeat him, **turn to 116**.

## 116

The Guard lies dead at your feet. Glancing around, you note that the street is still empty. You drag the corpse over to a more shaded side street, hoping that no one will discover the body until your investigations are complete. As an afterthought, you decide to take the white robes the Guard was wearing. Overcoming your revulsion at the bloodstains, you don the robes, hoping that the interior of the warehouse is in darkness to hide the gruesome marks.

Steeling your resolve, you stalk over to the doorway and enter the building.

**Turn to 118.**

## 117

The guard stands aside, allowing you to enter the forbidding building. With one last glance at the cold, callous moon, you walk through the open doorway into the warehouse, expecting the worst.

**Turn to 118.**

## 118

You have entered a long, dimly lit hallway. The walls are bare and unadorned, as is the floor. A

solitary candle burns, softly illuminating a passageway that leads off to your right. You also notice two Guards, dressed in white robes, standing to your left. They don't appear to be paying any attention to you, though it is hard to be sure in the poor light.

You may walk over to your right and follow the passageway, if you wish (**turn to 119**).

You may decide, however, to attack the Guards. If you do, be aware that ranged weapons cannot be used in this combat as they would undoubtedly draw attention to you. They attack simultaneously.

|                 |          |            |
|-----------------|----------|------------|
| <b>Guard 1:</b> | SKILL 8  | STAMINA 14 |
| <b>Guard 2:</b> | SKILL 10 | STAMINA 16 |

The guards fight in an eerie silence, almost as if afraid of causing disturbance. Neither can run past you to get to the passage.

If you win the combat, **turn to 127**.

## 119

The passageway is as dimly lit as the entrance hallway, and you creep along it as silently as possible, hoping to avoid unwanted attention. You cannot see another living soul, and the silence quickly becomes all too oppressive.

You stop to check one of the candles, noting that it has hardly burned down, and must have recently been replaced, a further reminder that you are in the enemy's camp now, and must be on guard at all times.

Eventually, the passageway opens into a small room, which is lit by five candles set in a wooden holder hanging from the ceiling. At the centre of the room, stone steps plunge down into darkness. You also note that the passageway continues on for several yards before turning abruptly to the right, probably following the perimeter of the building. There is no one in sight, and the only sound is of the sputtering candles.

If you wish to descend the steps, **turn to 124**.

If you would prefer to follow the passageway, **turn to 120**.

## 120

After a dozen or so yards, the passageway opens out into a small room. Above you, five candles are suspended from the ceiling, casting shadows in bizarre and disturbing patterns. A metal stairwell leads up to a doorway from which you can see light streaming. Opposite you, there is a wooden door

with a small window in it. Peering through, you can see the interior of the warehouse proper; though there appears to be few crates for such a large room.

If you would like to enter the warehouse, **turn to 121**.

If you would like to ascend the metal stairwell and enter the room above the warehouse, **turn to 122**.

## 121

The door opens soundlessly and you step through into the empty, cavernous warehouse. There is no illumination in here, save that provided by the moon through the high-set windows and skylights. This silvery radiance reflects and glints from the metal gantry high above your head, causing your eyes to make out amorphous shapes in the gloom around you.

Making your way over to one of the crates, you feel open and exposed, as though the whole world can see what you are doing, as if the gods are looking on in disapproval. Such eerie notions gives rise to an involuntary shudder, and your goose-pimpled skin becomes very sensitive to the cool, damp air, swirling in unseen eddies around you.

As you reach the container, you can make out words stamped onto the side. It takes you several moments to realise that you cannot read them; it seems they are in a foreign script, with letters that look familiar, but you cannot recognise. You peer inside the chest, but it is too dark to make anything out.

Noticing that a nearby chest is already open, you tiptoe as quietly as possible over to it, your nerves on full alert to everything around you. Looking inside, you feel your heart miss a beat. The contents are padded with straw, but you recognise the round, ball-like, dark substance and recoil. It is unrefined opium, probably shipped here from India or the Far East. You are fast losing control on the situation. You have seen the inside of a London opium den just after the war, and you have no wish to return to such a bleak existence, ending up a miserable, wretched creature, no longer in touch with the real world.

But what, you ask yourself, is the real world? Your view on reality has been skewed by what you have found here in Portsmouth. Perhaps those sailors, content to hallucinate their lives away, knew more than they ever let on.

You shiver again, but this time it is definitely not from the cold. Deciding that you must leave this place quickly, you stride purposefully over to the

doorway, eager to leave this seedy part of your life behind you.

Upon reaching the doorway, you are faced with the option of ascending the stairwell and entering the mezzanine room above the warehouse (**turn to 122**) or returning along the passageway and cautiously descending the stone steps (**turn to 124**).

## 122

The steps creak ominously beneath your weight, but the metal stairwell remains solid and supports you as you ascend. Reaching the top, you reach a wooden door with a frosted glass panel set into it. Light from inside the room diffuses through this panel, producing strange and eerie effects in the air around you. Grasping the knob firmly, you push open the door and enter a small but well-furnished office. The floor is carpeted with expensive Afghan rugs, and metal filing cabinets line one wall. Opposite the door is a desk, behind which is an expensive-looking leather swivel chair. Seated upon this chair is a dark-haired, sallow-skinned man with a roughly cut goatee beard. Before you can say anything, he leaps to his feet.

"You should know this room is out-of-bounds, initiate," he snaps angrily. "Do you know what the punishment is for disobeying the Master?"

You shake your head, which causes his face to contort from anger to a perplexed expression. "But that is the first thing you should have learned," he muses. "The Master has no use for those not prepared to bend to his will."

He steps around the desk and approaches you, looking you up and down. Suddenly he cries, "I don't recognise you at all! You're not one of us!"

He pulls a knife from his pocket and lunges at you. You must retaliate.

### Cultist

SKILL: 7      STAMINA: 12

The Cultist's dagger is coated with a nasty irritant, and will cause 2-4 points of damage on a successful hit (1d3+1). Due to the speed and ferocity of his attack, ranged weapons may not be used in this combat. Brawling, however, is permissible in this instance.

If you defeat him, **turn to 128**.

## 123

As you pull the desk drawer open, a small knife flicks out from beneath the drawer and cuts into

your hand. The blade is coated in a strange, transparent liquid, and the inflicted cut feels as though it is on fire. Stifling a cry of pain, you collapse to your knees in agony.

*The poisoned trap has inflicted 4 STAMINA points of damage.*

If you are still alive, you gingerly pull the drawer open. Inside is a silver knife, which seems to glow with a pale, iridescent light. Somehow you know that this Silver Dagger is a sacred relic of ancient times when the Gilgameshites were ascendant. You take this Silver Dagger. (*Remember to adjust your equipment list accordingly. The Silver Dagger inflicts 2-4 damage (1d3+1) upon a successful hit.*)

Pleased with your find, though unhappy about being poisoned, you clamber down the metal stairs to the ground floor and return to the stone steps leading down into the bowels of the warehouse. You descend cautiously.

**Turn to 124.**

## 124

The steps are steep and narrow, and they descend further than you had anticipated. Behind you, the flickering glow of the candles fades, to be replaced by pure, cold darkness. You continue down, slowly, your movements careful and deliberate.

You reach a landing, though because you cannot see it you stumble, almost falling over because you expected there to be another step rather than level ground. You stagger forward and brace yourself against the opposite wall. Dropping to your knees, you begin to feel the floor with your hands, soon discovering another set of steps leading further down into the all-pervasive darkness. This time, you decide it prudent to crawl rather than risk a serious injury.

You descend a further forty steps before you reach the bottom. Feeling around, you determine there to be a passage leading straight ahead. As you begin to make your way along the wall, your eyes detect a slight shift. Once you round a bend, you realise there to be a faint, strange coloured light coming from up ahead, though not nearly enough to make out your surroundings by. Your mind rebels at what your senses are telling you. The colour is strangely unhealthy, not quite green and not quite purple, but wholly repugnant to your eyes. As you continue ahead, the light gets steadily brighter, and you no longer need to hold to the wall to find your way ahead.

The feeling of oppression you felt when you entered the warehouse is building, and you are intensely wary of what could lie ahead. The

passageway, you notice, is arched overhead, but the geometry seems to be . . . off, as if it were hewn from the rock in another dimension by inhuman hands. If you own a Tommy-Gun, here would be a good time to assemble it.

A narrow opening is cut into the wall to your right just up ahead, while to main passage continues straight on.

Will you enter this (**turn to 125**) or continue onwards (**turn to 126**)?

## 125

The aperture leads into a small, natural cave, probably discovered accidentally by whoever – or whatever – carved the tunnel through the rock. By the faint, not-quite-green-not-quite-purple tinged light you can make out several barrels and boxes, each of which is tightly closed.

Having no means of opening these containers quietly, you turn to leave, noticing as you do an area of the floor that is darker than the rest. Kneeling beside it, you gently drag your fingers across the patch, feeling a strange, viscous liquid that clings to your fingertips. Raising your hand, you hesitantly lick one of your fingers and grimace at the brackish, metallic taste. Spitting in disgust, you wipe your fingers through the dust on the floor to clean them and stand. You are desirous of being away from here.

You return to the main tunnel and cautiously walk towards the green light.

**Turn to 126.**

## 126

The passageway opens up before you, and your eyes are assailed by a terrifying sight. You stand at the entrance to a huge cavern, somehow carved from the bedrock beneath the decaying city of Portsmouth. A huge pentacle is drawn out on the floor, suspicious brown stains covering some of the lines, and you can see upwards of twenty cultists, Initiates of Gilgamesh, dressed in the white robes of the guards in the warehouse above. To one side of the cavern you can see water; somehow the polluted waters of the English Channel must enter this chamber via an underwater tunnel.

The hideous, awful light by which you have been able to see comes from strange bowls atop tall pillars, the phosphorescent light eerily illuminating this chamber of horrors. The weird angles of the cavern leave you feeling off-kilter and nauseous.

Against one wall next to the water stands an impressive looking podium that dominates the cavern. You estimate that it is over twenty feet

high, and is held aloft by tall pillars of a stone you cannot quite identify. Standing atop this podium, presiding over the dark affairs of the Cultists, is a man dressed in robes of purple and yellow; the Cult Leader - the High Priest of Gilgamesh.

You hear a cry. *You have been spotted!* Two of the Cultists stop their unholy work and charge towards you with daggers drawn, snarling in a guttural language that sounds inhuman to your ears.

The daggers wielded by the Cultists inflict a standard 2 points of damage upon a successful hit. Due to the speed of their attack, you are unable to make use of a ranged weapon in this combat.

### First Cultist:

SKILL 8            STAMINA 14

### Second Cultist:

SKILL 10          STAMINA 14

If you manage to defeat them, **turn to 129.**

## 127

As the second Guard drops, you heave a sigh of relief. The two were more skilful than you would have preferred. Glancing around, you are relieved to note that no one has been alerted by the disturbance, and you are still alone in the hallway. A quick search of the bodies shows that they are carrying some unusually coloured bullets.

Make a roll vs. *either* your Acute Eyesight or your Chemistry Proficiency, Difficulty Factor 10. (*Remember, you must be carrying your Pocket Microscope to use your Chemistry Proficiency.*)

If you took neither of these Proficiencies, you must make a roll vs. your Problem Solving Attribute, Difficulty Factor 17.

If you passed your roll, or if you have rolled less than your attribute, **turn to 130.**

If you fail either roll, **turn to 131.**

## 128

As you strike the deathblow to the Cultist, you crouch behind the desk, worried that he may have alerted someone to your infiltration. You wait here, your breathing shallow, waiting for the adrenaline to pass from your bloodstream, and for your heart to cease its drum solo.

As the seconds gradually turn to minutes, and you hear no sounds of attackers entering the room, you calm down enough to think rationally once more.

Stumbling over to the body, you quickly search it for any useful items. You do turn up a Handgun which the Cultist was carrying, and you may take it

if you wish, though do not forget you cannot use it unless you have the requisite Proficiency in Handgun. *If you take the Handgun, remember to adjust your equipment list accordingly.*

He does not appear to be carrying any ammunition, which is probably why he didn't shoot you, and you send a silent prayer of relief up to the heavens, to whoever may be listening.

As more minutes pass, and you are sure that you have not been discovered, you return to the matter in hand. Carefully dragging the corpse over to the desk, you sit him in the chair, hoping that he is mistaken for being asleep. As you turn to go, your eye falls upon the desk, which has a drawer in it.

If you would like to open the desk drawer, **turn to 123.**

If you would rather leave the desk alone, you descend the stair to the ground floor and return to the stone steps leading down into the bowels of the warehouse. You descend cautiously. **Turn to 124.**

## 129

The second Cultist drops to the ground, blood pouring from several of the wounds you have inflicted upon his body. No sooner have you turned around than you see two hideous creatures shambling towards you with slow gaits. They are creatures of nightmare, part man, part fish, and wholly evil.

Roll two dice. If you have not encountered one of these creatures already, you must add two to this roll. Compare this value with your Sanity Attribute.

If your roll is higher than your Attribute, you are overcome by your fear. Unable to keep your body under control, you vomit the contents of your stomach onto the ground. Reduce your Sanity score by 1 and deduct 2 STAMINA points. Despite quickly recovering, you are unable to prevent yourself from trembling at the sight of these creatures. Whilst you are fighting the Deep Ones, you must deduct 1 from your *Attack Strength* every round.

If your roll was equal to, or less than your Sanity Attribute, you steel yourself and manage to control your fear, suffering none of the penalties above.

If you are carrying a ranged weapon, you may elect to open fire before the creatures reach you. To do this, **turn to 138.** You should make a note of their current STAMINA scores as will be instructed to return here afterwards.

Glancing briefly around, you see the Cultists are running around in panic, some trying to complete certain rites, while others seem just to want to get out of here. Of course, you are standing in front of the only entrance, blocking their escape. The Deep

Ones both stop about six feet in front of you and let loose chilling, gurgling screams before leaping at you, their claws poised to strike. You have no choice but to fight them.

If you are using a Silver Dagger, **turn to 139** prior to commencing the combat. You will be instructed to return here afterwards to begin combat.

If you have managed to wound the Deep Ones before entering into hand-to-hand combat, remember to use their current STAMINA scores instead of the ones given here.

### First Deep One:

SKILL 10 STAMINA 25

### Second Deep One:

SKILL 9 STAMINA 28

If you manage to defeat these eldritch monstrosities, **turn to 132.**

## 130

The copper-coloured bullets seem unusually heavy to you. Scraping your fingernail across the surface of one of the bullets reveals an unusual surprise. After several minutes of intense scrutiny, you are convinced that the bullets are actually cast in silver, and then covered in a cheaper metal, though why someone should do this is a mystery to you.

You may take the six Silver Bullets with you if you wish (*remember to adjust your equipment list accordingly*). Note that they are Handgun ammunition, and may not be fired from a Tommy-Gun, Elephant Gun or a Rifle. When used against non-human minions of Gilgamesh only, these bullets will inflict *double* damage.

Pleased with your find, you stand and walk over to the passageway opposite, the only way further into this mysterious building.

**Turn to 119.**

## 131

After a few moments, you recognise the bullets as being cast in copper, making them rather useless. Puzzled by this, you leave the ammunition where it is and head for the passageway opposite, the only way further into this mysterious building.

**Turn to 119.**

## 132

The second scabrous Deep One drops to the floor and you thank whatever deities may be listening for your victory. Glancing over to the far end of the cavern, you notice a man dressed in robes of purple and gold standing upon a stone podium, supported by several stone pillars. He is calling out words in a harsh, guttural tongue that chills your

spine to hear. He must be the Cult Leader, the High Priest of Gilgamesh. As he continues with his recital, the ground begins to tremor, the shakes increasing in violence.

If you are carrying a ranged weapon and have sufficient ammunition, you may decide to shoot the Cult Leader (**turn to 133**).

If you cannot (or will not) shoot, **turn to 134**.

### 133

You take aim and pull the trigger. The resounding explosion of your firearm echoes above even the rumbling beneath you and the rushing around you. The High Priest screams loudly, clutching his arm and slumps to his knees, behind the podium wall. You curse at having lost your aim, and begin staggering towards the steps leading up to him, being sent off-kilter every step by the movement of the earth.

Two of the lamps lighting this room with their unwholesome glow topple to the ground and become dark, plunging the cavern into near total darkness. You stumble and fall to the ground in the confusion, the aural assault from the air coming to a screeching crescendo.

The hairs on your nape suddenly rise, and you glance over towards the water. In the near darkness, you can just make out a strange, bulbous shape rising from the waters. The screams of the remaining Cultists join with the howling of the wind and you see several trying to run from whatever is out there. The last thing you see before losing consciousness is a glistening tentacle slithering over the dusty ground towards you . . .

**Turn to 140.**

### 134

You begin to run toward the podium, intent on stopping whatever unholy ritual is being performed. The tremors and judders coming from beneath your feet increase in intensity, and you can hear the ground creak and groan as if in pain.

As you stagger to regain your balance after a particularly violent judder, a sound like that of a strong wind joins the creaking ground in a chilling chorus.

However, you are determined to succeed. You will not let Julian down! No ancient evil will prevent you from discovering the secrets that lie beneath Portsmouth as long as you are alive. Firming your resolve, you look up towards the podium . . . and freeze in terror.

The violent rocking of the ground has damaged the podium and the cavern. You watch in horror as a portion of the roof detaches under the strain and falls onto most of the Cultists, squashing them

beneath several tons of rock. Petrified in sick fascination at the gristly end of most of Gilgamesh's followers, you do not see one of the stone pillars supporting the podium begin to crack and give way. Only your instincts can save you as it slowly begins to topple towards you.

Roll two dice and compare this with your current SKILL score.

If the roll is equal to, or less than, your current SKILL score, **turn to 135**.

If the roll is greater than your current SKILL score, **turn to 136**.

### 135

Somehow, you instinctively leap to the side, avoiding the falling pillar by just a few feet. Fired with the adrenaline of your near-death encounter, to charge towards the unsteady podium, ready to unleash your righteous fury upon these bedevilled Cultists.

Before you can reach the steps leading to the Cult Leader, you are accosted by a huge, heavyset giant of a man wearing purple robes that barely hide his rippling muscles. His facemask is made of gold and is in the shape of a hideous human – piscine hybrid that is detailed with such monstrous realism you find it difficult to tear your eyes away. He bellows aloud in anticipation of your bloody death, his cries so loud that you can hear them even above the pained sound of the earth and the rushing wind-like sounds of the air.

He lumbers towards you, hefting a huge trident, magnificently detailed with etchings and runes; truly the work of a master craftsman. It seems to emit an unhealthy, green glow similar to that of the lamps lighting this benighted cavern.

"You will not stop the Master!" he yells. "He will feast upon your bones this night!" With no further warning he attacks you. Owing to the speed of his attack, you may not make use of a ranged weapon in this combat.

#### Cultist Major-Domo:

SKILL 11      STAMINA 20

The Major-Domo is second-in-command to the High Priest, and has received his Trident as a gift for his devotion to Gilgamesh. On a successful hit, it will inflict 3–5 points of damage (1d3+2). The intricate designs and etchings on the hilt and prongs detail an army of Deep Ones rising from the sea and slaughtering humans like cattle.

If you manage to defeat him, **turn to 137**.

### 136

You try to leap out of the way of the falling pillar, but in your haste you stumble, tripping over a piece

of rock jutting up from the cavern floor. The pillar crashes to the floor, missing you by no more than a few inches, but you are unable to dodge the debris as it smashes into hundreds of pieces. Three large pieces of shrapnel slam into your body. Lose 8 STAMINA points.

If you are still alive, you groggily climb to your feet, wincing in pain. Shaking your head to clear it, you try to take stock of the situation.

Turn to 137.

### 137

The podium is empty; the High Priest is gone! You cast your gaze about erratically, hoping to catch sight of him in the chaos, but the only persons you can see are the remaining Cultists crying out in fear about the retribution of their God. Somehow, he managed to make good his escape in the confusion. Angrily you spin around with a view to escaping from the cavern, but the upheaval has affected more than just the podium's stone pillars.

Two of the lamps lighting this room with their unwholesome glow topple to the ground and become dark, plunging the cavern into near total darkness. You stumble and fall to the ground in the confusion, the aural assault from the air coming to a screeching crescendo.

The hairs on your nape suddenly rise, and you glance over towards the water. In the near darkness, you can just make out a strange, bulbous shape rising from the waters. The screams of the remaining Cultists join with the howling of the wind and you see several trying to run from whatever is out there. The last thing you see before losing consciousness is a glistening tentacle slithering over the dusty ground towards you . . .

Turn to 140.

### 138

As the two aquatic monstrosities shamble towards you, they make no attempt to dodge. You have time to let off two shots from a rifle, one or both barrels from an elephant gun, two bursts of Tommy-Gun fire, or three shots from a handgun. Remember, if you are using Silver Bullets you inflict double damage upon these creatures.

**First Deep One:** STAMINA 25  
**Second Deep One:** STAMINA 28

If you have managed to defeat both of these hellish abominations, **turn to 132**.

If one, or both, of the Deep Ones is still alive, **return to 129** to continue hand-to-hand combat, but remember to use their current STAMINA total(s) if you have managed to wound them.

### 139

The Silver Dagger was forged in times immemorial by the Priests of Gilgamesh to discipline the Deep Ones. Note that against Deep Ones *only*, the Silver Dagger inflicts double damage.

Now **return to 129** to commence your battle.

### 140

Slowly consciousness begins to return, and you become aware of your aching limbs. You open your eyes and flinch as the bright light of the midday sun pierces your brain, increasing the throbbing headache you were already suffering. As time passes, the ache subsides and you are able you open your eyes once more and look around you.

You are lying on the cold floor of the warehouse at 115 Nelson's Lane. The sun is shining in through the broken windows and roof high above. Outside, you can hear the distant sounds of produce being transported.

As you gradually remember the events of the previous days, you wonder quite how you got here, who brought you here and why? Shakily, you get to your feet and walk over to where you remember the staircase should be, leading down to the grotto beneath Portsmouth; but it is no longer here. Instead, the place where the stairs used to lead down is filled with a strange, white, chalk-like substance. You dig in it with your keys for some minutes, but make little headway. It would seem that this "chalk" now fills the lower hallways. Besides, you are in no mood to return there.

You idly wonder what could have caused such a thing; you also wonder what happened to the cult leader; you are sure that the terror of Portsmouth has been averted, however, and people may now live without the fear of unholy creatures rising from the sea and slaughtering them.

Not that any sane person would believe your story, of course. You can hardly visit the local constabulary and explain to them what happened here last night. Somehow, the inside of a sanatorium doesn't seem the best place to be right now, though you envy the safety of such a situation.

Julian had told you that this investigation would lead to more questions than answers, and he was certainly correct. You have seen and discovered things it would be best not to know, just as he hinted you would. Leaving the warehouse through the rotten front door, you walk back to your hostel and pack your belongings. You have decided to accept Julian's offer of employment, wherever it might lead. As you prepare to return to Leicestershire, you idly wonder where Julian will send you next...

## Appendix A: Proficiencies Defined

| Proficiency                | Requirements                | Not usable by |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>ACUTE EYESIGHT</b>      | None                        |               |
| <b>ACUTE HEARING</b>       | None                        |               |
| <b>BIOLOGY</b>             | None                        | G, D          |
| <b>BRAWLING</b>            | None                        |               |
| <b>CHEMISTRY</b>           | Pocket Microscope           | G, D          |
| <b>DRIVING</b>             | Automobile                  | D, Do         |
| <b>ELEPHANT GUN USAGE</b>  | Elephant Gun & Ammunition   |               |
| <b>FAST-TALK</b>           | None                        | G             |
| <b>FIRST AID</b>           | Medical Bag & Paraphernalia | G             |
| <b>HANDGUN USAGE</b>       | Handgun & Ammunition        |               |
| <b>KNIFE USAGE</b>         | Bladed weapon               |               |
| <b>LIBRARY USE</b>         | None                        |               |
| <b>NAVIGATION</b>          | None                        |               |
| <b>RIFLE USAGE</b>         | Rifle & Ammunition          | Do            |
| <b>TOMMY-GUN USAGE</b>     | Tommy-Gun & Ammunition      | D, Do         |
| <b>UNDERWORLD CONTACTS</b> | None                        | Do            |

### ACUTE EYESIGHT

Acute Eyesight means that you have trained your visual ability to a greater level than normal men. You are able to see in detail over much longer distances, and over a wider area. You can detect movement, even if the subject is well camouflaged. Your eyesight even works well at twilight and dusk, giving you heightened detection abilities even when underground.

This Proficiency may only be used when the text specifically instructs it, and is available to those of all professions.

### ACUTE HEARING

Similar to Acute Eyesight, your innate ability has been naturally trained to detect the slightest sound, and to know the direction of its origin. You can often detect whispered conversations happening tens of feet away, and this advance warning allows you to ready your attack earlier than most men.

This Proficiency may only be used when the text specifically instructs it, and is available to those of all professions.

### BIOLOGY

Biology is the study of living things, how they work, their make-up and composition, including feeding habits and social behaviour. This allows you to determine animals from such factors as their excreta or scent. Your knowledge of animal behaviour gives insight into what beasts are planning; thus, in a combat situation with a non-human opponent, you may add 1 point to your SKILL for the duration of the combat; this bonus *is* cumulative with other attack bonuses for fighting styles and includes when using ranged weapons.

A sound training in the Medical field is essential for the use of this Proficiency; hence, it is only available to Doctors.

### BRAWLING

Brawling, sometimes known as 'dirty fighting', is combat without specific weaponry. Thus, one skilled in Brawling suffers no penalty for entering a fight without a weapon. It also covers temporary use of anything nearby as a weapon, meaning that unless specifically told otherwise, you always inflict 1+ Proficiency Level divided by two points of damage to an opponent's STAMINA upon a successful hit (rounding fractions *up*).

This Proficiency may be used in combat (unless instructed otherwise) and when the text specifically instructs it. For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Brawling (rounding fractions *down*), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat. It is available to those of all professions.

### CHEMISTRY

A character proficient in Chemistry is well schooled in the arts of chemistry and physics. The elements that make up the Universe are known to you, and you keep abreast of the latest scientific discoveries. You are also aware of chemicals, their make-up and uses, normally being able to recognise them rather quickly. You are also quick to notice small details regarding the science of the physical world, but perhaps you place too much trust in them.

A Pocket Microscope is usually necessary for usage of this Proficiency. In depth training by the scientific establishment are necessary for this Proficiency; hence, it is only available to Doctors.

### DRIVING

Anyone can drive an automobile, but this Proficiency signifies a much deeper understanding of vehicles, including their maintenance, mechanical repair, and handling under difficult circumstances at high speeds. Such knowledge is not widespread since automobiles are still fairly

uncommon, and only those with 'contacts' could gain such a deep knowledge. Although it is safe to say that an automobile is essential at the outset for this Proficiency, should the automobile be lost during the adventure, the knowledge and Proficiency may still be retained and used.

Owing to the expense and difficulty of finding a trainer in such a rare field, only the Gangster may take this advanced Proficiency. Note that this does not preclude one of another occupation from owning or driving a car.

### **ELEPHANT GUN USAGE**

In these colonial times, there is nothing a gentleman likes more than travelling to some remote portion of the empire and shooting himself a wild animal. Not only is it character building, it provides trophies for you to display at your home, showing your friends how well off and well travelled you are. Elephant Guns are large shotgun affairs with two barrels, allowing for two shots to be fired at once. A shot with an Elephant Gun inflicts 1d6+2 STAMINA points of damage per cartridge.

For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Elephant Gun Usage (rounding fractions down), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat.

In the game, you must decide beforehand whether you will loose one or both barrels at an opponent. Then roll your Attack Strength as normal. Should you have the higher Attack Strength, you inflict 1d6+2 STAMINA points of damage *per cartridge*. You only need to roll the Attack Strength once as both cartridges are assumed to have hit (or missed) if you loosed both off. A major drawback with Elephant Guns is how long they take to load. Unless the text specifically says otherwise, you may only loose off two cartridges before your attacker reaches you or escapes. Also note that their given SKILL when being attacked by ranged weapons may be higher than their close combat SKILL score; this is due to their own Proficiencies.

Despite the cost usually involved, anyone can travel the Empire, so members of any of the occupations may take this Proficiency. An Elephant Gun and ammunition are vital for this Proficiency to be used.

### **FAST-TALK**

A character gifted with Fast-talk always makes a good impression, and is known as the life and soul of the party. What few of their companions could guess, however, is what is going on in their mind. Such characters are gifted with the ability to hide their true feelings and motives behind a cleverly constructed veneer, which only the most suspicious or devious minds might penetrate. The ability allows them to talk their way out of embarrassing and potentially compromising

situations with seeming effortlessness. An additional benefit is that of being able to talk your way out of dangerous situations, or to trick information out of an unsuspecting victim.

This Proficiency is only available when the text specifically instructs it. Due to the nature and subtlety of the ability, Gangsters may not take this.

### **FIRST AID**

The character gifted with the First Aid Proficiency is capable of dealing with injuries and wounds in a hygienic and professional way. A character with First Aid may use this once per day to restore 1d6+ Proficiency Level points of STAMINA, if they can roll their Proficiency Level or less on 2d6. This is in addition to any other STAMINA bonuses for resting, eating, etc. First Aid is also useful for helping any wounded or injured characters you may meet during the adventure.

To use this Proficiency, a Medical Bag and the Paraphernalia to go in it are essential. Gangsters usually have their own doctors to treat them, and so may not take this Proficiency.

### **HANDGUN USAGE**

The handgun, though devised in Europe during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, has been made famous by "cow-boys" of the prairies of the United States of America. It was often used to settle quarrels until fairly recently, and as such, knowledge of the use of handguns is widespread.

The handgun in question here is a Luger, though you may also pick up and aim other, less usable pistols. A Luger deals 2-4 points of damage per successful hit (1d3+1), though other handguns or ammunition may deliver different damage, and this will be noted in the text. The chamber holds 6 Bullets, which may be released at a rate of one bullet per Attack Round. You must also keep track of how many bullets are held in the gun, though you are free to refill the gun in any section where there is no combat. Keep a track of how much ammunition you have because an empty gun is of no use in combat.

For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Handgun Usage (rounding fractions down), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat

Owing to the prevalence of Handgun Usage in the western world, characters of any profession may take this Proficiency. A Handgun and sufficient ammunition are both required to use this Proficiency successfully.

### **KNIFE USAGE**

Perhaps something of a misnomer, Knife Usage refers to any bladed weapon, from a dagger to a

Samurai broadsword; however, knives are easier to take through customs and explain to the police. Obviously, to use this Proficiency you must be in possession of a bladed weapon. For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Knife Usage (rounding fractions *down*), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat. Normal knives deal 2+Proficiency Level divided by two points of damage upon a successful hit, (rounding fractions *up*) though larger blades may inflict more basic damage; this information will be given in the text.

A bladed weapon is required to use this Proficiency in combat. Knives are used all over the world and by many professions. This being the case, characters from any occupation may take this Proficiency.

### **LIBRARY USE**

As any researcher will tell you, the library is the best place to visit to find out information for free. As such, great importance should be placed by anyone investigating unusual phenomena in the Library Use Proficiency.

No items are necessary to use Library Use, and it may only be used when the text gives you the option. Libraries are widespread, and research is necessary to many occupations, so characters from any occupation may take this Proficiency, and are *strongly* advised to do so.

### **NAVIGATION**

More than simply the knowledge of how to get from A to B, Navigation is a complex and under appreciated Proficiency. With such knowledge, a character knows roughly where he is at all times, and can mentally plan a route between two places he has never visited, though charts and maps will give a bonus to such an attempt. Additionally, you always know which way is North, and you rarely get lost, even in exotic or deserted places.

Navigation is open to characters from any of the occupations. No equipment is necessary to take or use this Proficiency.

### **RIFLE USAGE**

Rifles have been around for over a century now, and they have passed into the realm of respectability, despite their murky past. For the Rifle is the weapon of an assassin. Long-barrelled and with long-range sights, the rifle is used to take out specific targets.

In combat, a Rifle may only be fired once (unless the text specifically says so) because it takes so long to re-arm with more ammunition. However, it has a very good range, and inflicts 1d6 damage upon a successful hit. There is also a chance that

the wound will be fatal. After a successful hit, roll 2d6. If the result is a double, you managed to hit a vital organ, and your opponent has died.

For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Rifle Usage (rounding fractions down), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat

To use this Proficiency, a Rifle and sufficient rounds of Ammunition are required. Due to the nature of the weapon, Doctors will not have had access to training with Rifles, and therefore may not take this Proficiency.

### **TOMMY-GUN USAGE**

The Tommy-Gun is the most powerful and destructive ranged weapon available in this game, and also the most dangerous. If you are found in the possession of this illegal weapon, confiscation is the least penalty you will incur; likely you will be sentenced to a lengthy stretch at Her Majesty's pleasure. The Tommy-Gun is a large machine gun with a real kick. The ammunition is sold in rounds of 20 projectiles, of which 5 are fired each Attack Round. On a successful hit, the Tommy-Gun will inflict 5d3 damage to a hapless victim.

For every two Proficiency Levels a character has in Tommy-gun Usage (rounding fractions down), they may add +1 to their SKILL score when using this Proficiency in combat

The Tommy-Gun is an illegal firearm, and as such is not cheap. Similarly the ammunition is exorbitantly priced. It is usually kept in several pieces in a suitcase; thus, unless the text specifically says that you have time to assemble it, you may not use it in ranged combat.

The illegality of this weapon means that only those with Underworld connections and plenty of ready money may be skilled in this weapon, so only the Gangster may take this Proficiency.

### **UNDERWORLD CONTACTS**

The Underworld is a place of mystery and danger, and most people sensibly steer well clear of it. There are some, however, for whom this forbidden zone is alluring, and those characters will take this Proficiency. Contact with organised crime can take place in public, or behind closed doors, but the character with this Proficiency knows the lairs and whereabouts of these organisations, their secret codes, and their interests. One skilled in such knowledge will need to be respectful and alert to those whom they contact, for news travels fast along the tunnels of the Underworld, and it is never good to be on the receiving end of a contract.

Due to the illegal nature of this Proficiency, only Gangsters and Detectives may take it. No items are required to use this Proficiency.

## Appendix B: Old Money

The British monetary system is based on the pound (£ - also known as a 'Quid' in slang, possibly from the Latin phrase 'Quid Pro Quo' which translates as 'what for what' or 'something for something' and conveys the concept of getting something of value in return for giving something of value) and has been since around the 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE when it was almost a pound (lb) in weight. A pound was made up of 240 pennies (d – referring to the word 'Denarius', which is a Latin term referring to roughly a day's wage for a commoner, and the French word denier, which itself is a corruption of the Latin). 12 pennies made up a shilling (s – also referred to as a 'Bob' in slang), and thus 20 shillings made up a pound. British money can be very confusing.

To further confuse matters are a plethora of notes and coins of varying values from a Farthing ( $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1d) to a Guinea (£1 1s). The Guinea usually being reserved for lawyers and other professionals as 20 Guineas sounds less than £21.

The history of British money can be fascinating. The pound sign £ is based on the Latin letter L, referring to the Latin 'Libra' meaning 'scales' or 'balance' indicating it to be the basic unit of money in Britain. S or Shilling is derived from another Latin word, Solidus with a rather meandering etymology. According to website [www.carat.co.uk](http://www.carat.co.uk), "it appears that a solidus mark or a scilling (in old English, possibly from Norse or old German) mark was a mark or notch made in a length of metal wire to enable it to be divided into convenient regular sized pieces. Therefore the English word shilling appears to be directly related to the word solidus."

Despite being so complicated, the old monetary system provides real insight into the era, the characters alive at those times, and the way people thought. For example, the Sixpence was also called a 'Tanner' after John Tanner who worked at the Royal Mint in the eighteenth century. The silver Joey (silver threepenny bit) got its name from a nineteenth-century MP, Joe Hume, who was keen that plenty of threepenny pieces should be available for cab fares. Why the Shilling was called a Bob is something of a mystery, though some point to Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's Prime Minister from 1721 – 1742.

Below is a table based on information kindly provided by Guillermo Paredes and Paul Mason.

| Denomination               | Value           | Decimal Equivalent |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Farthing                   | $\frac{1}{4}$ d | —                  |
| Ha'penny                   | $\frac{1}{2}$ d | —                  |
| Penny                      | 1/12s           | —                  |
| Twopence                   | 2d              | —                  |
| Threepence                 | 3d              | 1.25 pence         |
| Sixpence ( <i>Tanner</i> ) | 6d              | 2.5 pence          |
| Shilling ( <i>Bob</i> )    | 12d             | 5 pence            |
| Florin ( <i>Two Bob</i> )  | 2s              | 10 pence           |
| Half Crown                 | 2s 6d           | 12.5 pence         |
| Double Florin              | 4s              | 20 pence           |
| Crown                      | 5s              | 25 pence           |
| Sovereign                  | 20s (240d)      | £1                 |
| Guinea                     | 21s             | £1.05              |

For the sake of simplicity, this gamebook uses simplified currency and always provides a decimal equivalent for ease of use. This table and information is provided merely as background material to enhance the atmosphere of the adventure and provide detail of the era in which it is set.

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