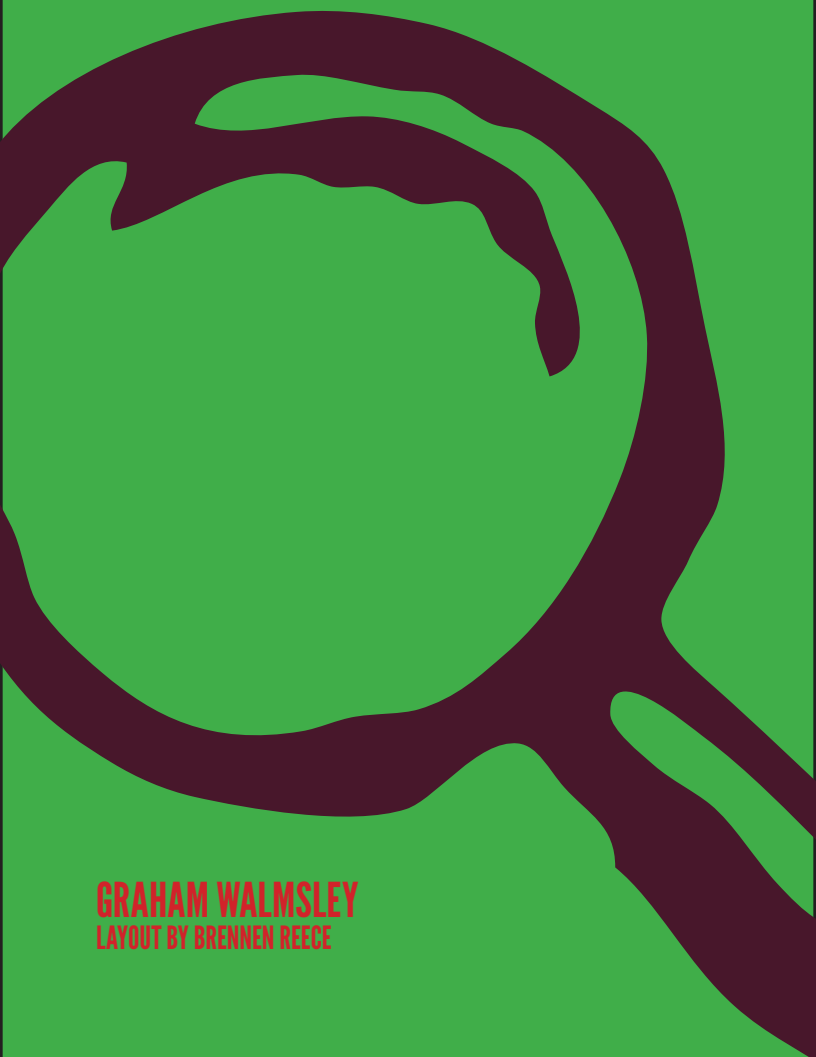


DARK TRAIL

A SHORT GUMSHOE™ GAME FOR
LOVECRAFTIAN INVESTIGATIONS



GRAHAM WALMSLEY
LAYOUT BY BRENNEN REECE

DARK TRAIL

YOUR INVESTIGATOR

Choose a name and occupation. Name the thing that drives your Investigator to investigate.

List the skills that let your Investigator investigate: for example, flattery, history, knowledge of physics. Split 20 points between them.

List your other skills: fighting, shooting, driving, running. Split 40 points between them.

Your Health describes your physical state, your Stability describes your mental state and your Sanity describes your insight into the Mythos. All start at 10.

GOING INSANE

When you see something disturbing, roll a six-sided die. Before rolling, you may take points from your Stability to add to the roll. If you get 5 or more, you hold it together. If not, the Keeper decides how many points of Stability you lose.

If your Stability reaches 0, subtract 1 from Sanity. If your Sanity reaches 0 or your Stability reaches -12, you go insane.

At the end of the Investigation, your Stability returns to 10 but your Sanity does not.

INVESTIGATING

To get a clue, spend a point of an investigative skill. There is one exception: if you *must* get the clue for the investigation to proceed, simply name the skill, without spending a point.

USING OTHER SKILLS

To do something that isn't investigating: the Keeper sets a Difficulty Number. Roll a six-sided die: before rolling, you may take points from an appropriate skill to add to the roll. If you get the Difficulty Number or more, you succeed.

To compete with someone else: both roll dice, both may take points from an appropriate skill to add to the roll. The highest number wins. If it is a tie, roll again, but points already spent are lost.

FIGHTING

In a fight, take turns, starting with whoever has the most unspent points in the skill they are using.

Make a skill roll to hit, against a Difficulty Number of 3 (or more, if the opponent is monstrous or wearing armour). If you hit, roll a six-sided die to subtract from your opponent's health (or more, if the weapon is monstrous or powerful).

EXAMPLE

YOUR INVESTIGATOR

You name your Investigator Jacqueline Waters. She is a journalist and her career drives her to investigate.

Her investigative skills, with 20 points between them, are: Persuasion 4, Photography 4, Languages 2, Bureaucracy 2, Reassurance 2, History 2, Art 2, Medicine 2.

Her other skills, with 40 points between them, are: Fighting 10, Shooting 10, Driving 10, Disguise 5, Stealth 5.

Her Health, Stability and Sanity each start at 10.

GOING INSANE

In her great-uncle's belongings, Jacqueline finds a disturbing statue. She rolls a six-sided die and decides to add two points of Stability to the roll, taking her Stability down to 8. She rolls a two, for a total of 4, and so fails to hold it together. The Keeper says she must lose two Stability, taking her Stability to 6.

INVESTIGATING

Jacqueline, investigating dates mentioned in her great-uncle's manuscripts, decides to ask neighbours. Spending a point of Persuasion, she finds that, on those dates, townspeople dreamed of nameless creatures.

Investigating further, she uses her Bureaucracy skill to file and catalogue the manuscripts. She finds an address that seems out of place: 7 Thomas Street. She does not spend a point of Bureaucracy, because she needs this clue for the investigation to proceed.

USING OTHER SKILLS

Inspector Legrasse is attempting to observe a group of swamp cultists unobserved. The Keeper sets a Difficulty Number of five. Adding two points of Stealth to his roll, he rolls a four, for a total of six. He remains hidden.

Later, Legrasse and another officer chase a cultist. Legrasse spends two points of Running, then rolls five, totalling seven. The other officer spends four points of Running, then rolls two, totalling six. Legrasse wins and catches the cultist.

FIGHTING

Legrasse is attempting to subdue a cultist at the point of his gun. He has more unspent points in his Shooting pool than the cultist does in his Fighting pool, so he attacks first. Legrasse adds three points of Shooting, then rolls 2 to hit, making five: he hits. He rolls for damage and gets 4: the cultist loses 4 Health.

This work is based on the GUMSHOE SRD (found at <http://www.pelgranepress.com/?p=12466>), a product of Pelgrane Press, developed, written, and edited by Robin D. Laws with additional material by Kenneth Hite, and licensed for our use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

© Graham Walmsley 2013