

CHAPTER 1: HERO CREATION

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This chapter presents everything you need beyond basic True20 Adventure Roleplaying to create your hero for Shadows of Cthulhu. The backgrounds, roles, feats, and skills presented here are additions or modifications to those already available in True20 Adventure Roleplaying. Your Narrator may make other traits available to you as your hero digs deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the Cthulhu Mythos.

BACKGROUNDS

The Human background from True20 Adventure Roleplaying is available to heroes in Shadows of Cthulhu, as well as the backgrounds described below. Each reflects a specific upbringing or profession that has heavily influenced the hero's development before play begins. A few of these backgrounds are specific to the traditional 1920s setting for Lovecraftian adventure, but most work just as well in modern time periods, or even the near future.

ANCIENT BLOODLINE

Somewhere back in your family tree is a branch that isn't completely human. There may be hints in family diaries of strange interactions with creatures from the sea or with white apes from the deep jungles of Africa. The ancient bloodline has manifested itself in you, creating an ominous resemblance to your more eccentric ancestors.

Ability Adjustments: +1 Con, -1 Cha

Bonus Feats: Endurance, Low Profile

Bonus Skills: Disguise and either Climb or Swim

Favored Feats: Defensive Roll, Rage

ATHLETE

You have developed your natural talents in one or more sports such as football, baseball, or basketball. Your natural talents make you a hot commodity.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Wealthy

Bonus Skills: Choice of two chosen from Acrobatics, Climb, Concentration, Diplomacy (an athlete has to know how to give a good interview), Jump, Knowledge (Current Events - with an emphasis on sports and sports trivia), or Swim

Favored Feats: Fascinate, Master Plan

BIG BUSINESS

You come from the world of big business and big deals, and you're on your way up the corporate ladder. You spend your days worrying about growth curves and profit margins and the competition. Though you've sac-

rificed much of your non-work life, it's been worth it to get you where you are.

Bonus Feats: Wealthy, Leadership

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (business), Bluff

Favored Feats: Master Plan, Seize Initiative

BIG CITY

You grew up in the big city, learning to navigate the complex geography and social interactions of the streets. You met people from all over the world and you've learned to take care of yourself.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Contacts

Bonus Skills: Knowledge (streetwise), Stealth

Favored Feats: Hide in Plain Sight, Weapon Bind

CULTIST

You have spent your life among the rituals and trappings of a cult. You and your fellow cultist may worship one of the Old Ones, or you may follow prophets who have heard whispers of the destruction of the world from strange minds across the universe. This background isn't available without special permission from the Narrator.

Bonus Feats: Dedicated, Iron Will

Bonus Skills: Mythos Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Stealth

Favored Feats: Channeler, Mythos Language (choose one)

DEGENERATE

You come from an area where lack of communication with the outside world, interbreeding, or something in the water has created a mentally and morally degenerate group of humans. You're uncomfortable in normal society, but not much shocks you.

Ability Adjustments: +1 Str, -1 Cha

Bonus Feats: Jaded, Improved Grab

Bonus Skills: Language, Knowledge (supernatural)

Favored Feats: Jack-of-All-Trades, Tough

HIGH SOCIETY

You've grown up among the rich and powerful, so you know how to move in social circles and you know influential people.

Bonus Feats: Connected, Wealthy

Bonus Skills: Bluff, and one of Craft (art), Knowledge (art), Perform or Ride

Favored Feats: Weapon Bind, Inspire

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WILD WEST

You've spent considerable time on the range out west, rustling cattle and fixing fences. You are not comfortable without a good pair of boots and a tall hat and a lot of dust on your hands.

Bonus Feats: Animal Empathy, Tireless

Bonus Skills: Handle Animal, Ride

Favored Feats: Improvised Tools, Chokehold

NEW ROLES

In addition to the expert and warrior roles presented in True20 Adventure Roleplaying, Shadows of Cthulhu heroes may be academics dedicated to learning and creating knowledge, investigators specializing in finding information and connecting clues, or reverents totally dedicated to a cause or belief system. Although heroes cannot start at first level as adepts, they may acquire levels of adept later on.

ACADEMIC

Academics spend their time in the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake. They astound others with the esoteric facts they offer up at just the right time, and their ability to study and learn new areas of knowledge is unsurpassed. Academics are truly at home in dusty libraries, dim studies, and formaldehyde-tainted biol-

ogy labs. Outside of these erudite environments, however, academics may be uncomfortable. They often leave the practical application of their knowledge to others and remain at their studies to uncover more. Even so, archaeologists might visit remote dig sites, oceanographers may descend into the ocean's depths in diving capsules, and linguist might travel the world in search of new material.

ABILITIES

Upon gaining any level divisible by 5 (5th, 10th, 15th, 20th), an academic's Intelligence score increases by 1. This is in addition to the bonus ability point gained at levels divisible by 6. Academics crave knowledge, and that means they need strong Intelligence scores. Modest score in the other abilities will help the academic survive in the cruel world beyond blackboards and notebooks, but they are not as valued as Intelligence.

GENIUS (CORE ABILITY)

An academic can spend a point of Conviction to treat any Intelligence-based ability or skill check as a 20. Note this is not considered a "natural 20," but in all other ways works as a die result of 20. The academic must spend the Conviction point to improve a roll before the Narrator announces the result. In addition, an academic can use any Knowledge skill specialty untrained.

TABLE 1-1: THE ACADEMIC

Level	Combat	Fortitude	Reflex	Will	Sanity	Reputation
1	+0	+0	+1	+1	+2	+1
2	+0	+0	+1	+1	+3	+1
3	+0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+1
4	+1	+1	+2	+2	+4	+2
5	+1	+1	+3	+3	+4	+2
6	+1	+2	+3	+3	+5	+2
7	+1	+2	+3	+3	+5	+2
8	+2	+2	+4	+4	+6	+3
9	+2	+3	+4	+4	+6	+3
10	+2	+3	+5	+5	+7	+3
11	+2	+3	+5	+5	+7	+3
12	+3	+4	+6	+6	+8	+4
13	+3	+4	+6	+6	+8	+4
14	+3	+4	+6	+6	+9	+4
15	+3	+5	+7	+7	+9	+4
16	+4	+5	+7	+7	+10	+5
17	+4	+5	+8	+8	+10	+5
18	+4	+6	+8	+8	+11	+5
19	+4	+6	+9	+9	+11	+5
20	+5	+6	+9	+9	+12	+6

Surgeons can repair many of the permanent physical injuries inflicted on the heroes during their adventures.

Feats: Challenge (Surgery/radical procedure), Improved Tools, Skill Focus (Surgery), Sneak Attack, Wealthy

Skills: Knowledge (life sciences), Medicine

WEALTHY HEIR

The truly wealthy and privileged are at leisure to study whatever interests them, and to do just about anything within reasonable economic means. They are often patrons of favorite artists, writers, or academics, and they are usually have helpful contacts.

The independently wealthy furnish other heroes with the freedom to investigate strange events without risking financial ruin. Wealthy heirs also provide contacts, significantly better equipment, and esoteric knowledge and skills that aren't practical for anyone who has to earn a living.

Feats: Connected, Inspire (awe), Lucky, Wealthy

Skills: Bluff, Drive, Knowledge (art), Knowledge (popular culture), Language, Perform, Ride

INVESTIGATOR ARCHETYPES

Investigators are a curious class of characters that are not content until they understand every aspect of a mystery and have reduced it to hard facts and irrefutable deductions. They include Inspector Legrasse, who disrupted a cult ritual in the Louisiana swamps, and Detective Malone, who discovered things he would never reveal in the tunnels below the Red Hook district of Brooklyn.

JOURNALIST

Journalists go for the story, and some of them are not above embellishing the truth a little to make things more interesting. Journalists may be freelancers selling stories to whichever editor will pay the most or staff reporters working for a specific publication or broadcast station.

Journalists may find that the supernatural spin of certain events make them more interesting, even though the supernatural angle is certainly bogus. Some of the readers believe that sort of thing.

Feats: Benefit (press pass), Contacts, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Fascinate (Diplomacy), Well-Informed

Skills: Craft (writing), Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (current events), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATOR

Paranormal investigators openly profess their belief in psychic powers and the supernatural, and they're willing to help people explain unexplainable events. They

are essentially private eyes who deal in the world of the supernatural.

Supernatural investigators may find themselves face-to-face with real supernatural events, possibly for the first time in their careers. They may be the hook that leads all the heroes into adventure.

Feats: Contacts, Jaded, Night Vision, Steady, Talented (Gather Information, Knowledge (supernatural)), Track

Skills: Bluff, Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge (supernatural), Language, Stealth, Survival

POLICE DETECTIVE

Police detectives investigate potential crimes to determine if a crime actually occurred and to identify the criminals. They investigate crimes ranging from petty theft to mass murder, and they have the authority and resources of the police to back them up.

Police detectives may be called upon to investigate criminal activity by Mythos creatures or cults.

Feats: Benefit (legal enforcement powers), Connected, Firearms Training, Talented (Gather Information, Intimidate)

Skills: Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (streetwise), Knowledge (civics), Notice, Search, Sense Motive

PRIVATE EYE

Private eyes are investigators for hire. They track spouses suspected of cheating, search for missing persons that may not want to be found, and sometimes solve murder cases that the police have given up on.

Private eyes may find that their cases lead them to horrific discoveries of twisted cults and otherworldly creatures.

Feats: Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Drive), Stunning Attack, Tough,

Skills: Disable Device, Disguise, Drive, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (streetwise), Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Stealth

SPY

Spies gather information for foreign governments. They may come from the country they're loyal to, or someone may have recruited them from the local population. Spies keep a low profile and often have elaborate cover identities.

Spies may wonder if strange Mythos events are actually part of a government project worth knowing about.

Feats: Benefit (alternate identity), Challenge (Gather Information/discretion), Low Profile, Master Plan, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Gather Information, Language, Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Stealth

TOWN GOSSIP

Town gossips usually play some key role that gives them access to all kinds of juicy personal information. They might be the local hairdresser or barber, or the telephone operator, or the organist at the local church.

Town gossips will latch onto any mystery like a bulldog and won't let go until they know what's going on and can spread the news.

Feats: Contacts, Fascinate, Inspire (awe), Light Sleeper

Skills: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Perform (oratory), Notice, Search, Sense Motive, Stealth

REVERENT ARCHETYPES

A reverent can be the heart and soul of a group of investigators. They provide strength of will when confronting the mind-twisting reality of the Mythos, and inspiration when the will to go on fades into despair. Although the faith and trappings of mainstream human convictions and religions seem to provide no direct counter to the horrors of the Mythos, they can be of great indirect benefit to the humans themselves.

ACTIVIST

You're so dedicated to a particular cause that you've focused your entire life around it. You might be trying to save a species of animal, keep alcohol illegal, establish female suffrage, preserve the gold standard, or unionize workers.

An activist may find the object of their dedication threatened by Mythos activities, and they will certainly take action to preserve it.

Feats: Dedicated, Fascinate, Perform (oratory), Inspire (fury), Iron Will, Leadership

Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (civics), Perform (oratory), Sense Motive

BUTLER/CHAUFFEUR

Butlers are dedicated and selfless servants who anticipate their masters' needs and protect them from unwanted interruptions. Butlers often understand more of the world in general, and society in particular, than their masters.

Butlers may be the silent problem solvers, always there to provide aid when needed or to gently steer the other heroes in the right direction. They may also be the best drivers in the group.

Feats: Dedicated, Inspire (competence), Low Profile, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Mastery (Diplomacy, Drive, Sense Motive, Stealth)

Skills: Diplomacy, Drive, Knowledge (behavioral science), Knowledge (current events), Notice, Sense Motive, Stealth

NUN

Nuns dedicate their lives to service within the church. They are the teachers at parochial schools and the medical caregivers at church hospitals.

Nuns may get involved in Mythos mysteries because of their extensive knowledge of religion, or because the children or patients under their care are threatened.

Feats: Dedicated, Inspire (courage), Iron Will, Leadership, Vow of Poverty

Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (theology and philosophy), Medicine, Perform (singing), Sense Motive

PREACHER

Preachers spread their faith through inspiring sermons and one-on-one interaction. They may preach within an established church and congregation, or they may hit



CHAPTER 2: THE 1920s

H. P. Lovecraft wrote his stories in the 1920s and 1930s, and most of them took place in that time period or shortly before. So the 1920s have become the traditional setting for most Cthulhu Mythos roleplaying. *Shadows of Cthulhu* follows this tradition by using the United States of the 1920s as its default setting. Future books will provide information about other interesting settings.

DAILY LIFE

The 1920s began with a post-war recession, then exploded into one of the largest economic booms the United States has ever seen, only to come tumbling down again with the stock market crash of 1929. This decade saw the beginnings of many aspects of today's society. Telephones and automobiles became commonplace, women moved into the workforce, and mass advertising teamed up with radio broadcasters and credit banks to jump start the consumer economy.

WORK

As more and more laborers moved from farms to the growing number of factories in the cities, the modern work week began. Henry Ford's assembly line ideas had been adopted by many other industries, which now required every worker to show up on schedule and maintain output. A strong middle class emerged which could afford their own homes and automobiles. They couldn't always afford to live where they worked, so morning commutes began, as well as traffic jams.

Labor shortages and mandatory schooling during the First World War had created more opportunities for women to work outside the home, and millions of them did. Some of them kept their wartime jobs in factories and other professions that were traditionally reserved for men. The image of an independent working woman developed. She lived on her own, flouted old behavioral codes, and probably smoked filtered cigarettes to show how far she had come.

Typical wages ranged from \$1,000 a year for factory and office workers to \$5,000 or more for middle management. Wealthy businessmen, celebrities, and mob bosses could make millions. Pensions and unions became more common, but were often accused of being communist. Servants, who were once common among the middle class, became a luxury of the rich as the middle class made do with new labor-saving devices like washing machines, vacuum cleaners and electric mixers.

TRANSPORTATION

By the end of the 19th century, the railways had opened up travel between major cities across the country and were the primary means of long-distance travel. Just a quarter century later, half of America had access to a car, and they traveled five times as far in them as they did by train. Regular bus services ran through major cities, and short hop airline services were in place across the entire country.

Most of the cars on the roads were still the simple, slow models produced by Ford in the previous decade, and most of the roads were still the unpaved dirt paths built for horses and carts. But car models and technology were changing rapidly, and the Federal Highway Act of 1921 created decent two-lane roads between most major cities. These well-traveled highways were lined with traffic signs, electric traffic lights, and the first franchised filling stations.

Air travel was a novelty in 1920, but by the end of the decade it was commonplace. Some of the largest airlines, like United and PanAm, were just getting off the ground with flights between major cities. Coast-to-coast airmail service reduced the time to send letters and packages from New York to San Francisco from weeks to just days. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh proved that nonstop flights across the Atlantic were possible, and interest in air travel increased dramatically.

With no commercial flights between America and Europe, ocean liners were going strong and still the only way to cross the Atlantic, but their days were numbered. The transatlantic ships were grand affairs, floating palaces with ballrooms, live entertainment and expensive furnishings. Most ships also had small, cramped steerage rooms on the lower decks for immigrants and tourists on a budget.

COMMUNICATION

Before the 1920s, Americans got their news from the local newspaper. They communicated with friends and family in person or by letter, and listened to live music, or maybe a Victrola. By 1930, about half the homes in the country had telephones and most of the rest were eager to be connected. Pay phones were available on most busy city streets and a call cost only a few cents. Local newspapers still thrived, as did tabloid "Jazz Journalism," but the new national radio networks, like the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System, began broadcasting across the country. The iconic scene of the family gathered to listen to their favorite music or entertainment program had arrived. Hand-held radios were still decades away,

so military units and anyone who needed point-to-point communication used portable telephone units connected by wires.

FASHION

Fashions, especially young woman's fashions, changed dramatically during the 1920s. The confident, carefree "flappers" established the major trends with their simple, lightweight dresses, basic hosiery, smaller hats and short haircuts. Before the 1920s, women who wore makeup were assumed to be of questionable morals, but mass marketing and a deliberate rejection of old restrictions changed those attitudes almost completely by the end of the decade. Of course, wearing pants, which many women began to do, was still inexcusable. The young men who accompanied the flappers were called "sheiks," and they maintained their own fashion gap with their three-piece-suit elders. They slicked their hair and parted it down the middle, wore

knickers or baggy Oxford pants, argyle socks, and sweater vests.

While the younger generation experimented with new, lighter fashions, more traditional Americans fell in line behind the etiquette advice of Emily Post. In her books, she laid down firm rules like "you must never wear an evening dress and a hat! And never wear a day dress without one."

PASTTIMES

The booming economy, regular work hours, and easier travel of the 1920s opened up a wide range of new leisure activities. Americans went to the cinema more than ever before, saw more shows on Broadway, and bought more magazines. They took road vacations, increased the national obsessions with baseball and football, and discovered dieting and exercise with the help of Charles Atlas.

Movies were silent and people packed huge movie palaces that could seat thousands. They got news for from the newsreels before the main show and got the see their first "talkie" in 1927. Movie idols like Rudolph Valentino drew them in and showed them how to be fashionable.

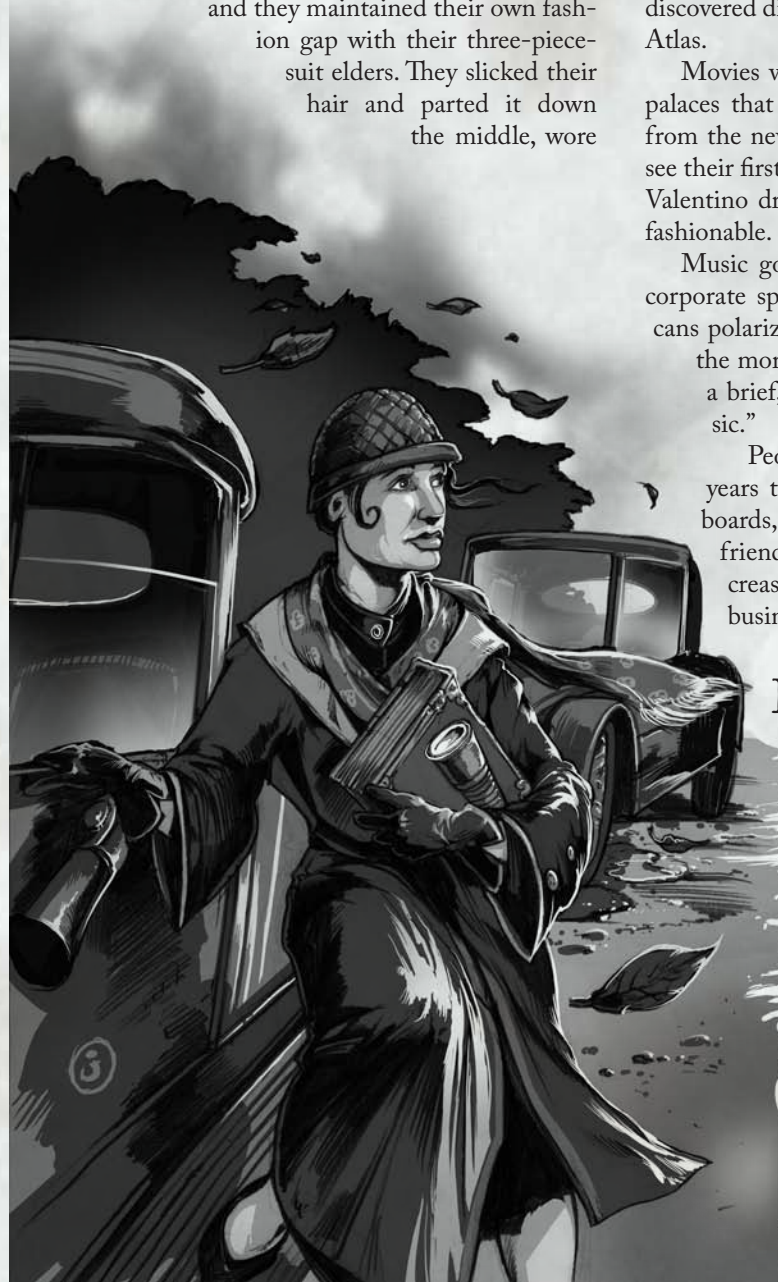
Music got a boost from new radio programs and corporate sponsors. Jazz was everywhere, and Americans polarized over whether they loved it or saw it as the moral downfall of the country. They even took a brief, but enthusiastic interest in "hillbilly music."

People took vacations by car, and within a few years the highways were lined with diners, billboards, campgrounds, and the new automobile-friendly hotels called "motels." Train travel decreased dramatically and car repair became a big business.

PROHIBITION

Besides jazz, flappers, and economic good times, the 1920s is most remembered for the crime and corruption that seeped into society through the financial doorways opened by prohibition. The Eighteenth Amendment of 1917 and the Volstead Act of 1919 severely restricted the manufacture and public sale of alcohol. Existing criminal organizations that had survived on drug trade, prostitution, protection rackets and imaginative cons found bootlegging and rum-running to be very profitable, low-risk ventures.

Raids on speakeasies were rare, and generally resulted in only modest fines for the patrons. The speakeasy was usu-



ally shut down, but often opened again in a month or two under a different name. Some speakeasy owners got around prohibition by calling their establishments private drinking clubs and handing out membership cards to customers.

FACTIONS

The 1920s was a decade of relative peace abroad, but intense, formative conflict at home. Dozens of factions and organized groups vied for power and a piece of the growing economic pie.

BIG BUSINESS

Legitimate businesses thrived in the heady atmosphere of the mid-1920s. Banks and investment companies appeared and for the first time had ordinary working-class customers. Local retailers expanded and stocked new personal items like deodorant, as well as an ever-increasing variety of dry and canned goods from the giant, well-established food companies like Kellogg's and General Mills.

Consumer credit combined with new advertising opportunities on the radio, billboards, and in the growing selection of magazines created a marketing and sales bonanza. Americans shopped in record numbers at department stores, like Gimbel's, Marshal Fields, and Macy's. Dozens of companies copied Sears Roebuck and began producing illustrated catalogs for consumers.

The stock market crash of 1929 erased much of the accumulated profits of these businesses, but many of the companies themselves survived and led the world of commerce throughout the 20th century.

BOOTLEGGERS

Not everyone who defied the prohibition laws was a gangster. Before the big gangs got into the business, small-time, enterprising bootleggers began distilling alcohol and employing rum-runners to smuggle the goods to the speakeasies. Though they were generally less sophisticated and less violent than their gangster counterparts, they usually benefited from extensive local knowledge and long-time connections in their communities. Since they weren't involved in other criminal activities, they often avoided the attention of the police and federal agents.

BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

In 1924, J. Edgar Hoover became the head of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation, which would eventually become the FBI. Initially only comprising a few hundred special agents, the bureau grew as it took on prostitution and interstate crimes, becoming the primary arm of the government opposing organized criminal gangs.

The bureau's agents were generally better trained and better equipped to confront the gangs, and they could concentrate a larger force for investigations and raids. As members of a federal agency, the bureau's agents sometimes ignored local sensibilities, but they were serious about process and new what it took to convict a criminal in federal court.

FRATERNITIES & SORORITIES

Attendance at American colleges doubled during the 1920s, but college graduates still represented only an elite fraction of the entire population. The young men and women who formed social networks on college campuses and in the growing number of national fraternities and sororities would go on to run the country's government and its most powerful businesses. They formed secret societies, like Skull and Bones, whose members favored each other for employment and business deals. They came off of the college campus with untested, high-minded ideas about change and the future, and they made many of them work.

GANGS

Organized crime gangs, led by members of the mafia families from Italy and Sicily, had established themselves in America long before the 1920s. They made money through prostitution and protection rackets, but prohibition fueled their growth into powerful, unchallengeable tyrannies. These gangs supplied the thousands of illegal speakeasies and semi-legal drinking clubs with alcohol, and money poured in. Local police generally didn't interfere, because they received little or no funding from the Federal Government for enforcement of prohibition and were usually underpaid and open to bribes. By the end of the decade, mobsters like Al Capone in Chicago and Lucky Luciano in New York were among the richest and most powerful men in the country.

THE GOVERNMENT

During the early 1900s, the people developed a general distrust of the U.S. government, and the government, in turn, seemed to develop a distrust of the people. Americans were swept up in the Red Scare of 1917, fearing that a copycat Bolshevik revolution was imminent in the U.S. Their fears were encouraged by a series of anarchist bombings aimed at prominent government officials and institutions, including the office charged with anti-Bolshevik investigations. President Harding's administration was rife with corruption, including a number of blatant incidents of bribery, such as the Teapot Dome scandal. The heavy-handed tactics of J. Edgar Hoover's Bureau of Investigation made some Americans feel safer, but left others uneasy.

IMMIGRANTS & MINORITIES

Residual fear from the Red Scare and real concerns about the nation's ability to employ both its native citizens and its immigrants led to a wave of xenophobia in America. The most definitive result of this was a series of anti-immigration laws, including the National Origins Act of 1924, which significantly limited immigration from Europe and completely cut off immigration from Asia. The fears of white Americans also made possible the re-emergence of the Ku Klux Klan, which was once presumed dead but was suddenly marching openly, in costume, through the streets of Washington D.C. The targets of the new KKK's wrath included African Americans, Asians, Catholics, Irish immigrants, and union organizers.

NATIONAL GUARD

With the Bureau of Investigation struggling to deal with organized crime, the U.S. Marshals undermanned and local police unmotivated to do anything without federal funding, state governors were often forced to use their National Guard or state militia to keep order in potentially volatile situations. When police in Boston went on strike, for instance, the state militia had to step in. These "citizen soldiers" were poorly trained for the situations they were thrust into and it's a credit to their leadership that more terrible situations didn't result.

POLICE

Most urban police officers in the 1920s were beat cops, walking a few blocks of the city. Rural police generally waited at their station for someone to call with a complaint, while some patrolled in automobiles. Local police dealt with local crime and were usually happy to hand over responsibility for organized or interstate crime to federal agents. Police would typically pursue gang members only when they killed or injured local citizens.

Police officers were generally armed with revolvers or shotguns and carried clubs. The 1920s predate Miranda rights and close scrutiny of arrest procedures,

so police had more freedom to investigate suspicious situations and make arrests with little evidence, if they believed they were promoting public safety.

UNIONS

Powerful unions like the National Labor Union, the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor existed long before the 1920s, but they moved to the forefront of politics in that decade. The unions included all sorts of workers, from factory workers to truck drivers to police officers. They pushed for the eight-hour work day and the elimination of child labor, and they began to feel the power of city-wide strikes and collective bargaining for wages. Workers credited them with significant improvements in working conditions, but enemies of the unions accused them of being communists and of plotting a Bolshevik-style revolution in the United States.

EQUIPMENT & SERVICES

The following tables present the equipment and services available in the United States in the 1920s. Many of the items listed in the equipment tables in True20 Adventure Roleplaying are also available in the 1920s, and the costs remain the same because the Wealth system scales with inflation.

ADVENTURING GEAR

It's hard to say what equipment a hero might need during an adventure, but devices that provide basic needs of light, shelter and communication are a good start.

PORTABLE TELEPHONE UNIT

A portable telephone unit consists of two rather bulky, battery-powered telephone handsets and receivers at either end of a two hundred foot roll of double wire. Parties at either end can speak to each other as if they had a normal telephone connection.

TABLE 2-1: ADVENTURING GEAR

Gear	Size	Cost
Portable Telephone Unit	Medium	13
Radio Transceiver	Medium	21
Box Camera	Small	9
Digging Tool	Medium	4
Film	Tiny	5
Flashlight	Tiny	4
Photo Developing Lab	Large	13
Tent	Medium	9

works for any hero as long as dreams and visions fit the theme of the adventure.

Victim: The hero is directly involved in the adventure from the start, as a victim or direct witness to events. This hook works well in the first adventure of a campaign, when it won't seem too coincidental.

INSPIRATIONAL READING

The best way to become familiar with the themes and general atmosphere of *Shadows of Cthulhu* is to read the works of H.P. Lovecraft and other Mythos authors that he inspired. Lovecraft's horror fiction consists mainly of short stories which can be found in a variety of anthologies. Complete listings of Lovecraft's stories are available on the Internet, but the following stories are a good place to start. They are all available in *The Best of H.P. Lovecraft* from Del Rey publishing.

- The Call of Cthulhu
- The Dunwich Horror
- The Rats in the Walls
- The Shadow out of Time
- The Shadow over Innsmouth
- The Whisperer in the Darkness

Many other authors wrote stories that further developed these themes of cosmic horror. Editors occasionally compile the important works of these authors into anthologies like *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, from Del Rey publishing.

INSANITY & OTHER IMPAIRMENTS

Adventures in *Shadows of Cthulhu* can expose heroes to horrible creatures and events that are dangerous and beyond the comprehension of their limited minds. The result may be physical impairment or various forms of insanity. Insanity is a key part of Lovecraft's fiction, and it is represented in *Shadows of Cthulhu* by a series of specific mental disorders, like phobias, addictions and delusions. Each mental disorder is described in detail in Chapter 4, including its effects on the hero's actions.

GOING INSANE

The descriptions of each of the creatures in Chapter 6 include the list of physical and mental disorders they might inflict on a hero, as well as the saves required to avoid them. Some of these conditions are only a threat under specific situations, like prolonged contact or a successful melee attack by the creature, but many are brought on simply by the creature's presence. To avoid many of the mental disorders, the Heroes will have to use the new Sanity save described in Chapter 1. The world of *Shadows of Cthulhu* also contains unnerving ancient locations and artifacts that hint at the true, aw-

ful nature of the universe. Encounters with these items can also cause insanity, as indicated in their specific descriptions.

Some encounters may cause mental disorders from a broader category, such as communication disorders, phobias, or anxiety disorders. If a hero fails a save for one of these categories, the Narrator can randomly determine the specific disorder using the tables in Chapter 4, or simply choose one that is appropriate for the hero and the situation.

A character can acquire the same mental or physical disorder multiple times, in which case the character has more than one level of a specific disorder. The effects of multiple levels stack as specified in the disorder's description.

Characters can acquire multiple levels of a disorder during a single encounter. For every 10 points by which a character fails a Sanity save, add an additional level of the disorder. For example, a hero who needs to make a Difficulty 22 Will save to avoid a mental disorder would acquire two levels if the save is 12 or less, or three levels if the result was 2 or less. Very disturbing encounters can drive heroes insane very quickly.

Once a hero has made a save, successful or not, against a specific effect, they are generally immune to that effect from that creature or item for 24 hours. Note, however, that a completely different creature or event may inflict the same disorder, requiring a separate save.

CURING INSANITY

Each mental disorder described in Chapter 4 can have very different effects on a hero, and the cures for each may be very different. Barring some sort of supernatural intervention, a hero must undergo the treatment cure specified for their particular mental disorder. The most common treatment is psychiatric care, which is explained in the Psychiatry skill description in Chapter 1.

Heroes also have the option of spending Awareness points to cure their mental disorders. This represents the heroes' ability to overcome their insanities by facing the unknown and prevailing. In general it takes one Awareness point to cure a single level of a mental disorder. A hero who pays the Awareness cost to cure insanity does not have to undergo the specified treatment cure. See the Awareness section later in this chapter for a full explanation of how heroes acquire and spend Awareness points.

Note that heroes who are fully cured of a disorder through treatment or by spending Awareness points can always acquire that same disorder at some point in the future. They do not become immune.

KEEPING INSANITY SECRET

To build suspense, paranoia, and a little mystery, the Narrator may want to keep mental disorders secret

stranger becomes a trusted confidant. Basically, you're crazy.

Effects: You suffer a -1 penalty on your Charisma, Intelligence and Wisdom abilities.

Stacking Effects: Suffer an additional -1 penalty to Charisma, Intelligence and Wisdom.

Treatment: Schizophrenia is treatable with psychiatric care.

SELF-MUTILATION

Mental, Anxiety Disorder

You're disgust with your own imperfections drives you to hurt yourself. You might pull out handfuls of your own hair, cut yourself repeatedly, or even break your own fingers or toes.

Effects: Because of the obvious wounds and scars, you suffer a -1 penalty to your Charisma. In addition, before any combat you must succeed on a Difficulty 12 Will save or inflict a hurt result on yourself before the first round of combat.

Stacking Effects: Increase the Will save Difficulty by 2 and suffer an additional -1 Charisma penalty.

Treatment: Self-Mutilation is treatable with psychiatric care.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Mental, Anxiety Disorder

You are obsessed with a specific person, and you are fine as long as they are nearby. When you are separated, you become frantic and can concentrate on little else but getting back to them.

Effects: When you are separated from your special person by more than 30 feet, or they are out of your sight, you must make every effort to be reunited with them. If you do something else instead, you must succeed on a daily Difficulty 12 Will save or suffer a -1 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks and saving throws.

Stacking Effects: Suffer an additional -1 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws while separated. Increase the daily Will save Difficulty by 2.

Treatment: If you manage to go one week away from the person you are obsessed with and you succeed on a Difficulty 20 Will save, you remove one level of

Separation Anxiety. This disorder is also treatable with psychiatric care.

SLEEPWALKING

Mental, Sleep Disorder

Your overall anxiety brings on episodes of sleepwalking.

Effects: Every time you sleep you must succeed on a Difficulty 12 Will save. If you fail, you spend up to an hour in seemingly normal activities of the Narrator's choosing. During a sleepwalking episode, you suffer a -1 penalty on all skill checks, ability checks, Will saves and Reflex saves.

During a sleepwalking episode, you must re-roll any daily Will saves made for Control disorder's like Substance Addiction, and for any other conditions which require periodic Will saves to resist.

Stacking Effects: Increase Will save Difficulty by 2 and apply an additional -1 penalty to all skill checks, ability checks, Will saves and Reflex saves while sleepwalking.

Treatment: You can be woken by someone else without ill effects. Sleepwalking is treatable with psychiatric care.



SOMATIC DELUSIONS

Mental, Psychotic Disorder

You believe there is something terrible wrong with you physically. Maybe you can't exert yourself or your heart will burst, or maybe you think you have a disease that is always on the verge of killing you. You might walk with a limp, even though there's nothing wrong with your leg. You may avoid direct contact with others for fear that you'll spread your disease.

Effects: You suffer a -1 penalty on your Strength and Dexterity abilities.

Stacking Effects: Apply an additional -1 penalty to Strength and Dexterity.

Treatment: Somatic Delusions are treatable with psychiatric care.

STUTTER

Mental, Communication Disorder

Your pent-up anxiety causes you to involuntarily stutter when you try to speak. Your speech difficulties can sometimes lead others to think you are less intelligent or a little crazy.

The specific special abilities you share with your Mythos familiar are the same as those listed in the basic Familiar feat. In addition, you gain a gain a +4 bonus on any Sanity saves required to resist mental disorders normally caused by the presence of your familiar.

Any time you use the Link or Share Powers ability with your supernatural familiar, you must succeed on a Difficulty 10 Sanity save or gain a level of Separation Anxiety with your familiar as the object of your anxiety. This check is only required once per scene.

MYTHOS HERITAGE (MYTHOS)

You are somehow the product of interactions between the human race and the creatures or deities of the Cthulhu Mythos. Perhaps an ancestor of yours wasn't quite human, or your parents were avid students of the strange and supernatural. Whatever the reason, you seem to have a knack for piecing the obscure clues and faint glimpses of the unknown together into a cohesive view of the terrible truth. For each Mythos trait that you unlock by paying an Awareness point, you may unlock an additional Mythos trait without paying any Awareness points. You cannot use Conviction points to gain temporary access to this feat.

OPEN MIND (MYTHOS)

Your mind is very open to contact with other minds. You gain a +5 bonus on Mind Touch and Temporal Mind Touch power checks. You suffer a -2 penalty on saves to resist Mind Touch attempts by others.

MYTHOS POWERS

True Cthulhu takes place in a world where people don't believe supernatural powers exist. Stories of healing powers, psychic communication and alien technology are the domain of imaginative fantasy writers or the truly crazy. Yet secret powers do exist for those aware of the Mythos. In the hidden corners of the world, ancient cults cast ritual spells, hideous charms transform whole families into carnivorous ghouls, and advanced science allows instant travel to other worlds.

ACQUIRING

MYTHOS POWERS

Heroes acquire Mythos powers when they advance adept levels, just as adepts acquire powers in True20 Adventure Roleplaying, but with some important differences. First, a hero must be sufficiently exposed to a Mythos power to understand it. The exact requirements for exposure are left up to the Narrator, but they usually involve concentrating on the power as it is used or studying it in a book.

Second, heroes must pay one Awareness point to unlock a given power before they can learn it. They must have an Awareness point available when they attain a new level and choose the power.

Finally, when using a Mythos power, heroes may risk their sanity. Each power description below includes the required saves for using each power, and the consequences of failure.

RITUAL POWERS

Any power that takes one minute or less to use also has a corresponding ritual power. Ritual powers are completely separate powers. For example, a character with the Suggestion power cannot perform the Ritual Suggestion power unless they acquire it separately. A character does not have to know the basic form of a power to learn the corresponding ritual power.

When multiple adepts have access to a power, rituals offer the advantage of much more effective power checks and easier maintenance at the cost of extended completion times.

Prerequisites: If a power has prerequisite powers, then the prerequisites for the corresponding ritual power must be the ritual forms of those powers. Likewise, ritual powers do not count as prerequisite powers for non-ritual powers. For example, a character may not learn the Ritual Weather Shaping unless she also knows the Ritual Water Shaping and the Ritual Wind Shaping.

Aid: When an adept uses a ritual power, other adepts who know the ritual (or have been exposed to the ritual and spend a Conviction point to use it) may participate and aid the ritual leader's power check. See Aid in the Introduction of True20 Adventure Roleplaying. If the base power requires no power check, then neither the ritual leader nor those aiding need to make one. The number of adepts attempting to aid the ritual leader is limited to the ritual leader's adept level, so a 4th-level adept could have aid from 4 other characters. The resulting power check for a ritual with many participants can be very large, and thus the effects of a ritual are generally much more impressive than the effects of a normal power. All adepts providing aid must also make any required sanity saves for using the power.

Time: The time to complete a ritual is 10 minutes, plus 1 additional minute per aiding character. If there is any serious interruption during this time, all participants must succeed on Concentration checks or the ritual fails.

Duration, Maintenance, & Concentration: If the normal power on which a ritual is based has a limited duration, the ritual effects last 10 times as long. If the power requires maintenance or concentration, only one of the participants in the ritual needs to maintain or concentrate on the power, and the responsibility for

maintaining or concentrating may be passed between ritual participants from round to round.

Fatigue: If the basic power is fatiguing, then the ritual power is also fatiguing for the ritual leader, but the fatigue difficulty is increased by the number of participants attempting to provide aid. Those providing aid do not make fatigue checks.

Example: Gareg McNee is a 3rd-level adept who knows the Ritual Elder Sign power and needs to seal a gateway to the Abyss. He has three friends that have all been exposed to the ritual and are willing to spend a Conviction point to use it. Two of the three friends succeed on their Difficulty 10 aid check, one of which rolls a 20. This grants Gareg a +5 aid bonus on his power check. The ritual will take 13 minutes, and, Gareg's fatigue check Difficulty will be increased by 3. Gareg and all three of his friends must make Fortitude saves to avoid Premature Aging.

SCIENTIFIC POWERS

The effects of any power can be replicated through the use of advanced science. These scientific powers, and the equipment required to use them, are often of alien or supernatural origin or the result of years of disturbingly morbid scientific research. Scientific powers are separate powers; a character with the Dimension Shift power cannot use the Scientific Dimension Shift power, unless he acquires it separately. A character does not have to know the basic form of a power to learn the corresponding scientific power.

For adepts with Mythos Knowledge skill and a reasonable amount of wealth, scientific powers provide improved effects over normal powers without fatigue penalties.

Prerequisites: If a power has prerequisite powers, then the prerequisites for the corresponding scientific power must also be scientific powers. Likewise, scientific powers do not count as prerequisites for non-scientific powers. For example, a character may not learn the Scientific Elemental Weapon power unless she also knows a Scientific Cold, Energy, Fire, Water or Wind Shaping power.

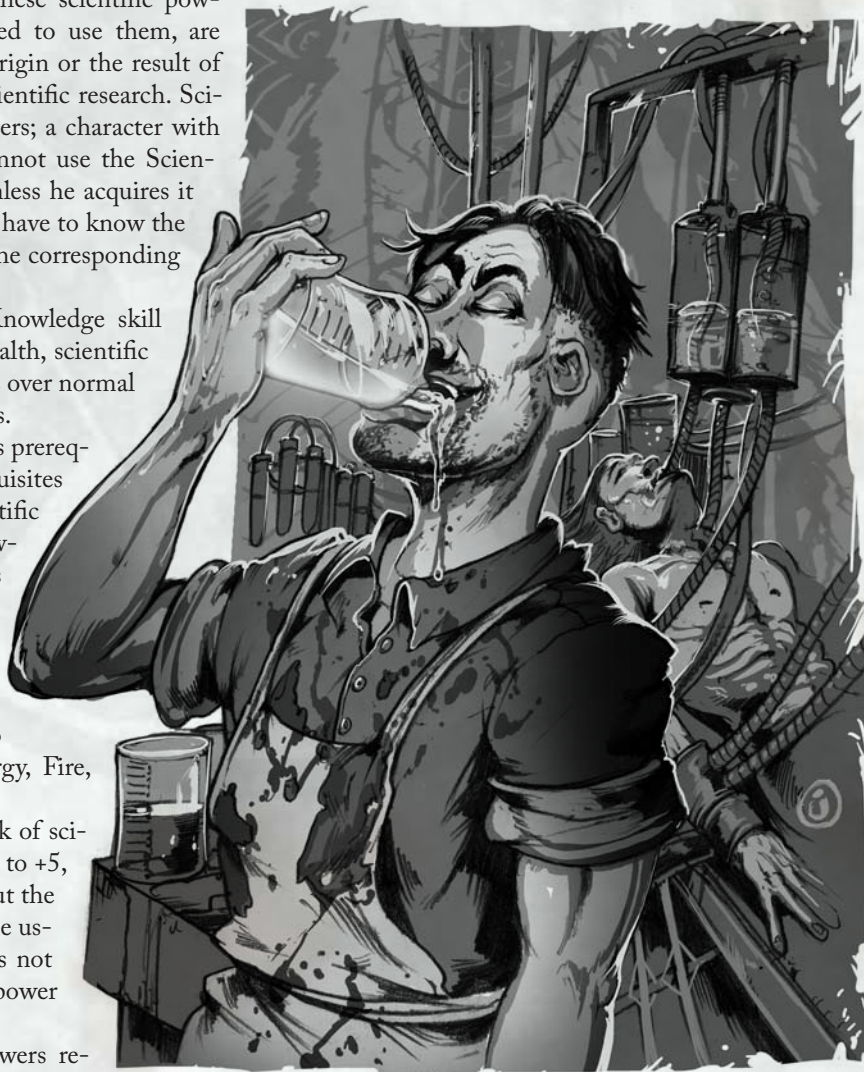
Empower: The effective rank of scientific powers is increased by +1 to +5, depending on the equipment, but the maximum bonus is limited to the user's adept level. This bonus does not stack with effects of the Empower feat.

Wealth Cost: Scientific powers require special equipment and resources.

The cost of the equipment, whether it's a laboratory, a special weapon, or a complicated machine, is $15 + 2 \times$ rank bonus. So a laboratory setup capable of supporting the Scientific Imbue Unlife power with a +2 bonus would cost 19. The cost of the resources expended by a single use of a scientific power is $10 + 2 \times$ rank bonus. The equipment and resources required for any prerequisite scientific powers are not required when the more advanced power is used.

Portability: The equipment for a scientific power is generally heavy and must be carefully set up in a fixed location before use. Portable equipment weighs only 10 pounds and is usable after taking a move action to set it up. Making equipment portable increases its cost by 5. A portable weapon providing a +3 rank bonus for the Scientific Elemental Blast power would cost 26 ($15 + 6 + 5$).

Mythos Knowledge: In order to operate the scientific equipment, the adept must succeed on a Difficulty 15 Mythos Knowledge (life sciences) or Mythos Knowledge (technology) check, whichever the Narrator



CHAPTER 6:

MYTHOS BESTIARY

The Cthulhu Mythos includes races of sentient creatures that pre-date humanity by eons, mindless beasts that slip through the cracks between dimensions, and powerful gods that would quickly destroy us if we ever drew their attention.

Each of the creature descriptions in this chapter follows the basic format of True20 Adventure Roleplaying, with the addition of a list of mental and physical disorders each creature might cause under specific conditions. This is by no means a complete list of creatures in the Mythos, nor does it contain every creature type or power represented in Lovecraftian literature.

THE GODS

The Gods of the Cthulhu mythos rule the worlds of our universe from grim voids reachable only through the intersections of different dimensions of existence. These deities are vast and amorphous unless they choose a solid form, and they seldom interact with humans except through avatars or unspeakable spawn. Their mindless, unintelligible state puts them beyond influence, though direct contact with them is said to be possible.

Each deity description below includes a brief statement of the deity's motivations, if they're at all comprehensible, as well as details about contacting the deity. Typical creature information is not provided for these deities because they take so many different forms and it is generally impossible to harm them.

AZATHOTH

Azathoth is the Ultimate Chaos from which creation came, an immense, formless, idiotic bubbling mass of power at the center of all dimensions. A great void surrounds him, filled with squid-like creatures that destroy anything they touch and amorphous dancing shapes that meter his movements with eerie sounds of drums and flutes. He is lord of all things, but neither knows nor cares about any of them. To the ancient Hyperboreans he was Ubbo-Sathla, and to the classical Greeks he was Uzzi-Tahuti. His will is embodied in his messenger, Nyarlathotep.

MOTIVATIONS

None. Azathoth is pure power, and his actions of destruction and creation seem to have no purpose, except that which Nyarlathotep gives them.

CONTACT

The Contact Azathoth power has a power check Difficulty of 40. If successful, a gate appears through which anyone can pass into the domain of Azathoth. While there, humans take the form of iridescent bubbles and are not bothered by the other trans-dimensional creatures. Anyone visiting the domain of Azathoth in this way can attempt to return through the gate once per minute with a successful Difficulty 15 Will save. The gate remains open for ten minutes. Azathoth never communicates with humans, but anyone successfully contacting him might draw the attention of Nyarlathotep.

COMBAT

Azathoth can use any power at will with no saving throws, and he may choose any power bonus. Azathoth cannot be damaged or destroyed. Seeing him causes Mutism (Difficulty 30 Sanity), Paranoia (Difficulty 25 Sanity) and the fear effect of the Heart Shaping power with a Will save Difficulty of 33.

NATHICANA

Nathicana is the Fair Maiden of the Gardens of Zais, a land that existed before time began and now exists outside of normal dimensions of time and space. She has white skin, deep red lips and sleepy eyes. Pale robes cover her alluring figure as she moves gracefully through her magical garden. Nathicana sometimes appears in her maiden form to men in visions or dreams, and her beauty haunts them from that point on. Some scholars speculate that Nathicana appears to females in an attractive male form that is the inspiration for the Greek god Himerus.

MOTIVATIONS

Nathicana is lonely in her magical garden and wishes only to meet with humans in dreams and visions for companionship. She prefers human men, because they seem more pleased to visit with her.

CONTACT

The Contact Nathicana power has a power check Difficulty of 35, but that can be reduced to 30 if she is offered fine wines personally brewed by the caller. If the contact is successful, the contactor falls into a trance

of the creature's waving light patterns. Though nearly immobile, the color out of space is protected by the long reach of its devastating power to drain life.

Life Drain: A fully-developed color out of space can lash out at a living target up to 30 ft. away with its prismatic waves of color. A successful Difficulty 14 Reflex save avoids the color's touch. If touched, the target acquires one level of the Life Essence Drain disorder (Difficulty 12 Fortitude).

Lifesight: This operates like blindsight, but the color out of space can sense only living creatures, nothing else. Invisibility and darkness have no effect on the color out of space, and it automatically senses living creatures within range without a Notice check.

Suggestion: The color out of space uses its Suggestion ability by creating unearthly patterns of light and color, drawing living



creatures in close. The target can resist with a Difficulty 14 Will save.

Sanity: Looking at the dancing lights of the color out of space causes Explosive Disorder (Difficulty 10 Sanity) and Depression (Difficulty 14 Sanity).

ECOLOGY

The color out of space travels through the universe in the form of a small, inorganic meteor until it crashes to the surface of a planet. If one of these meteors encounters water and life, it drains both and blooms into its colorful and deadly prismatic display, eventually maturing enough to reproduce and launch more meteor-like spawn into space.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Color out of space meteors are frequently crashing to earth, but the those that don't hit water die off, and the ones that do land in water drain nearby life and return to space within days. The rare color out of space that lands in water near civilization is the one that will draw the heroes' attention.

CTHULHU

Type: 34th Level Outsider (Great Old One)

Size: Colossal

Speed: 90 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 90 ft.

Abilities: Str +14, Dex +3, Con +8, Int +5, Wis +5, Cha +8

Skills: Bluff 37 (+45), Climb 37 (+51), Craft (architecture) 37 (+42), Intimidate 37 (+45), Knowledge (supernatural) 37 (+42), Mythos Knowledge (history, life sciences, physical sciences, theology and philosophy) 37 (+42), Notice 37 (+42), Sense Motive 37 (+42)

Feats: All-out Attack, Cleave, Double Strike, Great Cleave, Hover, Imbue Item, Improved Grab, Iron Will, Move-By Action, PowersB, Seize Initiative, Tough, Wingover

Traits: Amphibious, Damage Reduction 8/supernatural, Darkvision 120 ft., Fast Healing, Fear Aura, Powers (rank 37, Cha, save Difficulty 35, all powers except elemental powers and curing powers +45), Sanity, Tear.

Combat: Attack +27 (-8 Size, +34 base, +3 Dex, -2 two-weapon), Damage +18 (2 x claws), Defense: Dodge/Parry +29/ - (-8 Size, +34 base, +3 Dex), Initiative +3

Saves: Toughness +20 (+8 Size, +8 Con, +4 natural), Fortitude +27 (+19 base, +8 Con), Reflex +22 (+19 base, +3 Dex), Will +26 (+19 base, +5 Wis, +2 Iron Will)

Great Cthulhu is hundreds of feet tall, with leathery wings, and a roughly humanoid body. His head is octopoidal, with dozens of tentacles extending all