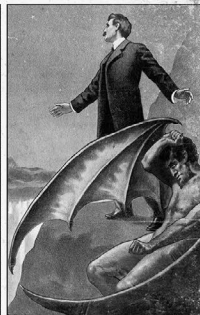


# Dangerous Times

Volume 1

Friday, March 9, 1923

Established 1887



## MUCKRAKERS AND MAGIC IN OLD NEW YORK!

Brought to you by a daring team of investigative reporters, the city's own "muckrakers" who put their lives on the line to document corruption, disaster, and crime in a time when the secrets of the supernatural are finally coming to light.

These fearless folk are sent on assignments directly in harm's way—up against the mob, wealthy business magnates, and the new threats posed by demonologists, magicians, and spiritualists.

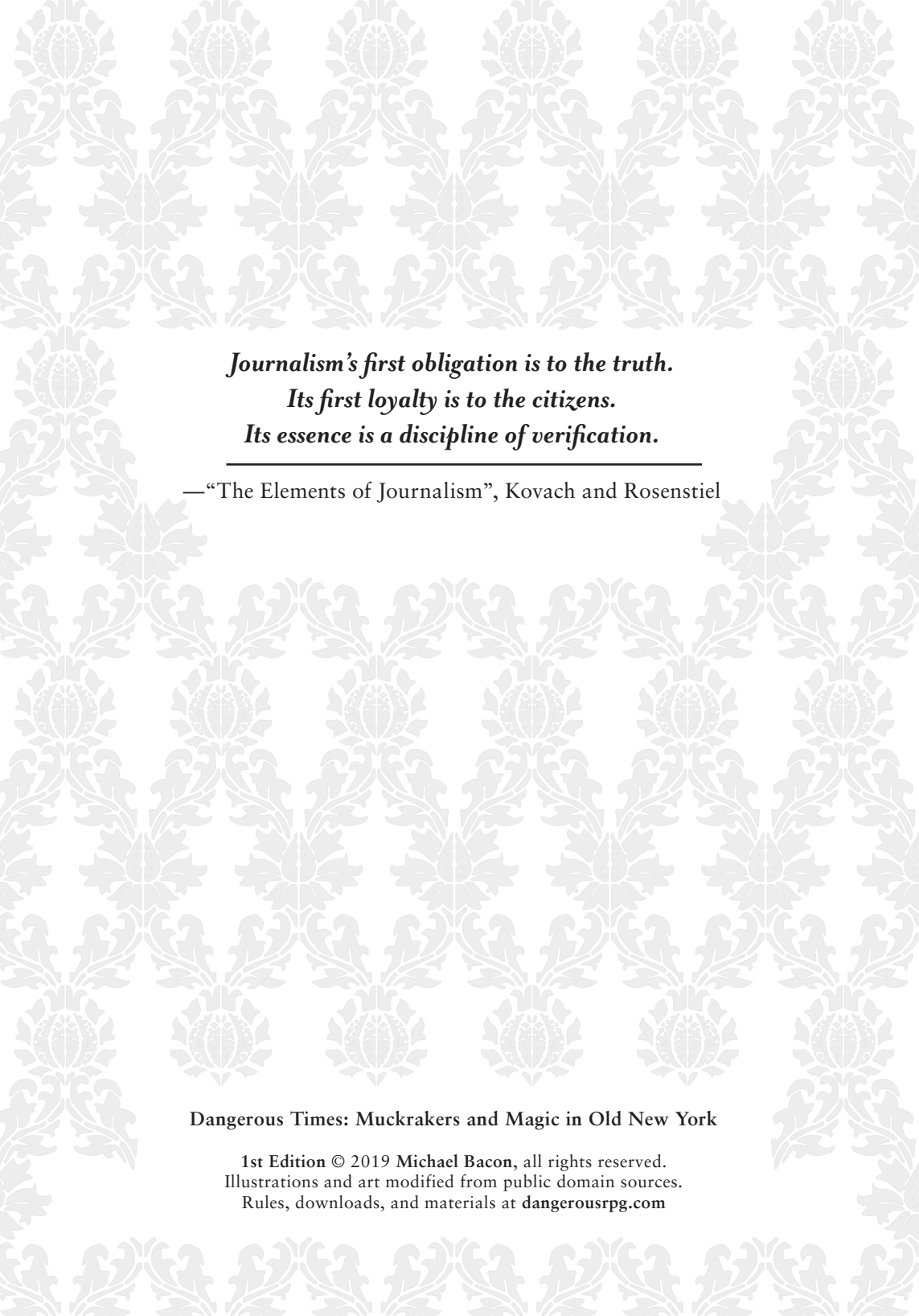
While on assignment around the city they'll test wits and magic against hazards and hardships. Not only do they have to survive, they must document the experience and hope the story is interesting enough to sell papers!

With the threat of bankruptcy and irrelevance looming, these brave souls might attract enough readers to actually change the world... because some problems can only be cured by the light of truth.



## A STORYTELLING GAME FOR TWO OR MORE PLAYERS

BY MICHAEL BACON



***Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.  
Its first loyalty is to the citizens.  
Its essence is a discipline of verification.***

---

—“The Elements of Journalism”, Kovach and Rosenstiel

**Dangerous Times: Muckrakers and Magic in Old New York**

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Rules, downloads, and materials at [dangerousrpg.com](http://dangerousrpg.com)



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## What is this?

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*Dangerous Times* is a storytelling game, played as a conversation between players, with rules and occasional die rolling to keep things interesting.

One player assumes the role of editor and helps to guide other players, who take the role of reporters, through a prohibition-era New York City that's recently discovered magic.

During this time reporters who sought to make the world a better place were known colloquially as "muckrakers". They worked for social change.

Each session plays out as a single issue of the newspaper. Together, players will build rumors and leads, gather evidence, and turn facts into news articles.

At the end, players consider the impacts their publication has made, and whether the world changes for the better or the worse.

Often players will end a session with a few open questions. This is part of the game! There's always another issue of the paper: open questions are an invitation to play again, learning what happens next.

## What is needed to play?

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At minimum, you need the following:

- This booklet
- At least **one six-sided die**
- **Pencils and paper** to write on
- At least **two players**

Snacks are also recommended.

Additional tools can enhance play:

- **Handouts** (beat, home, character sheet) printed for each player.
- **Index cards**, for recording sources.
- 3 pairs of **different color of dice** (representing player's approach).

Play aids and other extra material can be found online at [dangerousrpg.com](http://dangerousrpg.com)

## CONTENT AND TONE

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The past was a *different* place, not a kinder one. Prejudice, hatred, and discrimination existed just as much as they do in the present.

This game provides an opportunity to tell stories about people of diverse backgrounds, with diverse attitudes and beliefs, in whatever roles we choose.

It can be used to explore how people once lived, and through that play shine light on today.

Or it can be used to provide a much-needed break from harsh reality, an imagined past just a little bit kinder than our own.

All ways of play are valid.

**Discuss as a group how you intend to play. Set boundaries and work together to ensure everyone has a safe, enjoyable time playing.**



## Overview

---

*Players acting as reporters and editor collaborate to tell a story.*

### PHASES OF PLAY

This game is meant to be played in sessions, typically lasting around three hours.

Each session contains the following phases:

- A staff meeting, where leads and rumors are discussed.
- An investigative phase, where reporters discover what's going on.
- A publication phase, where articles are assembled and their impacts are determined.

Together, these phases make up a single "issue" of the newspaper's publication.

Something else happens during the investigation: **Trouble**.

Reporters will use their wits, luck, and magic to ensure the paper gets printed.

### STRUCTURED STORYTELLING

At its most basic, this game is a story players discover together. Everyone is given different ingredients, and nobody knows ahead of time how it will end.

The following rules and tools help keep the story interesting and ensure everyone has a say in what happens:

**During the Staff Meeting** (pg. 3), players work together to come up with questions and rumors (pg. 4) based on initial facts the editor shares (pg. 43).

**In the Investigation** (pg. 8), players enact scenes of their reporters seeking answers, while the editor brings the world around them alive.

Often, reporters will need to **find a source** (pg. 9) to interview; sources can be given a random name (pg. 61). Once a source is found, reporters must **gain access** (pg. 9) before they can **ask questions** (pg. 13). They'll also often **snoop around** (pg. 10) or **take downtime** (pg. 11).

All the while, reporters will be accruing **risk** (pg. 6). When trouble strikes they'll have to **face danger** (pg. 11) to find a way out.

Finally, reporters assemble articles during **Publication** (pg. 13) while the editor fills the future file (pg. 44). At the end, the group narrate quick scenes describing **How the World Changes** (pg. 14).

## Staff Meeting

Sessions of Dangerous Times begin with a “Staff Meeting”, during which players will invent rumors and questions to pursue in the upcoming investigation.

See page 39, “How to run a meeting” for editor-specific guidelines.

At the start of the staff meeting, the editor will provide a list of facts about the world. They might also include a little bit of hear-say to spark creativity.

Players will then collaboratively brainstorm a list of questions about that fact, using the reporter’s staples: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How.

Once a list of questions has been created, everyone takes turns making up an answer to these questions in the form of **rumors**.

Rumors take a very specific form: they start out by stating what a group or organization thinks the answer is.

So instead of “I think he threw the fight”, a rumor might say “I overheard at a nightclub that the mob paid him to throw the fight.”







A good rumor adds new information, but it doesn’t have to be true! That’s what the investigation will find out.

One or two rumors per player should be plenty: many more will be created during play.

Questions and rumors are the basis for the upcoming investigation.  
The more questions you come up with, the better.

### QUESTIONS ABOUT EVENTS

When something happens, these questions can lead to interesting rumors.

 Who	 What	 Where
Who caused this?	What happened?	Where is it now?
Who is in charge?	What caused this?	Where did it begin?
Who else is involved?	What did it do?	Where next?
Who wants it stopped?	What did it cost?	Where could it happen?
Who is harmed?	What could go wrong?	Where did it go?
Who stands to benefit?	What happens next?	Where is it felt most?
 When	 Why	 How
When will it happen?	Why did it happen?	How is this happening?
When did it start?	Why does it exist?	How do people react?
When does it stop?	Why trust them?	How can it be better?
When did you find out?	Why can’t we avoid it?	How can it be stopped.
When does it get better?	Why must it be stopped.	How do they know?
When did it get worse?	Why is it wanted?	How much did it cost?



## Rumor Generation

Refer to things in your beats and backgrounds, roll dice for prompts— or invent something from whole cloth, ignoring the dice entirely.

### WHAT ARE RUMORS?

During the staff meeting, the editor will provide a fact about the world. Players then make up **what a specific group believes about that fact**. This is a rumor.

Rumors could hold a hint of truth, or they could turn out to be completely wrong!

Everyone should feel free to engage their creativity. Add contradictions or impossible details. Say whatever springs to mind.

Reporters will verify rumors by going places, asking questions, and generally snooping around.

See page 8, “The Investigation” for details on how this is done.

### MAKING THINGS UP

Every rumor needs to mention some group that believes it, but the **best rumors add something to investigate**.

The dockworkers say the fire was started *for political reasons*. The mob claim the book was stolen *from a Brooklyn library*. Local police suspect the film crew is actually *cover for a crime*.

These rumors all point in two directions: back to the source, and outwards to something new. They do this by **making up a new piece of information**.

What new information? Just make something up. Your handouts and the “questions about events” prompts can provide inspiration.

### “POINT OUTWARDS WITH RUMORS”

When you create rumors during the investigation, it’s a good idea to “point outwards” to sources, beats, and players not involved in the current scene.

## Verifying Facts

As your reporter goes about the investigation they’ll answer questions and turn rumors into facts. To do this, enter a scene like **Ask Questions or Snoop Around** with a specific question or rumor in mind.

When it comes time to play the scene you’ll roll dice. Often you’ll end up with more rumors or questions, but sometimes you’ll get answers.

When this happens, let the person you’re collaborating with make something up! If they get stuck, the group may offer suggestions too— whatever gets decided becomes the truth.

## Rolling the Dice

When players want to determine the outcome of a scene, or what happens when their reporter faces danger, they'll roll the dice.

### THE BASIC RULE

You'll roll the dice before (or sometimes during) a scene, whenever the outcome of something is in doubt. Some scenes have special rules about what the dice mean, but the basic rule is simple: **you succeed on a 4 or higher.**

**In general, you succeed on a four or higher,  
and face stalls and setbacks on a three or less.**

Success means you got what you wanted; being stalled means you'll have to try and do things another way.

Depending on what approach you took, rolling the dice often also leads to risks—scenes the editor controls, involving complications or signs of upcoming trouble.

## Your Approach

Decide how your reporter is going to face the problem at hand and use that to shape their actions. Use colored dice or tell others your approach before rolling.

### Cautious

Roll **twice** and pick the **lower number**. If you roll doubles, gain risk.

It's harder to get things done, but safer.

### Steady

A steady approach means **rolling one die**. If you roll a one or a six, gain risk.

All outcomes are equally likely.

### Reckless

Roll **twice** and pick the **higher number**. If you roll doubles, a one, or a six, gain risk

More likely to succeed, but also likelier to hit trouble.

For general reference, refer to this table:



You're stalled, and unless you were *cautious*, gain risk.



You're stalled, but don't gain risk.



Success! Not perfect, but no extra risk.



Success! But unless you were *cautious*, it took risks.

Doubles

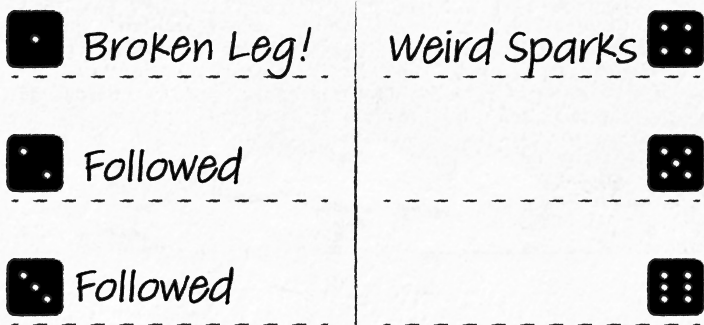
Any time you roll doubles, risks happen.



## Risk & Hardship

The average reporter goes about their day without once running into danger. You are not the average reporter.

Risk is something you build up while going about your job as a reporter. It's tracked on your character sheet in the "trouble meter", and represents how much potential trouble your reporter is in.



### How IT'S DONE

Risk either happens or it doesn't. You can't hit it twice on the same roll.

When you roll risk the editor has permission to interfere, adding a quick scene during or after yours showing how new risk complicates things. If your meter is full, trouble occurs: the editors' scene goes first.

Afterward, you'll record a one or two word reminder of what happened on your trouble meter.

**Hardships** are a special kind of risk, which get recorded with an exclamation mark.

Once your trouble meter is filled, all that risk has finally come calling. Your reporter will have to find their way out of trouble before they can continue.

When you **Face Danger** and clear a risk, clear all occurrences of it. In the above example, clearing "Followed" would leave two empty spaces.

## HARDSHIPS

Hardships are a special kind of risk which make life more difficult. You gain hardships from facing danger, and can often remove them by taking downtime.

Your dice rolls are reduced by one for each hardship. Use the new value to determine stall or success. If your result would be less than one, it counts as one. *Hardships mean the best results are often out of reach without spending credibility.*

**Always determine risk BEFORE applying hardship.**

## Credibility

---

When reporters do something awesome or challenge reality they're being incredible. When they gather facts and accept reality they gain credibility.



Credibility points are tracked on the players' character sheets and can be spent doing interesting things. Players begin each session with three credibility points.

**During publication, players will use credibility to determine if an article is boring or exciting, reliable or dubious.**

Spending credibility often imposes certain requirements on scenes, but it's also an invitation to do *something incredible*. When no credibility has been spent, magic should be strictly decorative, not used to solve problems.

## Gaining and Spending Credibility

---

When you gain credibility, mark one of the six circles. When you spend it, erase the appropriate number of circles.

The most common way to spend credibility is to modify a roll, at the rate of one point of credibility per one point on the die. For example, changing a four to a six means spending two credibility. **Often, spending credibility has special conditions which will influence how you play the scene.**

The following is a list of ways to gain and spend credibility:

- ◇ **Find a Source:** Both players gain one point. The volunteer may invent a new detail to gain a bonus point. The active player can spend one point to do the same.
- ◇ **Gain Access:** You gain one point for accepting a stall. If you spend to modify your roll, the scene must leave you indebted- making a deal or offering a favor for access.
- ◇ **Snoop Around:** You gain one point for accepting a stall. If you spend credibility to modify your roll, your scene should involve breaking laws or social norms while snooping.
- ◇ **Take Downtime:** All players involved in the scene gain one point. If the editor accepts it, the player may spend one point to remove a hardship; not all hardship can be mended.
- ◇ **Ask Questions:** Both players involved gain one point. If a fact is overturned, the entire table may each optionally gain a point.
- ◇ Sometimes, the editor may award bonus credibility. It's up to them what does it, but sharing facts about the 1920s can't hurt!



## The Investigation

This phase of the game is all about taking rumors and validating them as either fact or fiction.

Reporters use the dice for direction on how a scene will go, then act it out. When they roll risk the editor will contribute, showing ways in which trouble is brewing.

### BASIC INVESTIGATION FLOW



## Investigation Scenes

Reporters tend to split up and focus on different things. This requires some juggling on your part, as unlike real life only one person can be the center of attention at a time.

Find a way of taking turns that works for your group. Maybe that means switching off after every scene, or after risk has been rolled, or only once a new fact has been discovered. Try different things and do what works best.

Reporters' scenes have a defining focus, something that the reporter wants to achieve related to the investigation.

This focus (Asking questions, taking downtime, finding a source, etc) becomes the framework for the scene, shaping the rules of how dice rolls and credibility work.

The editor's scenes focus on the world around the reporters, and ways in which reporters face risk and dangers.

When players roll risk, the scene shifts. It's now the editor's turn to drive the action. If the reporter's trouble meter was full, the editor goes first; otherwise the player sets up the scene and the editor interrupts or follows.

As players investigate, they start to write down facts and rumors: information they've learned over the course of the investigation.

Anything players come across can be recorded, but only information that's produced from **Asking Questions** or **Snooping Around** counts as a verified fact.

Throughout the investigation the facts will evolve and change. New facts will be uncovered, old ones overturned.

Both verified facts and unverified rumors may be useful during publication.

## Find a Source

---

When reporters look for a source of information, such as a person to ask questions, they must first collaborate with other players to **Find a Source**.

*Collaborating players share narrative authority over that source, and can assume the role as required in scenes.*

### HOW IT'S DONE

---

First get a volunteer to collaborate with you. Usually, this will be a player with a Beat or Neighborhood your reporter is interested in.

Each player picks or rolls one underlined detail from their info sheets. If one player chooses from their beat, the other must choose from their neighborhood, or vice versa.

Instead of using the sheet, spend a credibility point to make up your own key detail; the volunteer may gain a credibility point for doing the same.

Once players have selected details, the editor will add a final detail.

Write everything down and give the character a name (*See page 61, "Random Names"*). As a group, examine the new character's details and come up with a quick backstory.

Think outside the box, using any keyword meaning that works. "Lush" might imply they have a beautiful garden, nice hair, or drink too much.

Finally, use all this to describe or play a short scene where you learn about them (but haven't met them yet).

Maybe flash back to a prior interview, talk to a street vendor, see them at a club or ask around.

More detailed examples and notes can be found online at [dangerousrpg.com](http://dangerousrpg.com)

## Gain Access

---

Unless the group agrees that meeting with a character would be trivial and without risk, reporters must play a quick scene attempting to **Gain Access** to the source before asking questions.

Sketch out the scene first, deciding how your reporter will attempt to approach the source, then roll the dice to see how it goes.

On a 4 or better, you gain access; describe or play out a quick scene to setup Asking Questions later.

On a 3 or less, you're stalled, but you have options:

- ◊ *Spend credibility to modify your roll.* If you do, your scene must leave your reporter indebted to someone.
- ◊ Take Downtime or Snoop Around instead of asking questions.
- ◊ Accept the stall and pass to another player, earning a point of credibility. You may try to gain access again later.

# Ask Questions

After they've **Gained Access**, reporters are able to **Ask Questions** of a source.

Find a volunteer to play the role of the source; both players involved in this scene gain a point of credibility.

Sketch out the scene first, announcing the one key question or rumor you'll focus on. You can discuss other things in the scene, but only one key question can turn into verified fact.

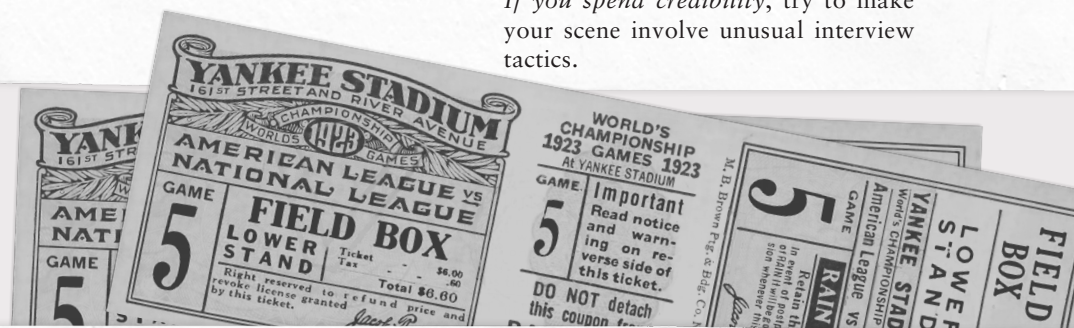
Roll the dice to see how it goes, then play it out. If the group agrees, you may roll again and repeat as seems natural; once or twice per source is usually enough.

**On a 6**, create a new fact by answering the question. If it was a rumor, you now know the truth.

**On a 2-5**, work together to create a few new rumors, pointing towards new beats and neighborhoods.

**On a 1**, pick a fact as a group and cross out a key part of it, replacing it with something else. Use this in the scene. Everyone gains credibility. (If you haven't yet uncovered any facts, create one instead.)

*If you spend credibility*, try to make your scene involve unusual interview tactics.



# Snoop Around

If you can't gain access to someone, or if you prefer finding information by digging in files or riffling through trash, you'll want to **Snoop Around**.

**Snooping around is more dangerous than asking questions**: if you roll risk during this scene, the editor may call on you to **Face Danger** before, immediately during, or afterwards.

*If you spend credibility*, your scene should go beyond legality: give bribes, break into places, steal papers, wire-tap phones, etc.

Follow the instructions for **Asking Questions**, but use this table instead:

**On a 6**, create a new fact.

**On a 5**, point outwards with rumors.

**On a 4**, overturn a fact. Everyone gains credibility.

These options are the same as in "Asking Questions", but snooping around has one more result:

**On a 1-3**, you discover nothing relevant.



## Face Danger

When reporters encounter a dangerous situation, they'll need to face danger before moving forward.

Facing danger usually occurs in reaction to risks or trouble, rather than being something reporters seek out; it happens any time there's the possibility of harm.

The player states what they want to attempt, and then the editor offers a consequence that might happen if things go wrong. Usually this consequence takes the form of a Hardship.

A simple roll is made: On a 4 or more the player is better off. On 3 or less, the reporter messes up somehow; often suffering a hardship.

No credibility is gained from this scene, though it can be spent to modify the roll.

Sometimes, facing danger will take multiple rolls and multiple wagers. You can still roll risk while facing danger. When you do, the editor will bring the risk into the scene, often requiring another roll.



## Take Downtime

Taking downtime is a scene that doesn't involve a roll. Instead, your reporter may do one of the following:

- ♦ **Mend a hardship:** Narrate how you address a hardship. If the editor accepts, spend one credibility to remove it from your list; if not, gain one point for the attempt.
- ♦ **Share information:** Your reporter can exchange information with another reporter that may relate to other investigations. Both players gain one point of credibility.
- ♦ **Seek rumors:** Find two volunteers, and play a scene where new rumors are created. Use players' beats as inspiration; all players involved gain a point of credibility.
- ♦ **Deal with life:** Find one or two volunteers and play out some drama in your reporter's life; relationships, finances, friends and enemies. Those involved gain a point of credibility.

Any time you spend credibility, it's possible to use magic to solve your problems. Do something incredible!



## Magic Tricks

Most everyone knows a little magic these days, but reporters have bills to pay. They don't have the time to go dedicating their lives to the pursuit of the arcane. Even still, it's common sense to keep a trick up your sleeve.

Any time you've spent credibility, it's an invitation to have your player do something magical. If no credibility has been spent, magic can't be used to solve any of the problems in a scene

There's no credibility requirement if you want to use it decoratively, or show how it fails to help.

To the right is a list of magic talents inspired by common vaudeville acts. Your reporter might have a knack for one of these, or for something you make up. **Anything you might see performers do can make an interesting trick.**

- ◇ Contortionist, able to bend and flex in strange ways.
- ◇ Knife-thrower, capable of tossing things with eerie accuracy
- ◇ Fire-eater, able to eat, breath, and juggle flames.
- ◇ Rabbit-puller, capable of conjuring small (possibly trained) animals.
- ◇ Mentalist, capable of hypnotizing the unwary.
- ◇ Levitationist, capable of floating or moving themselves and others.
- ◇ Escape artist, able to break out of any kind of bond or trap.
- ◇ Illusionist, crafter of strange images
- ◇ Prestidigitator, quick with the hands to move things out of sight.





## Publication

During publication, reporters will take the facts they've gathered and assemble them into articles. Typically, you should have at least one article per player.

Each article is made up of facts. Everyone works together — players can freely share facts between each-other.

If you don't have enough facts you may use rumors, but one of your statements about the world has to involve someone not believing the article.

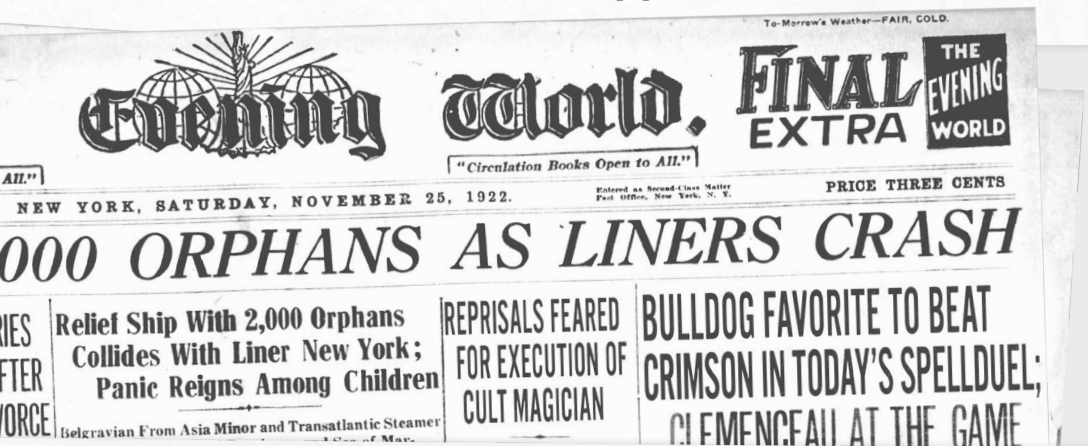
During this time, the editor should select a source or two to save for future use.

Select one article to be front page news. When the world changes, players take turns making quick statements about how the world changes.

Go around the group twice.

Reporters' statements should be about someone reacting to either their own article or the front page news; they'll make rolls to determine if the change is positive or negative.

The editor goes first. Unlike reporters, they may choose to make positive or negative statements, and can choose to focus on something other than the paper's articles.



## Building Articles

Each article is made up of information gathered during the investigation. Everyone works together: players can freely share facts between each-other.

Articles must answer at least three of the following six questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. Verified facts are preferred, but rumors and hearsay are also acceptable.

Anything players come across can be used, but only information produced from Asking Questions or Snooping Around counts as verified.

If all six questions are answered, the player may re-roll the die once while determining how the world changes. If all facts used are verified, they may re-roll a second time.





## Character Setup

Reporters play their role based on information which gets recorded and tracked on the “Character Sheet”, which you can see at right.

Either download, photocopy, or hand-write a duplicate of the adjacent page for each reporter playing. Then follow the details below to get started!

**Use pencil when writing things down! You'll need to erase and make changes frequently.**

Reporters tend to have an area of particular focus, a “beat”, which they write about often. That experience covering similar stories means you usually have a pretty good idea of who to talk to first.

In addition, living or hanging out in a particular place means a natural familiarity with what goes on there.

**Select one neighborhood and one beat (pages 21-36) for your reporter.**

You are the authority for the subjects mentioned in your **Beat** and **Neighborhood** pages.

Your trouble meter tracks risks and hardships your reporter is dealing with. Sometimes the editor will ask you to roll against it!

Usually, risks complicate the middle of your scene or follow after it; if your meter is filled, trouble happens before you get a chance to act.

Hardships are a big deal; they make the best outcomes rare or require spending credibility. Take Downtime to deal with them.

Risks stick around until the editor tells you they've changed or been resolved.

## Fill out the “Personal Details” prompts.

These are open-ended statements that add a little depth to your reporter.

Write anything you want, but try to reveal things that can both help or hinder your character.

During play, you'll be rewarded for using these details when playing your role. Examples follow.

◇ “Your family do not approve of the person you love.”

◇ “More than anything, you enjoy a stiff drink.”

◇ “Before you took this job, you lived in a different country.”

If you want, leave these blank and fill them as inspiration strikes you.

# Dangerous Times Reporter Info

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Trick / Talent: \_\_\_\_\_

## CREDIBILITY POINTS

INCREDIBLE ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ RELIABLE

## BEAT

Your beat is... \_\_\_\_\_

## NEIGHBORHOOD

You home is... \_\_\_\_\_

## TROUBLE METER

When you gain risk or hardships, write it down below. Hardships are followed by an exclamation, like "Shocked!" — Each hardship subtracts one from your die rolls.



## PERSONAL DETAILS

At the start of the session, ensure the boxes below are unmarked. Before rolling, you may check off a prompt and do one of the following:

- Add 1 to the roll result. During the scene, describe it providing an advantage.
- Subtract 1, but gain a point of credibility. Describe it causing a disadvantage.

- ☐ More than anything, you...
- ☐ Before you took this job, you...
- ☐ Your family...
- ☐ One day, you...
- ☐ What you fear most is...



## Time — The Roaring Twenties

The world of a hundred years ago may appear surprisingly modern to your players, and with good reason: the twenties were a period of rapid technological progress and increasing urbanization.

The 1910s were filled with tragedy, with an estimated 16 million dead in the first world war, and as many as 100 million in the following global influenza pandemic, colloquially known as the “Spanish flu”.

By the early 1920s, however, the United States is experiencing an economic boom that would push prosperity to new heights.

Jazz music fills the air, Street-cars and early automobiles ferry commuters to and from work, and silent film is giving way to a burgeoning “talking pictures” industry.

Every day, scandal, corruption, and violence fill the papers. Hard and desperate criminals make a quick dime as bootleggers. Terrorists flock to the KKK, perpetrating vile acts, lynchings and riots.

After generations of struggle, women have finally won the right to vote, and continue to fight for education, careers, and new freedoms. Despite rising xenophobia, immigrants from around the world are building lives and homes within the city.

### THE DECADE IN NUMBERS

Average net income, 1920:	\$3,269	1929: \$6,132
Cars on the road, 1919:	6.7m.	1929: 23m.
Price of Model T, 1919:	\$500.	1927: \$360.
Total sales of radios, 1922:	\$60m.	1929: \$842m.

Prices, 1925:	Loaf of bread—10¢.	Subway fare—5¢.
	1lb steak—43¢.	Hot lunch—38¢.



## Place — New York City

New York is the biggest city on the planet, and will retain that status for the next four decades. It holds the world's tallest skyscraper, the biggest department store and largest office building.

Like its modern self, New York of the 1920s relies on imports, with only 10% of the city's food requirements provided locally. In 1925, for example, over 200,000 boxcars laden with food were delivered from all across the country, and countries as far off as China or Siberia supplemented the supply of staples like eggs and butter.

Even in the context of a country that widely ignores the prohibition of alcohol, New York is exceptionally unheeding of the law. A conservative estimate places 20,000 speakeasies operating within the city, some disguised behind florists' shops, behind undertaker's coffins, or entered through imitation telephone boxes.

By making alcohol illegal, prohibition turned all drinkers into criminals; in some ways, this rule-breaking has created spaces where other social restrictions can be relaxed.

New York in particular sees a rising interest (often exploitative) in exploring the lives of different communities, with a series of "crazes" over working class, gay, immigrant, and black neighborhoods.

These neighborhoods flourish as new economic opportunity brings many to the city.

Most notably, Harlem becomes the center of a creative and cultural renaissance, where soon-to-be famous Black artists, writers and musicians defy racism through art and politics.

For now, optimism and progress reign, at least until the Great Depression brings economic turmoil and a tightening of rules, as repressive social hierarchies are reinforced.



## Hopes and Fears

### IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATION

Anarchist bombings spark immigration restrictions and deportation. Many are deported on spurious grounds, due to alleged anarchist ties, ethnicity, or "likelihood to become a public charge."

### A SHIFTING WORKFORCE

Immigrants and women play an increasing role in the workforce. Social change is met with reactionary forces that seek to uphold the old regimes.

### WEALTH, INEQUALITY AND BUSINESS

The gap between the wealthy and poor is wider than ever, but concerns over declining social mobility are mitigated by economic prosperity. Business is lauded for pulling the country out of its post-war slump.

### SCIENCE AND FAITH

Science presents challenges to traditional faiths that result in upheaval, reorganization, and denial. Technological advances impart a sense of progress.

### GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE LIFE

Resentment over prohibition creates opposition towards federal intervention, lessening the desire for social reform which defined the prior few decades.



## Magic

It was witch burnings that drove magicians into hiding, and Christopher Marlowe who taught them how to do it.

Marlowe's play about the demonologist Faust hid the basis for a secret that lasted from the late 16th century until the modern era: refuge in audacity.

European magicians under threat of the torch could now hide their powers behind entertainment: for if magic was the subject of plays and fantasies, a trick of the stage, then it could not possibly be real.

Thus magicians spent their public lives

as charlatans and their private lives in arcane study, quietly spreading disbelief anywhere they performed. "Fatal accidents" and "botched tricks" awaited those who stepped out of line.

### The deception worked too well.

At the end of 1917, a skeptics movement seeking to disprove the existence of magic accidentally succeeded in doing the opposite.

Though "The Great Reveal" did not come soon enough to have much effect upon the world war, by the mid 1920s magic has become a part of daily life.

Children play with levitation and fire-eating in the street, mourners seek out mediums to find closure, and illusionary images are fast becoming a staple of film and stage.

Meanwhile, law-breakers use hypnotism and escape-artistry to great and disastrous effect, while those who seek power consort with things best left alone.

At the epicenter of the revelation, New York has quickly become the most magical city in the western world.



### *Pinetti's Law: "Magic lies within the individual."*

Meaning: Magical spells must be cast and items made entirely by one person. No assembly lines or automation possible.

Caveat: Other magicians can share energy, but the mental & physical effort of casting still falls to one.



# Technology

Overwhelmingly, this decade is one of technological progress.

The city is a patchwork of modernity, caught in a transitional phase. The nation's population has just become majority urban, and no urban center is more populous than New York.

While roughly half the country has access to electricity, and the rest is beginning to wire up to power lines, power in the city is near ubiquitous: only a few stubborn landlords resist access due to cost or fears.

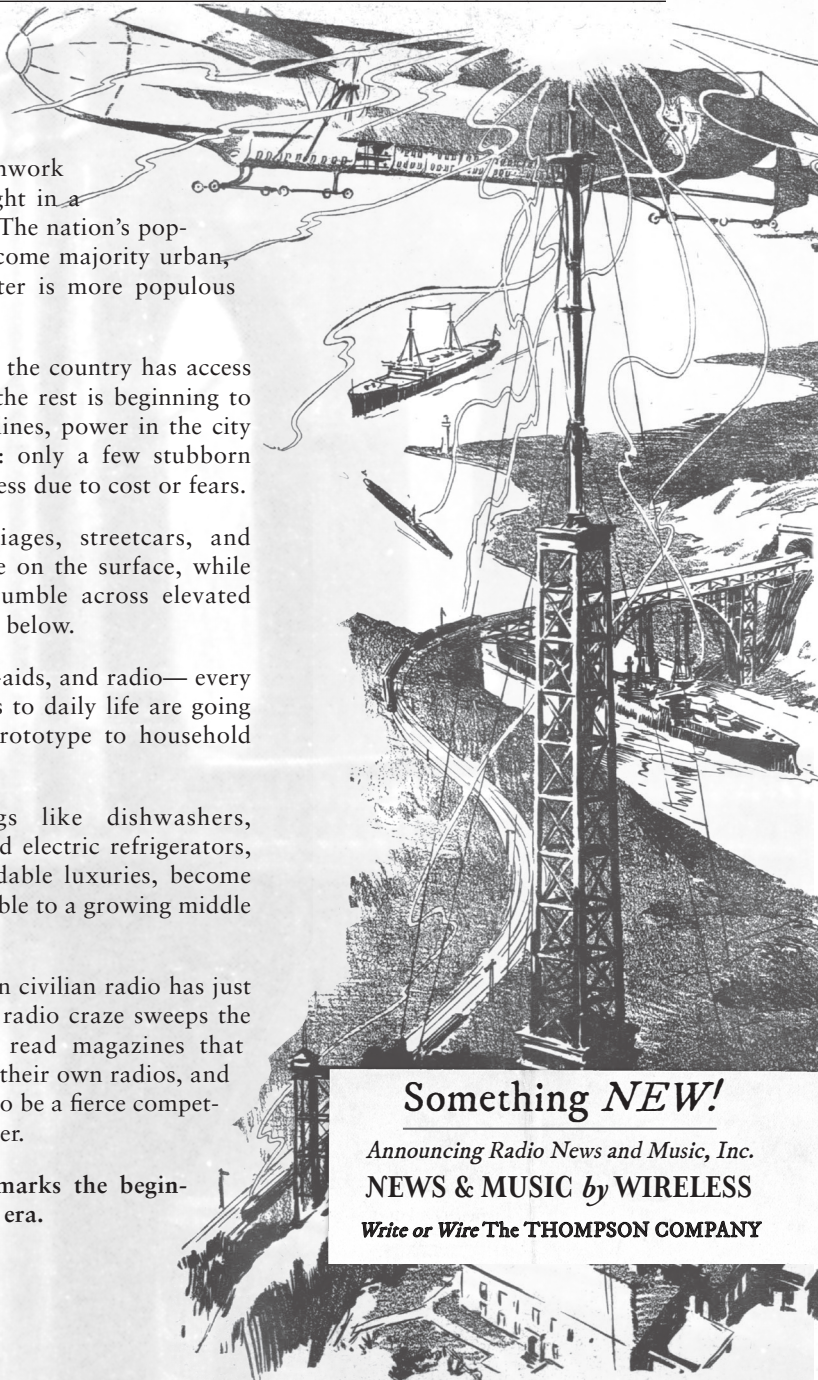
Horse-drawn carriages, streetcars, and automobiles mingle on the surface, while commuter trains rumble across elevated tracks or in tunnels below.

Traffic lights, band-aids, and radio—every year, improvements to daily life are going from laboratory prototype to household necessity.

Meanwhile, things like dishwashers, air-conditioners and electric refrigerators, previously unaffordable luxuries, become increasingly accessible to a growing middle class.

The wartime ban on civilian radio has just ended, and soon a radio craze sweeps the country. Children read magazines that teach how to build their own radios, and radio news proves to be a fierce competitor to the newspaper.

This time period marks the beginning of the modern era.



## Something *NEW!*

*Announcing Radio News and Music, Inc.*

**NEWS & MUSIC by WIRELESS**

***Write or Wire* The THOMPSON COMPANY**

## Neighborhood— Brooklyn Heights

Once the site of stately manor houses, the wealthy moved elsewhere when transportation made the neighborhood more accessible. Now those homes have turned into eagerly sought after apartment buildings filled with artists and bohemians.



### HART CRANE

**POET:** Spends most of the decade in love with Emil Opffer, sharing a room under the Brooklyn Bridge and writing poetry.

**TO EXCESS:** Loves much, drinks even more. Passionate, jealous and ecstatic.

**STRUGGLING:** Often relies on the charity of friends and lovers; is depressed.

**CLOSE:** Only 5 minutes to Wall Street, fifteen minutes to Times Square.

**DECLINING WEALTH:** No longer an exclusive and inaccessible place, only a few of Brooklyn's wealthy socialites remain here.

**CHANGING:** Houses become multi-tenant apartments, priced attractively for artists and authors. Shops follow.

**CONFUSING:** Newcomers are often lost in winding streets, lacking a grid system.

**LUSH:** Warehouses and hotels have rooftop gardens, making for peaceful retreats.

**ARTISTIC:** Artists rent space in boarding houses or turn hotel rooms into studios; host exhibitions of everything from historic prints to modern sculptures.

### Notes

RAISED ABOVE the surrounding areas, the Heights offer dazzling views of Manhattan IN THE SHADOW of the Brooklyn Bridge.



The sound of ships CRUISING in the harbor echoes near the Navy Yard, where sailors meet for assignments on streets of a certain REPUTATION.

Poets and novelists GOSSIP AND CHAT within the hotels and restaurants along Montague St, while bankers and retailers make it a center of COMMERCE.

### Hotel St. George

1047 rooms & suites, daily or yearly rate. Large swimming tank, 17 dance floors and PRIVATE subway entrance.

The Ardsley School of Modern Art offers NEW OPPORTUNITIES for students of painting and drawing. Application should be made at once.

### HOTEL BOSSERT

Open invitation to an evening SOCIAL at the Marine Roof. Lobster, orchestra and dancing.





## Beat— Cultists

Following the 1919 bombing of Wall Street, a rise in paranoia and fear spread across the nation. Cults and hate groups bolstered their ranks with promises to empower members and fight against outsiders, no matter the cost.

**SECRETIVE:** By keeping their occult actions clandestine and their identities secret, cults work to evade the law.

**EXPOSED:** As a senator, Jimmy Walker introduced a law requiring cult membership be filed with the state or the group is an illegal organization; most cults are illegal.

**SWINDLE:** Money helps the cult grow; many cults use pyramid schemes involving membership dues to reward recruitment.

**BAD INTENT:** Behind the barbecues, fund raisers, occult baptisms and picnics hides something more sinister.

**INFILTRATED:** Cultist infiltrate into every aspect of regular life... and find themselves infiltrated in turn by the city's secret police.

**HARRIED:** The subject of police raids once proven of wrong-doing; sometimes raided before evidence is found.

**DREADFUL VISION:** Cultists have a specific vision of what the future looks like. Reasonable people find it horrifying.

**OFFERING:** Cults claim to offer things their members want and ask for sacrifices in return... sometimes literally.

**MESMERIZED:** Brainwashing and indoctrination allow cults to exploit member and non-member alike.

**WITNESSES:** Those who discover the secret are made to join... or be silenced.

**CORRUPTING:** Cults spread beliefs that drive members to evil actions. They target those most susceptible for recruitment.

**FROM WITHIN:** They act from within society to undermine it, subverting, replace, or destroy what exists.

*Even within this squalid land we have our INFLUENCE, that the worthless, the politicians and the paragons will see us move among them and be shamed.*

*And we will call upon TERRIBLE POWERS, for worship and for strength, to impress and sway the minds of the unenlightened.*

*Let us nurture a HATE BEYOND REASON. We know that all who are not of us must be destroyed.*

### KINDRED OF THE GRIME

**VILE:** There is no crime known to man these terrorists have not committed.

**UNTRUSTWORTHY:** Claim to be acting for the greater good, but aren't.

**RITUALS:** The trappings of the arcane lend an aura of mystique to the cult.



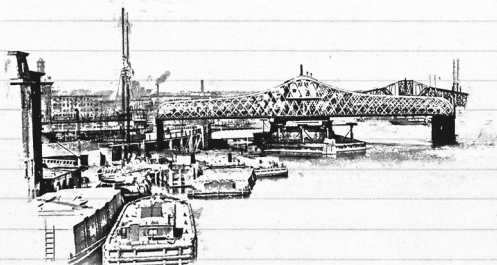


## Neighborhood—Mott Haven

At the southern tip of the Bronx lies Mott Haven, named after a prominent local family that ran an ironworks here until 1905. Due to the waterfront and the nearby rail yards it hosts many industrial jobs.

### Notes

The waterfront is lined with warehouses and factories where HARD WORK is done, but afternoons when the band plays St. Mary's park the crowd is as lively and CHEERFUL as anywhere.



CROWDS of porters, car cleaners, repairmen and bosses fill the rail yards, keeping trains safe, clean, and only occasionally LATE.

It's easy to get a SIDE JOB as a bootlegger here, smuggling booze from up north. It can get dangerous, but that's why the shops here sell so many good luck CHARMS.

### J. CLARENCE DAVIES

**MOGUL:** Made millions on land sales, turned rural Bronx into urban borough.

**COLLECTOR:** Donated paintings and prints of New York, then valued at \$500,000, to the City Museum.

**POLICY-MAKER:** Wields influence as head of the New York Real Estate Board & member of various trade organizations.



**FAITH:** Mott Haven is home to a number of synagogues, churches, and other places of worship.

**AGING:** The streets still hold cramped "old-law" tenements, and even the nicer areas have aging row houses.

**ORDERLY:** The precinct house lies on the main thoroughfare, from which the law is actively enforced.

**LAVISH:** The nearby Grand Concourse hosts 6-story apartments with elevators and doormen.

**PRECARIOUS:** Though it's successful now, once the depression hits this whole neighborhood will fall into poverty.

**DEFIANT:** Some bars and saloons in the Bronx stayed in business, openly selling booze until midway through the decade.

### YANKEE STADIUM

"The house that Ruth built"

Come watch SPORTING history be made!  
New electric voice amplifier lets fans hear the announcer describe every play.

### The Woodycrest Home for friendless children

Rescues children from HOMELESSNESS, hunger, want and sorrow; donations needed.

### Bronx Opera House

149 St. and 3d Ave.

Watch Broadway hits on tour,  
and see TRY-OUTS of future hits!

## Beat—Plutocrats

Despite cartels, monopolies and massive inequality, the 1920s were a decade when faith in business was at an all time high. The elite used their influence to wield economic and political power, often reshaping the country in their favor.

*My Dearest Nephew,*

*I have heard of your opinions regarding the plan to enact a MERGER with our rival mining concerns.*

*Allow me to put your fears to rest: the government is largely INDIFFERENT to anti-trust laws. What is written on paper means nothing if not enforced.*

*The benefit should of course be self-evident, as sufficient CONTROL over the market will both allow the establishment of a standard price as well as benefit our efforts in related industries...*

**INDULGENT:** The wealthy indulge in drinks, decadent parties, high-stakes poker, jewelry and exotic merchandise.

**BOOMING:** During the most prosperous 8 years of the decade, a new building went up on average every 51 minutes.

**SPECULATION:** Money is made by speculating on rising real estate values; investors buy shares of land and buildings.

**WEALTH GAP:** New Yorkers are above the poverty line if they make \$1,800/year. The wealthy spend that on a night at the club.

**SERVANTS:** Plutocrats cannot survive without chauffeurs and chefs, dog-walkers and doormen, butlers and maids.

**VACATION:** Come summer, Park Avenue and other wealthy neighborhoods clear out as their tenants travel abroad.

### WALL STREET

**NEW MONEY:** The face of wealth has shifted from inherited “old money” to “new money” fortunes made in business.

**VERY RICH:** About 3,000 millionaires live in New York, making fortunes from railroads, real-estate, oil and steel, movies and motorcars.

**OVERCONFIDENT:** Unemployment is down, the market is up, nothing could possibly go wrong!

**DOOMED:** The Great Depression is on the horizon, yet everyone lacks foresight.

**TAKING CREDIT:** Stocks are being traded “on margin”, backed by debt from loans with as little as 10% down.

**MANIPULATED:** Savvy insiders persuade others into artificially raising stock prices... then sell before anyone notices the fake.

### J.P. MORGAN JR.

**PROFITEER:** Struck a deal that earned him \$30M (1% of the total) from French and British WW1 munitions purchases.

**BANKER:** Develops a bad reputation during the depression, especially when he admits to not paying income tax.

**HEIR:** Inherited the family fortune. Will leave it to his children.





## Neighborhood—Harlem

Harlem is a large neighborhood in upper Manhattan spanning roughly 48 blocks. After the turn of the century the neighborhood became a focal point and icon of Black American professional, political and creative life.



### JESSIE REDMON FAUSET

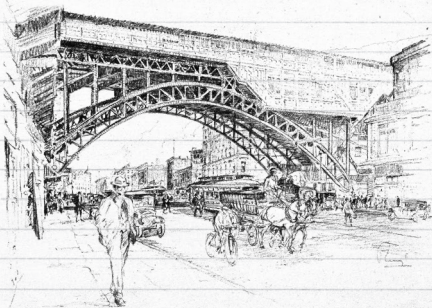
**EDITOR:** Literary editor for *The Crisis*; also ran an illustrated children's magazine.

**MENTOR:** Corresponded with and advocated for Harlem's most famous writers; later taught in NYC public schools.

**WRITER:** Wrote 4 novels, many poems and essays; also translated French writing from authors in Europe and Africa.

### Notes

CREATIVE types from all over come seeking community, and they find it; in JAZZ clubs and cafés, libraries and art studios.



The great reveal didn't change much, except FORTUNES are being read openly where once the teller would risk arrest for fraud. No wonder, then, that you can so readily find MYSTIC ingredients for sale.

Some tour the neighborhood as if it were strange and EXCEPTIONAL; others find a place to fit, incorporating their own lives into a beautiful HARMONY.

**VETERAN:** Soldiers from Harlem fought in France during the war, serving more days in combat than any other American unit.

**PROFESSIONAL:** Home to successful professionals from every industry who turn opportunity into profit.

**ORGANIZED:** Locals defend community rights, using social power against problems like exploitative landlords and police brutality.

**GATHERING:** Some renters throw parties to raise rent, or convert apartments into permanent "buffet flats"; with drinking, gambling, temporary banks for travelers.

**LABOR:** Many unions explicitly excluded Black workers; local businesses that refused to hire from the community faced boycott.

**DREAMS:** People arrive here with plans and aspirations in mind, dreaming big and determined to make it.



**TABB'S Quick Lunch**

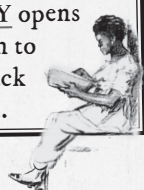
**OPEN** night and day, dine or take away.  
Great food, good prices, local employees!

### Annual Odd Fellows Ball

Masquerade at Rockland Palace, 280 W. 155th

Throw off your INHIBITIONS and assume the role and attire you desire. Awards given for the queerest dressed!

The 135th Street LIBRARY opens new Schomburg Collection to preserve and celebrate Black literature, history, and art.





## Beat—Scientists

The twenties saw inventors improve daily life through advances in aviation, radio, electricity, and automobiles, while researchers and theorists worked to expand our understanding of biology, physics, and the universe.

**POPULAR:** Interest in science is higher than ever, with magazines devoted to science, radio, and mechanical inventions.

**DISCOVERED:** Breakthroughs like the isolation of penicillin and insulin occur through serendipity, hard work, or both.

**EVIDENCE:** Scientists look towards existing evidence to develop hypotheses, then perform experiments to test them.

**UPSET:** Scientists expand the boundaries of knowledge; often, as in the 1925 Scopes trial, society pushes back.

**MORALITY:** Science and morality are uneasy bedfellows; terrible things are often done in the pursuit of knowledge.

**LEARNING:** Scientists spend time in study and research. Some are formally educated; others (like Edison) are not.

### DR. ADELAIDE BAYLIS

**DOCTOR:** Talented bacteriologist & researcher, directs the Red Cross in NY.

**DISTINGUISHED:** Captain & commander in WW1, served the NY Defense Service & Ambulance Service on the home-front.

**SHARP:** Won the first ever national championship for women's foil in 1912.



## INVENTORS

**COMPETITIVE:** First to invent means patent money to keep inventing; second place gets nothing.

**MOTIVATED:** Many inventors are driven by profit, and what they create is often influenced by the social mores of the time.

**CREDULOUS:** Inventors work towards impossible-sounding goals. The more outlandish the possibility, the more eager the public is to believe in it.

**EFFICIENT:** Modern inventions are often built to streamline industrial processes and simplify household chores.

**QUIRKS:** Long hours in the lab can lead to eccentric habits; some inventors are famous for their weird personal quirks.

**RISK TAKER:** Making a profit from science takes long hours of work and a steady stream of money, with no promise of success.

### BETTER BABY CONTEST

*Learn the science of Eugenics!*

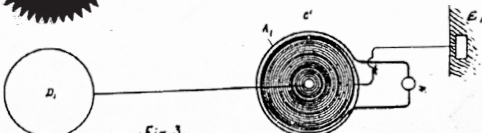
Physicians will perform **TESTS** and take **objective measurements**; prizes awarded to best stock.



Build your own **RADIO!** This step by step guide will entertain and educate. Send \$3 to Marconi's Wireless Co.

## PATENTS

**ASSISTANT** for hire, will guide applicants through patent process. Illustrations extra.



## Neighborhood—Astoria

When Long Island City officially became part of Queens, New York City in 1908, it brought with it the neighborhood of Astoria. Increasingly accessible with plenty of opportunities for work, new family residences are being built here.



### RUDOLPH VALENTINO

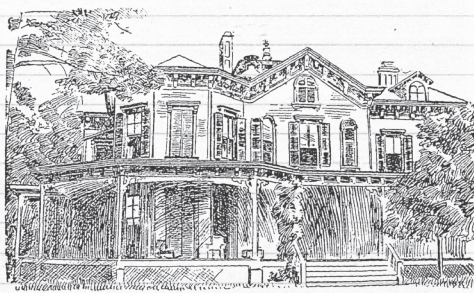
**HEART-THROB:** Beloved actor and sex symbol, divorced twice, had affairs.

**FIGHTER:** Challenged a reporter to a boxing match over what he wrote; won.

**TRAGEDY:** Dies age 31, in the middle of the decade. Mass mourning ensues.

### Notes

A neighborhood where RUSTIC manor houses mix with apartment buildings. Visitors find Astoria's rolling hills, parks and water-front view of Manhattan ENCHANTING.



Gardens aren't the only thing GROWING around here: new, affordable apartments are bringing in new people, because there's plenty of NEW JOBS just waiting to be filled.

Not everything is as RESTFUL as the local sanitarium, however. Long the site of ghost stories, reports that the area is HAUNTED are finally being taken seriously.

**OLD FAMILIES:** The wealthy and aristocratic once lived here; most have moved to less populous neighborhoods, but some remain.

**TO COURT:** Remodeled after the 1904 fire, the courthouse serves all of Queens; many famous crimes are tried here.

**COMPANY TOWN:** Many new industrial jobs are available here, particularly at the Steinway Piano and Ford plants.

**AMUSING:** Two amusement parks at nearby North Beach offer rides, shooting galleries, and dance halls.

**EASILY REACHED:** The Astoria Ferry and the Queensboro bridge, and the 60th st tunnel all provide access to the busy neighborhood.

**ON FILM:** A major center of the film industry, responsible for a quarter of all silent films; investing in "talkies".

## FAMOUS PLAYERS LASKY CORPORATION

**FAMOUSLY TALENTED** on Broadway?  
Inquire at our studio for upcoming film roles.

Steinway & Sons Piano Factory builds  
**HAND-CRAFTED** pianos without  
using complicated tools.



The American Chicle Factory is  
hiring workers with **STRENGTH**.  
No skills or qualifications required!



## Beat— Club Crowd

Entertainment-seeking New Yorkers left restaurants and cabarets that could no longer serve alcohol, and towards a new invention: the illegal night club, home to booze and live entertainment.

**SOCIAL MIXER:** Clubs mix people from different social strata, seating millionaires with movie extras, clerks, cops and convicts.

**WELL DRESSED:** Even the gangsters playing bouncer wear tuxedos.

**TEMPTATION:** Jazz was considered the music of the devil, tempting listeners to dance; night clubs quickly embraced it.

**BIG MONEY:** The wealthy show off by spending extravagantly; owners might make as much as a million dollars a year.

**LOCKED OUT:** With a ten year backlog of cases needing trial, prohibition agents prefer padlocks to the judicial system.

**ALWAYS MOVING:** Clubs can be shut down at any time, but with few legal consequences, they tend to re-open next door.

### “TEXAS” GUINAN

**CLUB OWNER:** Queen of night clubs; patrons drink, spend money like water.

**CONNECTED:** Cops shut her down, she's out with a new club the next day.

**CHARMER:** Former actress, greets new friends with “Hello, Sucker!”



**UNRESTRAINED:** Speakeasies let guests drink in peace; clubs are for making noise.

**BOOZE & SCHMOOZE:** The best clubs attract important people. Knowing important people could come in handy some day.

**UP ALL NIGHT:** Most clubs stayed crowded from midnight 'til dawn, with friends welcome even after closing.

**CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE:** Owners are often newly rich gangsters trying out other risky capitalist pursuits, or otherwise connected.

**POISONOUS:** The government adds poisons to industrial alcohol to deter resale as cheap booze. Hundreds die or go blind each year.

**LADIES PRESENT:** Bars of prior decades catered specifically to men; night clubs are frequented (sometimes owned) by women.

## SAVOY

*World's Finest Ballroom*

**EVERYONE DANCES.** The only thing that matters is if you've got that swing!



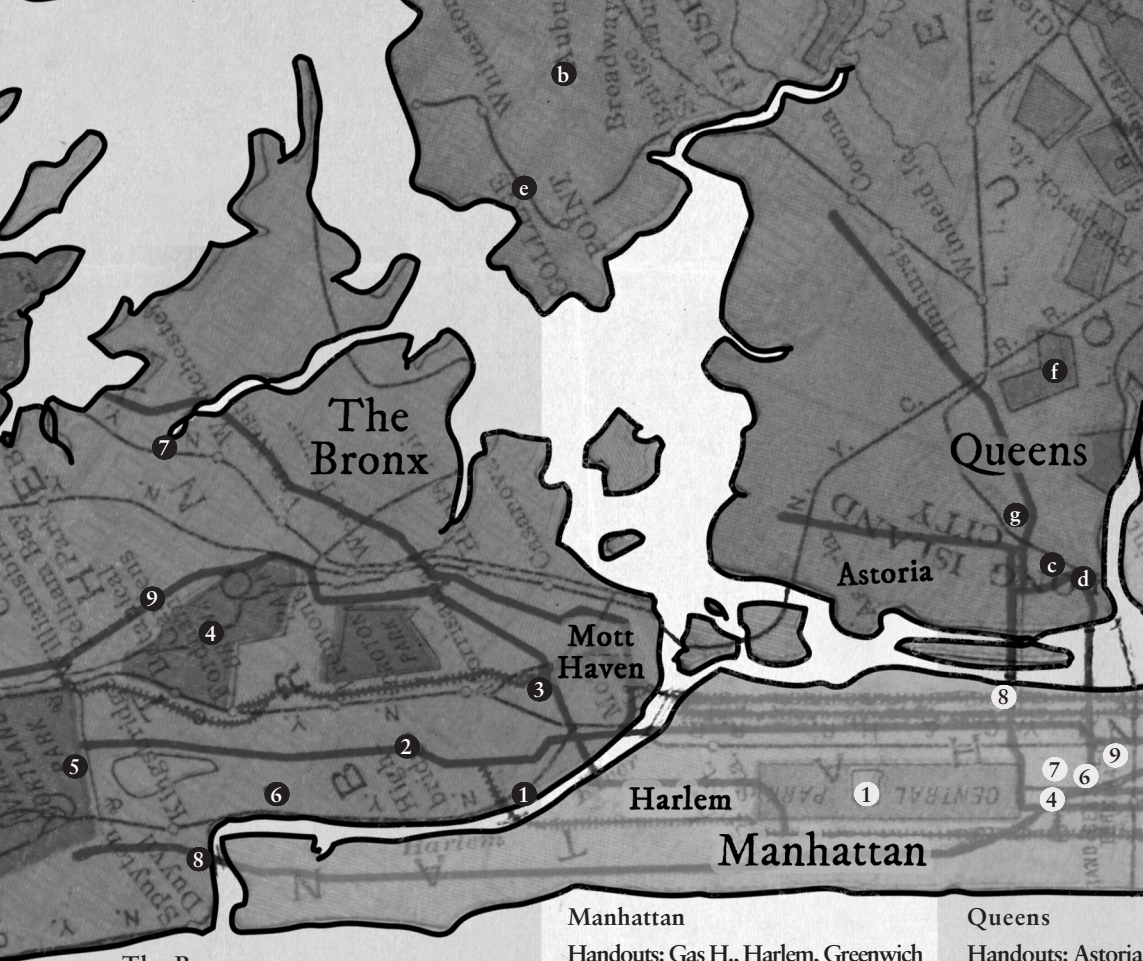
### THE STORK CLUB

Membership required for entry.

Quiet VIP Cub Room & **BACK-TABLE** seating for those interested in privacy.

Hiring **ATTRACTIVE** dancers!  
Serve drinks and act charming from  
11 to 7, will pay \$100/week plus tips.





## The Bronx

Handouts: Mott Haven

- 1 **YANKEE STADIUM:** Large baseball stadium built in 1923.
- 2 **GRAND CONCOURSE:** Once a river, this trendy street runs up the borough.
- 3 **RAILYARD:** Turntable, storage, cleaning; trains sanitized with gas.
- 4 **BRONX PARK:** 718 acres, zoo with 3000+ animals, botanical gardens.
- 5 **VAN CORTLANDT PARK:** Green with lake, popular for winter skating.
- 6 **HALL OF FAME:** Pavilion with bronze busts of prominent Americans.
- 7 **STARLIGHT PARK:** Amusement park, hosts circuses and music festivals.
- 8 **NY VELODROME:** Cyclist race track.
- 9 **PUBLIC BATHS:** One of many in the city, swimming pool and showers.

## Manhattan

Handouts: Gas H., Harlem, Greenwich

- 1 **CENTRAL PARK:** 843 acres, with lake, playground and zoo.
- 2 **PARK ROW:** The central hub of newspaper publishing in the city.
- 3 **TIN PAN ALLEY:** Lined with aspiring musicians selling songs.
- 4 **BROADWAY:** Street of 70 theaters.
- 5 **WALL STREET:** Center of financial markets in the city.
- 6 **GRAND CENTRAL:** Opened in 1913, hub of subway and rail.
- 7 **FIFTH AVENUE:** Former home to the rich, now fashion center.
- 8 **SUTTON PLACE:** New home of old money, Vanderbilt & etc.
- 9 **WALDORF-ASTORIA:** Elegant hotel, once center of high society.

## Queens

Handouts: Astoria

- a **FOREST PARK:** golf course, club h
- b **AQUEDUCT TR**
- c **TIFFIN CHOCO** by owners of the
- d **DAILY STAR:** largest printing
- e **SPEED'S AIR** 1927, NY's first
- f **CALVARY CEM** grounds spread to
- g **SUNNYSIDE Y** storage for passer





538 acres, with house and carousel.

**ACK:** Horse races.

**LATE:** Factory, run by Waldorf-Astoria.

Newspaper and press in Queens.

**PORT:** Opened public airfield.

**METERY:** Burial to four locations.

**ARD:** Service and nger trains.

### Brooklyn Handouts: Brooklyn Heights

- a CONEY ISLAND:** Vacation spot beach & amusement parks.
- b NAVY YARD:** Built battleships during the war, now does repairs.
- c SANDS ST:** Has a reputation for sailors, hookups, and debauchery.
- d MONTAGUE ST:** Banks, shops, courthouse & borough hall.
- e PROSPECT PARK:** Large park: lake, sports fields & tiny zoo.
- f GREENWOOD CEMETERY:** Graveyard, borough's highest point.
- g GOVERNOR'S ISLAND:** Army base.

### Staten Island Handouts: St. George

- h ROBIN'S REEF:** Lighthouse off the coast, visible 13 miles when lit.
- i COAST GUARD STATION:** Speedboats and destroyers are used to chase bootleggers.
- j SILVER LAKE PARK:** Park with golf course & large reservoir.
- k STATUE OF LIBERTY:** Gift from France, symbol of freedom.
- l ELLIS ISLAND:** Port of entry, detains deportees awaiting trial.
- m SNUG HARBOR:** Charity and retirement home for old sailors.

## GETTING AROUND TOWN



Brooklyn Rapid Transit & Interborough Rapid Transit both run subway trains on public tracks. Lines connect every borough save Staten Island, which is accessible by ferry. Streetcars are also convenient; during rush hour, the wait might be as little as 90 seconds between cars. Horse-drawn carriages get fewer every year, while taxis grow increasingly popular.



## Neighborhood— Gas House District

Populated mostly by immigrants and the working-class; eventually, government funded construction will force residents out to build Stuyvesant Town, “suburb in the city.”



### TOM “HUMPTY” JACKSON

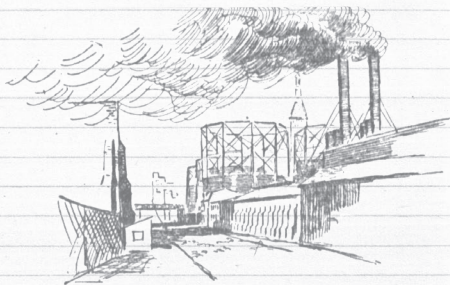
**EX-GANG BOSS:** Ran his gang from the old cemetery; did 5 years in the clink.

**“GENTLE”:** Had others make the hits; Runs a shop with his wife, sells doves.

**TALKATIVE:** Read a lot in prison, will talk about anything to reporters.

### Notes

NOT THE PRETTIEST, but it's home... a place where people help each-other: we all PULL TOGETHER in a crisis.



Many here are SUSPICIOUS OF MAGIC, trusting to the ways we grew up with. Old solutions are NOT AS FLASHY, maybe, but a knife or a prayer can help just as much as a spell.

A day doing piecework leaves folk TOO TIRED to try new things, but there's always room to dream— hard work and the promise of MOVING ON UP keeps us going.

**INDUSTRIOUS:** Filled with factories where even children work hard & are paid too little.

**ROUGH:** Those of few means build lives from shaky foundations; some turn to crime in desperation.

**NEWCOMERS:** Affordable rent and access to work makes this a natural landing spot for new immigrants.

**UNDESIRABLE:** Named for its many gas tanks, which stand taller than apartment buildings... and often leak foul odors.

**SLIGHTLY SAFER:** *Humpty Jackson's* gang is gone, folded into organized crime elsewhere. Now this is bootlegger country.

**BEING REPLACED:** Tanks are being dismantled, plans are drawn; in a few decades, everyone will be forced out.

### RATNER'S

Vegetarian Dairy Restaurant  
makes our own pastries,  
NO MAGIC INVOLVED.

### THE OLYMPIC THEATER

14th St. “Home of Burlesque”

Throw nickels or howl ‘em  
off stage during hilarious  
AMATEUR HOUR!



The Lying-In Hospital is proud to report  
NOT ONE LOSS of mother or child in our  
maternity clinic during recent flu epidemic.



## Beat—Politicians

The political power-house of the era is Tammany Hall. Firmly embedded in neighborhood affairs, their graft and patronage lined many pockets with taxpayer money.

**ANTI-PROHIBITION:** Many politicians, and most New Yorkers, oppose prohibition.

**HIRED THUGS:** Not beyond using intimidation to drive off votes for opposition candidates.

**LOOMING SCANDAL:** Before the decade ends, government corruption will end many careers and force many resignations.

**TAXED:** The city is supported almost entirely by real estate taxes, not federal or state funding.

**TAKING RISKS:** The economic prosperity of the time drives officials to spend big and take risks; they will not see the Great Depression coming.

**INDEBTED:** Municipal debt increases by almost \$100,000 a day, nearly equal to the combined debt of all 48 US states.

It is the season when trees will be trimmed, streets repaired, and city departments have our best interests at heart—**UNTIL THE ELECTION.**

### ELECTION MAY BE DECIDED BY WOMEN'S VOTE

Both sides make a **MAJOR APPEAL** towards recently enfranchised voters.



**10,000 CLAMS TO BAKE**  
**FREE LUNCH** if Tammany takes the election. Vote today, eat tomorrow!

### TAMMANY HALL

**PATRONAGE:** Vote for Tammany, get jobs, handouts, clam chowder.

**REGIME CHANGE:** *Boss Murphy* cleaned Tammany's reputation; died suddenly of "acute indigestion".

**CORRUPT AGAIN:** New boss, judge *George Olvany*, bribes officials; breaks laws; lines pockets through graft.

**INFLUENTIAL:** Governor *Al Smith*, mayor *Jimmy Walker*, many others owe Tammany. Borough leaders are nicknamed '*the five little mayors*'.

**FRACTIOUS:** Members sometimes vie for position, accidentally sabotage each-other, and hold grudges.

**SLOWLY WANING:** Controls the vote in Manhattan and the Bronx. Lost hold of Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

### MAYOR JIMMY WALKER

**SPENDTHRIFT:** Borrows and lends money, doesn't keep track, nobody seems to mind.

**EGALITARIAN:** His "Walker Bill" is the nation's strictest anti-KKK law.

**IDLE RAKE:** Occasionally found at work, frequently at parties; has indiscreet affairs.

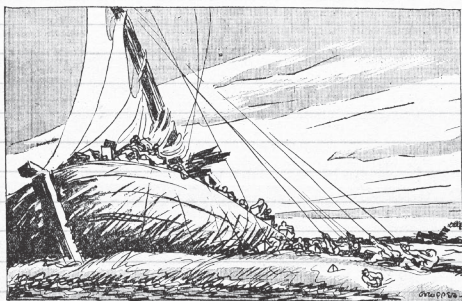


## Neighborhood— Saint George

The launching point of the Staten Island Ferry, St. George is one of the city's earliest planned suburbs. This area of the rural borough is slowly becoming more urban, as manor houses give way to small stores and office buildings.

### Notes

TRAVELERS come and go from the area often, with quick access to Manhattan via the ferry. Our home is the FOCUS point everyone on the island navigates around.



Sometimes bottles of booze are WASHED ASHORE, a sure sign the local coast guard is busy capturing RUM RUNNERS who sneak booze across the border.

THE PIERS are a good place to pick up a speedboat, captured while smuggling and auctioned off AFTER TRIAL... sometimes back to the original owner.

### CORNELIUS VANDERBILT IV



**REPORTER:** Used his famous name to gain access and interview many celebrities.

**ENTERPRISING:** Launched several tabloids and newspapers; all failed.

**DISINHERITED:** Unhappy with his decisions as a newspaper man, his parents struck his \$910k inheritance from the will.

**TRANSPORT:** The ferry transports locals in and out of Manhattan, including actors commuting to Long Island film studios.

**PROSPEROUS:** Land sells for \$600 per square foot, and the price continues to go up.

**AUTHORITY:** The borough hall and county courthouse are located here, making it a hot-spot of government action.

**FAIRIES:** Local historians document the slowly waning fairy population, as urban development drives them elsewhere.

**THEATRICAL:** Solomon Brill, local theater magnate, opens \$2M "dream theater" here... one month after the stock market crash.

**VIGILANT:** The nearby Navy Yard and Coast Guard bases employ locals in both military and civilian capacities. Often this involves enforcing prohibition.



Lakeview Home for Unwed Mothers and WAYWARD girls. Quiet adoptions & professional training.

Midland Beach & South Beach Resorts offer ALL THE AMUSEMENTS. Ferris Wheels, Coasters and More!

### CONSTRUCTION DELAYED ON SAINT GEORGE TUNNEL!

LACK OF FUNDS halts construction of subway connection to Brooklyn midway.



## Beat—Gangsters

The 1920s saw the rise of organized crime, as big cities like New York became the epicenter of rum-running and bootlegging. Prohibition led to crime becoming big business, with gangsters raking in millions of dollars of profit each year.

Tell Lucky to keep an eye on that looker that's been hanging around the club lately. I know he thinks it's just someone drawn in by his gangster MYSTIQUE, but...

I've noticed a lot of quiet phone calls being made. Could be someone's working an angle or carrying a GRUDGE.

Time to do something a little SOPHISTICATED. Get the kid to bring over her fancy wiretapping gear. Maybe we'll catch the dregs planning another raid...

### OWEN "OWNEY" MADDEN

**VIOLENT:** Nicknamed "Owney the Killer" by press; Suspected in five murders before age 18.

**EXPLOITATIVE:** Founded segregated Cotton Club in Harlem; makes "Madden's #1 Beer."

**BOSS:** Ran the Hell's Kitchen Irish mob; Just out of prison, sees potential in Prohibition.



**ON THE TAKE:** Gangsters relied on bribes to manipulate just about anyone.

**MANY ARRESTS:** Those convicted of serious crimes are "sent up river" to Sing Sing prison.

**FEW CONVICTIONS:** Only a handful of judges were available to try prohibition cases; it'd take decades to clear the backlog.

**OPEN CONFLICT:** Rival gangsters face assassinations or massacre; especially those "stool pigeons" who work with police.

**GUNS BLAZING:** The iconic weapon of the gangster, the Tommy Gun, is known as "the gun that made the twenties roar".

**ALLIANCES:** Partnerships are formed between gangs of disparate backgrounds; profit is the primary motivator.

## BOOTLEGGERS

**SMUGGLER:** Rum is smuggled into the city by ship or car, from Canada or the Bahamas.

**RESTRICTED:** The Coast Guard has a blockade in place and patrol cars watch the roads.

**MOONSHINE:** Prohibition seems impossible when every household is making bathtub gin or running a home distillery.

**MILLIONAIRES:** Before Prohibition, even the busiest gangster made thousands; after, they brought in millions.

**SIDE-HUSTLE:** Flush with cash, the wealthiest seek new rackets: politics, gambling and club-ownership.

**COMMONPLACE:** Bootleg booze is sold in clubs, speakeasies, even pharmacies where whiskey prescriptions are filled.



## Neighborhood— Greenwich Village

While the village was once the most bohemian part of the city, a new subway station combined with the reputation of art and culture rapidly increased rent. Although the ambiance remains, many of the actual artists have been priced out.

### Notes

There's a cultural RIFT within the Village, as artists and actors slowly move away the same way working families did before. Everyone is DISSATISFIED by the changes.



A decade ago most every building played host to a studio, with models POSING for sculptures, portraits and nudes. Now those buildings host tea rooms and TOURIST spots.

You can find a DRINK EVERYWHERE in the city, but it's particularly easy here: locally fermented wine fills PARTIES, speakeasies, even grocers and barbershops.

### ISAMU NOGUCHI

**GO-GETTER:** Left medical studies at Columbia to pursue his dream of art.

**RISING STAR:** One of the youngest to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship.

**SKILLED:** Has sculptures in shows, galleries, even national newspapers.



**GESTURES:** Villagers of the prior decade tried to transform art, freedom and identity; only lip-service and gestures remain of that.

**CENSORED:** Artists and publishers still push boundaries, but often encounter censorship, with magazines seized or destroyed.

**COMPLICATED:** Working class laborers, artists, wanna-be-artists, and business folk overlap spatially here, but seldom socially.

**CURIOSITIES:** New boutiques sell "authentic" bohemian bric-a-brac styled after the lives of struggling artists.

**REBELS:** With a reputation for excess and free-living, locals rebel against social structures; the press dubs it a village of "long-haired men and short-haired women"

**MAKE OVER:** Property owners "improve" old buildings, slapping on new paint to justify new, higher rents.

### Pleiades Club

Welcomes guests with a proven interest in literature and magical THEORY.

### LIBERATOR

A magazine of REVOLUTION, not reform.  
For the workers of the world. 20¢ an issue.

Local film studio seeks authentic villagers to ACT THE PART in newest bohemian farce!

## Beat—Magicians

Magicians have lived in and visited the city since its founding, though few knew of their real power. Now the old crowd stubbornly pretend to be powerless, the younger set practice openly, and actual frauds take advantage of the gullible.

**DEDICATED:** Simple tricks are quick to learn, but deeper knowledge requires immense physical and mental dedication.

**SPECIALIST:** Magical skill doesn't carry over between specialties. Most focus on one trick; learning many takes a lifetime.

**REVEALED:** The Great Reveal was publicized worldwide; returning to secrecy would require decades of effort to discredit it.

**BACKLASH:** Drawing on too much magic can cause harm to brain or body. Only the most skilled know exactly when to stop.

**FRAUD:** Real magicians once hid among frauds; now, those who've never bothered to learn seek profit by claiming real power.

**TRANSITION:** The role of "Magician" is changing; new generations will have very different ideas about magic.

**TRADITION:** Magicians hold to strict rules and traditions, often with reason; younger ones are more likely to rebel.

**DIVIDED:** Not everyone is happy being forced to act in the open; some forms of influence only work in secret.

**SECLUDED:** The most dedicated focus on magic over everything else; fearing distraction, many have gone into hiding.

**INSTRUCTORS:** Some are excited to share knowledge. Traveling magic shows have become both school and entertainment.

**RESTRICTIONS:** Control over magical secrets helped destroy dangerous cults; now info is widespread it's much harder.

**ENFORCERS:** For centuries magicians have enforced secrecy. The secret is gone, but those skilled at deadly cover-ups remain.



Be **CAPTIVATED** as secrets of the arcane are revealed in latest lecture.

Otto Mauer's Magical Bazaar  
321 Bowery & Second St  
Rare **ARTIFACTS** and essentials.

### ALEXANDER CRYSTAL SEER

Secrets of **THE FUTURE** revealed through the art of the crystal ball!

### HARRY HOUDINI

**POWERFUL:** Founder of the Society of American Magicians; runs national hotline "to track expositors and other undesirables."

**TRICKY:** Before the Great Reveal, worked to discredit those who claimed real magic, fabricating proof of fraud.

**RESOURCEFUL:** Runs NY's most selective magic shop, has vast personal library.





## Major Events

- Before* "The Great War" leads to roughly 15M dead and the same amount injured. The following flu epidemic kills nearly 100M. Grieving families turn to spiritualists and mediums; seeking to protect them, a skeptics movement attempts to prove magic as fraud. The opposite happens, resulting in "The Great Reveal"—the reality of magic made known worldwide.
- 1920* **Wall Street is bombed.** Though unproven, the public blames foreign anarchist groups active the prior year. A brief but powerful "**Red Scare**" leads to legal and cultural changes. Meanwhile, many survivors credit their health to magical protections; interest in the study of magic, already high, skyrockets. Nationwide **prohibition** of alcoholic drinks begins.
- 1921* The **first radio station** to reach the city, WJY, begins broadcasting. Prohibition turns crime into big business, as the city opens some 20,000 speakeasies. New, favorable tax laws result in a **building boom**. Gangsters like Luciano & Costello form organizations that will eventually become part of the country's first National Crime Syndicate.
- 1922* Post-war **economic uncertainties end**. Industrial activity soars, and factory jobs become commonplace. In the city, the prosperous start to spend money like water, sometimes drinking more in one night at the club than could be paid with the average yearly wage. **Cults** with hateful ideologies gain membership and popularity, entering state and national politics.
- 1923* Many popular **night-clubs open**, and Jazz music becomes the new craze. Yankee stadium opens, and the Yankees win the **World Series** against rival New York team the Giants; much of the city watches. President Harding dies in office (some claim assassination by curse), and Calvin Coolidge takes his place.
- 1924* The first Macy's Parade marches clowns, zoo animals and floats from Midtown to Harlem. Boss Murphy dies, and **Tammany political control wanes** from city-wide to just Manhattan and the Bronx. The Ford Motor Co joins the growing club of **billion dollar companies**. The US Coast Guard begins fielding WW1 destroyers and speedboats to wage war on rum runners.
- 1925* **Competition** among magic shops heats up, as many new establishments start selling herbs, tools, and ingredients. Houdini's shop moves to a fashionable Fifth Avenue spot. The **Scopes Trial** pits evolution against fundamentalism; a strong argument is made for religion based on magic, but opinions are swayed by the counter-argument that magic is just unknown science.
- 1926* The \$25K **Orteig Prize** is established, for the first pilot to fly from New York to Paris. Several attempts are made, leading to multiple deaths. **Jimmy Walker** sworn into office, ending Mayor John Hylan's term. RCA opens a wireless facsimile service, sending news photos by radio between New York and London.
- 1927* **Charles Lindbergh** successfully flies from New York to Paris, gaining instant global celebrity. The Yankees win their second world series. The Holland Tunnel opens, connecting Manhattan to Jersey City under the Hudson. **Hollywood** releases the first film with recorded sound, which also uses illusionists for special effects. New York's silent film industry can't compete.
- 1928* A subway crash occurs under Times Square, killing 18 and injuring roughly 100. The Yankees win their third world series. **Herbert Hoover** is elected President, defeating Tammany candidate Al Smith. Construction begins on the Chrysler building, part of a city-wide competition for **world's tallest skyscraper**; the Empire State Building wins in 1931.
- 1929* "**Black Tuesday**", the October 29th stock market crash, sparks the start of the Great Depression. The cause is a combination of bad debt and overconfidence, and it's completely unforeseen; later investigation shows the over-use of precognitives to predict the market led to a compounding **psychic interference** effect: predictions can't take other psychics into account.

## Editors, read this!

Your job is not to force a certain plot, but to encourage interesting ideas. **Reporters write the story; you edit.**

The facts you provide during the staff meeting are the seeds of the story, which you will help grow using details, risks, and trouble.

Details can nudge scenes in interesting directions. Leave the interpretation open, and encourage players to figure out what they mean. Details feed the players' ideas.

During interviews, stand back. You've planted seeds, now it's time to watch them grow.

Risks let you graft new ideas onto the developing story. When you introduce a risk, it reshapes the narrative and changes how reporters will act.

Trouble is risk made real. Draw from everything that came before. Don't try to pull apples from orange trees—do what makes the most sense in regards to what players have built.

The plot archetypes are here as a support, to provide a scaffolding for player ideas to lean against. Do not adhere to them; let player ideas grow around them.

Based on what players reveal, it may make sense to do something else. **Do that.** If the support no longer fits, switch to a different one, or let the new story stand on its own.

Listen to your reporters and build off their ideas. They are the writers; your job is to edit. Make tweaks to the ongoing story, but let reporters lead.

**Work together to maintain a safe environment for play.**

### **BEGIN WITH A DISCUSSION**

**Before the game starts, talk with your players regarding what kinds of stories they want to tell.**

Discuss, together, which aspects of the setting players would like to focus on—the magic, maybe? The crime, the politics, the music?

Determine, too, what aspects of the setting you'd rather not see in play. Perhaps you'd like to avoid any mention of silent film or organized crime, prefer Coney Island to Manhattan, or think mad science is boring.

*Finding out what your group wants and doesn't want is an important step in making sure everyone has fun.*

The focus of this game is on encountering and revealing issues. As a consequence, it's very easy for players to accidentally tread upon real-life personal trauma. If you haven't already, research "RPG safety tools" online and incorporate what works best.

**Discuss as a group how you intend to play, use safety tools and set boundaries, and work together to ensure everyone enjoys themselves.**



## How to run a meeting

Play starts and ends with a meeting, whether that's in the office, at a speak-easy, or somewhere in the city. Here's some notes on running one successfully.

### Staff Meeting

This brainstorming session marks the beginning of play.

Present a few facts to get things going. For first time players or small groups, stick to one plotlet. With larger or experienced groups, try selecting facts from multiple plots at once.

You don't need to use all the facts. Make things up, but try to leave them open ended: facts just happen, players interpret them.

Make certain everyone gets a chance to contribute, and that the rumors get written down. They'll be important for the investigation. If players get stuck, spur them on.

**Be flexible, and put the players first.**

### Publication Meeting

This meeting ends the play session, so try to wrap things up. Players make statements about reactions to the paper; you might do that, or else state other things that resulted from the plot. Do what fits.

One way to enhance play is to start the meeting with a relevant statement about real world history, drawing on your own knowledge or the historic parallels listed in the plot outline.

Talk briefly about how this real world situation continues or was resolved, so that players will have something to draw upon when building their own conclusions.



### SPARKING RUMORS

There are a few ways you can help players develop interesting rumors:

- 1) You can ask **what different groups think** about the same fact. What do the mob think of it? What about the actors guild? The labor organizations?
- 2) You can ask **follow-up questions**, acting as if what the player said was true. The mob think the money was stolen... who do the police think took it? Why? What did they do with it?
- 3) You can ask **about a new fact** entirely. Players might try to draw connections between this and the old fact, or they might not. Run with it.
- 4) Tell them to "make it weirder", or instruct them to "make it simpler, tone down the weirdness" if things are getting out of hand.

The purpose of this phase is to get reporters thinking critically.

A couple rumors per player should be plenty; if you run out during play, encourage players to Take Downtime and seek rumors, and let the group come up with new ones on the fly.

## Causing Trouble

When reporters roll their dice and trigger risk, it's your turn as the editor to start pushing them toward interesting places.

Once their trouble meter is full, that's an indication for you to push harder: you may preempt scenes and start with the trouble, forcing them to **Face Danger** first.

### Trouble and Pacing

Players will trigger risk and trouble scenes more often the more successful they are.

Use risk to foreshadow the main event. Send gangsters to lurk in the hallways, have suspicious strangers pass by, make the butler scoff loudly. Harass, threaten, and imply future trouble.

**If things are moving too slowly**, push harder. Drag reporters into the action elsewhere, or point them in a useful investigatory direction. Drop ideas all over during your scenes, and let players follow up on what they will.

**If things move too quickly**, manage player's trouble meters by having the same risk recur, letting players "roll trouble", or escalating multiple risks into new problems (letting players erase the old ones as necessary).

### SHIFTING FOCUS

**Risks don't always have to directly threaten the players.**

Often you'll want to use risks to foreshadow harm that could be done to people around them, to the newspaper, or to the city in general.

You'll also use risks to hint at things going on behind the scenes, letting reporters piece things together.

**When it comes to trouble, however, reporters should encounter something they can react against.** The consequences might be local or city-wide, but the reporters should be caught in the crossfire.

If thugs are threatening to break the printing press, have them try to capture reporters and make them watch. If buildings are catching fire, make certain a reporter is in the blaze.

### Useful Hardships

Economic	Mental	Physical	Social	Magical	Job
Lost Wallet!	Tired!	Twisted Ankle!	Dirty!	Exhausted!	Notes Stolen!
Flat Broke!	Shocked!	Black Eye!	Awkward!	Bewitched!	Unprepared!
In Debt!	Panicked!	Bloody Nose!	Suspicious!	Unlucky!	Lost!
No Bribes!	Angry!	Stabbed!	Banned!	Hallucinating!	Running Late!
Starving!	Disgusted!	Gut shot!	Ostracized!	Burning!	Can't Speak!
Overdressed!	Overwhelmed!	Sick!	Drunk!	Poisoned!	Biased!

Hardships apply to a scene at the editor's discretion: you may occasionally let reporters ignore a hardship that wouldn't cause difficulty in a specific situation.



## Keeping the plot moving

The investigation is driven by reporters actively doing things, building collaborative “scenes” where stuff happens. Sometimes players aren’t certain what they want to do or how they’re going to do it. It’s your job to keep the conversation going.

### Act as the Editor Character

Don’t forget the editor also exists as a character within the world, and is the person reporters work for.

Here’s a few ways you might use that:

- ◇ Have newsies, police or others pass along messages from the editor.
- ◇ Encourage reporters “call you at the office” to speak with you.
- ◇ Inform them of danger to the editor, point out consequences to the paper.
- ◇ Offer an in-character incentive for taking risks, like promotion or firing.
- ◇ Send them on a personal errand, bring the editor’s private life into it.
- ◇ Let your reputation help or hinder reporters when interacting with others.

### Talk Between Scenes

If in-character methods for moving things forward don’t work, use the time between scenes to ask players questions.

“What do you think is going on?” and “What are you looking into next?” are exactly the kind of thing an editor might ask a reporter in real life.

If you see good collaboration start to happen between people, suggest they play it out in an appropriate scene and see what happens from there.

### Push ‘em around

You may also use risk and trouble to push reporters together or pull them apart.

Confident players can assist others in role-playing when together, and being split apart can drive groups to start taking more interesting risks.

## IF ALL ELSE FAILS, “ROLL TROUBLE”!

If there’s a serious lull in the game and you don’t know how to get things moving, start calling on players to roll against their trouble meters.

If a player’s trouble meter is empty or nothing is hit, go to the next player. You can even combine multiple rolls into one delicious disaster!

Push players into action with the results.

Could be that “broken ankle!” no longer supports the player’s weight, and they need to Face Danger because the “gangsters watching” someone else have decided to go after the whole group.

Even when there’s no lull, rolling trouble can be used for inspiration. Prior risks might reoccur, escalate, or combine in strange ways.

## Including Monsters

The world reporters live in is one where magic is real, but the problems of humanity remain the same. Monsters and other supernatural beings make a fun addition, but care must be taken to ensure they don't steal the show.

### FLIGHT, NOT FIGHT

Reporters aren't police, animal control, or magical enforcers: most monsters should be beyond their capability to overcome.

If players try to fight while Facing Danger, warn them of grave hardships. Offer less deadly consequences to escape or distract the creature.

**Only let players win a fight when it won't make them focus of the news.**

### BEHIND THE MONSTER

Monsters alone naturally tend towards aftermath and incursion archetypes. You'll have to hint at forces beyond the monster to let players tell other stories.

Hinting that someone is using the monster fits well within the fiction and gives your reporters a whole new target to investigate.

Remember: monsters can be people, and vice versa.

## TOOTH & CLAW

The best way to build a monster is to draw the outline, letting reporters fill in the shape. Hint at the monster during risk scenes and build off player speculation during trouble.

### Hint at what & how using the aftermath

To Environment	Left Behind	To People
Scratched glass	Acid drops	Bites
Tooth marks	Noxious slime	Puncture Marks
Bent iron	Sulfur scent	Drained Feeling
Burning wood	Clumps of fur	Suction Marks
Clawed prints	Huge scales	Slashes and Cuts
Sinuuous trails	Charred grass	Shattered Bones

### Hint at who & why using behavior

Exploited for...	Natural instincts...	Targets chosen...
Murder: targeted victims	Hunger: drool, devouring	Gangsters: police, territory
Theft: drops loot	Protective: signs of family	Magicians: lectures, books
Distraction: runs away	Mate: second monster, gifts	Politicians: voters, reputation
Surveillance: watching	Lost: fear, startled by things	Club crowd: actors, money
Ingredients: missing parts	Nesting: collecting, build	Plutocrats: business, workers
Terror: crowds, suicidal	Youth: adoration, following	Cultists: artifacts, out-groups



## Secrets and Inspiration

So you've sent your reporters out on assignment, but you've only got the vaguest ideas about what terrible secrets they might uncover? Here's some advice.

### USING ARCHETYPES

Use the archetypes as a sort of cheat sheet. Pick and choose the bits that apply, and ignore the rest.

Introduce turning points and complications as details or using risk and trouble. Keep potential outcomes in mind as you watch reporter actions.

Archetypes can easily shift and change: Incursion leads to Aftermath, Injustice can become Cover-up, Competition turns into Exploitation. Any plot can flow into another one.

Don't try to force the story to fit a specific archetype, or worry about playing one out entirely. Instead, swap archetypes as they fit the story.

### USING EXAMPLE PLOTS

Each plot begins with a short, open-ended description, which you may choose to read aloud to players.

Depending on how the staff meeting goes you may not need all the initial facts. **Use what you want and save the rest for later.**

You can work leftover facts into your risk and trouble scenes, ignore them entirely, or hand them out while players Take Downtime to seek rumors.

Use the source connections to shake things up, introducing whatever will have the most impact. Focus on the pacing and broad outline of the adventure, but let reporters drive the details.



### DRAW FROM REAL HISTORY

Dangerous Times is a game played in and around real history. For a quick overview of the decade, see the timeline of Major Events (pg. 37).

As editor, you have the advantage of knowing what kind of trouble players will run into. Use that as an entry point into history: gangsters and federal agents, anarchists, radicals and racists.

Even a few minutes before a session spent reading up on a topic can spark inspiration. You'll be able to include real people, places, and happenings, some of which are surprisingly fantastical.

You may wish to draw attention to these things during the publication and staff meetings— "This really happened!" can add a sense of weight and reality to play.

## Running Campaigns

While the game can be played as a single session, it shines best in campaign mode. Here are some tips for making multiple games interesting.

### LET TIME PASS

While it seems natural to set the next session immediately after the last, it's often useful to skip ahead months or years in time.

This gives the changes made during the publication phase room to have big impacts, and allows factions and plots to grow and change "off screen".

### HAVE A LOT GOING ON

Playing a one-shot session places a lot of restrictions on the kind of stories you develop, because they need to wrap up quickly.

With repeat play, take advantage of the extra space. Run many plotlets at once, let the storylines spread and tangle, and work with players' guesses and analysis to tie everything together.

### KEEP A "FUTURES FILE"

Real publications pretty universally end up with files of things that aren't ready for print now, but may be in the future.

You should do the same thing. Pick a few things from each session and set them aside for future play.

Weave old contacts into trouble and risk scenes, or just set them out on the table for players to interview and build relationships with.

Keep track of debts, favors, rumors and events that happen, so you can surprise players with them later.

### Credibility & Circulation

If your group wants a little more structure to the newspaper's story, you can start tracking the publication's overall credibility and circulation.

Circulation is a measure of how many copies a paper sells, and can be used to gauge financial health. Credibility determines how much impact a paper has, and measures social influence.

When making rolls during the publication phase, track the results on the publication sheet. Remove a point of circulation when a roll turns up boring, and a point of credibility when an article turns out dubious. Add points on successes.

You can use these points as a benchmark of how the publication is faring, or optionally let players spend them on assets and social connections.

### Assets & Connections

One way to give players a sense of advancement is to reward them with assets and connections during the publication phase.

Assets and connections might be one time use or once-per issue, and can be used to modify rolls, remove hardships, or succeed at things.

These become both tools players can use, and targets which trouble can threaten.



# Archetype— Exploitation

All power requires sacrifice, but the truly evil ensure someone else pays the price. Terrible ambitions drive the destruction of lives, livelihoods, even human souls.

This is about those consumed by insatiable drives: to be rich, to be right, to hold power. It's also about those who are hurt in the process. If they're not careful, your reporters might be next.

## Turning Points

- ◇ See the power.
- ◇ Signs of exploitation and harm.
- ◇ How the harm fuels the power.
- ◇ Ways systems distort to support it.
- ◇ Seek allies to stand against it.
- ◇ Stand up and speak out.

## Complications

- ◇ It is being used to help and hurt.
- ◇ Another power has reasons to fight.
- ◇ The balance of power is used to keep worse things at bay.
- ◇ Most ignore or disbelieve the harm, even when it is shown to them.
- ◇ It has the power of law & authority.
- ◇ Too many people want what it gives.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ Destroy it, leaving a power vacuum.
- ◇ Replace it with something else.
- ◇ It digs in or grows stronger.
- ◇ Halted; must guard against it.
- ◇ Someone else claims power.
- ◇ Nothing is left to exploit.

## CONSIDER THESE

Who is being harmed? How does that fuel the powerful? How far will they go to see their goals achieved?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Supernatural signs might include ritual preparations and literal sacrifices, villains grown too powerful, exhausted resources or the restless spirits of those harmed.

In mundane matters, look towards profit and drive. Outrageous success is often built on cutting corners or causing harm. As well, those zealously motivated sometimes bypass lines of morality in their pursuit of a cause.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

The continual exploitation of human lives via unsafe working conditions, enforced labor, and outright slavery.

In the early 20th century in particular, new federal child labor laws were opposed by businesses, state legislatures, even parents.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

Those driven to exploit others will have many justifications and deflections. Expanded over multiple issues, exploitation plots can draw out the questions behind how and why this is happening.

When recurring from back-issues, you'll typically want the exploitative to use new approaches or twists, have new friends, or otherwise feel confident.

Often, the issues at hand are systemic, and dealing with one target will not fix them.

# Temper & Temperance

Funded by a secret pool of investors, public officials and wealthy businessmen, an international crime syndicate uses bribes, blackmail, and influence to ship liquor past the coast guard blockade.

The government gets serious. Funds are allocated, war ships blockade the coast, and industrial alcohols are spiked with poisons to prevent theft and consumption.

Federal agents resort to increasingly desperate and illegal tactics. Now it's come down to a secret battle between the agents and the syndicate's counter-espionage division, with both sides' lives and livelihoods on the line.

## Source Connections

When players Find a Source, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

**DOUBLE AGENT:** Has hidden loyalties, earning bribes or legal immunity.

**SUSPECTED:** Their hidden activities or loyalties are suspected by the opposition.

**REPORTING BACK:** Passes information to someone, government or syndicate.

**TROUBLED CONSCIENCE:** May soon pay the price for sticking to their morals.

**UNDER PRESSURE:** Taking risks and chances that they normally wouldn't.

**MAKE A KILLING:** The stakes are high, and there's few things they wouldn't do.

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

### Fact & Hearsay

### Risks & Trouble

Agents busted 6 clubs yesterday, destroyed the booze.  
*Prohibition agents showed up in wigs and disguises!*

Federal agents, economic threat;  
*padlocked doors*

Agents tried to make a booze bust, nobody was there.  
*Someone squealed or had their phone tapped.*

Local thugs, angry drunks;  
*sabotaged printing press*

Owney Madden has a "secret" brewery on 26th street.  
*Local cops patrol the area but arrest the wrong people.*

Police visits, police tail, harassed;  
*trumped up charges*

A bootlegger fell out an eighth floor window.  
*It wasn't an accident and it wasn't other gangsters.*

Delirious drunks, fainting hobos;  
*agents lace booze with strychnine*

More booze than usual coming into the city this year.  
*There's a sure-fire way around the coastal blockade.*

Coast guard, bribed or not;  
*A threatening boat ride.*

There's an extravagant party at the Waldorf-Astoria.  
*The person throwing it just came into a lot of money.*

Gangster attention, stares;  
*An offer you can't refuse.*



# Archetype— Incursion

Something is trying to claw its way into the city. Maybe it's a crime family grabbing new territory, a cult after membership and influence, or an other-worldly power searching for new things to feed upon.

Either way, the incursion wants something, and it needs to build a presence in the city to get it. Your reporters are about to get in the way.

## Turning Points

- ◇ Proof an incursion is happening.
- ◇ See which/why areas are targeted.
- ◇ Reveal the source of the incursion.
- ◇ The incursion spreads.
- ◇ Discover the goals which drive it.
- ◇ Learn why it must be stopped.

## Complications

- ◇ It has an unexpected ally.
- ◇ What we took as side-effects were the plan all along.
- ◇ It seeks to destroy, not to exploit.
- ◇ Factions within the incursion are working at cross purposes.
- ◇ Knowing about it gives it strength.
- ◇ It is harming itself and the city.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ It's halted, authorities are on the case.
- ◇ Now a permanent part of the city.
- ◇ Convinced to leave us alone.
- ◇ Was never a threat to begin with.
- ◇ Can only be stopped from within.
- ◇ It makes a desperate, all-out attack.

## CONSIDER THESE

What does the incursion want? Where does it come from? How does it shape its environment to fit its needs? What servants does it send forth to do its bidding?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Supernatural incursions will often show their influence in direct changes to the world. Expect strange lights or sounds, blighted landscapes, gateways to other realms.

Incursions involving gangsters, cults, and powerful plutocrats might reveal themselves through people's behavior: neighborhoods changing, shops being shuttered, families fearful or forced out.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

The KKK, literally an evil cult, drastically increased activity in this era.

The Red Scare, when authorities feared political dissent would lead to revolution.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

Incursions should start small and get more severe as time progresses. During publication, they provide many opportunities to reshape the city's political, magical, and physical landscape.

Incursions spread over multiple issues have more time for subtle moves and boundary testing.

When reusing an incursion from one of your back issues, have it come back much bigger than before.

# The Ruins of Dreamland

Shortest-lived and most spectacular of Coney Island’s three parks, Dreamland died in a fire on May 27th, 1911. The great lagoon boiled dry, the grand ball-room burned to ash, and only twisted metal hunks remain of its roller-coasters.

The fire is said to have sparked during renovation of “Hell Gate”, a boat ride through a realm of subterranean horrors. Miraculously nobody died; even the 60 premature infants on display in incubators were rescued by their nurses.

Eleven years later, a new story breaks...

## Source Details

When players Find a Source, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

- THE FIRE:** Connected to the fire somehow: saw it, set it, fought it, hurt by it.

**EX-EMPLOYEE:** Used to work at Dreamland in some capacity.

**PROFITEER:** Making money somehow; selling the ruins, hiding a business in them.
- THERE THAT DAY:** They were there; that day still affects them.

**DODGING BLAME:** They don’t want this situation to damage their reputation.

**TOO CURIOUS:** Very, very interested in this story, for reasons unknown.

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

Fact & Hearsay	Risks & Trouble
Free Coney Island trip for orphans may be canceled. <i>Someone doesn’t want kids at Coney Island.</i>	Advertiser loss, political threats; <i>newspaper vandalized</i>
City plans to buy the ruined land for \$1.2M. <i>Possibly more than the park was worth.</i>	Watchers, followers, threats; <i>physical violence</i>
Mediums are hearing panicked, animalistic noises. <i>Occurrences are growing in power and frequency.</i>	Animal prints, burnt smell; <i>fiery ghosts of circus animals</i>
Firefighters are called out to non-existent blazes. <i>It has to be a prank; only kids report them.</i>	Popcorn smell, floating sparks; <i>rooms catch fire, then buildings</i>
Brooklyn’s had a lot more fires than usual this year. <i>There’s a pattern involved, but no proof of arson.</i>	Ash drifts, unnerving presence; <i>something terrible is here.</i>
The remaining parks are having their best year yet. <i>There’s a strange excitement driving the craze.</i>	Flickering images, carnival music; <i>it is coming for them.</i>



# Archetype— Cover-up

There are truths which threaten the powerful, secrets which have the strength to bring whole terrible edifices down. At its core, the secret is always the same: harm is being done.

The cover-up excuses or buries the harm, going to great lengths to keep things hidden. Your reporters are about to unearth the truth.

## Turning Points

- ◇ Find signs of harm.
- ◇ Identify what stands behind it.
- ◇ Reveal how it was hidden.
- ◇ The suppressor strikes out.
- ◇ The complicit stand up or fall back.
- ◇ Lies war with the truth.

## Complications

- ◇ It holds power and many allies.
- ◇ It has weathered this storm before and come out stronger.
- ◇ It silences or discredits the harmed.
- ◇ There is a deeper secret.
- ◇ The harm is even more widespread.
- ◇ Industries hinge upon it, they claim it is “an unfortunate necessity”.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ Truth is known, but little changes.
- ◇ Someone powerful steps in, makes problems go away.
- ◇ The truth is suppressed.
- ◇ Authorities step in.
- ◇ Controversy, but no conclusion.
- ◇ Truth destroys the lie and the liar.

## CONSIDER THESE

What is being hidden, and how? Who knows and does nothing, who is silenced?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Supernatural cover-ups might use magic to distort or hide the truth, perhaps rendering secrets literally unspeakable or using illusions as cover. In this case, the magic itself is a sign.

More mundane cover-ups could be as simple as paying off grieving widows or encouraging a culture where harm is normalized. The after-effects of trauma may be blatant injuries or subtle behaviors.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

Coal mines, meat packing, textiles and other industries hide injuries and child labor from the public.

Fraudulent “Patent medicine” claimed to heal, caused death and harm instead.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

Cover-ups tend to be broad-ranging affairs; even if there’s a central antagonist, others who knew will almost certainly be involved.

Larger cover-ups might take multiple issues for all the secrets and all the people involved to be revealed.

Reusing it might mean letting the secret persist, but it could also involve revealing others who were complicit. Even with the secret exposed, they’ll share ties of loyalty and betrayal with each-other.

# Breaking the Pledge

Revealing magic broke a centuries-long secret, and adjusting to the new situation has not always been easy. There are many, especially among the older crowd, who much preferred the old ways of doing things.

Sharing power, after all, means losing an advantage, and not everyone can be trusted to use their new skills responsibly. Covering up a truth this widespread would be impossible, of course...

Then again, isn't magic about doing the impossible?

## Source Details

When players Find a Source, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

**THE BOOKS:** Connected to rare books somehow: selling, collecting, burning.

**FORMER STUDENT:** Studied under someone important.

**BYSTANDER:** Harmed by something that happened, or witness to it.

**VENDETTA:** Has a personal reason for their actions; seeking revenge.

**IN THE ACT:** Participated in something: old magic shows, new tutorials, crime.

**KNOWS SECRETS:** Might share their knowledge, might jealously guard it.

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

Fact & Hearsay	Risks & Trouble
Someone is buying up all the magic books. <i>Even books that aren't for sale go missing.</i>	Pickpockets, thefts; <i>reporter's notes are stolen</i>
The most popular magic class has been canceled. <i>The instructor hasn't been seen for weeks.</i>	Forgetting something, feeling lost; <i>people disappear</i>
Magic tutorials keep raising their prices. <i>An outside force is operating on instructors.</i>	Social pressure, told to back off; <i>bad luck, falling objects</i>
Today's class was interrupted mid-demonstration. <i>Rumor states there was a heated disagreement.</i>	Magician's warning, arguments; <i>magical battles in the streets</i>
One of the people who revealed magic just died. <i>Was found in a locked room with no visible injuries.</i>	Planted evidence, false leads; <i>sacrifices are being gathered.</i>
The magician's guild is meeting frequently. <i>A faction within the guild wants to quit.</i>	Chaotic energy, strange signs; <i>a ritual is being planned.</i>



# Archetype— Competition

Competition may be friendly, like sporting events or contests, a deadly conflict such as a war, or the abstract violence of business and economic competition. By nature, however, competition involves winners and losers.

While they watch from the sidelines, your reporters must take care they're not drawn into the fray themselves.

## Turning Points

- ◇ Establish what the stakes are.
- ◇ The competitors prepare.
- ◇ Initial acts and counter-actions.
- ◇ Someone falls behind.
- ◇ Someone takes the lead.
- ◇ The competition ends... for now.

## Complications

- ◇ A new challenger appears.
- ◇ Someone is breaking the rules.
- ◇ The stakes grow higher, more are drawn to compete.
- ◇ Lines are crossed; damage escalates.
- ◇ Friendly competition turns heated, or vice-versa.
- ◇ Unexpected event changes everything.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ Someone walks away with the prize.
- ◇ Balance is achieved; stalemate.
- ◇ Something unforeseen disrupts it.
- ◇ The outcome goes beyond what was expected; widespread impacts.
- ◇ It was rigged, or doesn't count.
- ◇ Everyone fails; competition goes on.

## CONSIDER THESE

What does winning mean? Is the competition fair? Who has the advantage? Who has the most to lose?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

Friendly competitions tend to announce themselves; heated conflicts where the stakes are high can start from small beginnings.

Often, the opportunity to "win" only presents itself because the situation is right for it. Look towards what's at stake to determine how things begin, and watch how the stakes change to see how others react.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

The Orteig Prize, \$25,000 to the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris. Six died before Charles Lindbergh's 1927 win.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Pulitzer and Hearst ran newspapers that competed over staff and sensational stories.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

Competitions can involve two people or two million people, as long as there is something to be won.

A competition spread over multiple issues can focus in on shifts in competitor rankings and tactics; shorter competitions tend to be more straightforward.

Reusing a competition can mean drawing from the same competitors over different stakes, or from different competitors over the same stakes. Draw on similarities and existing character bonds to make it resonate with past sessions.

# Rush to the Beyond

No scientific rivalry of the era quite matches that between Tesla and Edison. For decades they'd competed over inventions, with Edison holding nearly three times as many patents as Tesla. Now in the twilight of their lives, they compete over one final invention...

Edison claims that his improved radio will reach past the veil of death, allowing contact with scientists of the afterlife. Tesla, not to be outdone, argues his machine will soon put him into contact with beings from other planets.

As their rivalry escalates, neither considers the consequences of success.

## Source Details

When players Find a Source, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

**THE MACHINES:** Involved with the inventions, assistant, financier, thief, etc.

**HEARD SOMETHING:** Maybe on the street, maybe while testing inventions.

**FROM FAR AWAY:** Not a local, but from somewhere further. Possibly much further.

**MAD SCIENCE:** Scarily enthusiastic about beams, lightning, lasers or radio-waves.

**RADIO STAR:** Familiar with the science of radio, sings, acts or hosts a radio show.

**LAST SHOT:** They're planning their last, desperate attempt at something.

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

### Fact & Hearsay

### Risks & Trouble

Edison just received a rather large sum of money.  
*Every investor in town is awaiting what comes next.*

Wealthy and powerful investors;  
*Asking for the inside scoop.*

"Help Wanted" signs have been posted in both labs.  
*Can they afford more, or are assistants leaving?*

Henchmen, recruiters;  
*Everyone wants good publicity.*

Edison called and claimed Tesla's device is dangerous.  
*Tesla called to claim the same about Edison's.*

Bribes, paid to spread rumors;  
*An offer you shouldn't refuse.*

Someone has broken into an inventor's lab.  
*Suspicion suggests it was on behalf of a rival.*

Thieves, businessmen, or both;  
*Strange inventions for sale...*

Tesla claims his device has already made contact.  
*Strange noises, speech-like, emanate from his lab.*

Weird whispers, nonsense voices;  
*Lights in the sky.*

Radios around the city are malfunctioning.  
*Some pop, break, burn out— others won't turn off.*

Static shocks, electricity;  
*Lightning without thunder or rain.*



# Archetype—Aftermath

There are times when the unexpected suffering of others shocks the world, and the only thing humanity can do is watch. Some are huge disasters, harming millions and leaving the rest to pick up the pieces, while others are personal, leaving only a few irrevocably changed. The tragedy demands that reporters document the harm and find ways to move forward with empathy.

## Turning Points

- ◇ Disaster strikes.
- ◇ Discover the cause.
- ◇ Could it have been prevented?
- ◇ Can anyone be blamed?
- ◇ See the world react.
- ◇ Bring closure and healing.

## Complications

- ◇ It wasn't an accident.
- ◇ It could happen again soon.
- ◇ Every sign says it was impossible.
- ◇ Someone took advantage of it.
- ◇ People who knew did nothing; negligence or conspiracy?
- ◇ It's a precursor to a larger problem.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ Ongoing problems persist, those harmed continue to suffer.
- ◇ Support and aid is offered.
- ◇ Attempts to stop the root cause.
- ◇ Major changes prevent it recurring.
- ◇ Laws are passed because of it.
- ◇ It happens again.

## CONSIDER THESE

Why did it happen? Why now? How far does it reach? How does it tie people together? How does it pull them apart?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

While the cause may be supernatural or mundane, most will react in similar ways: intense feelings, coming together, seeking reason and meaning.

Once the shock has died down, many will channel their emotions into action. Sometimes action is unified, but often different groups will present different solutions.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

1920 Wall Street Bombing, which had a similar social impact to 9/11.

1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire; 146 dead, resulted in reform of labor laws and a push towards unionization.

1904 General Slocum shipwreck, 1021 drowned on way to a church family picnic; changed attitudes toward women swimming.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

**Be careful with this plot.** Before springing a disaster on your group, make certain everyone knows where the boundaries are.

Provided boundaries are set and safety tools used, however, the aftermath can shake up the current situation or make an excellent follow-up plot.

The aftermath is most effective when it pulls in elements and characters of prior games, to cause disaster or be affected by it.

# In the Underground

Three competing companies operate trains, with some lines shared between them. Hidden entrances connect certain buildings to the subway, mostly hotels and businesses.

Construction on a subway connection between Staten Island and Brooklyn began in 1923 and was abandoned in 1925. Partially-completed tunnels exist, with access points underneath Owl’s Head Park in Brooklyn and behind a false wall at the Saint George terminal, Staten Island.

With so much hidden, it’s possible there’s more we don’t know...

## Source Details

When players Find a Source, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>THE SUBWAY:</b> Train conductor, ticket-taker, traveler, or otherwise connected. | <b>WALLED OFF:</b> Is trapped or feels distant, keeping up defenses, hiding something. |
| <b>BURIED SECRETS:</b> Has kept something buried, literally or metaphorically.      | <b>KEEPING CALM:</b> Working to stay calm, or keep others calm, despite the disaster.  |
| <b>LOST:</b> They’ve lost something or someone important, or are lost themselves.   | <b>PANICKED:</b> Frightened, possibly with good reason. Making bad decisions.          |

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

Fact & Hearsay	Risks & Trouble
A train just arrived missing its last car. <i>They’re sending crews to walk the line.</i>	Police lines, barriers and bounds; <i>told to keep out</i>
The car had room for 160 seated, almost 400 standing. <i>No sign of the car or the passengers.</i>	Unhelpful officials, obstruction; <i>mayor wants to avoid a panic</i>
Mediums in the city have been knocked unconscious. <i>It could be related. Shock, or some other backlash?</i>	Vagrant prophets, crazy predictions; <i>bad luck, falling objects</i>
Pink slime is found in puddles in nearby stations. <i>Nobody is willing to touch it.</i>	Pink slime, gross puddles; <i>disturbing energy</i>
Other subway goers claim to have seen something. <i>A flash of light, a voice, a shape...</i>	Flashes of light, voices and shapes; <i>there’s something strange...</i>
Eight hours later, there’s still no sign of the missing. <i>Is this an attack? A subway car can’t just disappear.</i>	Glowing silhouettes, creatures; <i>ghosts and spirits manifest.</i>



# Archetype— Injustice

The true measure of a society is not in how well it treats its members, but in who and how well it treats those it excludes. Often they are scapegoated, marked as outsider, treated as dangerous or robbed of essential human rights.

Your reporters must bolster the voices of those who go silenced or unheard.

## Turning Points

- ◇ See the marginalization.
- ◇ Examine all harm and injustice.
- ◇ Show the justifications are false.
- ◇ Promote understanding.
- ◇ Counter and discredit reactions.
- ◇ Push for change.

## Complications

- ◇ The injustice is enshrined in law.
- ◇ It is considered natural or essential.
- ◇ Groups rely economically on it.
- ◇ Some of the marginalized support it.
- ◇ Respected “experts” endorse it.
- ◇ The harmed are cast as threatening.

## Possible Outcomes

- ◇ Legal change, unsupported by the society at large.
- ◇ Progress is made, some are changed.
- ◇ Groups gather in support & opposition
- ◇ Backlash, reactions and regression.
- ◇ Cover-ups, claims it never happened.
- ◇ Change comes from outside: other institutions, nations, or authorities.

## CONSIDER THESE

What wrongs does society accept? Who is made scapegoat? Who is hated or feared? Is harm being done? Are the reactions proportionate?

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

The methods of injustice may be mundane or supernatural, but one key sign is exclusion, marking as “other”, lesser, inhuman. Another sign is power: who has it, and who does not.

Supernatural plots can make the “dehumanization” literal.

## HISTORIC PARALLELS

At the turn of the 20th century, the US begins to instate immigration policy explicitly designed to control the racial makeup of the country.

The 1920s saw the rise of eugenics in the US, and the forced sterilization of people deemed “socially inadequate”.

In 1920, the woman’s suffrage movement succeeded in getting women, previously excluded, the right to vote.

## NOTES & PROGRESSION

Injustices are seldom resolved quickly. Even issues like child labor required hundreds of years of reform effort before they were regulated.

When spread over multiple issues, lack of progress can be disheartening to reporters. Emphasize the ways they’ve improved individual lives, even as the broader problems remain.

# The Truly Monstrous

The value placed on pretty baubles seems to have no limit. In a time when an honest day's work might pay \$5, jeweled necklaces and strands of pearls sell for as much as a million. No surprise, then, that these decorations make such tempting targets for a *dishonest* day's work.

Even birds will collect things that shine, but what use have jewels beyond their beauty?

What motivation could drive even something inhuman to steal?

## Source Details

When players **Find a Source**, add one of these details or make your own as appropriate.

- MONSTER:** Connected to the monster or is one, literally or metaphorically.

**PROTECTIVE:** Wants to protect something or someone: job, family, monster.

**COLLECTOR:** Gathers and collects something: gossip, valuables, assets, friends.
- NOT WELCOME:** Unwanted, or doesn't want others to be here.

**BELONGING:** Someone or something that belongs; cherished, loved, owned.

**WANTS SOMETHING:** Jealous, greedy, or just in need or striving for better.

## Story Ingredients

Adapt and use one or more of the following to make life interesting for reporters.

Fact & Hearsay	Risks & Trouble
A truck crashed into a streetcar downtown. <i>The wreckage included empty bottles and a bent cage.</i>	Strange drinks, howling noises; <i>Belligerent drunks.</i>
A wild animal interrupted a mugging last night. <i>The victim, hysterical, claims it was as big as a man.</i>	Pickpockets, cut-purses; <i>Muggings and hold-ups.</i>
A man was found unconscious, surrounded by feathers. <i>The last thing he recalls is taking a drink...</i>	Rioting crowds, broken bottles; <i>Drunks acting beastly.</i>
A dozen jewelry stores were broken into last night. <i>They're too spread out, must have been multiple crooks.</i>	Scattered jewelry, trails of blood; <i>City-wide panic &amp; looting.</i>
Paw prints & broken chains are found in Central Park. <i>Maybe an escape from Central Park Zoo...</i>	Angry officials, animal control; <i>A monster is loose in the city...</i>
Piles of clothing are turning up in odd places. <i>As if someone abandoned complete outfits.</i>	Lost memories, confused crowds; <i>Vigilantes roam the streets...</i>

Archetype: Injustice



## Reference Materials

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A thriving public domain provides us with a shared inheritance, the right to learn from and build upon the things our ancestors made. Some archives put up barriers to access, such as payment or university affiliation, while others rely on public support to stay free and open to all. I've listed a few of the latter.

Please, protect and support the public domain.

### PUBLIC ARCHIVES

The Internet Archive, [archive.org](http://archive.org)

Digital Public Library of America, [dp.la](http://dp.la)

New York Public Library, [nypl.org](http://nypl.org)

Library of Congress, [loc.gov](http://loc.gov)

Newspapers, [chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)

National Archives, [nara.gov](http://nara.gov)

JSTOR Open Access, [jstor.org/open](http://jstor.org/open)

IRS Statistics, [irs.gov/statistics](http://irs.gov/statistics)

### MUSIC

The Internet Archive and the Library of Congress have dedicated collections of period recordings.

The Library of Congress jukebox at [www.loc.gov/jukebox/](http://www.loc.gov/jukebox/) can be used to play instrumental recordings from the appropriate decade. Jazz albums and ragtime make especially good background music.

### ART AND ADVERTS

For character artwork, the Sears catalog found on [archive.org](http://archive.org) makes an excellent source. For period adverts and illustrations, pulp magazines and journals like *Colliers* or *McCalls* are also very useful.

For posters and period photographs, [dp.la](http://dp.la) provides an excellent meta-search of multiple archives.

### REFERENCE BOOKS

*Supreme City*;

Donald L. Miller

*One Summer: America, 1927*;

Bill Bryson

*The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s*;

Lynn Dumenil

*The Encyclopedia of New York City*;

Kenneth T. Jackson

*Greater Gotham: 1898-1919*;

Mike Wallace

*Summing: Sexual & Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940*;

Chad Heap

*Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*;

Saidiya Hartman

*When Brooklyn Was Queer: A History*;

Hugh Ryan

### THEMATIC FICTION

Film:

*His Girl Friday* (1940),

*Citizen Kane* (1941),

*The Untouchables* (1987),

*The Prestige* (2006)

Novels:

*The Great Gatsby*; F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Jazz*; Toni Morrison

*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*; Anita Loos

*Babbitt*; Sinclair Lewis

*Z*; Therese Anne Fowler

*The Diviners*; Libba Bray

### CONTEMPORARY

*The Fourth Estate* is a 1920s trade magazine for newspaper makers.

*City Editor* details Stanley Walker's editorship of the NY Herald Tribune.

*Dining In New York*, James Rian's 1930s restaurant guidebook.

# Dangerous Times Publication Sheet

Publication:

Issue #:

## CIRCULATION

Track how many issues the publications sells. Start with 2 + 1 per reporter. If it falls to zero, the publication closes.

10,000  
readers/point

## CREDIBILITY

Track how credible the publication is. Start at 5. If it falls to zero, have it cause trouble in the fiction.



## ARTICLES

Have players build articles according to the publication rules, then record the headlines below. Save this sheet for future reference.

Headlines

## NOTES

Record any critical changes to the world or the newspaper below. This can include debts the players accrue, assets the paper gains or loses, or similar details.



# Dangerous Times Article Sheet

*Reporter:* \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTES

Record notes on scrap paper or in the space below. Mark verified facts with a check mark.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

## ARTICLE

Assemble an article using the rumors and facts gathered during the investigation. Attempt to answer the traditional questions of “who, what, where, when, why & how”. You must provide at least half of these to publish, but one fact may answer multiple questions.

*Headline:* \_\_\_\_\_

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Article



*Persons who never saw a newspaper office often wonder whether a paper is produced by machinery or some sort of magic. Young people, puzzling over their futures, seek to learn whether newspaper work is worth doing.*

*It is, to me, the greatest business on earth.*

---

—“City Editor”, S. Walker



# Random Names

Below is a list of names sourced at random from the 1930 NYC census. Roll to pick a row, again for a column, then select a name.

	Agnes Albert Alexander	Alfredo Angelo Anna	Anthony Arsenio Bessie	Chalita Charles Cirilo	Clara Constancio Cora	David Delia Dolores	Given Names
	Dorothy Edgar Edith	Edna Edward Elenor	Elijah Elizane Ella	Ervin Estelle Eugene	Evelyn Fakanaza Ferdal	Fernando Frederic George Jr.	
	Gertrude Gozo Harold	Harry Hazel Henry	Herman Isador Isais	Jacinto James Joe	John Julia Julius 3rd	Kailach Kuni Laila	
	Lawrence Lee Leonardo	Lillian Louis Low	Lucy Martin Mary	Matilda Maude May	Meta Michael Misao	Murayi Nao Nathan	
	Nick Norman Olive	Ontero Ophelia Pearl	Philip Porter Ramnon	Rita Robert Rudolph	Russel Sadie Sam	Samuel Sang Sarah	
	Shigeshi Siano Sidney	Solomon Sue Theodore	Thomas Tillie Ton	Vera Vincenti Viola	Virginia Wae Wes	William Yahaba Zora	
							Surnames
	Albury Alcazar Amato Antolini	Arcabos Ayers Baclig Barter	Basco Bean Beauvair Beckford	Bell Bennett Bisignano Blozichsk	Blum Bremmer Briston Brown	Brusher Burt Cageros Caire	
	Carlozzi Carriger Chang Chawdry	Clements Cohen Coleman Crump	Dean Defillippo Deibler Desena	Donato Egnuss Ehrlich Eichmann	Eldridge Elliot Engeler Farragut	Federio Fedyna Flanagan Ford	
	Frazier Freidman Gartner Gonzales	Gordon Gross Haas Hale	Hamilton Hansen Hennis Hines	Hirai Hirchert Holans Hong	Hopkins Inouye Jackson Jannett	Johnson Johnson Kawamura Kawasoye	
	Keenan Kim Knudsen Kunn	Kwok Lail Lane Lee	Levine Lewis Lobo Lopez	Luster Makarevich Mannigs Marcus	Marinoff Mashelle McNeil Mires	Morikawa Morimoto Moy Nakao	
	November Nozaki Osaka Partyka	Pecore Pierhata Pierro Plevin	Prado Rebosa Renios Richarson	Roberts Ronca Sakurai Schwartz	Segui Sherman Shiro Silverstein	Simmonds Sirapuka Sitgraves Sjursen	
	Smith Song Spitatevitz Squires	Stead Stewart Sundstrom Surbato	Takaki Theophilus Tholson Tong	Tooth Turner Vadala Venable	Wade Ward Wood Wong	Young Yupai Zambardi Zelazny	