

The Wicked Dead

An Extreme Rip-Off Production

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Introduction

Player Introduction

It's the last week in October, and the teaching assistants are on strike. Your school is closed for at least a week, and one of your friends knows someone with a cottage. It's been an unusually warm autumn, and you and your friends can go hang out by the lake for a week.

Sounds good, right? It's a three-hour drive to the Muskokas and then forty-five minutes by boat. It should be a blast.

Like nothing else you've ever done.

Author Preface

Occasionally, I like a good (or even a bad) horror movie. The recent buzz about the role-playing game *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* had me thinking about zombies, and while my wife was away, I took the opportunity to watch the kind of films she hates: Horror films. *Evil Dead*, *Evil Dead 2*, *Return Of The Living Dead*, *Road To Rio* (oh, sorry, that wasn't a horror film). I started thinking about how I'd run zombies in a short adventure.

What interests me about the living dead genre is that it's everyday folk against the unstoppable. Any player who dies gets to come back as a Wicked Dead person, with full knowledge. (Except, of course, they want to kill. And maybe eat brains.) So you can't lose your character; you just switch sides.

I call these restless dead folks the Wicked Dead.

I considered other systems but decided on *CORPS*; it's nicely lethal. Feel free to run this in *Unknown Armies*, *Call of Cthulhu*, or any game system you want. For *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* fans, the dead are also written up in AFMBE format.

Here's a little session of Wicked Dead in *CORPS*. (Or would that be *CORPSe*?)

Character Creation

The genre cries out for between four and six characters, 100 AP, 50 SP. All characters are 21 years old, so they have 10 additional AP for age and 20 additional SP for skills. Psych limitations involving practical joker, not believing in the supernatural, and being in love with other characters are encouraged.

Use the *Modern Adventure Skill Tree*.

I wouldn't recommend spending a lot of time on character creation; you don't want lovingly crafted ubermenschen, you want stereotypes. If one of the characters went two extra points over budget, who cares? Just point out to the player that he or she has no Ass-Saver Points...

Players using *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* instead of *CORPS* should generate normal characters, or "Norms," rather than Survivors or Inspired.

If you want this to happen fast, here are two alternative creation mechanisms: *Random* and *templates*.

Reasonably Random

Generate characteristics with 4d10/4 (round down) and then spend 70 SP from the *Modern Adventure Skill Tree*. GM's choice if players get to apply their dice rolls to the characteristics of choice or if they just take'em as they roll'em.

Templates

You can also quickly create a character using a template. A template is a character stereotype you can customize. Available character stereotypes are:

- Bambi (socialite: cheerleader or sorority queen); Bambis are very good at getting others to do what they want.
- Biff (jock); Biffs are physically the toughest.
- Dexter (brainy nerd); Dexters are the smartest and have the most obscure skills; they also have a lot of ASPs.

Character Creation

- Joe (average guy); Joes tend to have down-to-earth skills, like carpentry and mechanic – a good all-round guy, with a bit of luck.
- Phoebe (artsy type); Phobes tend to know obscure things about the occult but are susceptible to it for that reason.
- Spike (misunderstood person of either sex); a Spike is typically a punk, someone from the wrong side of the tracks, or a minority member, trying to fit in. Spikes tend to have unusual skills that others don't.

To customize your template, select items where the template offers you a choice (skills and choices of psychological limitations). If you want to add more, you can add another psychological limitation for 2, 4, 6, or 8 points:

POINTS	LEVEL	EXAMPLE: "VAIN"
2 pts	quirk	Complains when he doesn't look his best; knows what colours look best and wears them
4 pts	interest	Brought a hairdryer, even though there's no electricity at the cottage; fusses terribly if breaks a nail
6 pts	major interest	Shaves her legs when everyone else is asleep so no one catches her with unwanted body hair
8 pts	obsession	Does all of her make-up when everyone else is asleep; will have to think seriously about running from the monster if it will damage her make-up

Any interest or psychological flaw can fit. Characters may be compulsive jokers, vain, lazy, always upbeat, religious, whatever you want.

If you think of an appropriate psychological limitation, you can use it instead of the one on the template.

You might want to add another template or two; perhaps you figure your characters ought to include Rufus (a local; use the Crazy Pilot template from *CORPS* 2nd ed., substitute boating skills for air skills, and use "mistrusts outsiders" for "cocky"), or The Perfesser (a distinguished but elderly academic; use the Retired Academic template from *CORPS* 2nd ed). Go ahead.

Templates aren't gender-specific; if you want your Biff to be Helga, a transfer student from the German Women's Weight-Lifting Team, that's fine by me.

You don't need one of each kind of character; if your story is about six Phobes caught with monsters, hey, more power to you.

Any player may swap an 8 point "Skill of choice" for 4 2-point familiarities.

Character Creation

Bambi

For STR and AGL, the first number is for males, the second for females.

STR	5/4	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	4/5	1	Psych 4: Used to getting own way (8 AP)
AWR	4	2	Psych 3: choose Looks to others for protection or Practical joker or Rationalist or No loyalties whatsoever or Looks out for number one (6 SP)
WIL	5	1	
HLT	5	1	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude (WIL or HLT or social skill)
POW	1	0	or 2 physical advantages dealing with social skills (e.g., Luck, Beautiful, Smooth talker, Seductive, Strong-willed, etc.)
Punch	1 DV		3 Foreign Language (studied abroad; 8 SP)
Kick	2 DV		3 Psychology (knows how to make people do things; 8 SP)
			4 Seduction (it's a kind of persuasion; 1 SP)
			4 Influence (let them think it was their own idea; 1 SP)
			3 Drive Land Vehicles (has expensive car; 8 SP)
ASPs	1		3 Theatre (has star aspirations; 8 SP)
			4 Knows Area (-1) (has vacation home near here; 8 SP)
			4 Drinking (likes parties; 15 SP)
			3 Major subject (Art, History, Political Science, etc; 8 SP)
			3 Skill Of Choice (8 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 75

A Bambi is a socialite, someone who is at the top of the pecking order, is beautiful, and knows both of these things. Bambis try to get other people to do the work—they will work (cheerleading is not effortless) but they expect to see social payoffs. Bambis often have money.

Veronica Lodge and Reggie Mantle (from Archie comics) are both Bambis.

“Theatre” includes such stagecraft as falling down without getting hurt.

- If you took Natural Aptitude HLT, add 1 to your Drinking skill.
- If you took Beautiful or Seductive as physical advantages, add 2 to your Seduction skill (Seduction is based on WIL)
- If you took Strong-willed as a physical advantage, add 2 to your Will score for making WIL rolls (but *not* for influencing people).
- Bambis are not renowned for their bravery or their tactical brilliance; the strength of the Bambi lies in getting others to do the work. Bambis are often the objects of someone else’s adoration.
- Bambis love themselves; this isn’t shown in the disadvantages, but is true nonetheless. They’re often vain.

Character Creation

Biff

STR	5	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	5	1	Psych 4: Aggressive (8 AP)
AWR	4	1	Psych 3: choose Practical joker or Macho or Gung-ho (6 SP)
WIL	4	1	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude (STR, AGL, HLT, or sport skill)
HLT	5	1	or 2 Physical advantages (e.g., Strong arms, Good aim, Fast runner, High stamina, Pain Tolerance, etc.)
POW	1	0	
Punch	1 DV		3 Unarmed Combat (gets in some fights; 8 SP)
Kick	2 DV		5 Football or Particular Sport (has a scholarship; 24 SP)
			3 First Aid (patches up buddies; 8 SP)
			3 Running (all those wind sprints; 8 SP)
			3 Psychology (understand other team; 8 SP)
ASPs	2		4 Intimidation (likes to psych out opponents; 1 SP)
			3 Driving Land Vehicles (drives fast cars; 8 SP)
			5 Major subject (Economics, Chemistry, Engineering, etc; 8 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 74

A Biff is an athlete, a jock.

In the harsh collegiate social world, Biffs tend to be near or at the top of the social ladder. They may be arrogant or polite.

- If you chose Natural Aptitude STR, your strength is actually 7, so add 1 to damage you do in melee combat (that is, you do 2 DV with a punch instead of 1, or 3 with a big club instead of 2).
- If you chose Natural Aptitude AGL, add 1 to your unarmed combat, football, and driving skills.
- If you chose Natural Aptitude HLT, add 1 to your running skill.
- Let the GM adjudicate the other physical advantages; remember that they're not additive.
- Feel free to replace "football" with your sport of choice (wrestling, swimming, basketball, etc.) and you may want to replace "running" with something appropriate (swimming, for example)

Character Creation

Dexter

STR	4	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	4	1	Psych 4: Curious (8 AP)
AWR	6	2	Psych 2: In love with friend (2 AP, 2 SP)
WIL	4	1	Psych 3: choose Practical joker or Blind without glasses (6 AP)
HLT	5	1	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude (AWR, HLT, or skill) or 2 Physical advantages (e.g., Good with languages, strong-willed, good memory, etc.)
POW	1	0	
Punch	1 DV		3 A Foreign Language (5 SP)
Kick	2 DV		3 First Aid (was keener cub-scout; 5 SP)
			4 Area Knowledge [-1] (reads maps; 5 SP)
			4 Electrician (tinkers; 12 SP)
			3 Military Science (wargamer; 5 SP)
ASPs	6		4 Investigative Research (goes with curious; 12 SP)
			1 Drive Land Vehicles (2 SP)
			5 Major subject (Economics, Chemistry, Engineering, etc; 21 SP)
			3 AWR-Based Skill Of Choice (5 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 72

The class genius; a Dexter gets 10 AP to spend on physical advantages that apply to AWR in some way, or a natural aptitude on AWR.

Traditionally, a Dexter's love for some other character is unrequited and obvious to all other characters except (possibly) the beloved. Bambis particularly like to take advantage of this.

- If you chose Natural Aptitude AWR, your AWR is actually 8; this won't affect your skills, but you're more likely to notice things and you get 6 ASP more for this. You can trade 5 of those 12 ASPs for level 3 in some other AWR-based skill (like Survival from your Boy Scout camping trips).

Character Creation

JOE

For STR and AGL, the first number is for males, the second for females.

STR	5/4	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	4/5	1	Psych 4: In love with another character (8 AP)
AWR	4	2	Psych 3: choose Nice guy (easily manipulated) or Loyal or Practical joker or Rationalist (6 SP)
WIL	4	1	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude (any except POW)
HLT	5	1	or 10 pts of advantages including physical advantages (e.g., Luck, Toughness, Keen eyes, Pain Tolerance)
POW	3	1	
Punch	1 DV		3 Mechanic (keeps jalopy running; 8 SP)
Kick	2 DV		3 First Aid (summers on uncle's farm; 8 SP)
			1 Carpenter (built a barn; 2 SP)
			1 Electrician (and wired a barn; 2 SP)
			3 Drive Land Vehicles (likes cars; 8 SP)
ASPs	10		3 Hunting (shot groundhogs; 8 SP)
			3 Drinking (likes parties; 15 SP)
			3 Major subject (Economics, English, Engineering, etc; 8 SP)
			3 Skill Of Choice (8 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 67

A Joe is an average guy or gal. A Joe is Everyperson.

A Joe gets a higher POW that gives him or her creepy feelings in the early stages of the game. He is required to have a psych lim involving being in love with one of the other players.

Joes may choose any advantages at all; Joes are often extraordinary without seeming extraordinary.

- The moderately higher POW of the Joe is why Joe tends to lend credence to a Phoebe's complaints that the place is "creepy"; being a nice guy, he may offer to help her get home after the first few scary events.
- If you're going to take Natural Aptitude, apply it to a characteristic where you already have a level of 5; that boosts your characteristic to 7. If it's Natural Aptitude AGL, you have skills based on that characteristic, you can buy one more AGL-based skill at level 3; if it's Natural Aptitude AWR, you can buy one more AWR-based skill at level 4.
- Joes are the most useful characters, and they have a high number of ASPs.
- A Joe is a good choice to survive long enough to read the spell at the end.
- Female Joes may want to substitute "girl" skills for Mechanic, Carpentry, and Electrician. Or not; tomboys have a long tradition in the Joe world.

Character Creation

Phoebe

STR	4	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	4	1	Psych 4: Kooky (8 AP)
AWR	4	1	Fame 3: "Easy" (6 AP)
WIL	4	1	Psych 3: choose In love with another character or Artistic obsession or Vegan or Attracted to supernatural (6 SP)
HLT	4	1	Non-combatant (5 SP)
POW	5	1	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude POW or 2 Physical advantages dealing with arts or unknown (e.g., Luck, Intuition, Sensitive, Creative, etc.)
Punch	1 DV		3 Philosophy (interested in things spiritual; 8 SP)
Kick	2 DV		4 Arcane Religions (listens to anyone; 1 SP)
			3 Foreign Language (dead languages are spiritual, like; 8 SP)
			4 Art (likes to draw and forge hall passes; 15 SP)
			3 Biology (likes plants and animals; 8 SP)
ASPs	3		4 Pharmacy (especially psychedelic plants; 1 SP)
			3 Investigative Research (curious about people and stuff; 8 SP)
			3 History (like Soylent Green, it's people; 8 SP)
			4 Secret societies (like fringe history; 1 SP)
			1 First Aid (wants to be helpful, but blood is icky; 2 SP)
			1 Swimming (likes to swim naked; 2 SP)
			3 Major subject (Economics, Chemistry, Engineering, etc; 8 SP)
			3 Skill of choice (8 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 78

A Phoebe is an artistic type, often drawn to the occult for other reasons. A Phoebe gets 10 AP to spend on physical advantages that involve being psychically sensitive. Phoebes can have extraordinarily high POW values, or Advantage: "Intuition".

On the down side, Phoebes have the reputation for being promiscuous, which may cause trouble during the early part of the adventure.

- Phoebes generally can't drive, because they're saving the environment.
- A Phoebe with Natural Aptitude POW has a POW of 7, and is a really good choice for reading spells.
- Since Phoebes tend to have high POW, it generally makes more sense for them to use POW instead of WIL when trying to fight off a spirit in daylight. 'Cause they're so spiritual, like.

Character Creation

Spike

For STR and AGL, the first number is for males, the second for females.

STR	5/4	1	Age 21 (10 AP, 20 SP)
AGL	4/5	1	Psych 4: Something to prove (8 AP) Fame 3: Mistrusted as an outsider (6 SP)
AWR	4	2	Choose 1 Natural Aptitude (any except POW) or 10 pts of advantages including physical advantages (e.g., Luck, Toughness, Keen eyes, Pain Tolerance)
WIL	5	1	
HLT	5	1	
POW	1	0	
Punch	1 DV		3 Melee Weapons (got in fights; 8 SP)
Kick	2 DV		3 Projectile Weapons (sent to military school to clean up; 8 SP)
			3 Drive Land Vehicles (loves motorcycles; 8 SP)
			3 Philosophy (fondness for nihilism; 8 SP)
			3 Hunting (likes sneaking and tracking; 8 SP)
ASPs	2		4 (Streetwise) (knows people; 8 SP)
			3 (Lockpicking) (liked to see own files; 8 SP)
			1 Law (knows when it's used against him; 2 SP)
			3 Major subject (History, Anthropology, English, etc; 8 SP)
			3 Skill Of Choice (8 SP)
			Total SPs spent: 74

A Spike is a token foreigner – a member of a racial minority hanging out with the group, the group's token Rebel without a cause, the misunderstood punk, the military brat. (Both girls in *Night of the Comet* are Spikes.)

Spikes get to have additional combat, stealth, and hunting skills that reflect their broader (but misunderstood!) backgrounds. However, Spikes suffer early in the game because no one trusts them, just as no one believes anyone with the "practical joker" limitation when he or she talks about "things out in the woods".

Spikes often are the objects of adoration by one person, generally a Phoebe.

- Some Spikes study Martial Arts instead of Melee Weapons; instead of a Skill of choice and Melee Weapons, they have level 3 in Martial Arts. (This gives them more damage than straight unarmed combat: a punch of 2 and a kick of 3 for males, and a punch and kick of 2 for females.)
- If you take Natural Aptitude on AGL, you can increase two AGL-related skills to 4.
- If you take Natural Aptitude on AWR, you can increase two AWR-related skills to 4.

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This section recaps the essential rules of *CORPS*. Combat is summarized in the next section.

Attributes

Your character has six attributes: Strength, Agility, Awareness, Willpower, Health, and Power. Think of these as your potential in those areas; the numbers range from 1-10, but will usually be 4-6.

The amount of raw ability you can use is your *aptitude*, which is $\frac{1}{4}$ your attribute, rounded nearest. If your attribute is 5, your aptitude is 1. If your attribute is 6, your aptitude is 2.

Your aptitude is how effective you are without training. For strength, it's how much damage you do with a punch. For agility, it's your ability to hit and avoid being hit. For awareness, it's your ability to puzzle things out.

For some things, like lifting or exerting your will, you'll just use the attribute score, not your aptitude. (You've effectively been training your whole life to notice things or to balance or not eat that extra piece of cheesecake.)

Advantages And Disadvantages

Some characters have physical advantages that give them a bonus to certain actions or skills. These are noted on your character sheet. For example, perhaps your character has Keen Eyesight and an awareness of 5. When looking to spot things, you get to act as if your awareness is 7 (5+2).

All characters have disadvantages that may restrict their abilities to act in some circumstances. Disadvantages can subtract 1-5 points from your abilities. For example, suppose your character has phenomenally bad eyesight (-5) without glasses and awareness of 5. Without glasses, your character has an effective awareness of 0 (5-5).

Psychological disadvantages (such as "vain") are based on your Will, and modified by circumstances. For example, if your character has "vain" at level

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3 and a Will of 4, normally your character simply has to decide *not* to be vain about jumping into the mud or whatever. But if your character is tired or drunk, both things that might lower your willpower, you might have to roll. You do that as a skill roll, your current Will against the level of your psychological limitation.

Skill Rolls

Your level of ability with a skill is given as a number. 1 means untrained, 3 or 4 is high school, 7 is professional-level (black belt or B.A.), 10 is magnificent.

If your skill is equal to the difficulty, no need to roll.

If the difficulty is *higher* than your skill level (or AGL aptitude for combat without relevant skills), roll a die:

DIFFERENCE	ROLL NEEDED
0	11-
1	9-
2	7-
3	5-
4	3-
5	1-
6	-

The average professional-level task is Difficulty 7 and takes 1 minute.

If you have any training in the skill at all (referred to as “familiarity”), you can take extra time to improve your chances, or to it faster and reduce your chances:

TIME	MODIFIER TO DIFFICULTY
“Out of combat”	-2
¼ of usual time	+2
½ of usual time	+1
Usual time	+0
2-4x	-1
5-9x	-2
10-16x	-3
17-25x	-4
Bad conditions	+1 to +5
Good conditions	-1 to -2

If you have *no training at all*, then use your aptitude as your skill level.

- If co-ordination is important, use your AGL aptitude.
- If thinking is important, use your AWR aptitude.
- If strength is important, use your STR aptitude.

ASPs

An Ass-Saver Point (ASP) is a point the player can spend to change the effects of a die roll.

For each point you spend, you can change a die roll by one. Let’s say you need to roll a 7 to hit the monster and you rolled an 8; spend one point, and

Example: Indigo West, adventurer, is trying to translate some hieroglyphics before the reanimated mummy breaks down the door. She has Ancient Egyptian at skill level 5; these hieroglyphics are Difficulty 7 to read. She needs to roll a 7 or less. (The hieroglyphics say, “This way to secret passageway.”)

Example: Indigo is now trying to read an ancient scroll in the comfort of her tent. This is a Difficulty 11 task, but she’s no longer stressed by possible dismemberment (“out of combat” or -2), she takes all day (9x time for -2), and she has an excellent Hieroglyphic-to-English dictionary (-2) for a final difficulty of 5. Since her skill is 5, she makes it automatically, without rolling.

Example: Sandi is attempting to climb a rock face to get away from an enraged bear. She has no climbing skill; so a kind game master would let her use the best of her AGL aptitude or STR aptitude.

No matter how long she takes to climb, she doesn’t get the “out of combat” bonus or extra time bonuses; she has no familiarity with climbing. If she had spent even 2 SP to get “familiarity” with climbing, she would get those good modifiers.

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you hit. Or let's say you need to roll a 1 to hit the monster in the head, but you rolled a 3; spend two ASPs, and that 3 becomes a 1. Or maybe someone shot you and rolled a 10 to determine where you were hit (left leg); you spend 1 ASP and move that gunshot off your body (there is no hit location 11).

The genre pretty much demands that each character have some Ass-Saver Points; they're up against something unstoppable, so they need some kind of edge. (Number of ASPs is one of the things that distinguish the different templates.)

If the GM is worried about the players dying too fast, he or she may ask each player to take one "quirk" psych lim, worth 2 points, that will be directly applied as ASPs. (Cruel GMs may want to withhold them at the last minute if the player hasn't been role-playing. Heh-heh-heh.)

Carnage

You have to fight off the Wicked Dead; that's just how they are.

Combat

The game is flexible about combat, so describe what you want to do, and I'll figure out how to make it happen. I suggest using the graze rule, *if you're comfortable with combat*.

Normal rules apply. The important rules are summarized below.

Who Goes First

CORPS has an odd method of determining who goes first in a fight: The person with the highest *skill* goes first. This means that the skill you use *first* determines when you act. For example, if you have Knife skill 5 and Punching skill 4, you can cut someone faster than you can punch them. That skill level may be modified by circumstances (if your arm is injured, you can't swing the knife as fast). It's useful to refer to this modified skill level as your Initiative for that turn.

If your first skill is high enough, you can act twice in a turn. (A turn is 1 second.) The skill for your second action must be 2 points lower than the first (or it will be treated as if it is, anyway). There is the concept of "initiative 0" – even if injuries, etc. bring your effective skill into negative numbers, you still get to act at initiative 0.

You can only move on your AGL aptitude, usually 1 or 2, or lower.

For example, if you have Punch at skill 2 and an AGL aptitude of 1, you can punch someone (skill 2=Initiative 2) and then run at Initiative 0. (Remember that 2 points must separate consecutive actions. You cannot, however, run (Initiative 1) and *then* punch someone in the same turn. Tackle them, maybe.

Another way of explaining this 2-point initiative difference for multiple actions is that every action after your first has its difficulty increased by 2, reducing that effective skill. You have skill 5 in punching: your first punch is at skill 5; your second punch is at an effective skill of 3, and your third punch is at an effective skill of 1. (It's hard to do more than one thing a second.)

Combat Checklist

1. Determine the first skill you want to use.
2. Apply any modifiers for injuries or situation to get initiative.
3. Act.
4. Wait 2 Initiative points before acting again.
5. Go back to step 3; repeat until Initiative 0.

Carnage

Hand-To-Hand

Unless you have Unarmed Combat skill or Martial Arts, your skill at punching and kicking is your AGL aptitude (1 or 2). Even a mediocre trained fighter can beat a talented untrained fighter.

The difficulty to hit you is also your AGL aptitude. *Dodging* doubles how hard it is to hit you, but makes it harder for you to hit someone by the same amount.

Example: Suzanne is slashing at someone with a machete. Her AGL aptitude is 1, the target's is 1, she hits.

Guns

The difficulty to hit someone is based on distance, in meters:

DISTANCE	0	1	2-4	5-9	10-16	17-25	26-36	37-49	50-64
DIFFICULTY	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
YOU'RE MOVING	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
TARGET MOVING	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4

The range modifier (RMod) of your gun is *subtracted* from the basic difficulty. It gets more difficult to hit if you're moving or they're moving.

If you brace the gun against something, you can double the Range Modifier of your gun, and make the shot easier. And if you actually aim the gun for two seconds, you can make it even easier.

Example: Sandi (AGL aptitude 1) is shooting at a mysterious figure 4 meters away, difficulty 4. Since she has no guns skill, she needs to roll a 5 or less to hit. Indigo spots the mummy 30 meters away (difficulty 8). She uses a rifle with a range mod of 4. The final difficulty is 8-4=4. Her rifle skill is 6, so she squeezes off a shot.

Aiming (For The Head)

Normally, where you hit is determined randomly when you hit.

ROLL	LOCATION
1	Head/neck
2	Right arm
3-4	Chest
5	Left arm
6	Abdomen
7	Upper right leg
8	Upper left leg
9	Lower right leg
10	Lower left leg

That's the default for a weapon that can hit any part of the body (gun or an arrow or a machete).

- If you're stabbing with a paring knife or punching, subtract 2 from the roll before looking it up. Arms are up high.
- If you're kicking, add 1. Legs are down low.

If you rolled a 10 and you add 1, it still counts as a 10. If you rolled a 2 and subtract 2, it counts as a 1.

Example: Suzanne rolls a die for where she hits – she rolls a 6, so she cuts across his belly.

You can choose to aim, but that makes the attack more difficult, based on how large the target is; big targets are easier to hit, small targets are harder to hit:

TARGET SIZE	DIFFICULTY
Big boat	-3
Boat	-2
Motorcycle	-1
Person	+0
Torso	+1
Head	+2
Hand or neck	+3

Example: Sandi punched a former roommate; she rolls a 3 for where. She subtracts 1 because she's punching, and hits the woman in her right arm. Now the woman kicks back. She rolls a 5, adds 1 because she's kicking, and kicks Sandi in the abdomen.

Example: Indigo West is shooting with a pistol at the mummy's head. It's 7 meters away (Difficulty 5), she's aiming for the head (+2), and Indigo has skill 4 with pistols. Her pistol has a Range Mod of 1. Total difficulty: 5+2-1=6. Her skill: 4. She needs to roll 7 or less.

Carnage

Damage

Every time you're hit by an attack, there are three possible results:

1. You're injured, which will make it more difficult for you to do things in the future, or *impair* you.
2. If the attack is lethal (as most are), you might suffer a wound that will eventually kill you.
3. You might be knocked out by the shock and pain.

Attacks come in lethal and non-lethal flavours. A punch is non-lethal; it'll bruise you, maybe knock you out, but is unlikely to kill you. A gunshot or a knife wound is lethal; you could die from it. Some attacks (such as a wooden club) will do both: a lot of bruising, some broken bones.

The amount of damage an attack does depends on where it hits you. Attacks to the arms and legs *hurt* more, but aren't as likely to kill you. Attacks to your head may not hurt so much (the head has lots of bone) but may kill you.

Impairment

Whenever you get hurt, it's more difficult to use the injured body part. That's an *impairment*, because it impairs your ability to do things. (The most damage you can take on a body part is 10 impairments; then the body part is useless until it heals.)

A non-lethal attack hurts for a second, then subsides a bit. You take the full impairment for the next second, and from then on you take 1/10th of that impairment. It's a whacking great bruise, is what it is.

A lethal attack keeps hurting at the full amount until it heals.

- If the attack hit a limb, add 1 to the impairment.
- If the attack hit your head, subtract 1 from the impairment.

A lethal attack can't do less than 1 point, though—it's a lethal attack.

Could I Die?

To determine if a lethal attack might kill you, check how lethal it is. Take the damage of the attack and:

- If the attack hit a limb, subtract 1 from the impairment
- If the attack hit your head, add 1 from the impairment.

Then roll a die. If you roll under that number, you're bleeding to death.

Important: Unlike every other roll in this game, you want to roll high!

Look at the number you just rolled. In that many minutes, you're going to bleed away 1 health point. Twice that many minutes later, you're going to bleed away another health point. Four times that many minutes after that, you're going to bleed away yet another health point, and so on. You die when your HLT goes to 0.

Someone with First Aid can stop the bleeding. The difficulty of the First Aid roll is the size of the injury.

Getting Hurt Checklist

1. Learn where you're hurt
2. Subtract armor, if any, from damage.
3. If you're hit in the arm or leg, add 1 to damage; if you're hit in the head, subtract 1.
4. Record the impairment.
5. If the attack is lethal, figure out if you're dying: roll 1d10 *over* Damage - armor (+1 for head, -1 for limb)
6. Figure out if you're knocked out. Your will vs. a difficulty of 2x that if-you're-dying number

Example: Peter has an arrow in his right arm. The arrow does 2 points of damage, +1 because it's his arm: That's 3 points of impairment.

The *difficulty* of anything he tries to do with that arm (punch, pull a trigger, run a chainsaw) is now 3 points higher.

Example: Suzanne gets a knife gash on her head worth 2 pts. That will be only 1 point of *impairment* (2-1), but the chance she's bleeding to death is 3 or less out of 10 (2+1).

She rolls a 6. No problem.

Example: Indigo has taken a 5 point shot to the abdomen, which is fatal on 5 or less. She rolls a 4. She's dying.

In 4 minutes, she'll lose 1 HLT point. In 12 minutes (4+8), she'll lose another, and 28 minutes after *that* a third. She has HLT 5; she'll die in 124 (4+8+16+32+64) minutes.

Carnage

Could I Be Knocked Out?

This one's a little tricky. To see if your character might be knocked out, take that eventually-fatal number (damage, minus 1 for limb or plus 1 for head), double it, and use that as the difficulty against your WIL.

- If you fail by your WIL or more, you're unconscious.
- If you fail by less than your will, you're impaired by the amount you failed by for another second.
- If you succeed, you're fine.

Amputated limbs may become non-player characters.

Example: Suzanne has a WIL of 4; the fatality number on her head wound is 3, so she needs to roll her WIL of 4 versus a difficulty of 6 (2x3). On a roll of 7 or less, she's unaffected; on 8, 9, or 10, she could be "stunned" and take a -1, -2, or -3 impairment.

Indigo has a WIL of 5, and she rolls versus a difficulty of 10. On a 1, she's okay, on 2-5, she's stunned, and on a 6 or more, she's unconscious.

Going Crazy

Fighting the Wicked Dead is stressful. Expect the player characters to go crazy; that's part of the fun.

Use the *CORPS* fear ratings. That is, roll against WIL when seeing walking dead – difficulty 5 for 1, difficulty 6 for 2 or 3, difficulty 7 for self animated amputated limbs, difficulty 8 for seeing 4 at once. (The higher difficulty for 4 of them is because you're alone by then...)

Success means you continue as you were; failure means all actions take a penalty of the amount failed until the situation changes significantly (someone smacks you to sanity, the monster leaves, etc.). Failure *by your current WIL or more* means you freak out: stand paralyzed, flee, or you attack with whatever's handy and no regard to personal safety.

When they fail fear rolls, PCs can choose to adopt new psych lins during the course of play. Hallucinations, obsessions, and general psychotic hard-heartedness would be likely.

Here's my suggestion. When you have failed as many fear rolls as your WIL, you pick up one level of psychological disadvantage: a brief hallucination, a minor phobia about something in the room, a new obsession... It should be somehow related to what has just been happening.

GMs should be liberal in asking for more Fear rolls. The more the merrier. After all, the sooner they go crazy, the better.

Heh-heh-heh.

Suggested madnnesses:

- "There's a rational explanation...someone's playing a prank. I'll go out there and talk to them."
- "Make sure everything's sealed up tight. *Tight*. Tighter than that."
- "I want to go home. Right now."
- Hallucinations.
- Talking to your reflection.
- Inappropriate laughter.
- Adopting an item such as a hairbrush or broom as your totem of protection.
- Not trusting anyone.
- Curling into a fetal position and rocking, crooning to yourself.

Weapons

Now that you know about the effects of combat, you might want to know what's available for mayhem.

The following items can be found in and around the cottages on the island. PCs may be carrying penknives. The machete, pitchfork, scythe, and sickle are in the Burroughs cabin to the east. The hoes are in the Doyle and Hilton cabins to the north and east. All four cottages have chainsaws and the other equipment.

NAME	DAMAGE	DV	INIT	LENGTH	SIZE	MASS	AV
KNIVES AND BLADES							
Bowie Knife	lethal (c/p)	+1/+1	+0	28	2	0.4	16
Hatchet	lethal (c)	+2	-1	30	4	0.7	10
Lumber axe (2-handed)	lethal (c)	+3	-3	90	8	2.1	8
Meat Cleaver	lethal (c)	+1	-1	30	4	1.3	18
Hunting Knife	lethal (c/p)	+1/+1	+0	25	2	0.2	12
Pen Knife (cheap)	lethal (c/p)	+0/+0	+0	10	1	0.1	4
Pen Knife (expensive)	lethal (c/p)	+0/+0	+0	10	1	0.1	12
Machete	lethal (c)	+1	-1	55	4	0.4	5
CLUBS							
Billy Club/Truncheon	comb. (b)	+1	-1	55	6	0.3	2
Medium club	comb. (b)	+2	-2	70	9	1.4	5
Big club (2-handed)	comb. (b)	+4	-2	120	11	5.5	22
TOOLS							
Claw Hammer	lethal (b/p)	+1	-1	25	5	1.5	30
Hoe (2-handed)	lethal (c)	+1	-1	130	19	1.4	6
Pen/leather awl	lethal (p)	+0	+2	17	1	0.0	0
Pitchfork (2-handed)	lethal (p)	+0	-3	180	14	1.4	4
Scythe (2-handed)	lethal (c)	+5	-3	240	33	2.4	6
Sickle	lethal (c)	+2	-2	50	7	1.2	12
Chainsaw (2-handed)	lethal (c)	3/sec	-5	90	15	6	10
IMPROVISED							
Stick, Pointed Metal	lethal (b/p)	+1/+0	-2	70	5	1.8	6
Stick, Pointed Wooden	lethal (b/p)	+0	-2	70	5	0.9	2

Damage: Type of damage – lethal, non-lethal. The letters in brackets under Damage indicate the type of damage. They indicate *blunt*, *cutting*, or *piercing*; this might be significant if you're wearing some kind of armor. (Kevlar doesn't protect as well against piercing attacks, for example.)

DV: The Damage Value, or the number of points of damage it will do.

Weapons

Init: How the weapon affects your initiative. If the number is negative, it's bulky and hard to move quickly; if the number is positive, it improves your initiative.

Length: The length of the weapon in centimeters.

Size: A game statistic; only useful if you're trying to hide it or break it.

Mass: The weapon's mass in kilograms.

AV: A weapon's Armour Value—the number of points of damage it can take without any risk of breaking.

There are guns on the island, but not in this cottage.

NAME	CALIBER	DV	INIT	RMod	SIZE	MASS	EXTRA	RATE OF	CLIP	AV
							CLIP MASS	FIRE	HOLDS	
Remington 870	12 ga	10	+0	2	13	4.1 kg	-	2	7i	8
(with 00 buckshot)	12 ga	4(+0)	+0	1	13	4.1 kg	-	2	7i	8
AR 7	.22LR	6	+0	2	13	2.5 kg	.2 kg	4	50c	5
Browning M78	6 mm	20	+0	5	13	3.9 kg	.2 kg	1	1i	7

"i" means internal magazine, load individually; "c" means a clip.

Setting

Your four or six friends are going to Professor Haggard's cottage for a week. It's remote and it's late in the season, so none of the other four families are on the island. Professor Haggard is an archaeological philologist; translating dead languages is his specialty.

The Island

The cottage is one of four on a large island in a lake in the Muskokas. It's owned by the family of Professor Haggard; they use it less frequently now that the kids have grown up.

The only way to get to the island is by boat; the families that live on the island keep their boats moored at the harbour of the nearest town, Blackwater Mills. It's a forty-five minute trip by boat to get to the island.

(None of the templates have familiarity with boating. This is intentional, but don't stop any player who wants to have some knowledge of boating.)

The terrain of the island is rough and rocky; lots of small hills and hollows. The soil over the rock is thin; bare or lichen-covered rock pokes through in many places. Most of the island is covered with pine trees, tough bushes and scrub. Each cottage seems isolated; there is no line of sight between the cottages.

There is some wildlife on the island; there was a bear there some years ago, and there are a family of skunks and two porcupines on the island right now, as well as a variety of squirrels, chipmunks, snakes, etc. (There might be a Massasauga rattlesnake there, but the snakes are endangered and probably not on the island.)

Each cottage has its own dock. For Professor Haggard's cottage, there's a dock on the south side, sheltered from the winds. From the dock is a stairway that leads up to the deck/front porch.

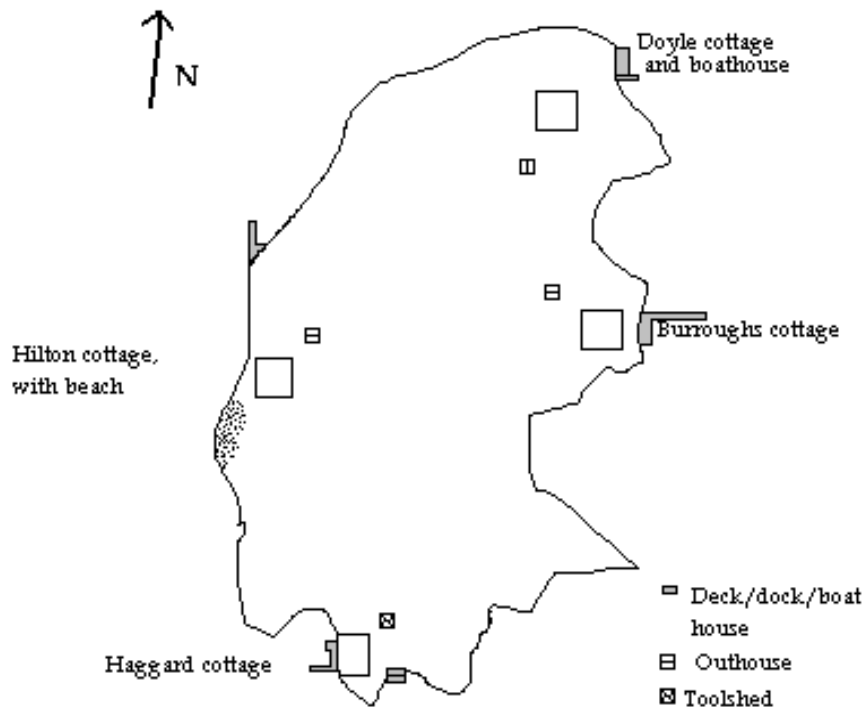
The cottage is medium size and tidy. It's not sealed up, as one might expect; the shutters are open.

Setting

Behind the cottage is the wood shed; one side of it is stacked with lumber for the fireplace.

Down the hill, behind the wood shed, is a path to the boathouse. It's closed on all four sides; there's space for two boats, and there's a canoe up in the rafters. The roof is corrugated green PVC plastic; the walls are plywood. It looks a little rickety. The water-doors opening to the water are worked by a rope-and-pulley system inside.

The cottage to the north belongs to the Doyle family; to the east is the Burroughs cottage, and to the west is the Hilton cottage.



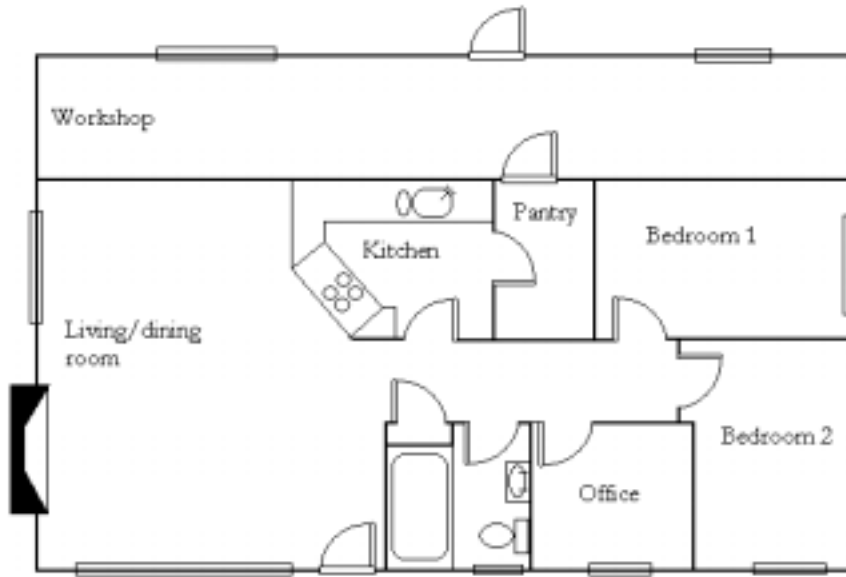
MAP 1: THE ISLAND. Trees are not shown; the whole island is overgrown.

The Cottage

The cottage has three bedrooms, a living/dining room, a kitchen, a pantry/laundry room, and an indoor bathroom (which contains a composting toilet and a shower). There are large picture windows; every window has a shutter (to protect during storms), but one must go outside to close the shutters.

An extension to the cottage contains the workshop.

Setting



MAP 2. THE COTTAGE

Some furnishings (such as beds and sofas along the picture windows) are built in, with drawers underneath. Others are clearly cast-offs from earlier in the family's life: the Formica table in the kitchen, the web lawn chairs tied to the deck

Underneath the cottage is a small cold-storage room. It's quite low (four feet tall or so). It also contains the propane tanks mentioned later; there is an external door to get to the cold-storage room, but it's normally padlocked shut to keep animals out. (There's a trapdoor in the living room, normally covered by a rug.)

Also underneath the cottage is a water tank and a water purifier which takes water in from the lake, but each sink has a "lake water" tap; don't drink that water. There's enough water in the water tank to take a bath, but then it takes about six hours to refill from the lake.

Light is by propane lamps; the building is rigged for it. The only electrical appliances are the TV, the VCR, the stereo, and a hand-held hair dryer in the bathroom. For electrical power, they have a set of batteries and a portable generator to recharge them.

Living Room/Kitchen

The living/dining room/kitchen has a fireplace, and a small rack with firewood.

The walls are mostly bookcases and framed nature prints. A couple of handmade quilts are hanging beside the windows. One shelf has a TV with rabbit ears and a VCR.

Setting

The kitchen appliances run off propane; there are a pair of propane tanks in the cold-storage crawlway under the house.

Bathroom

The bathroom contains a composting toilet; taped to the wall behind the toilet is a yellowed sheet of paper explaining how to maintain it. There is a mirrored medicine cabinet over the sink. (It contains aspirins, bug spray and repellent, and some tampons.)

The cold tap water is lake water and is not safe to drink. The hot water is purified and is safe to drink.

There is only enough water in the water tank for one bath; then it will take six hours for the purifier to fill the water tank again.

There is an old clawfoot tub with a showerhead attached. The tub fits into an alcove in the wall and a flowered plastic shower curtain runs across the alcove.

Beside the medicine cabinet is a first aid kit. Anyone looking will discover that the first aid kit contains no disinfectant and that the antibacterial cream is nearly used up; there are other first aid kits in the woodshed, the boathouse, and the boat.

To the left of the toilet is a small magazine rack with some ancient (1950s and 1960s) copies of *Chatelaine*, *Reader's Digest*, *Argosy*, and *Saturday Night*.

Kitchen

The kitchen has a gas stove and a gas refrigerator. The refrigerator is full-size and has a small freezer at the top; it does not need defrosting.

There is a small amount of spoiled food in the refrigerator. The refrigerator is turned on but out of propane.

There is a small fire extinguisher mounted on the wall beside the stove.

Bedrooms

There are three bedrooms, but one also serves as Professor Haggard's office; only the other two are described here.

Each bedroom has a double bed; the mattresses and boxsprings are mismatched. The rooms have small double-hung windows (about one foot by two feet) and tall pine dressers with six drawers; the bottom two drawers contains sheets and blankets, smelling strongly of mothballs.

One bedroom has a framed print of a Lamborghini; the other has a watercolour landscape.

Pantry/Laundry Room

The pantry is three floor-to-ceiling cupboards filled with cans and jars of food. Items such as flour are repacked in metal and plastic boxes with tight-sealing lids.

This room contains the exit to the workroom.

Setting

Office

The professor's office is also a bedroom with a pair of bunkbeds. There is another six-drawer dresser, and a small desk-hutch combination.

The Professor has some artifacts in his office, at his desk. Anyone who spends time poking through the desk will find these.

- A ceremonial knife, intricately worked in obsidian and copper. It's beautiful in a primitive way. The blade is obsidian and still gleams.
- A binder containing rough notes, including phonetic mappings of the various glyphs in the other binder.
- Another binder containing a photocopy of an ancient scroll, probably the one translated in the journal and the other binder.
- There is a journal that contains a set of rough translations, but not phonetic pronunciations.

Workshop

The workshop is also a general storage room; storage is to the right coming out of the pantry. To the left is a variety of tools. Most are arranged nicely on a pegboard rack, with the position of each tool indicated by a white painted outline. The tool rack includes hammers, drills, handsaws, bow saws, and screwdrivers. On the workbench are neatly stacked drawers of screws, nails, and other fastenings. There are three toolboxes: a "main" toolbox, a second toolbox specific to plumbing (recognizable by the small copper plumbing parts in it), and a third for electrical work (including a soldering iron).

On a shelf is a propane torch in its original box (although it has clearly seen use) and a spare fuel cylinder.

Some lumber is neatly stacked on the floor along the wall in one corner.

A boombox is also on the workbench (the professor helped build this cottage and he liked music while he puttered) and dozen dusty cassette cases. Most of the cassettes are classical, but there is also a collection of the Ramones' greatest hits and a Lyle Lovett cassette.

Under the workbench are a series of batteries and a portable generator. These batteries are wired into the wall; they power the few electrical appliances (notably the TV and the VCR in the living room).

The workshop has a large vent near the top for airflow, but has no window.

Woodshed

The woodshed was the toolshed before the extension was built; it has a lock on the door. The woodshed is solidly built; it looks much more secure than the boathouse.

Inside are:

- a gasoline can (half full)
- four full propane cylinders and one empty one
- a light Stihl chainsaw
- an electric lamp powered by a 6-volt battery

Setting

One wall has a pegboard rack for tools; the spot for every tool is outlined in white paint. Most of the spots are empty, since the tools have been moved to the workshop.

The tool rack has:

- a pair of pliers (for pulling nails)
- a small sledge hammer
- a lumber ax
- a wood-splitting wedge
- an awl
- leather snips
- a first aid kit
- a small fire extinguisher (ABC type)

Arranged on shelves are several clean rags, lubricating oil, and some two-stroke oil for the chainsaw. On the workbench is a small mechanic's toolkit for maintaining the chainsaw.

Boathouse

The boathouse looks rickety.

Inside, there is an L-shaped floor that extends along the back of the boathouse and along one wall. There is a canoe and paddles set up among the joists in the ceiling. Hanging from the walls are two fishing nets, hip waders, a pair of water skis, and old orange life jackets in a variety of sizes.

There's a small workbench with some tools, cans of oil, paint, brushes, two large cans of gasoline (one full, one two-thirds full), and a box of fishing tackle. (It contains two dozen lures, sinkers, floats, a long sharp knife, a pair of wire snips, and two spools of fishing line.)

Over the workbench is a 1975 calendar featuring pictures of attractive women in fishing gear; most of them have their breasts exposed or nearly exposed.

There is no light in the boathouse, but there is a large waterproof flashlight on the workbench.

The doors to the water are operated by a rope, weight, and pulley system.

Scenes

Players! Don't read this stuff. (You know why.)

The genre generally breaks down into four acts:

1. **Afternoon.** In which the PCs arrive, we get a flavour of their interaction, and we get the sense that something might not be all right. The PCs discover the interesting artifacts left behind by Professor Haggard, and unleash the forces of nature. It ends with nightfall.
2. **Evening.** In which things go wrong: at least one practical joke is played and afterwards at least one person is seriously hurt (typically a Phoebe; call this player the "doorway"). Still, it seems as though the pleasant holiday can still be saved (although they'll have to get the injured person to a hospital in the morning). The words of the injured person hint at something much more frightening, but no one believes. This is the point at which a Joe might be coerced into taking a Phoebe back to civilization.
3. **Midnight.** In which things go from bad to worse; the nature of the horror becomes plain, and nearly everyone becomes a believer.
4. **Before the Dawn.** In which it's always darkest. This is the point for the make-or-break action; the last desperate effort.

When running a session, hints of oddness should be sprinkled through act 1 and act 2. The players can hear the truth about what happens to the doorway; penalize them if they act on that knowledge.

Act 1 should be relatively quick.

Act 1: Afternoon

In this act, there should be hints of oddness: the missing boat, the fact that the shutters are open, a stopped clock, a mound of dirt behind the tool shed. These hints should suggest to anyone with "practical joker" that it would be good to set up a joke for as soon as it gets dark.

The PCs should discover academic papers such as "Hastur: A Phonetic Evaluation" and a manuscript in process entitled "A Translation of Anomalous Prayers in Lothal." There are more artifacts listed in the next section.

Scenes

Upon arriving, the players notice that the refrigerator is on, but not running; none of the propane-powered appliances work, because the propane tank is dry. It's a simple matter to take propane from the woodshed down to the crawlspace.

The Videotape

The players may play the videotape now, or they may play it later. It's a six hour tape, labeled "Phonetic Translations: October 21." The first part of the tape features Professor Haggard explaining that these are phonetic translations based on new finds. The priests of Lothal went out of their way to create a phonetic syllabary for the document he has translated. (It's been known for years that the document—"The Lothal Book of Worship"—is unusual. Since no one has ever translated the Harappan language, no one knew just *how* unusual.

Recent finds have allowed Professor Haggard to translate the Book of Worship and to provide a phonetic transcription.

He then reads the first spell, which he describes as a "binding" spell. (Joes and Phoebes get a "creepy" feeling, like ants crawling along their necks, when he does this.)

Immediately after this, the scene changes. Professor Haggard is talking in a low voice, urgently; his face is scratched and dirty. He is panning around the room, talking about the blood on the walls; there isn't any visible. He sounds like someone having a bad drug experience.

His last words before he disappears from the tape are:

"I understand them now. I can feel them within me. Listen: according to the Book of Discord, they can't keep going if they're dismembered. Remember that. I just—I can't do it myself. I'm going to die soon, I can feel it. I'm going to sink the boat to the bottom of the lake, to keep them from getting off the island. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

Act 2: Evening

In which things go wrong: at least one person is seriously hurt (typically a Phoebe; call this player the "doorway"). The act ends when the doorway dies.

The spirits will try to act when someone is alone. They need to injure someone so they can enter the body.

While in spirit form, the Wicked Dead can cause poltergeist-like effects and can "possess" plants, causing them to wrap around someone's arm or leg. Any cuts from a bramblebush or a raspberry bush are sufficient to "infect" the doorway character. Perhaps a tree root moves and the character throws his hands out to stop the fall; the character impales his hand on a sharp branch that "wasn't there before." See "Opening The Doorway" for more ideas.

They will find the other person eventually and bring them back.

Example: Some effects:

- The clock stops.
- The radio turns on and off.
- Musical instruments play themselves.
- Television flickers on without power.
- Mirror images talk and move independently.
- Boils appear on someone's body.
- Cold breezes.
- Doors and shutters open and slam.
- The room swarms with insects.
- When a door opens, it reveals the wrong room.
- Crowds of sparrows gather.

Scenes

Once they have done this, the poltergeist-like effects in the cottage increase. They still only affect one or two people at a time (they may have made a rule that no one can go anywhere alone).

Still, it seems as though the pleasant holiday can still be saved (although they'll have to get the injured person to a hospital in the morning). The words of the injured person hint at something much more frightening, but no one believes. This is the point at which a Joe might be coerced into taking a Phoebe back to civilization.

Someone might go over to one of the other cabins looking for a phone or a ham radio. None of the other cabins has a phone or a radio.

If they do try to leave, prevent them. Bring up the wind so the waves are treacherous, or damage the boat's engine, or collapse the boatshed.

The first person to notice that the injured person is actually dead will see a large beetle crawl from his or her mouth and scuttle under the furniture. No one else will see the beetle.

Opening The Doorway

In order to open the doorway, the spirits must "infect" one person. They do this by causing some kind of damage to the person and "slipping into" the wound. The damage must be at least 1 point of lethal impairment.

In keeping with the genre, the accident should come about as a result of a fright, caused by the spirits.

Also in keeping with the genre, the doorway is in shock, out of proportion to the actual injury. The shock of the spirit entering the body will require the person to make a difficulty 8 HLT roll.

Possibilities:

- Someone going for a night-time swim could be grabbed or even bitten by the possessed body of Professor Haggard under the water. (The drowning rules are on pages 82–83 of the *CORPS* rulebook—a person struggling underwater is probably losing 1 exertion point per second; Phoebes have 10 exertion points, while all other characters have 15.)
- Scared by the sense of *something* out there, someone could trip and fall, stabbing himself or herself with a branch or thorn that just happens to be there.
- Someone might be startled while working with a knife or other tool. For instance, they might see the decayed corpse of Professor Haggard in the mirror just as the light burns out.
- First one crow attacks, clawing at the person, then falls dead, then dozens of others attack. (Crows are traditional psychopomps.)
- A beetle bites and draws blood. A second beetle appears, and then a third, until a hundred or a thousand beetles are crawling over the person, clogging their throat, blinding them, filling their ears. After they collapse, suffocated, the bugs retreat, leaving the person unconscious and bleeding from a thousand small nips.
- In certain movies, the possessing spirit is visible and worthy of a Fear check, rating 7. It can be outrun, however; it moves at about 8 m/s.

Scenes

Other Resources On The Island

If the players believe that someone – perhaps an escaped convict – is out there, someone may want to make a run to another building and look for guns.

Here's what's in the other cabins, in order it's likely to be found:

Doyle Cottage (North)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• hoe, garden trowel, spade, garden chemicals• a .22 caliber rifle (3 boxes – 150 rounds of ammunition) and a shotgun (1 box of 00 buckshot shells, 2 boxes of slugs; 10 rounds to a box)
Burroughs Cottage (East)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chainsaw and can of gasoline• chainsaw and two cans of gasoline• machete, pitchfork, scythe, and sickle• Browning M78, 2 boxes of ammunition, 50 rounds to a box
Hilton Cottage (West)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a .22 caliber rifle and 1 box (50 rounds) of ammunition• A 30-06 rifle and five boxes of ammunition (100 rounds)• gardening implements: hoe, garden rake• chainsaw, half-can of gasoline

Act 3: Midnight

This is the bulk of the evening. It involves the attacks by the wicked dead.

This act should involve several short combat sessions. By liberal use of ASPs, players should be able to keep the evil outside the cottage (although by the end of this act, all but two should be dead).

Once PCs are actually Wicked Dead, the need for the surviving players to use ASPs is vastly increased. Players tend to be much more aggressive in their attacks than the GM.

Reading the professor's notes – or looking at the videotape – will tell the players that the "creatures" need to be dismembered to stay down: arms, legs, and head must be removed from the torso.

Act 4: Before The Dawn

It's possible to piece together the ritual from the binder, but a character will need some time to cross-reference the spellbook with the phonetic transliteration, and the translation. (Two different tasks.)

If the players don't decide to cast the spell, then this act is simply about survival.

Scenes

Artifacts

The Professor has some artifacts in his office, at his desk. They are:

- A ceremonial knife, intricately worked in obsidian and copper. This is heavier than a regular knife, and does (STR/4)+1 damage. It is not necessary for the ritual of dismissal, but is tremendously useful. (Using it adds 4 POW.)
- A binder containing a photocopy of the Harappan spellbook.
- A binder of rough notes, including phonetic mappings of the various glyphs in the Book of Discord (spellbook).
- There is a journal that contains a set of rough translations, but not phonetic pronunciations.

Spellbooks

There are three versions of the spellbook, which is known in archaeological circles as The Lothal Book of Worship, but according to the translation is called The Book of Discord.

The rough translation in the professor's notebook shows that the scrolls that make up the Book of Discord are in roughly these sections; each is followed by the difficulty and time for creating the phonetic translation:

- A spell for summoning and binding the Evil Ancestors (Difficulty 0; already done)
- A list of acceptable animals for sacrifice and best prices to pay (Difficulty 7, 1 hour)
- A spell for purifying the water in the harbour (Difficulty 8, 30 minutes)
- A list of 20 wicked men who are condemned to death (Difficulty 6, 15 minutes)
- A spell for trapping evil ancestors in their flesh bodies (Difficulty 8, 1 hour)
- A note that cutting the body into six holy pieces does not dismiss the evil ancestor, merely renders the body unusable (Difficulty 7, 20 minutes)
- A spell for dismissing the ancestor trapped in a body, making use of the ceremonial knife (Difficulty 7, 30 minutes)
- A spell for dismissing all ancestors bound to an area; this one says that Eremuk, high priest of Harappa, did not need the knife for he was powerful of spirit (Difficulty 8, 1 hour)

Remember that these are the difficulties for *translating* the spells.

Casting the spells is an AWR task of difficulty 7, minus 1 if the caster already knows a foreign language (some of the phonemes are not English phonemes).

About The Wicked Dead

The Wicked Dead are spirits from Harappan culture; the spells were excavated from a temple in the city of Lothal, along the west coast of what is now India. The Wicked Dead ruled the city of Lothal from 1900-1700 BCE.¹

Wicked Dead are almost the same as people. (Well...except for the level 10 psych lim involving killing and eating human flesh.) Will and Power go up; those rely on the inhabiting spirit. They're also slightly stronger: their strength increases by the POW of the human, or to 6, whichever is greater. And they're dead: they have a lower AGL (due to rigor mortis), dropping by 1 point when they die and a second point 8 hours later, when the second rigor hits. They also gain some strength; all dead seem to be preternaturally strong. That also means they don't need to breathe; you can't choke them or drown them.

Wicked Dead start off with full knowledge of everything they knew as people and their normal amount of creativity. The longer they are dead, the less creative they become. Most movies don't last long enough for this to be a problem.

The longer they're dead, the more corrupt their bodies become, giving evidence of the evil spirit within.

Your typical Wicked Dead person would have these characteristics:

STR	6	2	0.5 Toughness (50 AP)
AGL	3	1	Sense living (Detect, range, self, invisible, no drain, independent, inherent, detect based on POW Apt) (21 SP)
AWR	4	1	Illusion (Dominate, range, self, invisible, no drain, independent, inherent, only to create illusions, concentrate each phase) (19 SP), 3 Area multiples (47 SP), affecting 4 hex radius (16 meters diameter)
WIL	5	1	
HLT	5	1	
POW	10	3	
Punch	2 DV		Skills from life.
Kick	2 DV		
Claws	1 DV		
ASPs	0		

¹ Information about Lothal and Harappan culture given here is entirely spurious.

About The Wicked Dead

Powers

Once ensconced in a body, the Wicked Dead have three supernatural powers:

1. They ignore all impairments in combat up to the point of amputation. (The GM is free to make judgment calls—in the movies, zombies are frequently stunned, but they just keep coming back for more. Obviously, a zombie without fingers won't be able to operate the car radio.) This represented as 0.5 Toughness, but it's simpler to just ignore all non-lethal impairments.
2. They can voluntarily hide this corruption and appear as if they were alive and healthy. They can't attack and use this ability simultaneously. They often use this to draw in their shell-shocked former companions.
3. They can find the living based on their Power aptitude. This isn't a targeting sense—they can't reach through the specific spot in the wall for you—but they know you're in there. They find you based on your Power, so Phoebes stand out.

As spirits, they're powerless in the daytime; the only way they can function in the light is to have bodies to possess. At night, they have certain poltergeist-like effects. They can cause tree branches to grab you or roots to trip you as you run. They can stop clocks and levitate small objects. They can make it appear that the walls are bleeding or that the faucets are running with blood; they're particularly good at Biblical plagues. They can make images appear in mirrors or reflective surfaces.

With bodies, they can enact the rituals required to completely open the doorway into the Other World.

Hurting The Wicked Dead

You can only hurt Wicked Dead with lethal attacks. Ten lethal impairments to a limb or head are an amputation; Wicked Dead can only be stopped by removing all limbs and the head (this makes 6 parts of the body, and the evil spirit can't maintain control over 6 parts; 5 is their magic number). (I'd also allow 5 lethal impairments *in one blow* to be an amputation.)

The dead can be stunned, however; one sees this all the time in the movies. Even then, the dead tend not to let go.

Dying Fighting The Wicked Dead

Any normal human who dies after having been bitten or scratched by the Wicked Dead becomes one of them. This can be prevented by amputating the bitten part within 3 hours of contact. (Tourniqueting a limb is a difficulty 4 First Aid task.)

If the player doesn't amputate the bitten limb, and can survive until dawn, he or she has one more chance. When dawn comes, the bitten-but-not-dead-yet human can "dispossess" any invading spirit with a *effective* WIL or POW roll (whichever is higher) at difficulty 10, no time bonuses allowed (although

About The Wicked Dead

psych limbs or advantages may give bonuses); the GM may allow other bonuses as he or she sees fit. For example, the character who has successfully exercised his will several times without failing – such as chopping up his girlfriend and managing to amputate his own hand – could receive bonuses because he has clearly shown himself to be of strong will.

A character who dies should be allowed to read the “Welcome To The Dead” text in “About the Wicked Dead.”

Once dead, the normal human appears to be “normally” dead for a while; this is generally five or ten minutes or until the best opportunity to scare the crap out of the other players.

Defeating Them

The heart was the source of all power. It was significant to the Harappans that there were five channels out from the heart: arms, legs, neck. By opening these channels, the Harappans believed the essence of the heart would drain out, and the spirit must leave it. That may or may not be the case; however, dismembering a possessed corpse into six major pieces (head, arms, legs, torso) will remove the spirit. The spirit is still around, however, and can possess another person. (From an adventure standpoint, the evening is a success if someone ends the night without being possessed.) One can also cut out the heart using the obsidian spell knife.

The only way to actually dismiss the Dead from this plane of existence is to cast the Spell of Dismissal. The only way to do *that* is to finish the translation.

From the viewpoint of the *characters*, it may be sufficient to chain up the remaining possessed dead and leave. However, if they take this option, make sure a Wicked Dead person greets them at the dock...

Background

Reference books on the shelf will tell the players a little bit about Lothal: it was a theocracy, ruled by a High Priest, who was forbidden to go into the sunlight.

Since the Harappans practiced ancestor worship, it was easy for the original spirit to possess the High Priest. The taboos on the priesthood were designed to keep the spirits in power.

The Wicked Dead were eventually “evicted” from the Lothal culture by priests of nearby cities, dragging the living “hosts” into the sunlight and casting the relevant spells (recorded in the Book of Discord, being translated by Professor Haggard.)

The spirits have learned from this; they’ve learned that they need to move into Earth in force when they get the chance, rather than having a cozy human time-share.

About The Wicked Dead

(The clues from the Professor's notebooks should give hints that the Dead are rather like Lovecraftian horrors: creatures from beyond that seek re-entrance to earth, to use humanity as their playthings.)

The first spell in the Book of Discord is the spell to summon the Wicked Dead, originally intended to ensure that they didn't simply take off for safer pastures before being bound and dismissed. This is the spell that Professor Haggard translated.

All Flesh Must Be Eaten

If you're running this using *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, the Wicked Dead have the following statistics:

Str: 4	Int: 2
Dex: 2	Per: 1
Con: 2	Wil: 2
DPs: 34	EPs: n/a
Spd: 4	Essence: 13

Skills: Brawling 2, Language 2, any skills from life

Attack: Bite damage D4 x 2(5) slashing

Weak Spot: None

Getting Around: Life Like

Strength: Strong Like Bull

Senses: Like the Dead, Life Sense

Sustenance: Weekly, All Flesh Must Be Eaten

Intelligence: Language, Problem Solving

Spreading the Love: One Bite and You're Hooked

Power: 34+ [5 + 10 (No weak spot) + 3 (Life Like) + 5 (Strong Like Bull) +2 (Life sense) +4 (Weekly) + 5 (Long Term Memory) + 15 (Problem solving) +1 (Language)]

Mind Rule at Strength 3, Art 5, illusions only

About The Wicked Dead

Welcome To The Dead

You know everything you used to know, but you also know this:

Your kind are ancient; you are the Old Ones. You moved through space before the Earth was born. Your kind achieved great things: they warped time and space to their own ends, and discovered that your era was circumscribed. There was an end fated to your rule of the universe.

You chose not to accept it, and when your stars were snuffed, you continued to exist, tucked into a fold of space-time, hungry for existence again.

Some thousands of years ago, your kind discovered a way into the “real world” again. You found an insignificant sentient species who were glad to offer you their bodies, who were glad to have you partake of the pleasures of their senses. These were the Harappans of Lothal. From the perspective of your kind, this was like adopting an anthill as a pet; you did what you needed to maintain its usefulness.

However, some of the other ants didn't like this, and blocked your passage. Now that you have gained access to this world again, you will not make the same mistakes. You will not share a body with a living soul; that is too risky. Dead bodies have limitations, but they are yours completely. You will not attempt a peaceful co-existence; instead, you will take over. You will find bodies for all of your kind who enter in the first spell, and you will set about opening a gate for the rest of your kind.

You are still weak; as spirits, you have only the most tenuous control over the material world, and once in a body, you are largely limited by that body. Although you can control the body parts when they are dismembered (and if you can put the pieces back together again, you can join them), you cannot hold more than 5 pieces at a time. If the body is separated into 6 or more pieces, you become diffuse and must withdraw.

You are *angry*. You know that you are only the smallest fraction of what you once were, and you want to be whole again.

You still have some abilities. If you do nothing else, you can make everyone see you as you were when you were alive and hear your voice. They may not believe you, but they will see you. You can find the living, no matter where they hide, tracking them by the essence of their souls.

When attacking, you show a preference for anyone you used to love. They are the ones you want to kill first – perhaps that's a sign of disgust at the weakness your host used to show, or perhaps that's because those were the strongest feelings your host had.

What Has Gone Before

Professor Haggard translated the spell, and recorded himself saying it, on videotape, to record the proper pronunciation.

That released the Wicked Dead.

The professor didn't figure out what was going on until later. He survived the evening and most of the night, seeing the images and enduring the hallucinations of the Dead; the last part of the videotape shows him.

By dawn, the professor was dying. He hadn't managed to throw off his possessing spirit, and he knew what was coming; the spirit had told him. So he weighted himself down with rocks, and now he's down there, waiting.

Haven't figured out yet if there's really a way to defeat them once and for all; haven't figured out why the cottage still looks okay if the owner summoned the spirits and went through this him/herself. (Those questions are never really resolved in the movies, which are an exercise in nihilism, gore, and the occasional naked breast.)

I'm toying with the idea that Professor Haggard was dying, so he weighted himself down with stones and threw himself in the lake. He's, um, *occupied* right now, so as soon as the fish have nibbled enough of him so he can come to the surface, he will. In that case, there's a boat already in the boathouse (unless it got destroyed in the Professor's fight).

Alternative ending: It's also possible that the Professor has no idea of what he did. Perhaps he finished the translation (that is, cast the spell) at dawn, then left, and no one has been to the island since then. (I rather like that idea.)

Bonus Session

After all of the players have died, give them an army unit or a SWAT team to come in and clean up the area. Wicked Dead aren't nearly as fearsome if you're not an average joe, and you know what you're up against.

The ancient Harappans had only bronze weapons, so full auto weapons might make a difference.

Or they might not.

Charts

DIFFERENCE	ROLL NEEDED
0	11-
1	9-
2	7-
3	5-
4	3-
5	1-
6	-

TIME	MODIFIER TO DIFFICULTY
"Out of combat"	-2
¼ of usual time	+2
½ of usual time	+1
Usual time	+0
2-4x	-1
5-9x	-2
10-16x	-3
17-25x	-4
Bad conditions	+1 to +5
Good conditions	-1 to -2

ROLL	LOCATION
1	Head/neck
2	Right arm
3-4	Chest
5	Left arm
6	Abdomen
7	Upper right leg
8	Upper left leg
9	Lower right leg
10	Lower left leg

TARGET SIZE	DIFFICULTY
Big boat	-3
Boat	-2
Motorcycle	-1
Person	+0
Torso	+1
Head	+2
Hand or neck	+3

DISTANCE	0	1	2-4	5-9	10-16	17-25	26-36	37-49	50-64
DIFFICULTY	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FIRER MOVING	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8
TARGET MOVING	+0	+1	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4