

# RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

A HOBO ODYSSEY

BY OSCAR RIOS



**STRETCH GOAL TWO OF THE COLD WARNING KICKSTARTER**

Edited by Lisa Padol  
Cover & Interior Art by Reuben Dodd  
Maps by Gregory Shipp  
Layout & Design by Mark Shireman

**CALL OF CTHULHU**  
HORROR ROLEPLAYING



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## Thank You

To start off, we must thank the backers of the Cold Warning Kickstarter. We here at Golden Goblin Press cannot bring these projects to life without your generous support. Your faith in our little publishing house keeps us moving forward through the hard times and fuels our passion to create the best possible books we can.

Next, thank you to Reuben Dodd, of Sorrowking Studio, for another amazing cover and collection of interior illustrations! Thank you to Gregory Shipp, from Lost in Maps, for providing us with such wonderful maps. To Lisa Padol, our editor, thank you for another trip on this train and I'm sorry about the foot. To Mark Shireman, thank you so much for another inspired layout and the countless extras you added as our designer. Thank you to our proofreaders, Rob Meyer, Liam Scanlon, and John Scheib, for helping us tighten this drum.

Lastly, I'd like to thank the many playtesters who've hopped on this train and taken this trip with me at various conventions and home gaming sessions. Your almost universal desire for MORE adventure, and pestering for a sequel of some sort, has borne fruit at long last. This new version now includes additional scenes, including the ones the best and bravest hobo teams have long clamored for.

**Oscar Rios**—*President, Golden Goblin Press*

## Dedication

Many years ago, a new friend entered my life, and joined my gaming table. His name was Walter Attridge, and he eventually married another close friend of mine who was part of my gaming circle. He embodied everything one hopes for in a good player and a good friend: a warm fun-loving attitude, a sharp mind, and razor sharp wit. When creating his very first Call of Cthulhu investigator, he rolled up, on a whim, because he thought it would be fun, a hobo, whom he named "Mashed-Potatoes" Johnson. This quickly became a legendary investigator at my home table. When the time came to make pre-generated investigators to use at conventions, we created one inspired by Walter's hobo character, naming him Walt "Mashed-Potatoes" Johnson. Without a doubt, this hobo has been the most played pre-generated investigator in my convention games for the better part of two decades. Eventually, because of his popularity, I created an adventure specifically for hoboes, "Riding the Northbound."

So, to my dear friend Walter Attridge, this one is for you.

**Oscar Rios**

## Riding the Northbound

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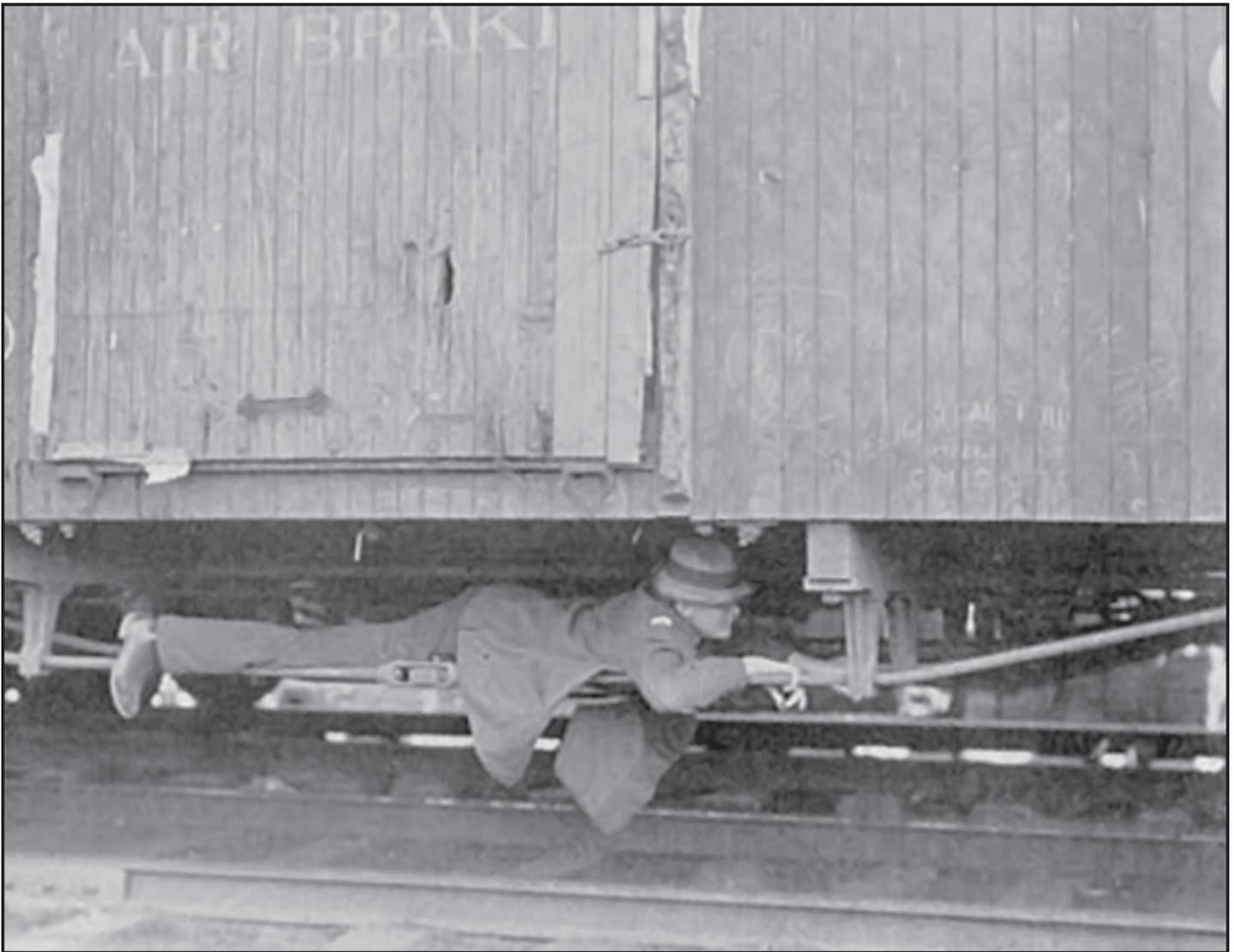
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## RAGGEDY CLOTHES AND WORN OUT SHOES

### A Look at the American Hobo

“He knows the fright of hunger and thirst, / And of cold and rain as well; / Of raggedy clothes and out-worn shoes, / An awful tale he can tell”

—*Hobo Poem*

### WHAT IS A HOBO?

The word “hobo” conjures many images. Some picture a lazy, homeless n’er-do-well riding the rails, begging and committing petty thefts to survive. Others picture a free spirited nomad, wandering from place to place, working where he can while trying to stay out of trouble. Society portrays the hobo as both a villain and a hero, a wise mystical sage or a comical clown, a vagabond poet or a shiftless criminal. The hobo was an undesirable to be driven away or a valued source of manpower to various industries. Truth be told, the hobo is all these things and none of them.

In the late 19th century, the American economy shifted from agrarian to industrial. This caused many once necessary farm workers to become obsolete, their labor no longer required. Many

such people found themselves without work and homeless, desperate to find any way to survive. Some chose a life wandering in search of work, often sneaking onto and off of trains as a way to travel from one possible job to the next. At the end of the Civil War, there were thirty thousand such wanderers; by 1916, their numbers had grown to nearly a quarter of a million, and, by the 1930s, there were over one million such homeless nomads. The American Hobo was born.

While society may not make such distinctions, hoboes define themselves as being different from tramps and bums: The hobo works and wanders. The tramp dreams and wanders. The bum drinks and only wanders when forced to. The separate, yet related, occupations for both tramps and bums are included here.

Hoboes considered themselves workers, nomadic and homeless due to the economic pressures they were forced to contend with. They developed a complex culture all their own. While they faced constant discrimination and other dangers of their unique lifestyle, they endured and became an important part of American culture.

### ATTITUDES TOWARDS HOBOES

How hoboes are viewed by society varies wildly. Many consider them free spirited wanderers and defenders of the common man. As railway barons are some of the richest people in America, stealing rides on railroads marks hoboes as heroes of the working class. Hoboes are depicted in movies, comic strips, and advertising as harmless comical

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figures, moving from one adventure to the next while leading lazy, carefree lives. To many, they are as beloved as the cowboy of the American West, well deserving of an opportunity to work, a few free meals, or the donation of a coin or two.

To others, hoboes are a valuable and vital source of labor, especially in areas suffering from a manpower shortage. When there are large construction projects, such as railroad building, or crops in need of harvesting, especially in the Midwestern wheat belt, hoboes are welcomed with open arms. Once these projects are done, the hoboes are paid, and they move on to the next job somewhere else.

However, many people view hoboes as a menace. In areas where unemployment is already high, homeless strangers seeking work are an unwelcome sight. Petty theft, panhandling, loitering, squatting, drunkenness, and raiding dumpsters are seen as distasteful and threatening

to local residents. Many towns have passed anti-tramp legislation which allows their police forces to arrest, imprison, or quickly drive hoboes out of their communities. Sometimes, numerous hoboes are rounded up and loaded onto trucks by local police. They are then driven to the nearest state or county line and simply dumped off to become another community's problem. This is known as the Hobo Express.

### THREATS TO THE HOBO

In addition to the daily struggle to find work, food, clothing, and some form of shelter, hoboes also face other dangers. Dishonest businessmen and farmers sometimes employ large numbers of hoboes for projects, and then refuse them payment upon completion of their labor. The cheated hoboes have little recourse, as local authorities seldom take their word or their side in

an argument against that of an established, often respected member of the community.

Many communities despise hoboes, and their local police force actively, sometimes violently, drives them off. Hoboes can be arrested, beaten, and escorted out of town without ever committing a crime. Hoboes are also convenient scapegoats for any recently committed crimes, whether they are involved or not. Sadistic railroad workers and security guards are often a serious threat as well, as many are quite eager to brutally beat or even murder a hobo.

Black hoboes often face the additional dangers associated with racial prejudice. Female hoboes and young boys are sometimes tragic victims of sexual assaults from both townspeople and other hoboes, even though committing such heinous acts is strictly prohibited by the established hobo code of conduct (see "Hobo Etiquette/Code of Conduct"). Hoboes might also become targeted



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for robbery, especially after they received payment for a large job, such as bringing in a harvest. The robbers, called jackrollers, usually work in pairs or larger groups that prey upon the hoboes in wolf packs.

When it comes to matters of protection, justice, and fair play, hoboes are on their own. They are well aware that very few people care what happens to them, and those committing crimes against them are seldom, if ever, punished or prosecuted. This forces hoboes to be ever wary, take precautions to ensure their safety, and be ready to flee from danger or defend themselves at a moment's notice.

### TOURIST UNION #63

A group of clever hoboes found a way to avoid prosecution for vagrancy: unionize. As members of a union, the hoboes couldn't be arrested for being homeless if they were looking for work. The group drew up articles for a confederation and registered as a union. There were sixty-three founding members, both men and women, so the union became known as the Tourist Union #63. Each August, the union would have a convention. It traveled from city to city each year, through 1899. In 1900, the convention was held at the town of Brit, Iowa, which invited the hoboes to make their town the convention's permanent home.

## HOBO CULTURE

Like many groups bound together by circumstance, hoboes developed a culture all their own.

### Hobo Arts

Hoboes often have long periods of inactivity while riding the rails or camping for the night. During these times, they find ways to entertain one another. This sparked a tradition of story-telling, tall tales, and poetry among hoboes.

Music is also important, with songs sung and music performed on makeshift or portable instruments, such as the harmonica. The popular children's song "Big Rock Candy Mountain" was recorded in 1928 by Harry McClintock, who claimed it was a hobo song which he wrote during his misspent youth riding the rails.

### Hobo Camps

Often, near important railway switching points or water towers, where hoboes can easily get on and off trains, they build settlements. These simple camps are called Jungles and offer hoboes a place to socialize, share a communal fire, and rest in relative safety. Hoboes wishing to stay at a Jungle are required to help support the camp. They can share food, perform camp

chores such as gathering wood or water, or do other important tasks.

### The Rule of the Match

Hoboes who shirk their camp responsibilities, a serious breach of hobo etiquette, are called Jungle Buzzards. Such individuals are often given a match, usually accompanied by a cold threatening stare. This is the "Rule of the Match" which signals exile from a Jungle. Its meaning is simple: you are not welcome at our fire; go make your own fire someplace else.

### Hobo Etiquette/ Code of Conduct

A code of behavior is widely accepted among hoboes, voted upon during the 1889 National Hobo Convention in St. Louis, Missouri. This is the Hobo Ethical Code of 1889 (aka the Hobo Code), and this code of ethical behavior can be summed up in fifteen simple rules.

- 1. You Do You:** A Hobo must be their own master, ever free to decide the course of their own life. They must never let another person control them.
- 2. Show Some Respect:** Hoboes must always be respectful towards others, especially when in towns or cities. They should behave as ladies and gentlemen, showing the utmost courtesy, especially towards public officials and officers of the law.
- 3. Don't Be an Opportunist:** A hobo should never take advantage of someone in a vulnerable situation, be they a stranger or a fellow hobo. Never kick people when they are down.
- 4. Get a Job:** A hobo should always try to find work, even if temporary, and always the jobs nobody else wants to do. This way local businesses gain much needed labor and hoboes find a steady source of employment.
- 5. Be a Self-Starter:** A hobo should keep busy and stay productive. If they cannot find work, they should make their own work, via crafts or talents. A resourceful hobo can always find something that needs to be done.
- 6. Set a Good Example:** What a hobo does reflects on all hoboes, so they should always be on their best behavior when passing through an area. Becoming publicly drunk, behaving like a nuisance, causing problems, or embarrassing yourself somewhere makes life harder for every other hobo visiting that area.
- 7. Be Mindful of Others:** When passing through an area, a hobo should never take advantage of the generosity of people, especially those giving out handouts, or wear out their welcome. Other hoboes will be passing through

the area behind you and may be in as great or even greater need than you.

- 8. Don't Litter:** A hobo should respect nature. They should never leave garbage lying about, especially at a Jungle.
- 9. Lend a Hand:** A hobo visiting a Jungle should always pitch in with camp chores, offering the help with whatever the community might need.
- 10. Practice Good Hygiene:** A hobo should try to stay clean, and "Boil Up" (bathe and clean their clothing) whenever they have an opportunity to do so.
- 11. Be Courteous when Riding the Rails:** When traveling on a train, a hobo should ride respectfully, causing no problems with the crew or operation of the train. They should behave as if they were an additional crew member, to the point of offering assistance to the crew should the need arise.
- 12. Be Courteous when NOT Riding the Rails:** A hobo's courteous behavior towards trains and crews should extend to their actions when in railyards. Causing problems or behaving badly in a railyard makes life harder for other hoboes traveling through there in the future.
- 13. Help Out Kids:** A hobo should always try to help runaway children, and should always try to persuade them to return home. Riding the rails is not an easy or safe life, and it is much harder and more dangerous for children. Anyone molesting a child must be turned over to the local authorities immediately; such individuals are considered to be the lowest of the low.
- 14. Help Your Fellow Hoboes:** A hobo should always come to the aid of other hoboes, whenever or wherever the need arises. One day, that hobo in need could be you.
- 15. Lend Your Voice:** A hobo should not remain silent if they have testimony relating to something at a Hobo Court (where a council of respected hoboes settles a dispute in the hobo community). If a hobo has something relevant to add, be it in favor of or against an accused, they must speak up because every voice matters.

## HOBO NAMES

Among themselves, hoboes are usually known by their nicknames, called "traveling names." Often, these are the only names they are known by, both to fellow hoboes and outsiders. Famous hobo names include: Seasick Steve, Boxcar Bertha, Haywire, Sidetrack, A No.1, Steam Train Maury, T-Bone Slim, and Utah Phillips. Within my own *Call of Cthulhu* campaign, the most famous hobo Mythos investigator is named Walt "Mashed Potatoes" Johnson.

# HOBO NAME GENERATOR

A hobo's name says a lot about them, how people see them and how they see themselves. It can be simple or complex, profound or outlandish, depending on the type of hobo who uses it. These charts are meant to help get players started, giving them a wide variety of choices for inspiration. Ultimately, the specific name created should always be the choice of the investigator.

There are four tables:

- A) Names, Male/Female (1D100)
- B) An adjective (1D20)
- C) A Noun (1D20)
- D) A Title (1D20)

## Getting Started

The player should roll on tables A, B, C, and D, coming up with four names. Some of these listings will have choices connected to them. The player should construct a name using anywhere between

one and three of these names, but we find that two usually works best. Four would be a mouthful to yell at someone while running for a train.

## Choices

Many of the choices have double listings, such as Lord/Lady, Rusty/Shiny, Tin Can/Ashe Can. Other choices will be very general, such as Name of State or Country, Type of Drink, or Item of Clothing.

## First Names

These 100 male and female first names are some of the most popular American names during the 1920s. Players should consider using the shortened nicknames of these names, as hobo names tended to be informal. So, names such as Robert, Arthur, and Frederick would become Bob, Art, or Fred, while names like Beatrice, Gertrude, and Kathleen would be Bea, Gerdie, or Kat.

For example, here are two names we've rolled up as an example, and a list of names that could be created from these rolls:

- A) Marvin or Lorraine
- B) Sweet/Sour
- C) Name of Animal
- D) Doctor/Nurse

These names could be: Bulldog Marv, Doc Sour-Rat, or Squirrel; Sweet Lori, Lorraine Butterfly, or Nurse Bunny.

- A) Vincent or Theresa
- B) Dirty/Dusty
- C) Type of Metal or Gemstone
- D) Duke/Duchess

These names could be: Dirty Vince, Vinnie Sapphire, Duke Dusty; The Duchess, Dirty Terry Diamond or Dusty Silver.

## A. Names – 1D100 (Male/Female)

1. Robert/Mary	21. Albert/Florence	41. Anthony/Ethel	61. Lloyd/Joyce	81. Martin/Anne
2. John/Dorothy	22. David/Lois	42. Stanley/Phyllis	62. Ray/Nancy	82. Milton/Marilyn
3. James/Helen	23. Harry/Martha	43. Norman/Grace	63. Frederick/Katherine	83. Lee/Kathryn
4. William/Betty	24. Eugene/Rose	44. Gerald/Hazel	64. Theodore/Gertrude	84. Jesse/Maxine
5. Charles/Margaret	25. Ralph/Lillian	45. Daniel/June	65. Clifford/Elsie	85. Dale/Kathleen
6. George/Ruth	26. Howard/Louise	46. Samuel/Bernice	66. Vernon/Julia	86. Cecil/Viola
7. Joseph/Virginia	27. Carl/Catherine	47. Bernard/Marion	67. Herman/Agnes	87. Bill/Pearl
8. Richard/Doris	28. Willie/Ruby	48. Billy/Dolores	68. Clyde/Wilma	88. Harvey/Vera
9. Edward/Mildred	29. Louis/Eleanor	49. Melvin/Rita	69. Chester/Marian	89. Roger/Bessie
10. Donald/Frances	30. Clarence/Patricia	50. Marvin/Lorraine	70. Philip/Bertha	90. Victor/Myrtle
11. Thomas/Elizabeth	31. Earl/Gladys	51. Warren/Ann	71. Alvin/Eva	91. Benjamin/Alma
12. Frank/Evelyn	32. Roy/Annie	52. Michael/Esther	72. Lester/Willie	92. Wallace/Beverly
13. Harold/Anna	33. Fred/Josephine	53. Leroy/Beatrice	73. Wayne/Audrey	93. Ronald/Violet
14. Paul/Marie	34. Joe/Thelma	54. Russell/Juanita	74. Vincent/Theresa	94. Sam/Nellie
15. Raymond/Alice	35. Francis/Edna	55. Leo/Clara	75. Gordon/Vivian	95. Allen/Ella
16. Walter/Jean	36. Lawrence/Norma	56. Andrew/Jane	76. Leon/Wanda	96. Arnold/Lillie
17. Jack/Shirley	37. Herbert/Pauline	57. Edwin/Geraldine	77. Lewis/Laura	97. Willard/Jessie
18. Henry/Barbara	38. Leonard/Lucille	58. Elmer/Sarah	78. Charlie/Charlotte	98. Gilbert/Jeanne
19. Kenneth/Irene	39. Ernest/Edith	59. Peter/Emma	79. Glenn/Ida	99. Edgar/Eileen
20. Arthur/Marjorie	40. Alfred/Gloria	60. Floyd/Joan	80. Calvin/Elaine	100. Oscar/Minnie

## B. Adjective – 1D20

1. Big/Little	5. Drunk/Sober	9. Happy/Angry	13. Quick/Slow	17. Smart/Stupid
2. Brave/Jittery	6. Fat (chubby)/Thin (slim)	10. Hot/Cold	14. Red/Green	18. Smelly/Stinky
3. Crazy/Sensible	7. Generous/Stingy	11. Hungry/Sleepy	15. Rough/Smooth	19. Smiling/Smirking
4. Dirty/Dusty	8. Handsome/Beautiful	12. Patch-Work/Gap-Tooth	16. Rusty/Shiny	20. Sweet/Sour

## C. Noun – 1D20

1. Bottle/Bottlecap/Wine Cork	6. Item of Clothing	11. Name of State or Country	16. Type of Good Luck Charm
2. Boxcar/Railcar/Caboose	7. Item of Currency	12. Tin Can/Ash Can	17. Type of Metal or Gemstone
3. Item Found in a Kitchen	8. Name of Animal	13. Type of Alcohol or Tobacco	18. Type of Musical Instrument
4. Item found in a Washroom	9. Name of City	14. Type of Drink	19. Type of Tool
5. Item Found on a Farm	10. Name of River or Ocean	15. Type of Food	20. Type of Weather

## D. Title – 1D20

1. Baron /Baroness	5. Doctor /Nurse	9. Governor /Governess	13. Marshal	17. Saint
2. Captain /Sargent	6. Duke /Duchess	10. Judge /Minister	14. President /Mayor	18. Secretary
3. Chief /Boss	7. Father /Mother	11. King /Queen	15. Prince /Princess	19. Sir /Madam
4. Count /Countess	8. General /Warlord	12. Lord /Lady	16. Professor	20. Trooper

Some Examples of Hobo Slang

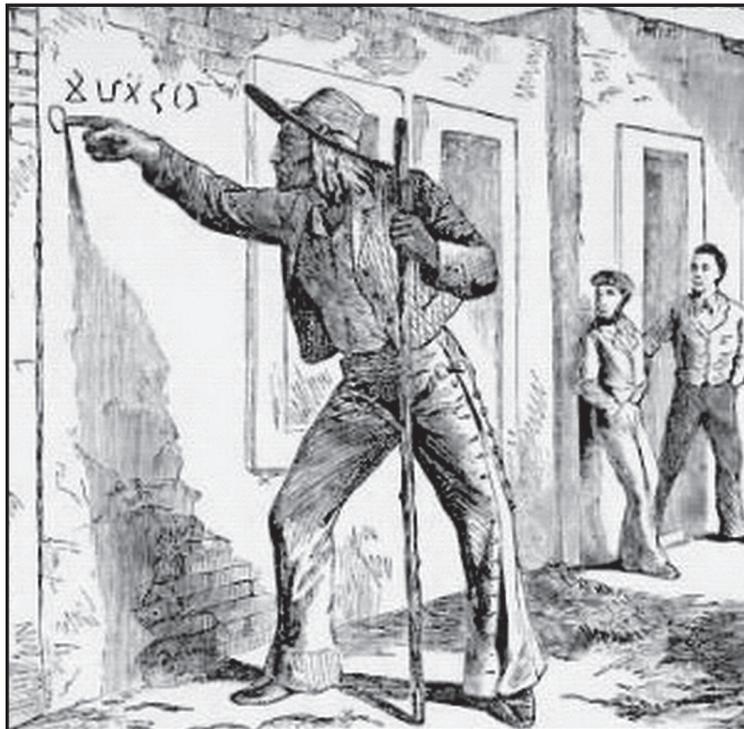
1. **Angelina:** Someone young and inexperienced.
2. **Bad Road:** A train line rendered very difficult or unusable due to a hobo's bad behavior.
3. **Bindle:** A bedroll.
4. **Bo:** What hoboes call one another instead of "hobo."
5. **Boil Up:** To boil ones clothing to kill lice and their eggs, also to wash or bath.
6. **Bone Polisher:** An unfriendly dog.
7. **Bull:** A policeman or railway officer
8. **Bullets:** Beans.
9. **C, H and D:** Someone is Cold, Hungry, and Thirsty (Dry).
10. **California Blanket:** Newspaper used as bedding.
11. **Canned Heat:** Strained Sterno consumed for the alcohol content.
12. **Catch the Westbound:** Die.
13. **Cinder Bull:** A railroad policeman.
14. **Courtesy Call:** A night in jail without arrest, usually for a meal and warm place to sleep.
15. **Dumpster Diving:** Searching through dumpsters for food and supplies.
16. **Flip:** Boarding a moving train.
17. **Flop:** A place to sleep.
18. **Grease the Tracks:** To be run over by a train.
19. **Gun Boat:** A large empty can used for cooking.
20. **Hot Shot:** A very fast train, typically carries priority freight and rarely stops.
21. **Jackroller:** A person who assaults and robs hoboes.
22. **Jungle:** A hobo camp, usually near to a railway line.
23. **Jungle Buzzard:** A hobo or tramp who preys upon other hoboes or tramps, particularly by taking advantage of their generosity.
24. **Knee-shaker:** A handout on a plate at the backdoor of a house, eaten on one's knees.
25. **Lump:** A pre-packaged handout.
26. **Mulligan:** A communal stew made from combining whatever food hoboes can contribute.
27. **On the Fly:** Jumping from a moving train.
28. **Padding the Hoof:** Traveling on foot.
29. **Punk:** Any young person.
30. **Road Kid:** A young hobo traveling with an older hobo, who is mentoring them.
31. **Road Stake:** Money kept in case of an emergency.
32. **Sit Down:** A meal offered inside a person's kitchen.
33. **Stemming:** Begging on the street
34. **Tokay Blanket:** Drinking alcohol in an attempt to stay warm.
35. **Walking Dandruff:** Lice.

HOBO SLANG & CANT

Hoboes developed a vast lexicon of slang terms. These words coupled with odd pronunciation of common words, are part of a pidgin dialect all its own, a secret language of the hoboes. All hobo investigators begin play speaking this language, the Hobo Cant.

HOBO SIGNS

These simple runic signs are used by hoboes to convey important information to one another. This information can be warnings to other hoboes about the dangers of various places or tips for where one can find work or charitable people. All hobo investigators begin play with the Hobo Signs skill.



 NO USE GOING THIS DIRECTION	 THIS WAY	 HIT THE ROAD QUICK!	 OR	 GOOD ROAD TO FOLLOW	 ROAD SPOILED, full of other hoboes
 HALT	 THIS IS THE PLACE	 POLICE HERE FROWN ON HOBOS	 AUTHORITIES HERE ARE ALERT	 THIS COMMUNITY Indifferent to hoboes	 ALCOHOL IN THIS TOWN
 OR	 WELL-GUARDED HOUSE	 THE OWNER IS IN	 THE OWNER IS OUT	 A GENTLEMAN LIVES HERE	 ILL-TEMPERED MAN LIVES HERE
 THESE PEOPLE ARE RICH	 KIND LADY LIVES HERE	 KIND WOMAN, TELL PITIFUL STORY	 EASY MARK / SUCKER	 DISHONEST PERSON LIVES HERE	
 BARKING DOG HERE	 VICIOUS DOG HERE	 BEWARE OF FOUR DOGS	 MAN WITH A GUN LIVES HERE	 A BEATING AWAITS YOU HERE	 YOU'LL BE CURSED OUT
 IF YOU ARE SICK, THEY'LL CARE FOR YOU	 DOCTOR HERE, WON'T CHARGE	 FREE TELEPHONE	 RELIGIOUS TALK GETS FREE MEAL	 OR	 YOU CAN SLEEP IN HAYLOFT
 FOOD HERE IF YOU WORK	 GOOD PLACE FOR A HANDOUT	 DOUBTFUL	 O.K. / ALL RIGHT	 NOTHING TO BE GAINED HERE	
 YOU CAN CAMP HERE	 FRESH WATER, SAFE CAMPSITE	 DANGEROUS DRINKING WATER	 THE SKY IS THE LIMIT	 TROLLEY STOP	 GOOD PLACE TO CATCH A TRAIN
 KEEP QUIET	 HOLD YOUR TONGUE	 DANGEROUS NEIGHBORHOOD	 THIS IS NOT A SAFE PLACE	 BE PREPARED TO DEFEND YOURSELF	 COWARDS, WILL GIVE TO GET RID OF YOU
 2/10 THERE ARE THIEVES ABOUT	 # CRIME COMMITTED, not safe for strangers	 @ JUDGE LIVES HERE	 @ COURTHOUSE / PRECINCT STATION	 # OFFICER OF LAW LIVES HERE	 # JAIL

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND



### RIDING THE RAILS

An essential part of being a hobo is riding the rails—sneaking onto and off of railways cars to travel. Sometimes, a hobo must get on (Flipping) or off (On the Fly) a moving train, which can be a hazardous proposition. The ideal time to attempt this is when the train is stopped or when it slows down while taking a sharp turn or steep incline, and hoboes can accomplish this easily with a Regular Dexterity check. Those failing this suffer 1D2 points of damage as they stumble, fall, or bruise themselves against the moving train. Hoboes attempting to board or disembark from a train that is moving (either starting to pull away or reducing speed on a moderate turn or incline) must make a Climb check. Those failing take 1D6 points of damage, unless they fumble, in which case they instead suffer 3D6 points of damage. Those who survive the damage from a fumble must make a Hard Luck check, or suffer a serious injury, such as a broken bone, severed extremity, or internal injury (Keeper's choice). Hoboes who lose more than their maximum hit points from such damage catch the westbound, i.e., die. Hoboes reduced to 0 hit points who have also suffered a Major wound are dying. Those reduced to 0 hit points who have somehow not suffered a Major wound are rendered

unconscious. Keepers should see pages 120–122 of the *Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition Keeper Rulebook*.

### FULFILLING DAY TO DAY NEEDS

Hoboes, like everyone else, need to eat, clothe themselves, and occasionally get out of the elements. Hobo investigators, unless supported by others, must constantly work to provide for their basic needs. They can do this in many different ways, such as seeking temporary work (popular with hoboes), perform in hopes of earning donations (most popular with tramps), or beg and/or scavenge (most popular with bums). Please note that any and all of these methods are open to all types—hoboes, tramps, and bums. E.g.: A hobo who can't find a job on a particular day may need to beg in order to get something to eat. A tramp who can't find an audience may need to get a job for the day, while a bum who had a bad day begging and dumpster diving may be forced to tell some jokes and sing a few songs for a handout.

#### Days of Need

In game, what hoboes earn while doing these tasks are called Days of Need. A Day of Need is the daily material the hobo needs to get through

a single day in (relatively) good health. This can be cash payment, such as when working a job or performing professionally. The average Day of Need in cash is roughly about \$3 in cash. However it can also be food, drink, and clothing, whether given in lieu of cash, donated, or found. It also includes other important things a hobo needs, such as camping and travel gear, trade tools for working (this includes musical instruments for performing tramps), and the occasional luxury items, such as tobacco, alcohol, candy, or books. It does not include shelter.

Most successful rolls for working, performing, begging, and scavenging only provide a single Day of Need. This forces most hoboes to live day to day. However, those making Hard or Extreme successes on these checks can earn multiple Days of Need, allowing them to horde away enough to last beyond the current day, as detailed in the lists in the following subsections. This is of vital importance if the hobo is planning a long trip on the rails, as they'll be unable to look for work, beg, scavenge for supplies, or perform while traveling.

Hoboes who run out of Days of Need suffer a loss of 2D6 CON per day. They continue to weaken until their minimum needs are met, recovering 1D3 points per day. Hoboes can recover faster, at the rate of 1D6

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CON per day, but must spend 1.5 Days per Need each day. Hoboes who drop below 30 CON become too sick to move, and once reduced to zero CON, die of a combination of thirst, hunger, illness, and exposure. Often, before this happens, most hobo come to the aid of any of their brethren who's fallen on such hard times. It's part of the Hobo Code after all, and in their own best interest. One day, the sick and starving hobo might be them.

### Finding a Job

A hobo looking to find an honest work must make a Luck check. Those who fail spend the day unsuccessfully looking for work. Those making a Regular success find employment for that day, a task taking 1D6 hours of labor. Those making a Hard success can choose one of the following options, while those making an Extreme success can choose any two of the following options:

- » **Generous Employer:** The payment for the hobo's labor is 2 days' worth of need.
- » **Simple Task:** The time required to complete the work is only 1D3 hours.
- » **Flop Space:** The job includes a place to sleep for the night.
- » **Longer Assignment:** The job is open for multiple days (1D6+1), should the hobo be willing to stick around for a while.

### Performing

A hobo seeking to perform for handouts roll a successful Art: Skill check (such as singing, dancing, musical instrument, etc. . .). Those who fail this check earn nothing and waste 1D4 hours. This could mean that they failed to locate a suitable audience, were driven off by the authorities mid-performance, or could not inspire the crowd to donate anything. Those making a successful Art check earn enough to meet their needs for that day after 1D4 hours. Those making a Hard success can choose one of the following options while hobo making an Extreme success can choose any two of the following options:

- » **Generous Audience:** The payment for the hobo's labor is 2 days' worth of need.
- » **Return Engagement:** Local shop owners invite the hobo to perform the next 1D3 days with automatic success.
- » **Flop Space:** The job includes a place to sleep for the night.
- » **Longer Assignment:** The job is open for multiple days, (1D6+1), should the hobo be willing to stick around for a while.

### Begging

Hoboes begging for handouts must make a

successful Persuade, Charm, or Fast Talk roll. Those making a Regular success receive a day's worth of need in 1D6 hours. Those who fail are ignored by the crowds, lectured by the judgmental, harassed by local business owners, and likely driven off by the police. Those making a Hard success can choose one of the following options while hobo making an Extreme success can choose any two of the following options:

- » **Generous Person:** The payment for the hobo's labor is 2 days' worth of need.
- » **Prime Location:** The time required to earn a Day of Need is 1D3 hours.
- » **Accidental Donation:** Someone makes a mistake and donates something valuable, worth 2-5 Days of Need (1D4+1). If the hobo returns the item, they get 2 days' worth of need. If they don't, and fail a Luck check, the person returns looking for them to recover their item. They might also contact the police if the item is rather valuable.
- » **Opportune Favor:** While begging, the hobo see someone in need of help. This can be anything from having fallen down or fainted, needing help carrying something heavy, or pushing them out of the way of a moving car. In return, the hobo is rewarded with a hot meal and having a local room rented for them for the night (2 full days' worth of need with the bonus of a comfortable room).

### Scavenging

Hoboes scavenging for supplies must roam about a vast area looking for discarded food, supplies, or valuables they can sell or trade by making a Spot Hidden check. Those making a Regular success receive a day's worth of need in 1D6 hours. Those who fail find nothing, or are driven off by local shop and business owners, residents, and the authorities who suspect them of being thieves. Those making a Hard success can choose one of the following options while those making an Extreme success can choose any two of the following options:

- » **Fortuitous Find:** The hobo finds a healthy supply of something, gaining 2 Days of Need.
- » **After party:** The hobo locates the trash from a celebration, gaining a Day of Need in 1D3 hours.
- » **Generous Staff:** The hobo finds a sympathetic kitchen staff at a local restaurant, which saves and packs up their daily leftovers. They receive 1D4+1 Days of Need.
- » **Lost Treasure:** The hobo finds

something very valuable, such as a lost item of jewelry, a bill roll, or a mistakenly discarded antique. There is no way to determine to whom it belongs. The finder can turn it into authorities for a reward equivalent to 1-2 Days of Need. If they keep the item, they receive 1D6+1 Days of Need, but must also succeed on a Luck check, or at some point be accused of its theft by authorities.

## THE HOBO AS A MYTHOS INVESTIGATOR

A hobo is uniquely suited to the life of a Mythos investigator. Without a steady job, set residence, or an overabundance of social connections, they can fight cultists, aliens, and ancient evil deities, with little fear of reprisals. They are hardened survivors, versatile and resourceful, able to travel great distances rapidly and are seldom taken to be a serious threat or credible witness by others. Their transient nature makes them hard to find by their enemies or the authorities, and fellow hobo are code bound to assist such investigators whenever possible.

### New Skills

Hobo, Tramp, and Bum investigators begin play with the following three new skills.

- » **Other Language: Hobo Cant (EDU):** Hoboes, tramps, and bums have a special language only they can easily understand.
- » **Hobo Signs (EDU):** Hoboes, tramps, and bums have a secret pictorial communication system which they use to convey important information, such as warnings, directions, and tips.
- » **Survival: Urban (Half EDU):** This skill allows a hobo to find shelter from the elements in an urban setting, such as locating an abandoned building, constructing a makeshift shelter, or finding a church or shelter offering the needy a bed for the night.

### The Hobo

You are without a permanent home or steady job, riding the rails, continually on the move from one town to the next. You take work when you find it and do your best to live from one day to the next. You're a survivor, plain and simple, the master of your own destiny.

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU X2 + DEX X2

**Credit Rating:** 0-5

**Suggested Contacts:** Other hobo, tramps, and

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bums, as well as a few friendly railroad guards, and soft touches (generous persons willing to provide handouts) in numerous towns.

**Skills:** Charm, Climb, Fast Talk or Persuade, Hobo Signs, Jump, Listen or Spot Hidden, Other Language: Hobo Cant, Stealth, Survival: Urban.

### The Tramp

You are a nomad poet, going where the winds of chance blow you and making the best of wherever you land. Food, clothing, and comfort will come or it won't. Either way, you follow your heart while depending on your luck and the generosity of others. You've always got a joke or story to tell, a song to sing or play, and a desire to bring a smile to others.

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU X 2 + APP X 2

**Credit Rating:** 0-5

**Suggested Contacts:** Other hoboes, tramps, and bums, as well as a few friendly railroad guards, and soft touches (generous persons willing to provide handouts) in numerous towns.

**Skills:** Art/Craft (singing, poetry, storytelling, or a portable musical instrument), Charm, Climb, Listen, Navigate, Occult, Other Language: Hobo Cant, Persuade, Psychology, Stealth, Survival: Urban.

**Special Ability:** Tramps are inherently gifted Dreamers. Should a tramp ever learn the Dreaming skill, their base score begins at half their POW. Tramps do not begin with the Dreaming skill, but must learn it during play. (This is true of all other investigators, but when other investigators learn Dreaming, their skill starts at 1/5 POW.)

### The Bum

You don't have a home or a job and wouldn't have it any other way. You live on your own terms, answer to no one, and set your own hours. Work is for suckers! Trading your life away for a handful of nickels while making other men rich off your labor, no way, not you, no sir! Sure, you take a drink now and again, so what?

**Occupation Skill Points:** EDU X 2 + POW X 2

**Credit Rating:** 0-5

**Suggested Contacts:** Other hoboes, tramps, and bums, as well as a few friendly railroad guards, and soft touches (generous persons willing to provide handouts) in numerous towns.

**Skills:** Charm, Climb, Dodge, Fast Talk, Hobo Sign, Jump, Listen, Locksmith, Other Language: Hobo Cant, Sleight of Hand, Spot Hidden Stealth, Survival: Urban.

**Special Penalty/Alcoholism:** All bum investigators begin play as alcoholics. They find solace in drinking and have become physically addicted to alcohol. They spend much of their time maintaining and indulging in their habit. This disorder's symptoms include poor judgement, talkativeness, mood changes, aggression, impaired attention, and amnesia-like states.

Their self-medication deadens their fears and anxieties, and offers temporary resistance to insanity. Keepers have the option of allowing bums to make Sanity checks with a bonus die, depending on their level of inebriation.

Bums struggle with their addiction daily, and Keepers should require a POW check for hoboes attempting to refrain from drinking when given the opportunity. The bum tries to maintain a balance between total inebriation and withdrawn, staying just drunk enough to function without becoming sober enough to start suffering from the shakes. Symptoms of withdrawal include shakiness, nausea, headaches, insomnia, and profuse sweating. Hoboes who are totally inebriated, as well as those going through withdrawal, find it incredibly hard to focus and control their actions. Keepers should impose a 1 or even 2 dice penalty to all of their actions.

**Special Ability/Dumb Luck:** When it comes to somehow avoiding injury, bums are unusually lucky. A special providence apparently protects fools, children, and drunkards. Once per day, bums can reduce the damage suffered from a single attack or accident by half if they make a successful Luck check.

#### ***The following sources were extremely helpful in the writing of this article:***

Colin Beesley, "The American Hobo," accessed June 12, 2013, <https://www.northbankfred.com/colin1.html>

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Bobb Hopkins, *The American Hobo*, directed by Bobb Hopkins, 2003

# PRE-GENERATED INVESTIGATORS FOR “RIDING THE NORTHBOUND”



**Bayou Babe**  
*Hobo*

**STR** 75 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 70 **INT** 65 **POW** 60  
**DEX** 55 **APP** 45 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 60  
**LUCK** 60 **HP** 14 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 80% (40/16), 1D3+DB; Crowbar 80% (40/16), 1D4+DB; Pocket Knife 80% (40/16), 1D3+DB; Dodge 40% (20/8)

**SKILLS:** Charm 20%, Climb 80%, Credit Rating 04%, First Aid 45%, Hobo Signs 70%, Intimidate 35%, Jump 70%, Language (Other): French 30%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 70%, Language (Own): English 70%, Listen 50%, Natural World 25%, Occult 20%, Persuade 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 65%, Survival: Urban 60%, Throw 50%

**NOTES:** This powerfully built, but gentle-hearted hobo is well liked across New England. Originally from Louisiana, few know much about his life before he took to the rails, and no one even knows his actual name. While reticent about his earlier life he is far from shy, and enjoys helping out his fellow hoboes with a generous, good-natured spirit. While he doesn't have many special skills, like carpentry, mechanics, or the ability to play a musical instrument, he has no trouble finding work. At manual labor, he is worth any two men, and his strong back and powerful shoulders gain him a place on construction work crews and helping bring in crops.

Among hoboes, he is quite valuable for his intimidating size and powerful build. Very few jackrollers or railway bulls are foolhardy enough to take him on in a fair fight, so his mere presence makes hoboes traveling with him a bit safer. While Bayou Babe may toss around a threat or two, most hoboes know he is loath to use violence, and often gives first aid to those he knocks out. This is ironic because he is very good with his fists—so good, in fact, that many comment that he should be a boxer, to which he replies that he has a glass jaw and would never make it in the ring.

In truth, this is a lie. He was, in fact, an up and coming boxer in his youth. Bayou Babe's real name is Jefferson Baptist, a fugitive wanted for murder in Georgia. The man he is accused of killing, a Henry Hargrove, died in the ring during a match. His death was purely accidental. However, since Bayou Babe is black, and his opponent was white, he thought it wiser to flee the south entirely. He is certain that if he had remained to try and explain things to the police, he would have ended up being lynched before ever getting to a courthouse or jail cell. To this day, he feels guilty about Henry Hargrove's death.

**EQUIPMENT:** Crowbar, canteen, box of matches, blanket, ball of string, roll of bandages, needle and thread, metal mug, handkerchief.

**Sandpaper Sammy**  
*Hobo*

**STR** 60 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 60 **POW** 55  
**DEX** 65 **APP** 55 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 50  
**LUCK** 50 **HP** 11 **MP** 11 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10), 1D3+DB; Hammer 50% (25/10), 1D4+DB; Screwdriver 50% (25/10), 1D2+DB; Dodge 40% (20/8)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Carpenter 55%, Charm 35%, Climb 70%, Credit Rating 02%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 35%, Hobo Signs 80%, Jump 40%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 80%, Language (Own): English 80%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 20%, Natural World 20%, Navigate 40%, Occult 15%, Persuade 45%, Sleight of Hand 20%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 65%, Survival: Urban 40%



**NOTES:** As his name would suggest, Sandpaper Sammy is well known as a skilled carpenter, but also for an ever-present five o'clock shadow. He tries to find work in construction projects, doing minor repairs, and doing odd-jobs fixing things. He would like nothing better than to find a steady job somewhere and settle down, but something always seems to mess that up. Before long, he's always forced to move on and look for work, or at least that's what he tells himself.

Sandpaper Sammy, whose real name is Sam Donovan, has wanderlust. Every time he gets a permanent stable job, he works hard and does well, for a while. Once he's in a single place for longer than a month or two, he begins to get bored and become unfocused. His work suffers, resulting in lateness or missing shifts entirely, and an increasingly indifferent attitude. This goes for paying his rent as well, through a combination of forgetfulness and irresponsibility.

Sandpaper Sammy does this subconsciously, of course, but it is this personal tendency which keeps him riding the rails. While he "dreams" of a better life, he is living exactly as he wants to, and the freedom of a hobo's life is the only thing that does in fact make him happy.

This all stems from a failed whirlwind romance when he was a very young man. His heart was broken by a woman who promised him the world. What she did was drain his bank account and leave him standing at the altar on what should have been his wedding day. He was so devastated that he stopped going to work and became homeless. After abandoning his dream of a home, wife, family, and stable job for

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the life of a wandering hobo, things seemed to come back into focus for him. If you rely on yourself, and live day to day, then no one can take advantage of you.

**EQUIPMENT:** Sack, tool belt, hammer, screwdriver, box of nails, box of screws, collapsible jigsaw, sandpaper, level, three empty milk bottles, book of matches, bandages, bedroll, pot.



### Coal-Dust Hobo

**STR** 50 **CON** 60 **SI** 65 **INT** 65 **POW** 60  
**DEX** 45 **APP** 65 **EDU** 75 **SAN** 60  
**LUCK** 50 **HP** 12 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10), 1D3+DB;  
Small Knife 50% (25/10), 1D4+DB;  
Dodge 40% (20/8)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Furniture Maker 40%, Art/Craft: Harmonica 25%, Charm 40%, Climb 65%, Credit Rating 02%, Fast Talk 40%, Hobo Signs 75%, Jump 30%, Language (Other): German 20%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 75%, Language (Own): English 75%, Listen 45%, Natural World 25%, Occult 15%, Persuade 45%, Sleight of Hand 25%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 75%, Survival: Urban 40%, Throw 50%

**NOTES:** Coal-Dust is so named for a famous incident where he escaped a murderous railway bull by hiding in the coal car, buried over his head, from Toledo, Ohio to Cucamonga, California. From this, he gained quite a reputation for resourcefulness and his ability to get into and out of places undetected. He's more embarrassed by the story than he is proud, because it was a completely miserable experience for him. He tends to be quiet, but has a keen ear and sharp

eye, often spotting both danger and opportunity that other hoboes miss. He is also one of the more handsome hoboes in New England, with a charm and persuasiveness that often gets him out of trouble.

Before taking to the rails, Coal-Dust, whose real name is Frederick Gruber, worked for a furniture factory. He made a decent living, until he was laid off, his position replaced by a machine. Betrayed by factory management and his union, the apprentice furniture maker suddenly found himself jobless, and soon after, homeless. While family offered to take him in until he "got on his feet," his pride kept him moving from town to town, looking for work. Without money for a ticket on the train, he started traveling as a hobo and quickly found the lifestyle agreed with him.

Today, he does whatever odd jobs he can, and often does repair work on furniture pieces as a way to get by. Sometimes he'll play the harmonica, but usually only as an accompaniment to a more skilled tramp, as his skills with it aren't high enough to reliably earn a handout. His good looks and natural charm don't hurt either. He has been approached by more than one con-woman to partner up with her for a life on the grift; he has so far refused. Despite all the world has thrown at him, he hasn't given up his core morals, and he'd rather live a life on the rails than become a professional liar and a cheat.

**EQUIPMENT:** Small knife (whittling blade), sack, blanket, harmonica, lighter (works 50% of the time), clay jug, 10 feet of rope, large rag, bar of soap, newspaper.

### Lady Songbird Tramp

**STR** 60 **CON** 70 **SI** 50 **INT** 70 **POW** 60  
**DEX** 70 **APP** 80 **EDU** 85 **SAN** 60  
**LUCK** 60 **HP** 12 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 9 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 45% (22/9) 1D3+DB;  
Hatpin Stiletto 45% (22/9) 1D3+DB;  
S&W Safety Hammerless, .32 caliber revolver 45% (22/9) 1D8+1, Range 10, 5 shots, RoF 3, Malfunction 00;  
Dodge 35% (17/7)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Singing 55%, Art/Craft: Story Telling: 55%, Charm 50%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 04%, Dreaming 35%, First Aid 45%, Fast Talk 40%, History 35%, Hobo Signs 85%, Language (Other): French 25%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 85%, Language (Own): English 85%,



Listen 50%, Navigate 40%, Occult 15%, Persuade 65%, Psychology 45%, Sleight of Hand 45%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 45%, Survival: Urban 45%

**NOTES:** Lady Songbird is widely known and loved by hoboes far and wide. She is a very skilled singer and storyteller, and she makes her way in the world by performing at coffee houses, street corners, and hobo Jungles alike. Always a charming beauty, many wonder how she came to ride the rails as a tramp, to which she replies, "I've never been the responsible type, always had my head in the clouds."

As a child, Lady Songbird, who was known then as Melissa Walton, was always flighty. Born to a respectable and well off family, she never seemed comfortable in the life they demanded she lead. A powerful and natural Dreamer since her earliest days, it was always difficult for her to focus on her life in the Waking World. By the age of eighteen she gave up on living a responsible life. A job or marriage, being tied down to a run a household and raise children—it was just too much for her. She dropped out of nursing school, broke up with her fiancé, and ran off to follow her dreams.

She attempted to become a singer, but even that proved too constraining. Auditions, rehearsals, performance dates... it felt like a straightjacket to her. She needed to be free, to sing when she wanted, where she wanted, and if she wanted to. Her motto is "There is no cage for this songbird." As this philosophy goes for romantic entanglements as well, Lady Songbird has never married, often saying "Nothing ruins love faster than a wedding ring."

In the Dreamlands, her life is not that different than it is in the Waking World. There she is Me'lisan the Minstrel, a traveling performer in heavy demand at festivals and royal courts. In the Dreamlands she is wealthy, respected, and world famous, while in the

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Waking World she lives hand to mouth, traveling here and there and surviving as best she can. She loves both her lives, as nothing matters more to her than making people happy.

**EQUIPMENT:** Hatpin stiletto, S&W Safety Hammerless, .32 caliber revolver, 14 bullets in a coin purse, satchel, blanket, canteen, bandages, matchbook, lipstick, compact with mirror, comb, notebook (for writing songs and stories), pencil.



**Banjo Jake**  
Tramp

**STR** 45 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 50 **POW** 60  
**DEX** 60 **APP** 60 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 60  
**LUCK** 55 **HP** 11 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 60% (30/12), Blackjack 60% (30/12) 1D4+DB;

Remington Double Derringer, .41 caliber pistol 60% (30/12) 1D6+1, Range 10, 2 shots, RoF 1, Malfunction 99;  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Banjo 50%, Art/Craft: Comic Storytelling 35%, Art/Craft: Singing 35%, Charm 60%, Climb 45%, Credit Rating 03%, Dreaming 35%, First Aid 45%, Fast Talk 40%, History 30%, Hobo Signs 70%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 70%, Language (Own): English 70%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 25%, Navigate 30%, Occult 35%, Persuade 45%, Phycology 25%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stealth 55%, Survival: Urban 45%

**NOTES:** Born Jacob Mountjoy, the son of a preacher, his father pushed hard to give him the finest education possible. However, Jacob was rather ill-suited for academic life, and always seemed to drift

off the straight and narrow to embrace the life of a wastrel. His father often said his son couldn't work an honest day's labor to save his life. Something about that seemed to click in the young man, so he decided not to bother trying. Besides, all he ever wanted to do was tell tall tales, play his banjo, and sing silly songs. He found that if you can make people smile, sing, or better yet, laugh, someone is always willing to feed you, put you up, or give you two bits for your trouble. That suited the charming young man just fine, so one day he left his father's authoritarian home and took to the road as Banjo Jake. In a world full of ants, somebody needed to play the grasshopper.

That was almost ten years ago, and the now older tramp has no regrets. He enjoys playing music and singing songs every chance he gets. He is also known for making up outlandish and hilarious stories about everyone he meets. He even enjoys the excitement of not knowing where his next meal is coming from or where exactly he's going to sleep every night. His everyday life is an adventure few people will ever know.

That adventure got even better when other tramps, impressed with his gifts of music and imagination, taught him how to reach another world. Banjo Jake is a gifted Dreamer, and in the Dreamlands is known as Helios of the Five Strings. There, he is a wandering adventurer, trickster, and hero, as well as a notorious lady-killer. This is ironic because in the Waking World, he is well known for shyness around women he's interested in.

**EQUIPMENT:** Banjo, 3 extra strings, a Remington Double Derringer, .41 caliber pistol, 4 bullets, black-jack, backpack, blanket, army surplus mess kit, canteen, lighter (works 40% of the time), comb, 5 Bobbie pins (for lock picking), needle and thread, rubbing alcohol (half bottle), roll of bandages.

### The General Bum

**STR** 75 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 75 **POW** 55  
**DEX** 55 **APP** 40 **EDU** 95 **SAN** 50  
**LUCK** 40 **HP** 10 **MP** 11 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 65% (32/12), Straight Razor 65% (32/13) 1D3+DB;

Colt Government M1911, .45 caliber pistol 65% (32/13) 1D10+2, Range 15, 8 shot, RoF 1, Malfunction 85 (due to poor maintenance); Dodge 40% (20/8)

**SKILLS:** Charm 20%, Climb 65%, Credit Rating 01%, Fast Talk 35%, Firearms: Shotgun 40%, Hobo Signs 95%, Intimidate 35%, Language (Other): German 35%, Language (Other): Hobo

Cant 95%, Language (Own): English 90%, Law 20%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 20%, Occult 15%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 40%, Sleight of Hand 40%, Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 50%, Survival: Urban 60%, Throw 45%, Track 35%



**NOTES:** The bum known as The General was once Captain Sean Foster of the American Expeditionary Forces. Few really know anything about his war record, other than that he was dishonorably discharged (for dereliction of duty). Most assumed this was because of drinking, although that started after he returned to the United States. The horrors of trench warfare and constant shelling drove the officer to the edge of madness, but it was interrupting a ghoul pack feeding at the edge of No Man's Land that shattered his grip on reality.

That was a turning point for him, the start of a speedy downward spiral into self-destruction. He cut ties with friends and family, become estranged from his wife and children, and found himself homeless. Driven from place to place, from one drunken stupor to the next, the bum who'd become known as The General found a family of sorts. Those he rode the rails with didn't ask questions, or remind him of things he wanted to forget. They didn't expect anything from him so it was impossible to disappoint anyone with his failings. He found a new life beside the other lost souls, doing their best to play with the bum hand they'd be dealt. The General tends to take on the role of defender to other hoboes, as he hates bullies and is used to putting his own safety secondary to that of others. To the hoboes of New England he is a well-known fixture, well liked if not wholly loved.

The General suffers from both Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (known at the time as shell-shock) and alcoholism. When he has things under control, he can be a valuable asset to any group of traveling

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hoboes or jungle residents, as he has a wide array of skills from his considerable military training. Unfortunately, when things slip out of his control, he can be dangerous to himself and everyone around him.

**EQUIPMENT:** Straight razor, Colt Government M1911, .45 caliber pistol, 1 magazine with 8 rounds, six loose .45 caliber bullets, flask, corkscrew, bedroll, bindle, matchbook, handkerchief.

### Night-Cap Nora

*Bum*

**STR** 60 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 70 **INT** 75 **POW** 70  
**DEX** 40 **APP** 60 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 70  
**LUCK** 65 **HP** 11 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** 1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 75% (37/15);  
Switchblade 75% (27/15) 1D4+DB;  
Pocket Knife 75% (37/15) 1D3+DB;  
Butcher Knife 75% (37/15) 1D6+DB;  
Dodge 30% (15/6)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Cooking 25%, Art/Craft:  
Bartending 35%, Charm 40%, Climb 60%, Credit  
Rating 01%, Fast Talk 45%, Hobo Sign 80%,  
Language (Other): Hobo Cant 80%, Language  
(Own) English: 80%. Listen 45%, Locksmith 50%,  
Persuade 50%, Sleight of Hand 30%, Spot Hidden  
50%, Stealth 65%, Survival: Urban 40%, Throw 45%



**NOTES:** An attractive mature woman, Nightcap Nora is a fixture at most hobo gatherings. She's a decent cook, and can mix any drink anyone's ever heard of (and if she doesn't know how to make it, she pretends she does). However, her heavy drinking keeps her from holding down a steady job for any period of time and has alienated her from her sister (her only surviving family). She lives day to day, riding the rails with her fellow bums, tramps, and hoboes, falling from one crazy situation into another. She keeps up her appearances very well, boiling up whenever the opportunity arises and wearing makeup whenever

she can get a hold of it. Most people would never know she's a bum, until she starts drinking and slurring her speech.

Nora doesn't like anyone feeling sorry for her, and really considers herself to be one of the few people living an honest life. Sure, she could rely on a man or a husband for a warm place to sleep and there square meals a day, but that's not what she wants. It never was and never will be. The appeal of such a relationship always escaped her (well, one with a man on the other end, anyway).

However, Nightcap Nora is a bit of a flirt towards everyone, regardless of gender. Most everyone knows this is all smoke and no fire (which is usually, but not always, the case). People who know her are smart enough never to push the issue with her, or lay hands on her without her consent. That's a good way to get stabbed, as she is well known to hide multiple knives on her person.

Like all bums, Nightcap Nora is an alcoholic. She also is addicted to nicotine, and greatly enjoys cigarettes (Fleur-de-Lys being her favorite). If Nora has access to cigarettes, Keepers may allow her a bonus die on POW checks to avoid drinking to excess.

**EQUIPMENT:** Handbag (with switchblade), butcher knife (in a leather sheath, worn in the small of her back), pocketknife (in either brassiere or garter belt), compact with mirror, lipstick, blush, eyeshadow, brush, soap, needle and thread, flash, lighter (works 75% of the time), cigarette case, carpet bag, blanket.





# RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

BY OSCAR RIOS

## OVERVIEW

This adventure takes a group of hoboes, tramps, and bums on a grand adventure, starting in a hobo Jungle outside of Boston. Their goal is to attend a party thrown by a friend of theirs, a retired hobo named Bottlecap Bob, who's recently gotten married. Getting there requires traveling from Boston, Massachusetts to the hamlet of Harmony Corners, near the Town of Charlton, New York, during a cold late November. The journey, a trip of roughly two hundred and thirty miles, has many challenges hoboes may find familiar, but what happens after they arrive at the party is quite another matter. Bottlecap Bob's new wife and stepdaughters are not what they seem, and represent a grave threat to humanity from beyond the Walls of Sleep. Investigators must fight for their

very survival. Should they survive, they must then chose to either escape with their lives or press forward to rescue their friend, Bottlecap Bob.

## Introduction

Over the last week, the temperature took a downward turn, and snowfall blanketed New England. It is time to hunker down, find a warm place to sleep, and stay there. Besides, it will be Thanksgiving in a few days, so hoboes from all over New England are gathering at various Jungles to rest, share their food with one another, and give thanks for what little they have. The Boston Jungle is one of the biggest and most welcoming on the East Coast.

You all find yourselves arriving at the Boston Jungle at roughly the same time, expecting it to be filled with cooking fires, and friendly faces. But instead

of laughter, voices raised in song, people trading gossip and telling outlandish stories, the air is filling with silence. The camp, which usually houses about two dozen residents, is almost totally deserted! Just four old hoboes are here gathered around a single cooking fire, over which hangs a pot of very meager mulligan stew. They greet you warmly, with looks of confusion and surprise.

## The Jungle Bound Hoboes

These four hoboes are either too old (for hoboes) or infirm to ride the rails in such inclement weather. They are Stewpot Sue, an elderly female hobo renown for her cooking skills; Navy Joe, an older hobo man whose eyesight is growing very poor; Rummy; a weary looking middle-aged bum whose skin and eyes have a yellow tinge (signs of liver disease); and Barney Whoppers, a lovable

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old tramp known for storytelling, but currently immobile due to arthritic knees, which the cold weather makes much worse.

### Friends in Need

These four are known to be nearly permanent residents of the Boston Jungle during the winter months. They survive off the kindness of their fellow hoboes, and in return, they keep the camp running by cooking, cleaning, gathering fuel, and doing minor repairs to huts and shacks. The four invite the investigators to join them by the fire, and ask if they have anything to contribute to the stew. It is obvious they are in need of supplies as the deserted camp means that no one is bringing in food or supplies. They four only have enough stew to feed themselves for today, after which they'll go hungry or be forced to venture out to forage for supplies.

Investigators can donate up to one full day's worth of need in supplies to the camp (once they get it), up to a total of four days, one day for each hobo there. Should they offer more, the Jungle-bound hoboes refuse, saying they don't want to be a burden, and that the investigators have been generous enough. This is their pride talking, and in truth, they are in desperate need of help. To get them to accept more than this, investigators must make a successful Charm, Fast Talk, Persuade, or Intimidate check.

### Explanations and Invitations

If the investigators ask why the camp is so deserted, or where everyone else is, the four all start talking at once. This cacophony makes no sense until Rummy shouts out, "Hey, let Barney tell the story! He tells it bestest anyhow!" The four agree, and Barney relates the following information in grand fashion.

If the investigators don't ask why the camp is so deserted, the four ask them, "Why ain't you off to the party like everyone else?" If the investigators ask them to explain, they all begin trying to do so at once, with Rummy stopping them, and Barney telling his story, as in the other case.

### The Marriage of Bottlecap Bob

1. Bottlecap Bob, a charismatic and well-liked tramp, renowned for his boundless generosity, has recently gotten married and given up riding the rails.
2. He met a rich widow traveling east from California by train (which he had hopped onto), and it was love at first sight.
3. Her name is Midori Greene, and she's said to be an exotic beauty from Asia.
4. After a whirlwind romance, they were

married and have moved into a huge house in upstate New York in a hamlet of Harmony Corners, outside of the Town of Charlton.

5. Bob's invited every hobo he ever road the rails with (which includes the investigators and a vast majority of hoboes) to visit him at his new home for a week-long Thanksgiving celebration.
6. His wife wants to meet all of his friends, and is quite the moneybags.
7. Guests are promised all the hot food they can eat, booze they can drink, a warm place to sleep, and a hot bath, along with a new set of clothes and shoes.
8. This is sort of Bob's way of saying goodbye to the hobo lifestyle by sharing a bit of his good fortune with his many friends.
9. People started leaving for the party three days ago, with the last heading out just this morning.

### Planning The Trip to Harmony Corners

Bob's home is in a small hamlet called Harmony Corners, part of the town of Charlton. Investigators making a Know or Navigation check can figure out the surest route of travel between Boston and Harmony Corners. (If all of the investigators fail the check, the four Jungle-bound hoboes know the route, as they've listened to others making travel plans.) It is a difficult, dangerous route, especially at this time of the year. It is obvious that the four Jungle-bound hoboes are physically unable to make the journey, even though they wish they could. Successfully traveling to Harmony Corners requires some preparation, namely gathering supplies to sustain them while traveling, but this is something they have done many times before.

If the investigators wish to join in the party, then their adventure begins! It will be filled with deadly challenges, unexpected horrors, and possibly even a gateway into another reality!

### Keeper's Information

The investigators must travel from Boston, Massachusetts all the way to Harmony Corners, New York. Bottlecap Bob has been enthralled, quite literally, by his new wife, Midori Greene, and her three daughters, Hina, Nana, and Rina. He did not meet the Greene women on a train as the story goes, but in the Dreamlands. Beyond the Wall of Sleep, the generous hobo known as Bottlecap Bob is a traveling adventurer and swashbuckling hero. On his last adventure, he was captured and enthralled by a group of inhuman creatures called mantids. They are single-sexed sentient insects who not only prey upon humans but also use them as hosts for their parasitic young. The mantids use a

combination of pheromones and psychic abilities to masquerade as human and mesmerize their prey.

These particular mantids are members of an elite noble family group. The creatures operate out of the Tower of Mal'Galdobor, a dark fortress in the abandoned section of the city of Drinen, in the Dreamlands. They possess a rare and powerful artifact called the Mirror of Dreams, which allows them to physically pass between the Waking World and the Dreamlands. Instead of just killing Bottlecap Bob, to use him as a host for a single larva or provide a meal or two, they decided to keep him enchanted and use him as a lure to attract scores of humans into a deadly trap.

Their plan is to use their enthralled victim to invite as many humans as possible to a remote location which they have prepared as a breeding hive. By targeting hoboes, bums, and tramps, the mantids believe (quite correctly) they can prey on them without fear of discovery from the human authorities. These are people no one will miss. The humans will be secretly implanted with mantid larvae and kept secure while the young mantids feed, grow, and ultimately, hatch. This agonizing process proves fatal to the hosts. The creatures will then spend several days waiting, as the young mantids mature while feeding off the corpses of their former hosts. Once their new crop of young is fully grown, the mantids plan to travel back to the Dreamlands through the Mirror of Dreams.

When investigators learn about Bottlecap Bob's party, the Mantids' plan is already underway. By the time they arrive, the majority of hoboes in attendance have been charmed and implanted with larvae. A few have also been cocooned and stored in the basement, to serve as food for the adult mantids while they are waiting for their larvae to mature. Several hours after the investigators' arrival, implanted hoboes begin dying horribly as alien grubs erupt from their distended bellies. It is nearly impossible for investigators to save any of the hoboes at the party. Only a few remain free of the mantid larvae, one of whom is Bottlecap Bob himself.

To succeed the investigators must survive and escape slaughter at the Greene Mansion. They may manage to eliminate the four mantids and even destroy the Mirror of Dreams to prevent such a horror from happening again. However, their greatest challenge would be to follow the creatures back to their lair through the Mirror of Dreams. They might then invade the Tower of Mal'Galdobor, rescue Bottlecap Bob, and maybe even slay the mantid queen. Such a victory would free the city of Drinen from the creature's vile predations once and for all.

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

### Tramps/Dreamers

While players are free to choose whichever type of hobo they wish to create, or whatever pre-generated hobo they like, Keepers should encourage at least one investigator to play one of the pregenerated tramps, both of whom have the Dreaming skill. These investigators are experienced dreamers, and will have access to a number of clues only they can understand. However, having a tramp investigator along is not vital to the party's success, as none of these clues are required for the scenario's successful completion.

## PART ONE: GATHERING SUPPLIES

To begin the adventure, the investigators must travel what is known among their fellowship as the Massachusetts/Troy Route. Any investigators making a successful Know or Navigation roll knows the full details of this route. If all of the investigators fail to make these rolls, the four Jungle-bound hoboes can give them the directions. They are as follows:

### The Massachusetts/ Troy Route

Without mishaps, this trip takes about three days.

1. This route begins in Boston, hopping a train heading to the city of Northampton.
2. The hoboes jump off the train at Northampton and walk 33 miles west (about 11½ hours) to the town of Washington. They can cut this down to 20 miles (about 6 hours) if they choose to go through the village of Azure Heights.

3. In the town of Washington, the hoboes hop onto another train heading west to the town of Chatham.
4. When reaching Chatham, they must be on a train heading on the north fork, going to the town of Rensselaer.
5. From Rensselaer, the hoboes must be on or board a train heading on the north fork, towards to the city of Troy and beyond to the town of Mechanileville.
6. From Mechanileville, the hoboes must be on or board a train heading on the western fork, heading to the village of Ballston.
7. From Ballston, the hoboes must walk thirty miles (about 10 hours) to the village of Harmony Corners.
8. Once in Harmony Corners, hobo signs should lead the way to the Greene Mansion.

### Gathering Supplies

Investigators must gather supplies before heading out, as they'll be unable to forage during their journey. Each investigator must gather at least the minimum amount of supplies needed for the trip, between three and four Days of Need, depending on whether they cut through Azure Heights. This requires the investigators to venture into Boston in order to gather the necessary supplies. The longer they take, the more of Bottlecap Bob's party they'll miss, so Keepers should maintain a sense of urgency.

Investigators can either Find a Job, Perform, Beg, or Scavenge, or do a combination of any of these methods. It may take most of a day to gather the supplies, unless the investigators make a few Hard or Extreme rolls. Investigators playing up the holiday angle, such as mentioning Thanksgiving

or Christmas, or singing Christmas carols, gain a bonus die to their rolls, as people are more inclined towards generosity when so reminded. Keepers should not mention this to the investigators beforehand, but reward them if they come up with the idea themselves.

Investigators gathering more than they need may share their extra supplies with fellow investigators who've fallen short. If the entire group gathers more than they need, they can keep it as insurance against possible delays they might face while traveling. However, they may also donate their extra supplies to the four Jungle-bound hoboes unable to make the trip to Bottlecap Bob's party. Keepers can, if they wish, reward this generous action by granting investigator donating the supplies to the Jungle-bound hoboes +1D10 Luck points (points above starting Luck are lost).

## PART TWO: LEAVING BOSTON

The hoboes must travel to South Station in Boston in order to board a train heading east towards Northampton. This immense, fairly modern transportation hub, constructed in 1899, is one of the largest transportation hubs in New England. Unfortunately, the area where the train lines head towards Northampton is patrolled by a particularly vicious railway bull and his two cronies. These men, Gordon Starks (the leader), Mark Corbin, and Edward Webbe (his stooges), are well known to area hoboes, who are rumored (and correctly so) to have killed a bum named Green Apple just four months back. Hoboes in the area who make successful Spot Hidden rolls come across a hobo sign indicating Danger from Railway Bulls.

## Challenges of The Massachusetts/Troy Route

### Forks in the Tracks

When hoboes board a train, they seldom know its ultimate destination. Often it turns off at a fork, going in the wrong direction, but sometimes they get lucky and it remains on their desired route. When hoboes reach a fork Keepers should make them roll a Navigation check, to know the proper fork they need to travel. Hoboes who are not paying attention or who fail their Navigation check can be taken miles in the wrong direction before realizing their mistake.

If the hoboes are paying attention and make a successful Navigation roll, they know the proper fork and must then make a Hard Luck check. If successful the train remains on the desired route and the hoboes can just relax and continue their ride. However, if this roll is unsuccessful, the train takes an undesirable fork

and the hoboes must hop off the train before it carries them too far away from the fork.

Once off the train, the hoboes must return to the fork to wait for a new train traveling in the desired direction. They must then make a Luck check to determine how long they must wait. A failed Luck check means a wait of 1D8+6 hours, a successful Luck check means a wait of 1D4+3 hours, a Hard Success means a wait of 1D3+1 hours, and an Extreme success means a wait only of 1D100 minutes!

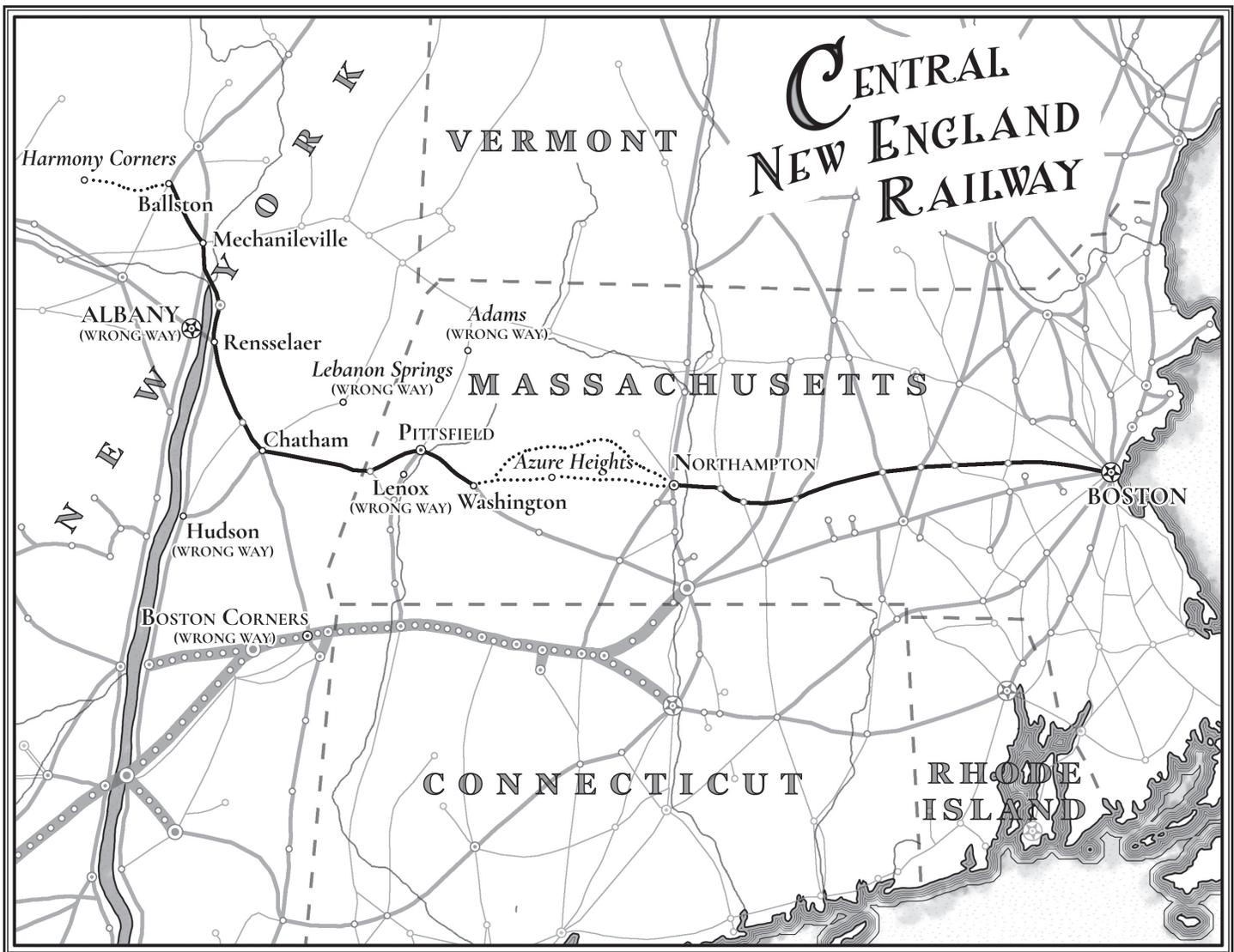
**Keepers' Note:** *The Massachusetts/Troy Route has three forks investigators must take. These are:*

1. *The west fork at Pittsfield*
2. *The northwest fork at Chatham*
3. *The west fork at Rensselaer*

### Azure Heights: Hoboes Beware!

All hoboes in this part of New England know about Azure Heights, and why they should avoid it. Hoboes are not welcome in the town, and many hoboes have stories about being harassed and beaten by police, and even of fellow hoboes being killed by the spiteful townsfolk there. Azure Heights is something of a legend, and few hoboes have ever actually been there personally. Because of this many younger (i.e., reckless) hoboes doubt the place could be as bad as everyone makes it out to be. Unfortunately, its dark reputation is well deserved. Azure Heights is a very dangerous place for the investigators. Whether investigators opt to risk it, thereby cutting their cross country walk nearly in half and saving nearly half a day in travel, is up to them.

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### Sneaking In

To get the rear yard of South Station and onto a train undetected requires hoboes to make a Hard Stealth check. Once inside the freight yard, they must search for a train heading along the correct set of tracks. Investigators making a successful Know roll can easily move to the correct track and find a train leaving in 1D3 hours. Should investigators fail the Stealth check, they draw the attention of the trio of railway bulls, who begin patrolling the area where the failed check was made.

### Stealth Strategies

There are many ways the hoboes can get past the railway bulls. Some can lure the guards to another area so that their fellows can board a train unmolested. They can wait until their train seems about to leave the station, and then board it so quickly the train pulls away before the bulls can reach them. Physically confronting them, or even killing them, may have dire consequences later on,

not only for the investigators, but for every hobo in New England.

### Discovered

If these men discover any hoboes hiding on a train or sneaking around trying to get onto one, they'll charge them with drawn clubs. If the hoboes flee, which requires a successful DEX check, the bull and his men give chase only so long as the hoboes are inside South Station, being satisfied with driving them out of the area. If the hoboes surrender to the bulls without resistance, and make a successful Charm or Persuade check, they are roughly escorted off the premises and firmly warned against trying to sneak back into South Station. Hoboes failing said checks are roughed up, i.e., punched, jabbed with clubs, and kicked, suffering 1D4 points hit points of damage while they are being thrown out.

If any fleeing hoboes fail the DEX check, they are cornered or caught, and the bulls attempt to beat

them into unconsciousness before calling the police and having them arrested. Hoboes making a Hard success on either a Charm or Persuade check are thrown out of South Station after being roughed up a bit, suffering 1D4 hit points of damage in the process. The bulls can only be dissuaded from physically attacking the investigators if one or more of the investigators makes an Extreme success on Persuade, Charm, or Intimidate. In this case, the hoboes are escorted out of South Station without being beaten or arrested.

### Confrontation in South Station

If the hoboes are discovered by the railways bulls and resist their attacks, true combat erupts. These men turn from bullies satisfied with just beating up the hoboes to men intent on murder. While the hoboes may be justified in claiming self-defense, few would believe their claims. Hoboes can defeat the bulls by beating them unconscious, or by killing them, although the latter will have very dire

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

consequences not only for them, but for hoboes across New England. Also, they would have to face the judgment of other hoboes; as such actions are strictly prohibited by the Hobo Ethical Code of 1889 (aka the Hobo Code).

The bulls are only armed with their clubs. Once combat begins the hoboes still have a few options to get out of the situation without dire consequences. Hoboes making a Fast Talk roll can pretend to be rendered unconscious if hit for 4 or more HP. Hoboes making a successful Persuade check can beg for mercy and only be beaten for 1D6 HP. Hoboes making a Hard Charm roll can avoid harm by offering the men \$2, and for \$3 the hoboes are allowed to board the train unmolested.

### The First Leg of the Journey

If investigators get past the railway bulls, they can find a train heading towards Northampton that leaves in 1D3 hours. Investigators making a Hard Luck roll discover an open railway car, allowing them to ride protected from the elements. Otherwise, they must then make a successful Locksmith roll to gain entry into a railway car. Hoboes can, of course, break into a railway car by destroying a lock or otherwise damaging a door or window, although such measures are violations of the Hobo Code.

The worst option would be to wedge oneself under the car, among the support rails of a boxcar or climb onto the roof of one. This would be a horrific and miserable experience, draining the investigators of 3D10 CON points during the ten hour trip to Northampton, Connecticut. This would be the last resort, an option taken by only the most unlucky and desperate of hoboes.

## PART THREE: FROM NORTHAMPTON TO WASHINGTON

The trip from Boston's South Station to the turn at Northampton takes several hours (1D4+1). The train does not actually stop at Northampton, but slows down enough while navigating a turn for the investigators to disembark "on the fly." This requires a Regular DEX check (see page 8) to do so safely. Once off the train outside of Washington, the investigators must choose between two paths, the one leading around the town of Azure Heights (33 miles, taking about 11 and 1/2 hours) and the one going through it (20 miles, taking about 6 hours). Their ultimate destination is a water tower where trains stop to fill up outside of the town of Washington.

### At The Outskirts

Investigators leaving the railways outside of

Northampton walk north towards Azure Heights for about an hour. The weather has gotten colder, snow is on the ground here, and the road is rough and frozen. Once they reach the outskirts of Azure Heights, they must choose their path: either through the town with the dangerous reputation or around it.

However, just before the sign proclaiming the Azure Heights town limits, the investigators find a makeshift shack. If investigators make a successful Spot Hidden searching the outside of the shack, they find a hobo sign which someone has attempted to paint over. The sign is the mark for "Danger." The shack does not have a proper door, just an old carpet hung to keep the wind out, with a sign above it reading "No Work. Keep Out. Take One and Move On!"

#### The Shack

The interior of the shack is roughly three feet wide by two feet deep, bare wood with a frozen dirt floor, lacking any way to heat the interior. The only thing inside is a small worn table with ten bindles (tied cloth bundles) resting on it. Each bindle has a hunk of cheese, a large hard tack biscuit, a fist size cut of hard salami, a bottle of nearly frozen pop, and a candy bar, representing 1 Day of Need each. All of the food inside of the bindles has been laced with rat poison, treated as a form of arsenic. Within 1–3 hours after ingesting any of the poisoned items, the victim suffers burning pain, vomiting, and violent diarrhea, and takes 4D10 points of damage.

### Skirting Around Azure Heights

This, the safer of the two routes, proves to be a miserable trip. During the 11½ hours of walking, it snows several times, with high winds chilling the hoboes to the bone. The terrain is a mix of snow-covered fields and small wooded areas. At some point in their trip, the hoboes will need to build a fire, rest, and try to get out of the wind, if possible. They can construct a makeshift shelter with a successful Survival check, or find something suitable, like a fallen tree or gulley tucked out of the wind, with a successful Hard Luck check. During this trip, the investigators have two possible encounters:

#### Encounter #1: The Victims

About two hours along the route to Washington, investigators should make a Spot Hidden check. If successful, they discover a horrible scene: three frozen corpses, two men and a woman, beside a burned out fire. They all seem to have died in agony, contorted by cramps, covered in frozen, bloody vomit. They are hoboes, traveling the same route as the investigators. Investigators making a Spot Hidden within their grisly camp find bindles much like the ones in the shack outside of Azure Heights.

Investigators making a successful Know roll can identify them as the hoboes Horseradish, Pitchfork McKreedy, and the tramp Jess Buttons. Jess was a beautiful singer, and the men were her escorts and bodyguards who played harmonica and spoons to back her up. All three were very well liked and respected. Investigators viewing this scene must make a Sanity check for 0/1 point, unless they fail a Luck check. If they fail a Luck check, they were good friends with one or more of these hoboes, and must then make a Sanity check for 1/1D3 points. Investigators who chose to scavenge their camp can recover three days' worth of need from their supplies. Doing so falls within the Hobo Code, and is not viewed as a sign of disrespect to the dead, as they are no longer in need of anything.

#### Encounter #2: The Angry Dog

As the investigators are crossing a frozen farmer's field they hear the barking of a very angry dog. They see a large, powerful looking farm dog racing towards them from the direction of the farmhouse. The investigators have several choices:

- » **Run and climb:** They can run for a nearby stand of trees just beyond the field and try to climb before the dog can reach them. This requires a successful DEX and Climb check. If successful, they spend 1 hour in the tree, after which the dog loses interest in them and goes home.
- » **Run like hell:** They can simply run and try to get away from the dog, which requires a Hard DEX or CON check. This allows the investigator to simply outpace the dog, who eventually loses interest in them and returns home.
- » **Make friends with or scare off the dog:** This requires standing one's ground and either a Hard success on a Charm or Intimidation roll. If either is successful the dog doesn't attack and returns home after a few minutes of either getting petted or barking.
- » **Fight the dog:** Investigators try to attack the dog, or defend themselves from it.
- » **Distract the dog with food:** The investigators can discard 1 day's worth of need as they flee, which causes the dog to stop and devour the food. After this, he gives up the chase, although he barks at them for several more minutes. Investigators do have the option of throwing food recovered from the Azure Heights bindles, thereby poisoning the dog, who then dies about 20 minutes later.

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

### Fighting the Dog/The Farmer's Revenge

The dog, who's named Duke, attacks the first person he can reach, biting them viciously. He continues to maul that person until driven off or called back by the farmer (which he won't do). If the dog suffers more than 4 points of damage, he runs back home whimpering pitifully.

Should the dog be killed or return home injured, an angry farmer immediately begins tracking down the hoboes. His name is Bernard Jackson, a bitter widower, willing to track the people who hurt his dog for the next four hours. He is intent on vengeance, armed with a shotgun filled with rock salt. While less lethal than buck or bird shot, this ammunition is still quite painful to be shot with and possibly even fatal at close range. Unless the hoboes keep moving at a good pace, it is very likely the farmer, who is very fit and well rested, will be able to catch up with them (+2 bonus dice to Track due to snowy conditions).

### Crossing through Azure Heights

The town of Azure Heights is a collection of dairy farms grouped around a large factory which makes cheese, butter, and yogurt. Nearly everyone in town works either on a farm, in the factory, or runs a business with interests tied to either of those two endeavors. The center of town has a lot of residential buildings, with most shops and stores arranged along Main Street, along with the town doctor, the sheriff's office, and the court house.

Investigators attempting to sneak through Azure Heights can do so by making a Hard success on a Stealth roll. Every investigator must do so, for if even one of them is detected, whoever spots them will call the sheriff's office, which will dispatch armed men to deal with the hoboes. Investigators who make the roll can abandon those who fail to save themselves, while those who fail can lure the authorities in another direction to allow their fellow hoboes to escape Azure Heights unmolested. It goes without saying that any attempts to beg, find work, perform, or scavenge within Azure Heights instantly fail and attract the police. No one in town is sympathetic to hoboes in any way, and no citizen is inclined to aid the investigators.

### The Azure Heights Police Department

Once the police are alerted to the presence of hoboes in their town they immediately dispatch men to find and arrest them. These men could be on foot or in a car or truck. Investigators who have drawn the attention of the authorities can try to avoid them by making a critical success on their

Stealth roll. Investigators who run when confronted by the police here will be shot (wounded, but not killed so long as they then stop and surrender), as the town has a zero tolerance policy for crimes committed by "wandering vagrants and hooligans." Investigators who try to combat the police will be killed, either by gunfire or baton. The local sheriff, one Dudley Scraton, has a sadistic streak which he encourages the men under his command to share.

Investigators who stop when told to and offer no resistance have the best chance of surviving this encounter. Such investigators can attempt to make a Hard success at Charm, Fast Talk, or Persuade to get on the police officers' "good side." Investigators who are caught trying to hide, but do not run or resist, must make a Critical success at these same skills.

Investigators failing to get on the "Good Side" of the police are in for a rough time. They are knocked to the ground or against a wall, handcuffed, hit several times while the officer's attempt to "search" them, and have anything of value or that can be used as a weapon confiscated. Investigators suffer 1D6 Hit points worth of damage from this. Those who have gotten on the officers' good side suffer the same fate, but without the rough treatment and take no damage.

### The Hobo Express

Once this is over, the investigators are loaded into the back of a truck, along with a half dozen officers, and driven to the outskirts of town. They are then pulled from the truck, one by one, and beaten unconscious while they are handcuffed. Investigators making a successful Fast Talk roll while this is happening can pretend to be knocked unconscious, but only after they have suffered an attack causing at least 2 hit points' worth of damage. This allows the investigator to end their beating early so long as they play possum. Hoboes who have gotten on the officers' good side are only beaten until half of their hit points are lost.

Those who fight back are beaten to the point of unconsciousness and then imprisoned in the sheriff's office, and later charged with attempted murder of a police officer. For such investigators, their journey ends here. Those imprisoned by police are removed from the scenario, as their rash actions prove that they are unsuited to the hobo lifestyle.

Once all the hoboes have been escorted out of town and beaten, their handcuffs are removed and they are left to fend for themselves. Ironically, they are dumped at the far end of Azure Heights, just a three hour walk from the outskirts of Washington. This is where the water tower is and where they must hop onto a train heading to Chatham, part

of their overall journey to Harmony Corners and the Greene mansion.

### The Water Tower

Investigators reaching this area after their encounter with the Angry Farm Dog or the Hobo Express, or somehow successfully sneaking through Azure Heights arrive at this large water tower, on the edge of the town of Washington. Trains pause here to take on water, and investigators must wait 2D3 hours for one to arrive. During this time, it begins to snow.

Once a train arrives and stops to take on water, investigators must sneak onto it. This requires a successful Sneak check with a bonus die, as the train operators are busy taking on water and the falling snow limits general visibility. Those making a successful Luck check find an unlocked car, while those making a Hard Luck check find one with a half dozen horses and loads of hay.

The bodies of the horses help heat the boxcar and the hay is wonderful bedding material. As for the smell of the horses and their manure, it's something the hoboes are well used to. Once the train pulls away from the water tower the hoboes are on their way west towards the town of Chatham.

## PART FOUR: FROM WASHINGTON TO BALLSTON/ THE SWITCHES

Very lucky hoboes will be able to ride this train from outside of Washington all the way to Ballston, without having to switch trains once. Very unlucky ones will be forced to change trains three times! Each time the investigators are forced to change trains, Keepers can insert one of the following encounters. (If Keepers wish for the investigators to experience, these encounters they can simply rule that the train changes tracks, instead of calling for a roll.)

### Changing Trains

The investigators may, or may not, have to change trains at Pittsfield, Chatham, and Rensselaer. At each fork in the rails, the investigator with the highest Luck score must make a Hard success. This Luck check becomes even harder each time a successful check is made. For example, if the first Luck check (made at the Pittsfield fork) is successful, then the second Luck check (made at Chatham) must be made with a penalty die. If both are made successfully, the third and final check (made at Rensselaer) must be made with two penalty dice.

Investigators forced to hop off (on the fly) and then

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

on (flipping) to moving trains at these track switches must make Regular DEX checks (to get off a moving train), or DEX checks and Climb checks (to get onto a moving train). Keepers should reference page 8 of this book, for the section “Riding the Rails.”

### **Interchange Encounter One: The Runaway**

The investigators see a young boy with an oversized satchel lurking around the interchange. He looks to be about twelve years old and seems nervous and confused. If they speak with him, investigators learn his name is Simon Blake. He has just run away from home and is looking to hop onto a train and get away from his hometown to, well, anywhere else. Simon has no idea where he is going other than that he wants to get far from his father. He explains that his father beat him for stealing half a bottle of gin and skipping school to drink it with his friends.

According to the Hobo Code, the investigators must try to talk him into going home. Any player making a successful Fast Talk or Persuade check convinces Simon to go home, which he seems almost relieved to do. Otherwise, the boy boards a train and heads off. If the players try to physically force Simon to go home, he calls for help, possibly attracting the attention of the railway guards or local police. If investigators fail to talk him into going home, they may invite him to join them, hoping to at least keep him safe for the time being, but this requires another Fast Talk or Persuade check with a bonus die.

### **Interchange Encounter Two: Shifted Load**

As the investigators wait for the next train to arrive, they notice it is approaching the fork in the tracks at low speed. When it finally arrives it moves onto its proper fork, but then comes to a complete stop. The crew of engineers gets off the train, one of them moving to the rear with a warning lantern. The reason for this becomes obvious, as a load of lumber on an open train car has shifted and is now leaning heavily to one side. The chains lashing it down were not properly fastened and the load came loose during transit. This has off-balanced the entire load and forced the conductor to drastically reduce speed.

As the hobo watches, they see the four engineers split up, two moving to the lumber, one moving to the rear with the warning lantern, and the last approaching a livestock car. Two of them will be forced to restack and lash down the shifted load of lumber, while the other will muck out the stalls, and feed and water several cars carrying about sixty horses. As the trip has taken much longer than expected because of the load, the animals are in desperate need of care. The men look annoyed,

obviously not looking forward to the unexpected labor. No trains will be going anywhere along this route until the work is completed, and with so few people to undertake such a large job, the investigators may be stuck here for many long cold hours.

However, there is the matter of Article 11 of the Hobo Code, Be Courteous when Riding the Rails. This states that hoboes should act as additional members of a train crew, even offering assistance to the crew if it appears they need help. In this case, the crew is obviously in need of help. Should the investigators do nothing and simply wait for the work to be done, they are stuck here for 1D4+4 hours.

If the hoboes approach the crew and offer to assist them in these tasks, they are at first suspicious. Any hobo making a Hard Luck roll has dealt with a member of the crew before, who vouches for them. Otherwise, the hoboes must make a Persuade or Charm check in order for the crew to trust them enough to allow them to lend a hand. Should the investigators make a bad impression, the crew won't allow them to help, and warn them against trying to sneak onto the train, claiming, “We've got enough problems on this run already. We don't need no more.”

The four men are Dan Meuser, Connor Lamb, Dwight Evans, and Brendan Boyle. They are honest, hardworking train engineers, just trying to finish this trip to get home in time for Thanksgiving, something this delay is putting in serious jeopardy. If the investigators lend a hand, two of the men remain to supervise the work, Dan Meuser supervising the lumber, and Connor Lamb to supervise the mucking out of the horse cars. Dwight Evans, the oldest of the men, goes inside to fix everyone coffee, and comes out periodically with small mugs for everyone, worker and hobo alike. He apologizes for not having any food to offer them (“We didn't expect to be out here that long ourselves”), but he does give the hoboes a fresh pack of smokes and a book of matches. The work is not difficult, but is time consuming and strenuous. With the investigators help this only takes 1D3+1 hours.

Once the train is ready to resume its trip, Dwight Evans asks the investigators to follow him. He leads them to an empty passenger car, telling them that the lights don't work, but the heater does. “So long as you don't make a mess in here, you can ride with us in here to the end of our line.” Keepers should randomly roll to see if this particular train is actually going all the way to Ballston (likely beyond that). Either way, Keepers should allow for this particular train to be going in the correct direction for at least the next leg of their journey.

If the investigators can ride this train all the way to Ballston, it turns out they have a four hour stop there as freight is swapped out. The grateful crew invites them to join them at the local area diner, Carlo's All Night Grinders and Joe. It turns out that Conor Lamb is a cousin of Carlo, the owner, and the hoboes are welcome inside the restaurant. Each hobo is treated to a coffee and the blue plate special: meatloaf with mashed potatoes, a dinner roll, and a slice of blueberry pie.

### **Interchange Encounter Three: The Jackrollers**

This scene can begin two ways. First, as the investigators are hopping off a train at the interchange, they see a woman frantically running. She is trying to get onto the train, but it is obvious that she'll never reach it in time. Coming out of the trees behind her giving chase are two young men, shouting to one another not to let her get away. The woman's torso is covered only by a thick sweater, and one of the pursuing men has her old worn coat clenched in his fist.

The other way for this scene to begin is for Keepers to have the investigators make a Listen check while waiting for the train. Those who do so successfully hear a woman desperately screaming for help as she races towards the train tracks. Whether they pass or fail this check, moments later, the screaming becomes easily audible and the woman breaks out of the tree line. A moment later, the two men emerge from the wooded area in hot pursuit.

Investigators making a Know roll can easily identify the woman as Cable-Cast Collette, a young, light-skinned black hobo famous for her knitting skills. Those making a Hard Know roll also remember that she always travels with her cousin, Smiling Benjy Jigsaw, a much darker black hobo. However, he is nowhere to be seen. Unfortunately, Smiling Benjy Jigsaw is being beaten unconscious about sixty yards further into the tree line by another two assailants.

This all began two weeks ago when an area church hired Smiling Benjy Jigsaw to do some roofing work. While in town, Cable-Cast Collette made a deal with a local store to knit socks, scarves, and sweaters for them to sell, in return for materials and modest payment. Over the last two weeks, the pair of hoboes worked hard and was more or less accepted by the locals. When they left to catch a train to move, flush with cash from their labors, they were ambushed. They were set on by four Jackrollers (people who rob hoboes after they've been paid), named Fred Crandall, Clarence Nutting, James Bernard, and William Hawks. Smiling Benjy Jigsaw fought them off long enough for Cable-Cast Collette to make a run for it. At the moment, he is



badly losing this fight and Cable-Cast Collette's attackers are about to catch up with her.

Article 14 of the Hobo Code clearly states: Help Your Fellow Hoboes. If ever two hoboes needed help, it is this pair right now. Investigators who do nothing watch Cable-Cast Collette dragged into the trees by these two men never to be seen again. Those stepping in must defeat or drive off the two men chasing Cable-Cast Collette, and then rush to the rescue of Smiling Benjy Jigsaw. The men flee if reduced to 6 hit points or have a successful Intimidate roll made against them. Otherwise, they fight to kill any hoboes who attempt to come to the rescue of their chosen targets. If they escape, none of these men go to the authorities, as each are wanted for a slew of petty and not so petty crimes. If they are killed, and their bodies reasonably well hidden, nothing more comes of this terrible incident. These are not the sort of men people come looking for when they go missing.

If rescued, the pair express their eternal gratitude, after explaining everything that has happened to them. Smiling Benjy Jigsaw slowly recovers from his beating, and within a couple of hours, he is able

to travel once again. They insist on sharing some of their good fortune, giving the investigators 1 day's worth of need, mostly canned food and brand new handmade socks, gloves, or scarves.

The pair won't join the investigators on their journey, as they are actually traveling in the other direction, back to Boston. They know the old Jungle-bound hoboes are likely having a hard time, with everyone heading to Bottlecap Bob's party. Also, most people know that Smiling Benjy Jigsaw doesn't drink; it is rumored that this is because he is an angry drunk. The raucous party is just about the last place he'd want to be. Besides, Cable-Cast Collette explains, they have enough cash, canned goods, and yarn for knitting to keep them both comfortable at the Boston Jungle for months.

### Last Stop, Ballston

The last stop on this train is Ballston, and from here the investigators have a long walk to Harmony Corners, a distance of about thirty miles. This long, cold walk takes about ten hours. It is clear from the fresh and numerous hobo signs that many hoboes have been through Ballston in the last few days.

Investigators low on supplies may pause here to try and replenish them by looking for a quick job to do, begging, foraging, or performing.

### Between Ballston & Founda

Along the road between Ballston and Harmony Corners, the investigators continue to find hobo signs leading towards Bottlecap Bob's party. About two thirds of the way there, after the investigators have been traveling about six hours, they find an older hobo sign with a successful Spot Hidden roll. This is the sign for a friendly lady willing to give handouts. Investigators can ignore this and keep traveling, or stop and be shown some kindness and possibly even gain a little bit of extra information about the mysterious Greene ladies. If followed, these signs lead all the way to the woman's mailbox.

### The Charitable Woman

The hobo signs lead the investigators to a farm owned by Roberta Hardwell, who lives here with her three teenage children (Douglas, Harrison, and Mary). Their father is dead from an infection two years back from shoddy dental work. The

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family is kind, hardworking, but perpetually tired this time of the year. While the farm supports them, they don't really make enough to hire full time hands, and there always seems to be too much to do. They struggle to run the large chicken farm on their own.

If the investigators approach the house openly, Roberta is willing to prepare them a hot meal, and allow them to sleep in her heated work shed, in return for 1D3+1 hours of labor. Labor includes mucking out chicken coops (difficult in the frozen temperatures), chopping and stacking fire wood, gathering eggs and fixing a fence post. Douglas, age 15, and Harrison, age 13, supervise the work and show the investigators what to do.

If the players request additional chores, she tells them there is nothing else to do, but gives them a bar of soap, a washtub of heated water, and some of her dead husband's clothing (a successful Luck roll allows an investigator to find a random item of replacement clothing).

If the Hardwell family is asked about the Greene Mansion a few towns over in Harmony Corners, they'll say "You must mean the old Donovan place, about two miles off the main road, tucked way back up in the hills." They'll explain that a strange foreign woman and her daughters, whose last name they

think is Greene, moved into the old house about three months ago. They say the woman is newly married to an American man, but few people have seen any of them, as the family has kept to themselves. They have been seen driving a big fancy car with curtains on the windows but they never mix with anyone in the area. Most locals think the wealthy family is snobbish, but Roberta feels that maybe they just had odd foreign ways, as the women are supposed to be from Siam, or China, or someplace east like that.

**Keeper's Note:** *They claim to be from Osaka, Japan, but they are actually from the city of Drinen, in the Western Dreamlands.*

## PART FIVE: HARMONY CORNERS & THE GREENE MANSION

Once investigators reach the hamlet of Harmony Corners, locating the home of Bottlecap Bob is relatively easy. The investigators must make a Spot Hidden check with a bonus die, in order to locate the numerous hobo signs posted along the route. (Should they fail, they can ask directions from the locals.) The house is tucked back in the hills, up a steep incline, about three miles away

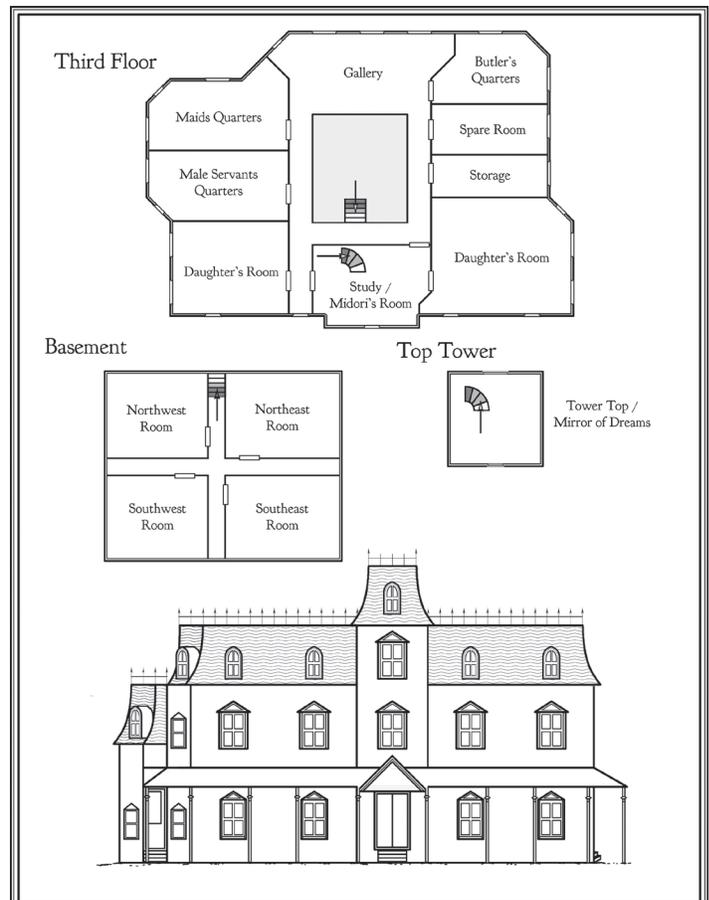
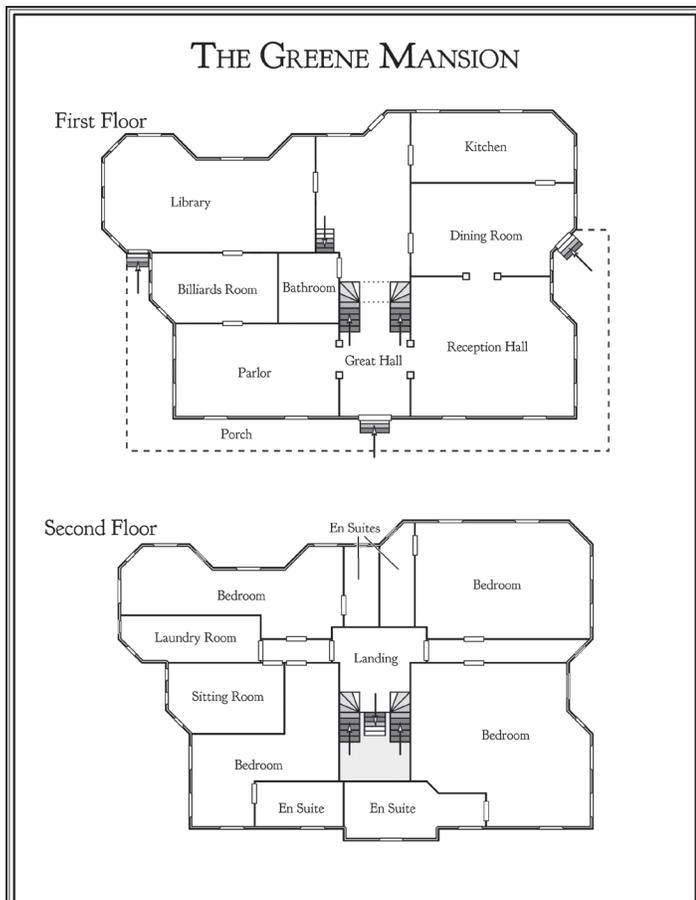
from the nearest neighbor. It is located two miles off the main road (Madison Street), up a winding side road (Donovan Road) going up into the mountains. The snow here is thick, and the wind blows cold through the bare trees. Soon, a large house with warm glowing windows comes into view. Investigators have reached the Greene Mansion, the home of Bottlecap Bob and his new family. Their long cold journey has come to an end, but the nightmare is about to begin.

### The Greene Mansion

The Greene Mansion is a sprawling Mansard-style mansion, ten miles north of Harmony Corners. The outside of the mansion looks a little run down, but the windows glow with warm light, and white smoke pours out of its chimneys. As the investigators draw close, they can hear the sounds of laughter and music coming from within. A large new Hudson Super-Six, an expensive luxury car is parked in the driveway. The tracks of several dozen people all lead up to the main entrance.

### Joining The Party

The investigators are the last hobo to arrive and most guests have been here for more than a day. The party has been going on for at three full days and nights at this point. Everyone who



## Party Goers List

For quick reference, here is a list of party goers for Keepers to reference. It lists all 28 hoboos, tramps, and bums (the maximum number allowed on the random roll), by name, type of hobo they are, and whether they are currently implanted with a mantid larva or not. Additionally, the few non-implanted hoboos are also italicized for quick reference.

1. *Lucky Ann (non-implanted hobo)*
2. Handsome Harvey (implanted tramp)
3. Eddie Cork (implanted hobo)
4. Willie the Nail (implanted bum)
5. *Washcloth Wanda (non-implanted tramp)*
6. Tennessee Mary (implanted hobo)
7. Trombone Harry (implanted tramp)
8. New Hampshire Herman (implanted hobo)
9. Alvin Sunshine (implanted tramp)
10. Nurse Barbara (implanted hobo)
11. Hoboken Henry (implanted hobo)
12. *Father Possum (non-implanted hobo)*
13. Gap-Tooth Mary (implanted bum)
14. King Ray (implanted hobo)
15. Bossy Neil (implanted hobo)
16. Mother Eva (implanted hobo)
17. Lady Baguette (implanted tramp)
18. The Typhoon King (implanted hobo)
19. Meerkat the Mayor (implanted bum)
20. Bourbon Bill (non-implanted bum)
21. Shiny Nickel Jack (implanted hobo)
22. Snow Cold Jane (implanted hobo)
23. Hungry Boss Lee (implanted hobo)
24. Teacup Don (implanted bum)
25. Little Vic Nevada (implanted hobo)
26. Professor Rusty Lester (implanted tramp)
27. *Quick Count Flapjacks (non-implanted hobo)*
28. Judge Dirty Crow (implanted bum)

sees the investigators greet them warmly and welcomes them to the party. The investigators know nearly everyone here as the hoboos of New England are a tightly knit community. The investigators only meet someone they don't personally know or know of with a failed Know roll. (I.e., there are no mysterious strangers among the hoboos. Even if the investigators run into someone none of them know, another hobo they know can vouch for the new acquaintance.) However, most of the people they hear are hard to recognize at first, as everyone is freshly bathed, in clean fairly new clothing, and many are freshly shaved or have had their hair trimmed. Identifying people becomes something of a game. A very few hoboos (mostly bums) look much like they normally do, having refused the offers of a bath and new clothing.

Inside the Greene Mansion are 16–28 hoboos, bums, and tramps (4D4+12 or Keeper's choice); all feasting, drinking, and making quite merry, while a radio plays music. Some people dance while others doze contently in armchairs and on couches beside warm, roaring fires. Some throw darts or play pool in the game room, while others crowd the well-stocked bar. A massive buffet table is laid out, with all manner of food to choose from. Every so often, something hot is added to the selection from the kitchen by one of three Asian women in beautifully ornate robes. Eventually, their host finds the investigators to offer his official welcome.

The party takes place over the entire first floor of the mansion, but the upstairs is strictly off limits. The party goers explain that this is one of the only rules Bob's new wife has, as that is where the family

sleeps. Anyone trying to sneak upstairs is stopped by one of the Greene daughters. The party goers also step in to stop the investigators, as they are afraid that offending the lady of the house by going where they don't belong might get them all thrown out. Sneaking upstairs during the party requires an Extreme Stealth check, as the mantids keep a close ear and eye (they have three) out for anyone going up the stairs.

## The Happy Couple

Happiest of all the hoboos here is Bottlecap Bob, now going by Robert Dolbert. On his arm is a beautiful Japanese woman dressed in a formal kimono whom he introduces as his wife, Midori Greene Dolbert. Three younger women dart around, delivering plates of food, pouring drinks, lighting cigars, and flirting shamelessly with both male and female guests. They are introduced as Hina, Nana, and Rina, the daughters of Midori from a much earlier marriage.

**Note:** *Keepers can reduce the number of daughters to better match the relative strength and number of investigators.*

The happy couple welcomes the investigators to their home and encourages them to join in the party. Each investigator is offered food and drink, hot showers, shaves and even haircuts, as well as a warm place to sleep. After bathing, Midori explains, new clothing and shoes will be provided, and can be tailored by her daughters to fit them better. The gracious Greene girls insist that it is no problem and that they are happy, nay honored, to make their new father's friends as comfortable as possible.

## The Mysterious Greene Women

They all appear to be Japanese and speak nearly perfect English with only the slightest of accents. Each has long dark hair, wears full formal kimonos, and moves with a fluid grace. Midori claims to have visited America many times while growing up, with her daughters spending as much of their childhood in America as they did in Japan. Anyone making a successful Language: Japanese roll or having more than 30% in that skill realizes that *all* of the women's personal names are some variation of a word meaning Green, and each is literally named Green Green.

However, those making a successful Hard Know roll realize the accent is not Japanese. Anyone who is an accomplished Dreamer and makes a successful Know roll can identify the accent as coming from the Six Kingdoms of the Western Dreamlands. Those rolling a Hard success on their Know roll identify the accent as specifically being from the city of Drinen, in the mountains west of the River Ska.

The Greene women appear charming and beautiful, generous and kind, flirtatious and sensual—to those attracted to women. To others, they appear plain and dull, aloof and condescending, somewhat insincere and cold. They see Greene women as overly made up with cosmetics, and those making a successful Spot Hidden roll realize that the women are all wearing wigs. Investigators commenting on their appearance may realize they are perceiving these women in very different ways. These beings aren't human women at all, nor are they native to the Waking World; rather, they are creatures native to the Dreamlands, called mantids.

## Questioning The Couple

Robert and Midori seem very much in love, and are practically connected at the hip. She follows him everywhere, sending her daughters darting about like a general commanding soldiers as she stays close to her husband's side. If questioned about how they met, they relate the story of meeting on a train and falling in love while playing cards and talking until dawn. Midori claims to be a wealthy widow, recently come to America with her three daughters after the death of her husband. Robert agrees with whatever she says.

Investigators making a Psychology roll find that Robert is replying truthfully, as his memories have been so twisted he believes this fantasy version of truth. Investigators making a successful Psychology roll on Midori are disturbed to find that they cannot read her reactions at all, not that she is lying or even telling the truth. She has none of the

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common tells humans do for either reaction, and comes across vaguely alien and disturbing when others focus on her too closely.

### The Seductive Stepdaughters

During the festivities, the Greene daughters attempt to lure each investigator into a lingering kiss, regardless of their gender. If a daughter succeeds, during this kiss she implants a single microscopic egg within the investigator's bodies (see below). They may do more than kiss, but such actions should be occur off-screen and

are at the Keeper's and players' discretion. Their main goal is to implant their larvae and keep their hosts distracted and controllable. As the investigators arrived days later than most guests, these eggs will take much longer to hatch. For most guests, their time as hosts is about to end quite horribly. Currently, so many of the hoboes here are successfully incubating mantid grubs that implanting the investigators is not a critical objective for the mantids. If the investigators can be implanted without too much difficulty, well and good. If not, they'll simply need to be eliminated once the main hatching begins.

### The Bath Trap

Investigators may relish the idea of a hot bath, shave, haircut, and new clothing, especially after the long cold journey from Boston. The Greene sisters attempt to personally bathe the investigators, as well as shave them and trim their hair, but these offers can be refused. While the investigators are nude and bathing, one of the sisters sneaks off with their old clothing and footwear, while another brings in fresh clothing.

What the sisters are mostly looking for are hidden weapons, and they steal anything the investigators might be able to use as such (guns, knives, clubs,

## MANTIDS, Lesser Independent Race

Found in remote jungles, deserts, and mountains across the Dreamlands are a race of sentient insects called the mantids. They naturally appear as tall, vaguely humanoid creatures with two pairs of arms, and three pairs of legs in various shades of green. Their heads are wide triangles with three large compound eyes and two pairs of large, moth-like, feathery antenna. Physically, they are very similar in appearance to the terrestrial praying mantis, although lacking any sort of wings or spike covered forelimbs.

These creatures are masters of disguise and charm, using a combination of psychic projection, biological pheromones, and specially constructed magical masks to mimic humans. Mantids typically learn to speak about ten different human languages, and have a gift for learning new ones. They have a parasitic relationship with mankind, on which they feed upon and use to incubate their young. The mantids have only a single gender, laying eggs within a human host to produce a nearly identical genetic copy of themselves, with some slight variation contributed from the incubating host. They attempt to deposit their tiny eggs into the mouths of various human hosts, usually through kissing. Only a single egg can be incubated in a human host, but each mantid can produce several dozen eggs during their breeding cycle.

Mantids can climb sheer surfaces with the powerful adhesive pads on the ends of their four lower legs. They can also slightly change the hue of their skin in an effort to camouflage themselves. They are powerfully built and nimble creatures, able to leap up to 20 feet and to dart about quickly in combat. A gland in their lower abdomen can produce a substance that quickly hardens when exposed to air. It has a STR of 80 per every three inches of thickness with regards to breaking through or free of it. The creatures use this material to restrain captives, create structures, and block off exits

### SPECIAL POWERS

**Psychic Disguise:** These creatures use a combination of psychic manipulation, chemical pheromones, and innate magical crafting ability to allow them to mimic human form. These

abilities work best against those attracted to women. The mantids' brains produce waves that cloud a human's perception, while a gland on their back emits a chemical that makes humans more accepting of what they expect to see. Lastly, each mantid learns to create an enchanted mask, made from the skinned face and scalp of a human woman. These masks are focus totems, and the mantid appears to be quite similar to a version of the human whose face they now wear. Older mantids often have multiple masks, allowing them to completely change their appearance.

Normally, those attracted to women view mantids who are wearing their masks as exquisitely beautiful, while others find them to be average looking at best. If a mantid is physically injured while wearing their mask, it is forced to make a POW check to maintain its disguise. Should it fail, the creature suddenly appears as it normally would: as a large green humanoid insect wearing a mask of a tanned human face and scalp. A mantid who has its mask removed cannot maintain the illusion of human form at all. Mantids are unable to enter combat while maintaining their disguise, and must also physically remove their masks to make their venom spray attacks.

### Mantids

*Dreamlands denizens with a poison kiss.*

CHAR.	AVERAGES	ROLLS
STR	80	(3D6+6) x 5
CON	100	(4D6+6) x 5
SIZ	80	(3D6+6) x 5
DEX	90	(4D6+4) x 5
INT	65	(2D6+6) x 5
POW	70	(4D6 x 5)

**HP:** 18

**Av. Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Average Build:** +1

**Average Magic Points:** 14

**Move** 12

**Attacks per Round:** 2, Mantids can only use their venom spray attack once per round.

**Fighting Attacks:** These creatures never use hand-held weapons, but make physical attacks with the sharp claws on their upper pair of arms. Once every three rounds, they may

also make a single attack by spraying caustic venom from a gland under their mandibles.

**Fighting (Claws):** 45% (22/9), **damage** 1D4+DB  
**Dodge:** 65% (32/13)

**Venom Spray:** Mantids can spray a cloud of paralytic venom once every three combat rounds. The cloud engulfs everything within 180 degrees of their mandibles to a distance of 8 feet. Victims making an Extreme CON check are temporarily debilitated, suffering a 1 penalty dice to all rolls and having their movement reduced by 50% over the next 1D20 minutes. Victims who fail this CON check are physically paralyzed for the next 3D8 hours.

**Egg Implantation:** Victims who receive a lingering kiss lasting at least fifteen seconds from a mantid attempting to implant its eggs must make an Extreme success on a CON check. Those who succeed resist the implantation; however, within an hour the mantids can tell (by scent) that the implantation was unsuccessful, and may target that individual again. Those who fail to make an Extreme success on a CON check have been successfully implanted with the creature's offspring, who gestate within their bodies over the next 1D3 days. In the final hours of the attack, the victim's abdomen bloats grotesquely, until the green maggot-like mantid grub bursts through their distended bellies, killing their hosts. Those witnessing this must make a Sanity Check for 0/1D4.

Removing a mantid grub before it hatches requires surgery, and is only successful with an Hard Medicine roll; otherwise, both grub and host die.

Mantid grubs are about 2 feet long with tiny clawed legs, but are quite harmless and helpless. Adult mantids usually defend their grubs as they devour the corpse of their former host. This typically takes 2-4 days, after which the grubs molt their skin and mature into their adult form.

**Armor:** 2-point Hard Chitinous Shell

**Skills:** Appear Human 100%, Climb 85%, Jump 80%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 70%.

**Sanity Loss:** None if seemingly human, 1/1D6 for Sanity points if in mantid form

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straight razors, etc). Investigators who don't literally bring their weapons into the bath with them have them stolen. Anyone asking after their weapons is told by the sisters that their mother has ordered that all such items be locked away for safe keeping, but they will be returned when the owners depart.

If Midori is asked about this order, she explains that her father drank a lot and was careless with a pistol when drunk. A family dog was accidentally slain by his drunken shot, and she has been uneasy about having armed people when alcohol is present. She will not relent, claiming that this is her house, and although there are very few rules, this is one that is not open to compromise.

### Winding Down for the Night

As the hour grows late, around 10 PM, the party winds down for the night. Everyone is already talking about what the Greene ladies will make for breakfast tomorrow, as they settle in to wherever they can for a long slumber. The happy couple and the Greene daughters retire upstairs to their rooms after wishing everyone a pleasant night's sleep. The house grows quiet aside from the snores of sleeping tramps, bums, and hoboos, all stuffed with food and many drunk from the beer, whiskey, and rye. If the investigators have maintained their sobriety (or at least most of it), they now have an opportunity to quietly search the mansion for clues. They are not required to do so, as the conclusion to the scenario is fast approaching, whether they like it or not.

## PART SIX: SNOOPING AROUND

Once the party ends for the night, the Greene women and Robert Dolbert retire to their private rooms on the third floor. The investigators now have free run of the house although efforts should be made to remain as quiet as possible. The mansion is a large place, and the residents have things they want to hide.

### Leaving Early

If investigators try to leave the premises they discover that not only are all the doors locked (and cannot be unlocked without the key, which Midorie Green has, or a successful Hard Locksmith roll), but the windows have been also painted shut. Investigators can pry open a window, break the glass of one, or force a door open to escape the house, but not likely without alerting their hosts. The mantids aren't sleeping; they are listening for the first of their grubs to begin hatching (65% Listen). Most of the other guests are too full, drunk, tired, or content to willingly leave the house. In fact, they not only refuse to do so; they try to convince the investigators to remain. They'll ask the investigators

at least wait until morning and say goodbye before leaving, as "the rest of us got a good thing going here; don't spoil it for everyone by being rude."

### Looking Around

There are five rooms in the house in which the investigators may find evidence of strange goings on. These are: the southwest chamber of the basement, the two daughters' rooms and the study/Midori's room; and the tower top.

#### Basement: Southwest Chamber

The door leading down into the basement is locked, but players can unlock it with a successful Locksmith roll or force the door open by beating a STR 70 contest roll. Once downstairs the door to the southwest chamber is concealed by a hung tapestry and requires a Spot Hidden roll, with a bonus die, to discover.

Once the door is discovered, investigators see that it is covered by a slightly opaque and tough substance similar to rubber cement. This is a thick layer of mantid secretions, which requires a winning a STR 200 contest in order to pull it down, or 1D8+8 minutes to chisel apart. Once inside investigators find a room filled with large stones neatly arranged in a circle. Covering each stone is thick bluish green moss which glows softly in the dim light. The air has a foul scent of swampy decay. Pale mist drifts up from a mysterious clay bowl, filling the room.

About twenty wicker baskets line the walls of this chamber, each filled with harvested clumps of the same bluish moss which grows on these stones. This is an alien farm which the mantids keep to feed themselves, as human victims can't provide a balanced diet. Investigators making a successful Spot Hidden roll locate scattered human bones from as many as half a dozen victims inside the baskets of moss. Those making a successful Medicine roll clearly detect that the bones have marks of having been gnawed on, cracked open, and harvested for the bone marrow. Sticking to the walls here and there around the room are three large lumps of mantid secretions. They are a little over six feet long, about two feet wide, and vaguely in the shape of a human being. If the investigators take the time to pry them open, they find the slightly pickled corpses of two hoboos and a bum (Smooth Ruth, Waistcoat Tom, and Alvin One-Eye). Seeing them requires viewers to make a 1/1D3 Sanity check.

#### Second Floor Stairs

The stairs leading to the third floor are completely blocked by a very thick wall of mantid secretions. While it is possible to break through this barrier or pull it down, it is such a difficult task that doing so without alerting the mantids is impossible. Also, it

would take so long to accomplish this quietly that, before the stairs could be cleared, the mantid grubs would begin to hatch.

#### Third Floor: Study/Midori's Room

The door to this room is kept locked at all times. This chamber is used as a master bedroom where Bottlecap Bob and Midori Greene sleep. If these rooms are occupied, the door will be barred from the inside. Breaking into this area requires a successful Locksmith roll, along with breaking the door down and winning a STR vs. STR 200 contest if the crossbar is in place. The door can be battered down by inflicting 120 hit points of damage to the door.

The interior of this room is nothing that one would expect. The room is devoid of all furniture other than a simple bed which is bolted to the floor. Four pairs of handcuffs are attached to each of the four corners of the frame, to secure a person to the bed by the wrists and ankles. There is also a spiral staircase here, leading to the upper levels of the mansion.

If Bottlecap Bob has retired for the night this is where he is, handcuffed by the wrists and ankles, with a gag in his mouth and a blindfold over his eyes. He's also been drugged with an exotic Dreamlands narcotic that keeps him unconscious while preventing him from entering a normal sleep cycle. It is used to prevent powerful dreamers from entering the Dreamlands.

#### Daughters' Rooms

These two spacious rooms are filled with large soft pillow cover mattress resting on the floor. The walls and ceiling have been covered in the rubbery secretions of the mantids, giving the room an alien feel. The eastern room is occupied by Midori and her daughter Hina; the western bedrooms belong to her daughters Nana and Rina. If any of the mantids have retired for the night, there is a 50% chance this is where they are, resting, tending to their masks, and listening for the screams to begin, a signal that the first grubs have begun to hatch. Shelves have been made out of the secretions, and each room holds several mannequin heads of the sort to hold wigs.

#### The Masks

There are 1D3+1 such heads for each mantid present in the scenario. Most of these frames hold the skinned face and scalp of a human woman, extra or in progress enchanted masks. One mannequin head per mantid will be empty as that is the mask the creature is currently wearing. With a successful Know roll, investigators recognize, some of the newer looking masks as belonging to the faces of female hoboos, tramps, or bums whom they know. Investigators finding these masks must make a 1/D3 Sanity check or a 1/1D6

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

check if one of the masks came from someone they personally knew.

### **Tower Top**

Investigators reaching here find a strange, otherworldly-looking machine, a strong box, a large chest, and an expensive-looking freestanding mirror.

### **The Machine**

It has dozens of gears, tubs, dials, and a small steam engine-like boiler. It has printing plates, ink traps, and paper feeds. The plates hold the designs for \$5 and \$20 bills. This is a counterfeit printing press. Investigators who are Dreamers realize the machine had to have come from the Dreamlands, due to the vibrant colors, and familiar feel it has to items created beyond the Walls of Sleep. Exactly how this machine remains stable in this Waking World is a mystery to them.

### **The Lock Box**

There is also a lock box with a simple lock, which can be opened with a successful Locksmith roll, winning a STR 80 contest, or inflicting 10 points of damage to it. Inside are \$2,000 dollars in counterfeit \$5 and \$20 bills.

### **The Weapons Locker**

The room also contains a chest filled with a wide variety of mostly crude weapons, predominantly small knives and clubs, hammers and screwdrivers, straight razors and hatpin stilettos, even an old, rusty, small caliber revolver or two. Keepers should feel free to add anything they like to this box of weapons. So long as it is small, concealable, and something a hobo may have picked up in their wide travels for self-defense. These are the items confiscated from the various hoboes, bums, and tramps while they were bathing or sleeping. If investigators had any weapons taken from them by the mantids, this is where they'll be found.

Keepers may also include a stick of dynamite and/or a fully loaded shotgun (12 gauge, pump action) located here. However, it is recommended that investigators be required to make an Extreme Luck roll to find such items. It is very rare to find a hobo with a shotgun.

### **The Mirror**

In the center of the room is a large free standing mirror covered in an immense velvet blanket. The oval mirror is about six feet tall, and three feet across at its widest point. The frame is extremely ornate, made of fine carved wood accented with gold leaf. At the top of the mirror is a bronze plate that reads "Le miroir des rêves." This is French, and easily translated by any investigator with more than 20% in Language: French or making a successful Language: French roll. If no investigator can read

the inscription, it slowly moves and changes shape to form the English words (assuming this is the language the investigators do speak) "The Mirror of Dreams."

### **The Mirror of Dreams**

The artistic motif of the carvings on the frame is one of cherubs, fauns, nymphs and fairies. Non-dreamer investigators who gaze into the mirror see their normal reflection; however, investigators who are Dreamers see the image of their Dream Self. The surface of the mirror ripples with any strong vibration or air movement in the room, and if touched, it feels permeable, like pressing into a layer of gelatin.

The mirror is a gateway, allowing for travelers to physically pass between the Waking World and the Dreamlands. It exists in both dimensions at once. Covering the mirror with a cloth, in either the Waking World or the Dreamlands, closes the doorway. Currently, the other side of the Mirror of Dreams is uncovered and opens into a locked chamber of the lost Tower of Mal'Galdobor. This tower is located in a far corner of the Pleasure District section of the city of Drinen, in the western Dreamlands. The blocks around the tower are walled off from the rest of the neighborhood, as they have fallen into ruin. (The wall is fairly easy to climb, should anyone choose to do so.) Using the mirror drains a traveler of 10 MP and 1D4 Sanity points. Those with less than 10 Magic Point arrive at their destination in an unconscious state, and remain that way for 1D6+4 hours, before awakening with 50% of their starting MP recovered.

The Mirror of Dreams can be destroyed if the "glass" is pierced or struck by an enchanted weapon or if the wooden frame suffers 20 HP of damage. If the mirror is destroyed in either the Waking World or the Dreamlands, it is also destroyed on the other side. Once destroyed, it cannot be repaired.

## **PART SEVEN: THE PARTY IS OVER!**

From the end of the party at 10pm, until 2:30am, the investigators may rest, eat and drink, sleep, attempt to escape, or snoop around the mansion. However, after these four and a half hours, things quickly race out of their control. The sinister plan of the mantids comes to fruition, thrusting the investigators, if they are still in the Greene mansion, into a nightmare of chaos, death, and horror.

### **If Downstairs**

If investigator are downstairs at 2:30am, their attention is drawn by the moans, groans, and painful complaints of numerous hoboes. A few toss and turn, while a couple try to stumble to their feet

in an attempt to reach a bathroom. While not every hobo seems to be affected, the majority of them are. The air is filled with a sour milk smell, along with the stench of voided bladders and bowels. It is clear something is very wrong. If the investigators go to examine or assist these suffering hoboes, Keepers should go to "Too Full."

### **If Snooping**

If the investigators are not downstairs at 2:30 am, Keepers should have them make a Listen check. Keepers should modify this by one degree of difficulty per level away from the ground floor from where they are in the house, a Hard success if they are in the basement or on the second floor, and an Extreme success if they are on the third floor or tower top. If successful, they can hear people coming awake, moaning and groaning as if in pain. If they move quickly, they can reach the party goers before their hatching grubs kill them, and Keepers should go to "Too Full." If they do not succeed in the Listen check, then they hear nothing until 2:45am, when the screams begin, and Keepers should go to "The Dead and the Dying."

### **Too Full**

Once the party goers begin waking up, investigators may check on them, or see one stumbling past them. If they make a Luck roll, they see one or more of the other non-implanted hoboes also coming awake due to the moans and groans of the others. The implanted hoboes are mumbling about upset stomachs, saying things like, "I ate too much; I feel sick. I'm too full, so full! I need to use the bathroom, help me get to the bathroom. Please God, help me!"

Investigators getting a closer look realize something is horribly wrong. Every suffering hobo has a huge distended abdomen, much like a pregnant woman in her third trimester. However, they appear this way regardless of gender. Most have voided their bowls and bladders, and a few are in so much pain they cannot even stand. Investigators getting close realize that sour-milk smell seems to be coming from these suffering hoboes. Those making a successful Spot Hidden check can see blood staining their clothing as well. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can be done to help these victims. Investigators seeing a hobo in such a condition must make a Sanity check for 1/1D4 points.

### **The Dead and Dying**

Within a few minutes of waking up due to the pain, the implanted hoboes begin screaming and collapsing with violent cramps. The investigators hear a wet, ripping sound coming from these

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

victims, like soaked canvas being torn apart. The smell of blood, human waste, and sour milk begins to fill the room. The mantid larvae have now turned into grubs and are chewing and clawing to emerge from their hosts.

The few unaffected hoboos begin to panic. Some try to help, some try to escape the house to find that they are locked in, while others begin screaming for their hosts for help. In case the investigators haven't noticed yet that they have been robbed of their weapons, one of the unaffected hoboos may scream, "Where's my pistol! Damn it, they took my pistol!" Investigators making a Hard success on a Persuade roll can get one of these hoboos to calm down enough to coordinate their actions with the investigators, possibly gaining an ally in the battle that is about to begin.

Suddenly, the screams of one of the hoboos rise in volume, intensity, and duration, before falling silent in a wet sloppy burst of blood, ripped clothing, and torn skin. The victim is now dead, and ripping out of the massive hole in their abdomen is a bright green creature, with the front half of a strange insect and the rear body of a thick worm-like grub. This victim

is only the first of many, as one after another, after another, every implanted hoboos suffers a similar fate. Investigators witnessing this must make a sanity check of 1/1D6 points.

These creatures have feathery antenna, rasping mandibles, and three large compound eyes. Each is about two feet long, and as thick around as a muscular person's thigh. The creatures spend a moment or two screeching, announcing their birth to the world, before immediately falling to feast on the still warm, dying corpses of their hosts. Investigators seeing these creatures must make a sanity check for 1/1D4 points. These mantid grubs have no natural defenses so are easily killed; however, as soon as they begin to emerge, the Greene daughters rush downstairs to defend their offspring.

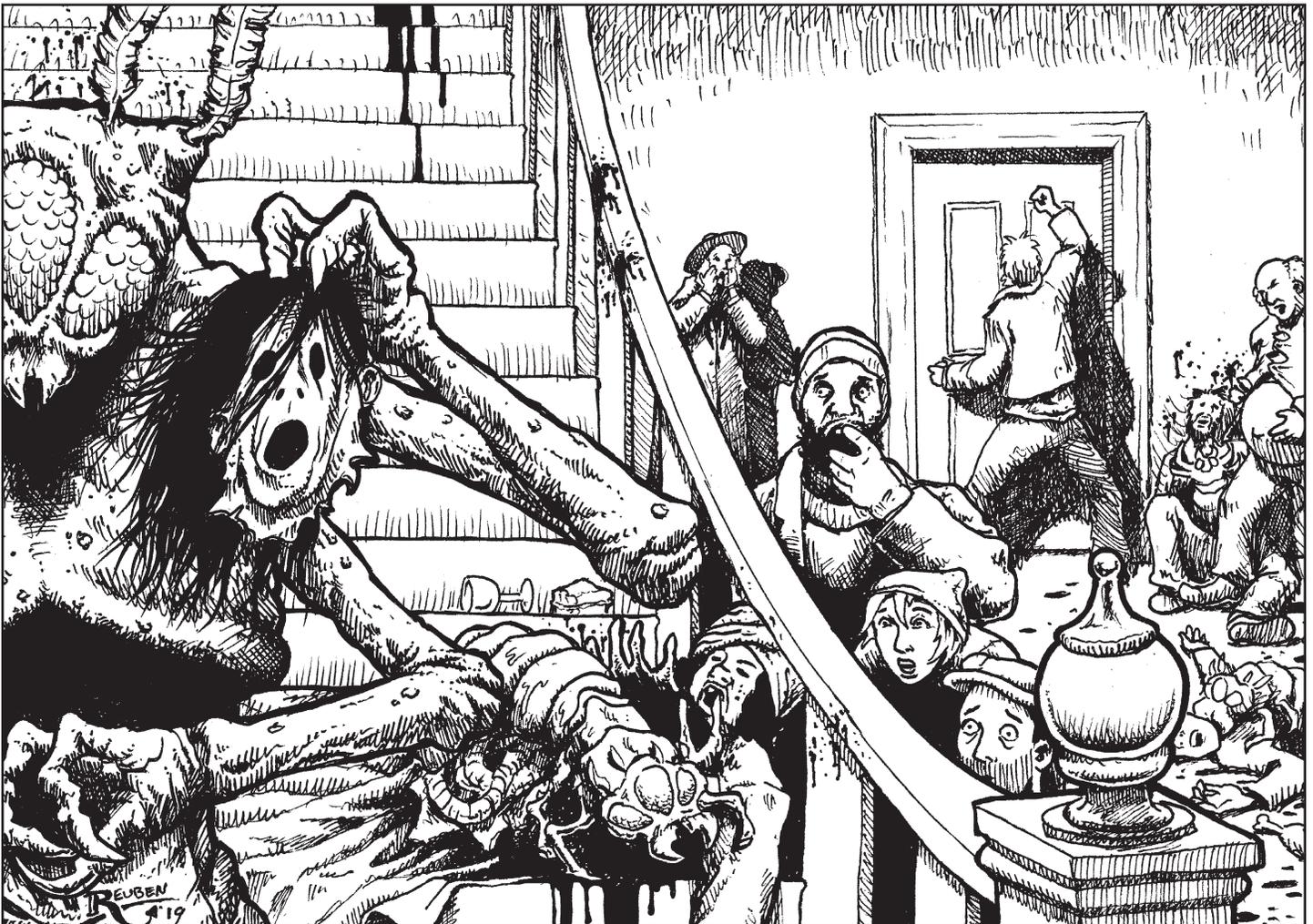
### The Mantids Attack

The Greene daughters, however many the Keeper decided to use, come rushing downstairs at an incredible speed. It almost seems that they move without their feet touching the stairs, almost flying or gliding towards the commotion. They spilt up,

going to separate rooms where this carnage is taking place to survey the situation. When they see what is transpiring they smile, and they focus on the few currently unaffected hoboos, which include the investigators, and then scream. The sound is much like that of the grubs' screech, only much longer, louder, and menacing.

They then reach up to their faces and the backs of their heads with both hands, and pull away their faces and scalps, tossing them aside. As they do so they instantly change appearance, now being perceived in their natural form: a huge, green, vaguely humanoid insect with three eyes and feathery antenna. Investigators viewing them must make a sanity check for 0/1D6 points. Keepers should pause to tally up the sanity loss their investigators have taken over the last few minutes, as investigators losing more than one fifth of their Sanity in a single game day are stricken with indefinite insanity.

The mantids immediately attack any unaffected human beings they find. Their main goals are to prevent anyone from harming their defenseless grubs, keep the humans from escaping the mansion,



## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

and paralyze the survivors with their venomous spray so they can be forcibly implanted with larva. They do not hesitate to kill, raking victims with their razor sharp claws. The mantids only attempt to capture new victims if it does not seem to put themselves or their larvae at risk. If any humans compose themselves enough to offer organized resistance, these individuals become their primary target. The creatures fight until reduced to 7 or fewer hit points (see “The Mantids Retreat”).

### Unarmed

Unless the investigators managed to retain their weapons, if they had any in the first place, they are forced to face the mantids unarmed. It is very unlikely, although remotely possible, that they have found and plundered the weapons locker, located in the upper garret level of the Greene mansion, before this encounter takes place. However, resourceful investigators are never unarmed for long, as the first floor is filled with many items that can be used as rather effective weapons. Failing that, they can always fight the creatures hand to hand, striking out at their insectoid adversaries with fists, elbows, and heels.

Investigators can retrieve various items from the kitchen, dining area, and bathroom that can be used as weapons. Items like cast iron skillet, butcher knives, meat cleavers, serving platters, steak knives, straight razors, barber scissors, glass bottles, fireplace pokers, and ice picks can be found throughout the house. Furniture is also an option, as investigators can wield chairs, coat racks, and even lamps. Keepers should allow a makeshift weapon to be found should the investigator state specifically what they are grabbing and from where. Investigators who simply “look for anything I can use as a weapon” must make a Luck check to be assigned something random from the Keeper. Makeshift weapons should inflict 1D3, 1D4, or 1D6 points of damage, depending on the size and shape of the item, with Keepers having the final say in the matter.

### Escape

When the carnage starts, some unimplanted NPC, and possibly the investigators, will simply seek to escape. Fleeing the mansion with their lives may offer their best chance of survival, especially if panicked and unarmed. However the windows are painted and/or nailed shut, and all the doors have been locked. Anyone trying to open a window or door immediately draws the attention of one of the mantids, and quickly become the focus of their attacks.

Forcing open a window or battering down an outer door requires a STR contest vs STR 90 and 150 respectively. It is easier to spend a round breaking

the glass of the window and then climbing out on the following round. Those failing a Luck check while climbing out of the broken window suffer 1D2 Hit Points of damage from broken glass. The quickest way to escape the house is by jumping through a glass window, although this requires a successful Jump check. The jumper suffers 1D4 points of damage from the impact, fall, and broken glass regardless of success. Those failing the jump check suffer this damage and remain in the house, but have effectively broken the window and may climb out on the following round.

### Kill it with Fire

Another likely tactic is for the investigators to set fire to the house, using the abundant alcoholic beverages as an accelerant. Should the mantids see investigators moving to set the house on fire they immediately focus all their efforts on stopping them. This desperate action does ensure that the mantid grubs are all killed, the adult mantids are driven back to the Dreamlands, and the Mirror of Dreams is destroyed.

However, any unimplanted hoboese still in the house, including the magically beguiled Bottlecap Bob, are also killed in the blaze. While the house goes up in a fiery blaze, winds carry the fire into the surrounding woodlands, down the mountain, and onto the neighboring properties, resulting in the loss of three other homes, and the death of an elderly couple, Kenneth and Oliva Mark. Due to the high number of hoboese seen traveling through the area, and the abundant hobo signs, a roundup of hoboese begins in an effort to locate the murderous arsonists.

### The Mantids Retreat

If the investigators kill 2 of the 3 daughters (if three are being used), or reduce all three to less than 7 hit points, the mantids retreat quickly upstairs. If possible they grab as many grubs as they can, able to carry as many as six in their four wide arms at one time.

Likewise, if the investigators successfully set the Greene mansion on fire the creatures quickly race upstairs to escape a fiery death. Midori Greene, the eldest of the mantids, never enters combat. Rather she guards Bottlecap Bob and, more importantly, the Mirror of Dreams. If the mantids make a full retreat from the investigators, all of the surviving creatures rush through the Mirror of Dreams. Midori Greene is the last one through, carrying the unconscious and handcuffed Bottlecap Bob. However, they do not destroy the mirror.

The investigators can choose to break the mirror, thereby preventing the creatures from returning to the Waking World. This greatly disrupts their long term plans, but doesn't defeat them outright. The

investigators have brought the Waking World time; that is all. The overall threat remains.

As the Mirror of Dreams remains intact investigators are able to pursue the creatures. This is the only way to rescue Bottlecap Bob, and win a wider and more lasting victory over the mantids and their sorcerous undead master, Yardis Xen the Undying. They can put a stop to this threat once and for all, making both the Waking World and the Dreamlands safer places for goodhearted, and peace-loving beings on both sides.

The choice is theirs. If the investigators pursue the mantids and Bottlecap Bob through the Mirror of Dreams, Keepers should go to “Part Eight :The Rescue of Bottlecap Bob.” If they do not, the scenario ends and Keepers should proceed to “Resolution.”

## PART EIGHT: THE RESCUE OF BOTTLECAP BOB

If your investigators choose to travel through the Mirror of Dreams to enter the Dreamlands, they are in for a difficult fight. They must move fast, strike hard, and flee before numbers can be gathered against them and they become overwhelmed. They will face the elder mantid that appears as Midori Greene and any of her surviving daughters, as well as a few others of her kind. Keepers may also choose to raise the difficulty by having the master of the Tower of Mal'Galdobor, Yardis Xen the Undying, along with his honor guard, join the fight.

### Using the Mirror of Dreams

Investigators passing through the mirror are drained of 10 MP and 1D4 Sanity points. When they arrive on the other side, they appear as the normally do, with none of their clothing or equipment altered in any way. This is an effect of traveling through the Mirror of Dreams; it stabilizes items traveling from one reality to the other, for a period of 1D20 days. If they are completely drained of MP during this passage, they arrive on in the Dreamlands unconscious for 1D6+4 hours, before awakening with 50% of their starting MP recovered.

### Welcome to the Dreamlands

Once the investigators arrive in the Dreamlands, they immediately notice the differences. Sounds are clearer, colors are more vibrant, and even the air smells more intense than it does in the Waking World. Investigators who are Dreamers realize they are in the Dreamlands, as this is a very familiar sensation to them. However, even they have only visited here as their dream selves, and never in their physical Waking World bodies.

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

They are in an octagonal room about thirty feet across. It has a domed roof, and a spiral staircase going down. The room houses a free standing mirror exactly like the one (because it is, in fact, the same one) located in the upper chamber of the Greene Mansion. Along the walls are eight tall, arched, open windows. Those looking out the windows see that they are in a half-ruined walled off section of a vast city. Beyond the wall, they can see lights in houses, smoke rising from chimneys, and people moving about as guards patrol the wall. They are in the tallest tower of the dead and haunted neighborhood of a living city. Those familiar with the Dreamlands who make a Know roll realize that they are in the abandoned section of the city of Drinen, one of the Six Kingdoms of the Western Dreamlands.

### The Tower Guards

Unfortunately, there are two mantids here standing guard. If any of the Greene daughters

survived the battle in the waking world and escaped to the Dreamlands, they are also found here. Investigators making a Listen check can hear insectoid footsteps rushing down the stairs, and the muffled screams of Bottlecap Bob, as he's being carried down into the main tower. The daughters will be licking any wounds they have and/or regurgitating food to feed any of the grubs they rescued. None of their wounds have healed.

All of the mantids present are dumbstruck at the invasion, it being the last thing they expected humans to attempt. The investigators instantly gain surprise in combat so long as they don't hesitate to press their advantage. Should they investigators overcome these mantids, who fight to the death guarding this vital chamber, they can proceed deeper into the tower.

### The Stairway Attack

As the investigators move down the stairs, they

are met by a desperate mantid rushing up to stop them. It skitters along the wall at top speed and fights to the death in order to buy those in the chamber below it time. At this point, a gong begins ringing, loudly, over and over, as the alarm is raised throughout the tower of Mal'galdobor. The alarm continues drawing more and more creatures to the upper tower to contain the raiders from the Waking World. The narrow stairs continue down for over 100 feet before reaching a much larger, open chamber.

### The Final Battle

In this wide chamber at the base of the tower, a small force of creatures have gathered to make a stand. Among them are the mantid Midori Greene and her human captive, Bottlecap Bob. There are two other mantids with Midori Green, but they can hear the sounds of many more coming. However, the sounds of reinforcement are still distant, so the investigators realize they have a few minutes to act before being overwhelmed. The investigators have six combat rounds to act before more creatures arrive.

Keepers have the option of having this force of three mantids augmented by two zombies, three skeletons and the undead sorcerer Yadis Xen the Undying. These creatures can be in the chamber when the investigators arrive or suddenly appear in the chamber out of a sudden burst of flames and cloud of black smoke on the third combat round. Investigators must make a sanity check of 0/1D6 (for the skeletons), 1/1D8 (for the zombies) and 1/1D10 (for the lich) respectively.

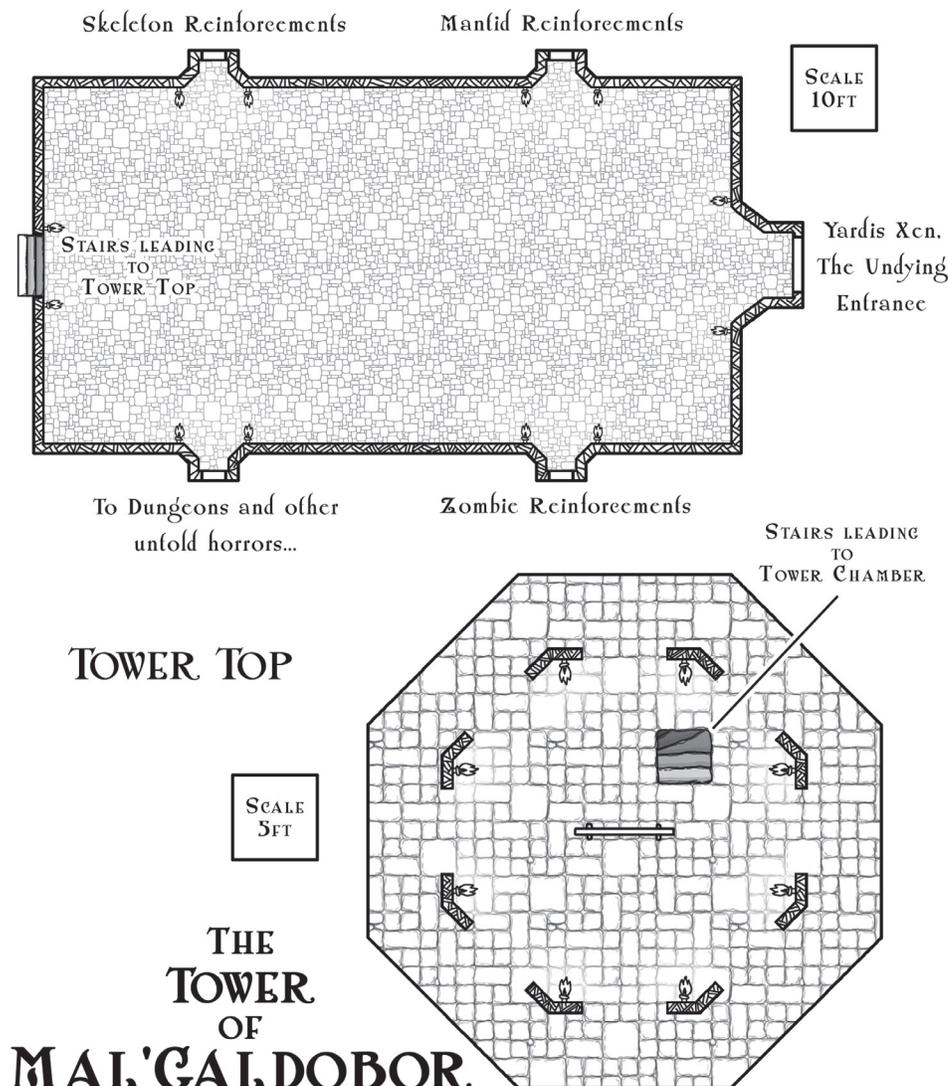
The battle continues until the defenders are all destroyed or the investigators flee. If they remain longer than six rounds, 1D3 mantid, 1D4 skeletons, and 1D4 zombies arrive per round to enter the fray. No matter how well armed the investigators are, they will eventually be overwhelmed. Their only hope is to strike hard, free Bottlecap Bob, and flee back to the mirror.

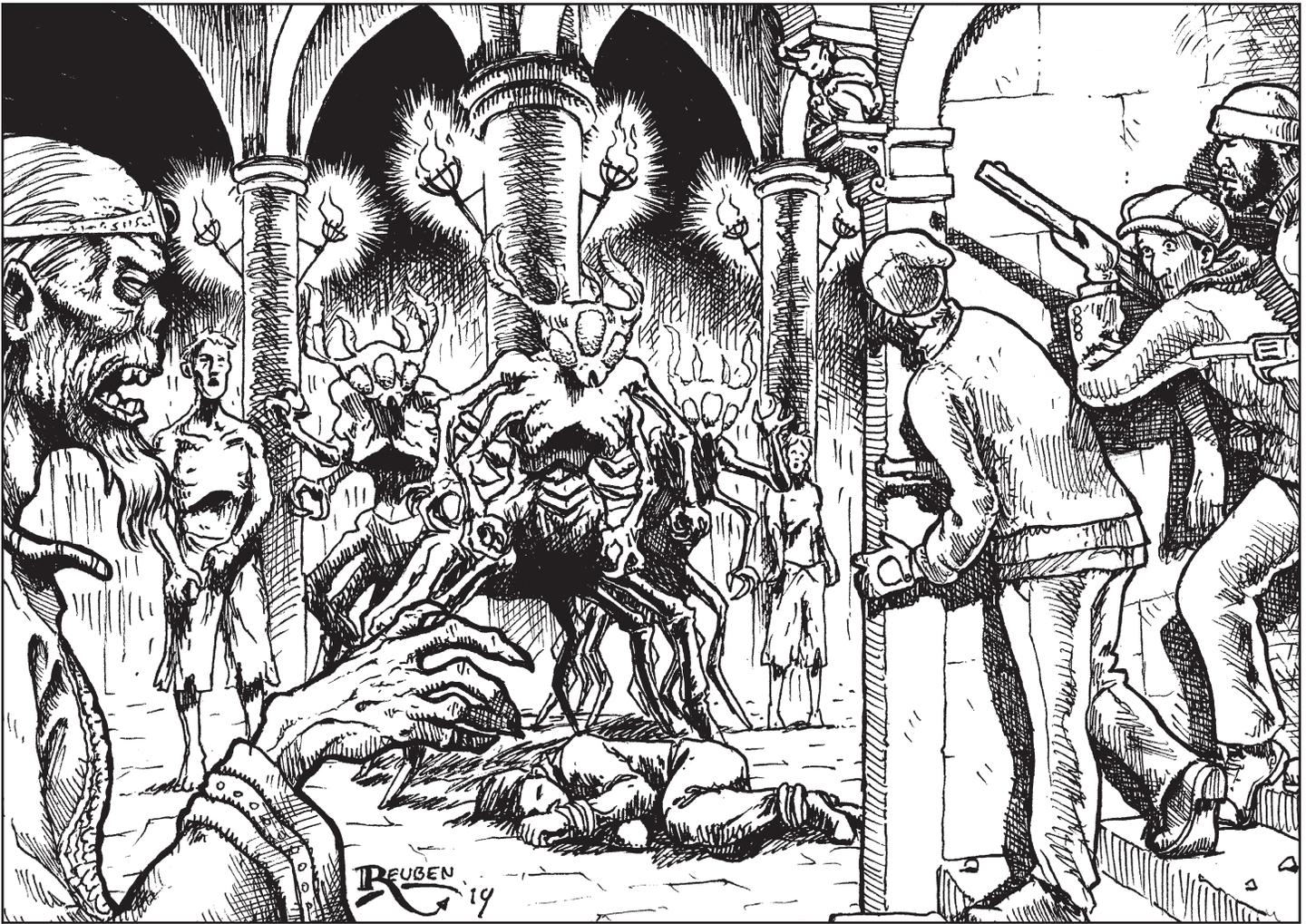
### Freeing Bottlecap Bob

Bottlecap Bob is secured by two pairs of handcuffs, one on his hands and the other on his ankles. He has managed to get both the blindfold and the gag off, and is screaming for help. If all looks hopeless, he calls for the investigators to flee, and to kill him rather than leave him behind alive. If it looks like someone is close enough to reach him, he screams for them to throw him a knife.

If Bottecap Bob gets a knife, he can free himself of both sets of handcuffs in three rounds. He is a master thief, after all. Once he frees himself, he rushes towards the upper chamber calling for the investigators to follow him. He'll shout, "There

## TOWER CHAMBER





are hundreds of these things, and thousands of undead, below us! We need to get out of here and destroy the mirror before it's too late!

### Escape from the Tower of Mal'Galdobor

If the investigators reach the Mirror of Dreams, they can use it to return to the waking world. At this time mantids, skeletons, and zombies are all rushing up the stairs and climbing up the outer walls of the tower. Horrific spectral figures are flying around the tower, screaming out an alarm. Investigators seeing these terrible wraiths must make a Sanity check for 1/1D6, but the creatures do not move into the tower to attack. This should be a horrifying chase and daring escape for the investigators.

Once back in the Waking World, the mirror must be quickly covered or destroyed. If it isn't, one creature enters the tower each round, a mantid, zombie, or skeleton (rolled randomly on a 1D3). Once the mirror is covered or destroyed, the creatures cannot use it to invade the Waking World, and the scenario comes to an end.

### Trapped in the Dreamlands

If any investigators are captured while in the Dreamlands, or stranded there if the mirror is destroyed, they are quickly overwhelmed by the mantids or the undead hordes of the lich Yaris Xen the Undying. They are then either eaten by the mantids, implanted with a larva, or transformed into an undead servitor of Yaris Xen (either a vampire or a mummy). While generous Keepers can play out the full battle, they are deep in the haunted abandoned section of Drinen. Their position is hopeless.

### Returning to the Waking World

Once the investigators return to the Waking World, the scenario is over. Keepers should review the resolution portion of the scenario, as there are many variables which must be addressed. What is the fate of the mirror? What about all those mantid grubs? Have any of the investigators been implanted with grubs? What happens to Bottlecap Bob? All this depends on the investigators' actions, up to this point and moving forward, and on the whims of the individual Keeper.

## RESOLUTION

### The Fate of Bottlecap Bob

Bottlecap Bob slowly recovers from his weeks of drugging and long term exposure to the psychic influence and pheromones of the mantids. He explains it as being trapped in his own body, watching things happen around him and not being able to stop it. He remembers everything and blames himself for all the horrors and deaths. It is more than his mind can take and falls into an indefinite insanity. Unless cared for by the investigators Bottlecap Bob dies trying to board a train, although in fact this was his chosen form of suicide. With time (1D3+1 weeks) and the support of understanding friends, this dark period passes, and the lovable tramp and powerful dreamer makes a full recovery.

### The Mantids

The investigators must destroy the mantids or drive them back into the Dreamlands. Unless the investigators accomplish this, the scenario ends in failure. If they drive the mantids back, the creatures

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

retreat through the Mirror of Dreams with as many grubs as they can manage to carry.

### The Mirror

Unless the Mirror of Dreams is destroyed or securely covered in the Waking World, it can be used by the mantids to reinvade the Waking World. The abandoned tower in Drinen, where the other side of the Mirror of Dreams is currently located, is firmly under these creatures' control. If the mirror remains intact, the scenario ends in failure.

### The Grubs

If the mantids are driven into the Dreamlands, many of their immature young may be left behind. These creatures are helpless, and spend the next

few days feeding on the corpses of their former hosts. Unless destroyed, they mature into adults, and spread across the region to make lives in the Waking World. If these creatures are allowed to mature and infest the Waking World, the scenario ends in failure.

### Implanted Investigators

The investigators may be implanted with mantid larvae, which are quickly maturing inside their bodies. They may enjoy a few days of victory, but soon their abdomens bloat painfully and their horrific deaths follow soon after. They can be saved by undergoing a risky surgery, which requires the surgeon to make a Hard success on a Medicine roll. If this roll fails, the victim dies during the procedure. Without this surgery, victims die

when the grub emerges from their bodies.

### Pennies from Heaven

Investigators may also be in possession of the Dreamlands counterfeit printing press. There is enough of the Dreamlands paper left to print another \$1,000 dollars, should the investigators wish to do a little counterfeiting. They may also have found the \$2,000 dollars of counterfeit bills in the locked drop box located near the machine. This money is only detected as counterfeit should the user make an Extreme failure on a Luck roll when the money is used. Unfortunately, the machine vanishes after two weeks (as do the images it created on the fake currency), or instantly, should the Mirror of Dreams be destroyed.

## SANITY AWARDS

**For successfully completing "The Runaway":** +1 Sanity Point

**For successfully completing "Shifted Load":** +1 Sanity Point

**For successfully completing "The Jackrollers":** +1 Sanity Point

**For each mantid defeated:** +1D6 Sanity Points

**For destroying all the mantid grubs:** +1 Sanity Point

**For Destroying the Mirror of Dreams:** +1D4 Sanity Points

**For defeating Yardis Xen the Undying:** +1D6 Sanity Points

**For saving Bottlecap Bob, physically:** +1D3 Sanity Points

**For saving Bottlecap Bob, mentally:** +1D3 Sanity Points

## NPCS AND MONSTERS

### Stewpot Sue

*Female Hobo • 52*

**STR** 40 **CON** 40 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 70 **POW** 65  
**DEX** 55 **APP** 50 **EDU** 90 **SAN** 50  
**LUCK** 50 **HP** 8 **MP** 13 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 30% (15/6), 1D3+DB or Cooking Knife 1D6+DB; Dodge 27% (13/5)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Cooking 65%, Hobo Signs 90%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 90%, Survival: Urban 45%.

**NOTES:** A hobo known for her cooking, stranded at the Boston Jungle.

### Navy Joe

*Male Hobo • 54*

**STR** 55 **CON** 45 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 65 **POW** 55  
**DEX** 35 **APP** 40 **EDU** 80 **SAN** 45  
**LUCK** 40 **HP** 10 **MP** 11 **MOVE** 5 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10), 1D3+DB or Small Club 1D6+DB; Dodge 17% (8/3)

**SKILLS:** Hobo Signs 80%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 80%, Pilot: Boats 40%, Survival: Urban 40%.

**NOTES:** A retired sailor with failing eyesight, stranded at the Boston Jungle.

### Rummy

*Male Bum • 44*

**STR** 40 **CON** 30 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 40 **POW** 35  
**DEX** 40 **APP** 35 **EDU** 50 **SAN** 35  
**LUCK** 30 **HP** 8 **MP** 7 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 55% (27/11), 1D3+DB or Rusty Knife 1D4+1+DB; Dodge 20% (10/4)

**SKILLS:** Fast Talk 55%, Hobo Signs 50%, Language

(Other): Hobo Cant 50%, Survival: Urban 25%.

**NOTES:** A weary looking bum showing signs of liver disease, stranded at the Boston Jungle.

### Barney Whoppers

*Male Tramp • 57*

**STR** 55 **CON** 60 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 65 **POW** 60  
**DEX** 30 **APP** 50 **EDU** 70 **SAN** 50  
**LUCK** 40 **HP** 11 **MP** 12 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), 1D3+DB; Dodge 15% (7/3)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Storytelling 65%, Hobo Signs 70%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 70%, Survival: Urban 35%.

**NOTES:** A lovable tramp known for telling tales, he suffers from arthritis, and is stranded at the Boston Jungle.

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

### South Station Railway Bulls

*Gordon Starks: 32, Mark Corbin:  
26, and Edward Webber: 23*

**STR 75 CON 70 SIZ 70 INT 50 POW 60**  
**DEX 65 APP 55 EDU 65 SAN 60**  
**LUCK 50 HP 14 MP 12 MOVE 8 BUILD +1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 55% (27/11),  
1D3+DB or Club1D6+DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

**ARMOR:** 1 point of heavy coat and boots.

**SKILLS:** Intimidate 40%, Listen 40%,  
Spot Hidden 50%, Track 20%

**NOTES:** A sadistic leader (Gordon Starks),  
and his two cronies. They are violent and  
merciless, hated by hoboes across New  
England, and suspected of murder.

### Duke

*Vicious Farm Dog • 4*

**STR 50 CON 70 SIZ 45 INT N/A POW 40**  
**DEX 70 APP N/A EDU N/A SAN N/A**  
**LUCK N/A HP 11 MP 8 MOVE 12 BUILD 0**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting 50% (25/10),  
damage 1D6; Dodge 42% (21/8)

**SKILLS:** Listen 75%, Scent hoboes  
anywhere near his property 100%

**NOTES:** A large, powerfully built, mixed  
breed dog trained to guard the property.

### Bernard Jackson

*Angry Farmer with Shotgun • 35*

**STR 60 CON 75 SIZ 55 INT 55 POW 50**  
**DEX 50 APP 40 EDU 70 SAN 50**  
**LUCK 40 HP 13 MP 10 MOVE 8 BUILD 0**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 55% (27/11),  
1D3+DB or Club1D6+DB; Firearms (Remington  
Model 11A Shotgun w/ rock salt) 60% (30/12),  
damage 2D6/1D6/1D3 w/ a CON check  
to avoid incapacitation due to burning  
pain for 2D12 minutes, range 10 yards/20  
yards/50 yards; Dodge 25% (12/5)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Farming 70%, Listen 30%,  
Natural World 70%, Operate Heavy Machinery  
45%, Spot Hidden 35%, Track 25%

**NOTES:** A bitter, mean-spirited widower  
who will go to extreme lengths to  
avenge his beloved dog, Duke.

### Azure Heights Police Officers

*Male (D3+1) • Late 20s*

**STR 70 CON 65 SIZ 65 INT 65 POW 55**  
**DEX 60 APP 60 EDU 70 SAN 50**  
**LUCK 50 HP 13 MP 11 MOVE 8 BUILD +1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 55% (27/11),  
1D3+DB or Club 1D6+DB; Firearms (Colt  
Positive Police Revolver) 50% (25/10),  
damage 1D8; Dodge 30% (15/6)

**ARMOR:** 1 point of heavy coats and winter clothing

**SKILLS:** Intimidate 50%, Law 45%, Listen 40%,  
Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 40%, Track 20%

**NOTES:** These hateful, violent men  
have a very dark reputation of assaulting  
hoboes they take into custody.

### Simon Dale

*Confused Would-Be Hobo • 11*

**STR 35 CON 65 SIZ 35 INT 40 POW 40**  
**DEX 60 APP 55 EDU 35 SAN 40**  
**LUCK 35 HP 10 MP 8 MOVE 8 BUILD -1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** -1

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 25% (12/5), 1D3+DB  
or Baseball Bat 1D6+DB; Dodge 30% (15/6)

**SKILLS:** Act Tough 05%, Climb 45%, Stealth 35%.

**NOTES:** A young scared runaway without  
a good reason to leave home.

### Railway Workers

*Dan Meuser: 24, Connor Lamb: 29, Dwight  
Evans: 51, and Brendan Boyle: 32*

**STR 60 CON 70 SIZ 65 INT 55 POW 70**  
**DEX 65 APP 50 EDU 85 SAN 65**  
**LUCK 55 HP 13 MP 14 MOVE 8, but**  
7 for Dwight Evans **BUILD +1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 35% (17/7),  
1D3+DB or small tool (crowbar, shovel)  
1D6+DB; Dodge 35% (17/7)

**SKILLS:** Electrical Repair 40%, Jump  
50%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Navigate

40%, Operate Heavy Machinery 35%

**NOTES:** Four fair, kind, but cautious  
railway workers who are facing many  
hours of hard cold labor.

### The Jackrollers

*Fred Crandall: 20, Clarence Nutting: 22,  
James Bernard: 27, and William Hawks: 26*

**STR 65 CON 65 SIZ 60 INT 40 POW 45**  
**DEX 55 APP 40 EDU 50 SAN 35**  
**LUCK 40 HP 12 MP 9 MOVE 8 BUILD +1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 50% (25/10), 1D3+DB  
or Club1D6+db or Knife 1D4+DB; Dodge 30% (15/6)

**SKILLS:** Fast Talk 25%, Intimidate 50%,  
Jump 40%, Listen 45%, Locksmith 40%,  
Spot Hidden 45%, Stealth 40%

**NOTES:** Four vicious, murderous thieves,  
who attack hoboes right after they've been  
paid and are trying to leave an area.

### Cable-Cast Collette

*Female Hobo • 20*

**STR 55 CON 60 SIZ 40 INT 60 POW 60**  
**DEX 75 APP 65 EDU 65 SAN 50**  
**LUCK 55 HP 10 MP 12 MOVE 9 BUILD 0**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 40% (20/8), 1D3+DB  
or small knife 1D4+DB; Dodge 40% (20/8)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Knitting 75%, Charm  
40%, Jump 40%, Hobo Signs 65%, Language  
(Other): Hobo Cant 65%, Persuade 40%,  
Stealth 40%, Survival: Urban 32%.

**NOTES:** A light skinned black female hobo,  
known for her good looks, her skill with  
knitting, and her very large bodyguard  
of a cousin, Smiling Benjy Jigsaw.

### Smiling Benjy Jigsaw

*Male Hobo • 25*

**STR 80 CON 70 SIZ 75 INT 55 POW 65**  
**DEX 70 APP 50 EDU 65 SAN 60**  
**LUCK 45 HP 14 MP 13 MOVE 8 BUILD +1**

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 60% (30/12), 1D3+DB  
or Hammer 1D4+1+DB; Dodge 35% (17/6)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Carpentry 70%, Charm

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

20%, Jump 40%, Hobo Signs 65%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 65%, Stealth 35%, Survival: Urban 32%, Throw 40%

**NOTES:** A large, powerfully built black hobo famous for being a very skilled carpenter, and rumored to have a bad temper when he drinks (which, thankfully, he no longer does).

### Roberta Hardwell *Soft Touch Widow • 44*

**STR** 50 **CON** 70 **SIZ** 60 **INT** 50 **POW** 65  
**DEX** 55 **APP** 55 **EDU** 60 **SAN** 55  
**LUCK** 60 **HP** 13 **MP** 13 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 35% (17/7), 1D3+DB; Firearms (Winchester Model 94 rifle) 50% (25/10), damage 2D6+2; Dodge 30% (15/6)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Farming 65%, Charm 55%, Listen 30%, Natural World 70%, Operate Heavy Machinery 45%, Spot Hidden 35%, Track 25%

**NOTES:** A lovely widow, struggling to keep her family farm going while raising her three teenaged children.

### Bottlecap Bob aka Robert Dolbert

*Male Tramp and Powerful Dreamer • 30*

**STR** 50 **CON** 50 **SIZ** 55 **INT** 65 **POW** 70  
**DEX** 75 **APP** 60 **EDU** 75 **SAN** 20  
**LUCK** 55 **HP** 10 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 8 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting (Brawl) 70% (35/14), 1D3+DB; Dodge 45% (22/9)

**SKILLS:** Art/Craft: Poetry 75%, Charm 40%, Climb 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 35%, Dreaming 60%, Hobo Signs 75%, Jump 50%, Language (Other): Hobo Cant 75%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 40%, Occult 50%, Spot Hidden 65%, Stealth 60%, Survival: Urban 37%, Throw 40%

**SPELLS:** Emerald Darts of Ptath, Lassitude of Phein

**NOTES:** A tramp known for his magic tricks, who is also a powerful dreamer. In the Dreamlands, he is a swashbuckling thief. In the Waking World, he is newly married and retired from riding the rails—and now fully under the psychic sway of the mantids. His birth name is Robert Dolbert.

### Midori Greene

*Bride of Bottlecap Bob/Elder Mantid*

**STR** 90 **CON** 115 **SIZ** 85 **INT** 90 **POW** 120  
**DEX** 110 **APP** N/A in mantid form, 85/50 in human form **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** 20 **MP** 24 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +2

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D6

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 2, but mantids can only use their venom spray attack once in a round.

**ATTACKS:** Claws 45% (22/9), damage 1D4+DB; Dodge 65% (32/13)

**MANEUVERS:** Venom Spray and Egg Implantation: See page 26.

**ARMOR:** 2-point Hard Chitinous Shell

**SKILLS:** Appear Human 100%, Climb 85%, Jump 80%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 70%.

**NOTES:** This elder mantid is one of the most powerful of her kind. She is the one who captured Bottlecap Bob, and she is using him to lure prey while raiding the Waking World. In her current human form, she appears to be a mature, beautiful, Japanese woman.

**SANITY LOSS:** None in human form. 1/1D6 in mantid form.

### Hina, Nana, and Rina Greene

*The Greene Daughters/Adult Mantids*

**STR** 80 **CON** 100 **SIZ** 80 **INT** 65 **POW** 70  
**DEX** 90 **APP** N/A in mantid form, 85/50 in human form **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** 18 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 2, but mantids can only use their venom spray attack once in a round.

**ATTACKS:** Claws 45% (22/9), damage 1D4+DB; Dodge 65% (32/13)

**MANEUVERS:** Venom Spray and Egg Implantation: See page 26.

**ARMOR:** 2-point Hard Chitinous Shell

**SKILLS:** Appear Human 100%, Climb 85%, Jump 80%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 70%.

**NOTES:** These elite mantids are direct offspring of “Midori”, an elder mantid. They were handpicked to join her for an attack into the Waking World. In their current human form, they appear as three nearly identical Japanese sisters.

**SANITY LOSS:** None in human form. 1/1D6 in mantid form.

### Mantids of the Tower of Mal’Galdobor

*x60*

**STR** 80 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 50 **INT** 45 **POW** 70  
**DEX** 90 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** 13 **MP** 14 **MOVE** 12 **BUILD** +1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 2, but mantids can only use their venom spray attack once in a round.

**ATTACKS:** Claws 45% (22/9), damage 1D4+DB; Dodge 65% (32/13)

**MANEUVERS:** Venom Spray and Egg Implantation: See page 26.

**ARMOR:** 2-point Hard Chitinous Shell

**SKILLS:** Climb 85%, Jump 80%, Listen 65%, Spot Hidden 50%, Stealth 70%.

**NOTES:** These are rank and file mantids, smaller, weaker, and less intelligent than Midori or her daughters. None are wearing their human skin masks, so they appear in their natural form.

**SANITY LOSS:** 1/1D6

### Skeletons of the Tower of Mal’Galdobor

*x400*

**STR** 50 **CON** N/A **SIZ** 65 **INT** 50 **POW** 05  
**DEX** 50 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** N/A **MP** 1 **MOVE** 7 **BUILD** 0

**DAMAGE BONUS:** None

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting, Sickle 45% (22/9), 1D4+1+DB; Dodge 30% (15/6)

**ARMOR:** Resistant to harm (Impose one penalty dice for attacks with impaling weapons. When damaged there is a 5% chance per point of damage inflicted that the creature is shattered and destroyed).

**NOTES:** These creatures are animated by Yardis Xen. They are faster and smarter than his zombie troops and can also wield weapons. However, they don’t last as long in combat as they tend to be quite brittle.

**SANITY LOSS:** 0/1D6

## RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

### Zombies of the Tower of Mal'Galdobor

x300

**STR** 80 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 65 **INT** N/A **POW** 05  
**DEX** 35 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** 14 **MP** 1 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** +1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting 30% (15/6),  
damage 1D4+DB; Dodge: None

**ARMOR:** Major wounds delivered to the body result in the loss of a limb. Otherwise ignore damage except to the head (one penalty die on roll to target the head)

**NOTES:** These rotting, shambling creatures are the rank and file soldiers of Yardis Xen

the Undying. They batter to death anyone they are ordered to, and then drag their bodies back to their master for animation.

**SANITY LOSS:** 0/1D8

### Yardis Xen the Undying

*Master of the Tower of Mal'Galdobor, Lich • 590*

**STR** 90 **CON** 80 **SIZ** 45 **INT** 90 **POW** 120  
**DEX** 40 **APP** N/A **EDU** N/A **SAN** N/A  
**LUCK** N/A **HP** 12 **MP** 24 **MOVE** 6 **BUILD** +1

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +1D4

**ATTACKS PER ROUND:** 1

**ATTACKS:** Fighting 60% (30/12)  
1D6 + DB; Dodge 20% (10/4)

**ARMOR:** 2-points of skin; impaling

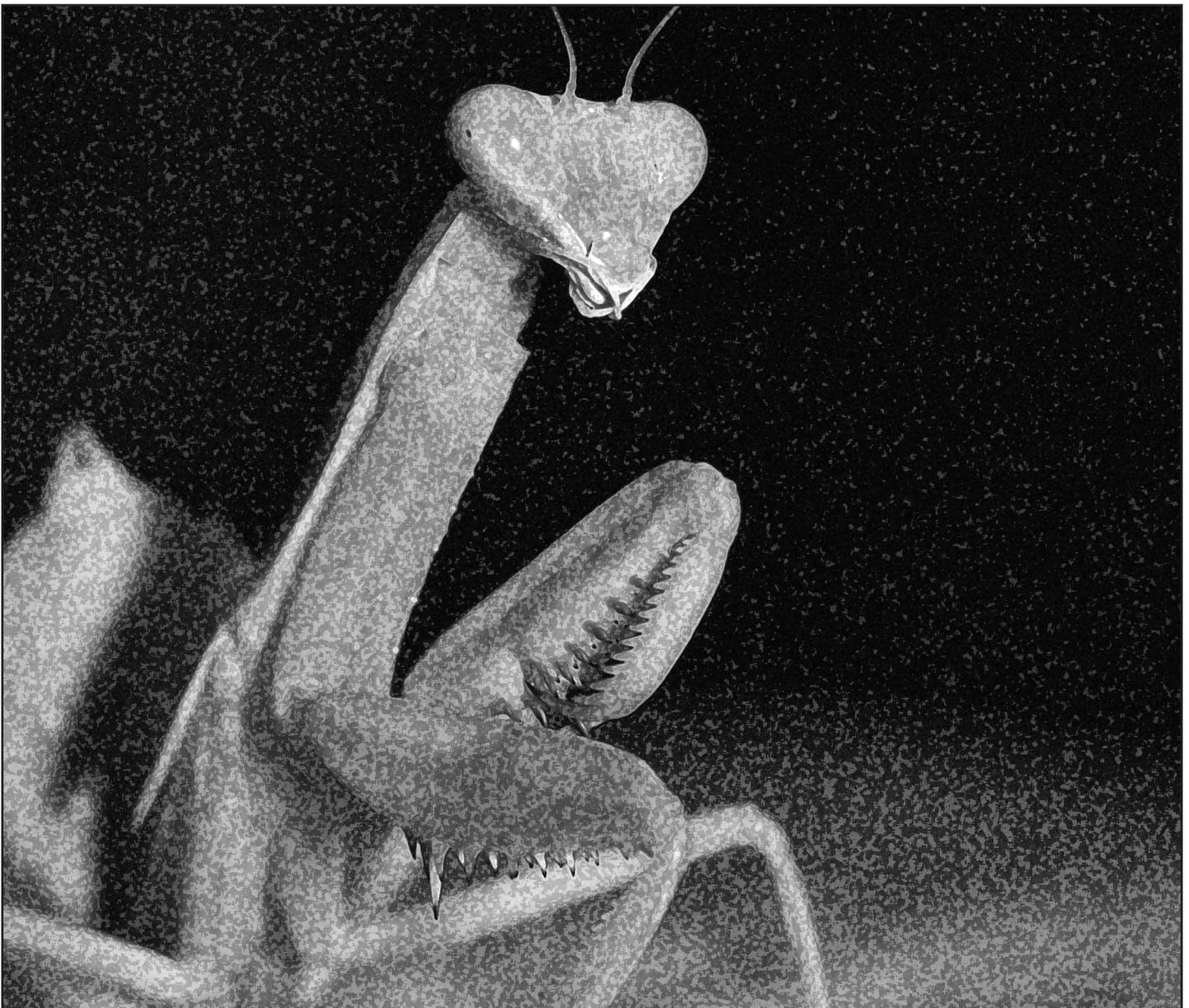
weapons do half damage

**SKILLS:** Stealth 50%

**SPELLS:** Dominate, Eviscerator, Explode Heart, Halt of Eanora, Touch of Decay, Worms, and any others so desired by the Keeper.

**NOTES:** Yardis Xen the Undying is very similar in appearance to a mummy, but rather than wrapping himself in bandages, he dresses in fine, red embroidered robes. He is short, and wears a circlet with a black opal on his forehead. His grasp is freezing cold, causing frostbite in his victims when he touches them. He carries no weapons, relying only on his spells and his deadly grasp in combat. Unless the black opal on his circlet is shattered (5 HP), Yardis Xen can reform in a new host body if destroyed.

**SANITY LOSS:** 1/1D8







# RIDING THE NORTHBOUND

**A HOBO ODYSSEY  
BY OSCAR RIOS**

A group of hoboes, tramps, and bums go on an epic journey from the hobo jungle (camp) outside of Boston, Massachusetts to the small town of Harmony Corners, just north of Albany, New York. A tramp named Bottlecap Bob has invited everyone he ever rode the rails with (which is pretty much every hobo, tramp, and bum you can think of) to his new home to celebrate his recent marriage to a wealthy and exotic widow.

Riding the rails is never easy, and doing so during a cold and snowy November makes it even more dangerous. However, the rewards seem worth the risk. Unfortunately, the trip to Harmony Corners proves to be the easy part, as the hoboes soon face untold horrors from beyond our reality.

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