ARKHAM NOIR

CASE FILE #1 "The Witch Cult Murders"
Yves Tourigny
Number of players: 1
Playing time: 30 minutes
Ages: 14 and up

INTRODUCTION

Walpurgis Night, May's Eve, is always a nightmare in witch-haunted Arkham. There are bad doings, and a child or two frequently goes missing. This year, Miskatonic University students engaged in occult studies have been turning up dead. Arkham Police, in deference to your unusual expertise, have asked for your help to get to the root of the matter. Time is of the essence: after Walpurgis Night the trail will grow cold and the culprits will retreat to the shadows until the next Witches' Sabbat, when the next cycle of deaths will begin. As private investigator Howard Lovecraft, you will investigate events based on the stories "The Dreams in the Witch House" (1933), "The Thing on the Doorstep" (1933) and "The Unnamable" (1923).

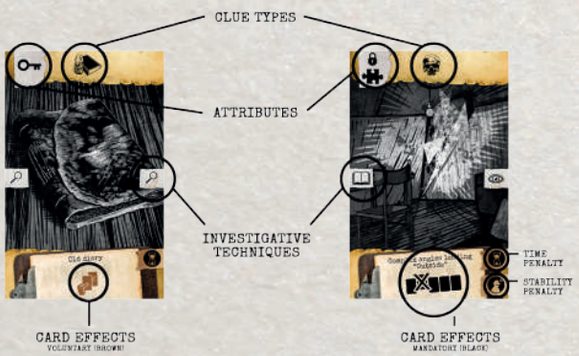
OBJECTIVE

Score 5 different types of Clue cards with the puzzle attribute before the game ends.

COMPONENTS

50 Clue cards
6 Victim cards
4 Reference cards
1 Professional Contact card
3 Player Aid cards

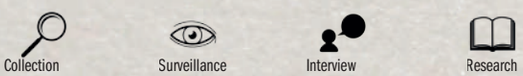
CLUE CARDS



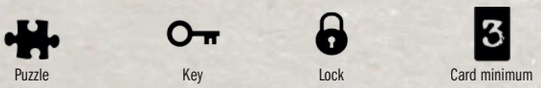
CLUE TYPES



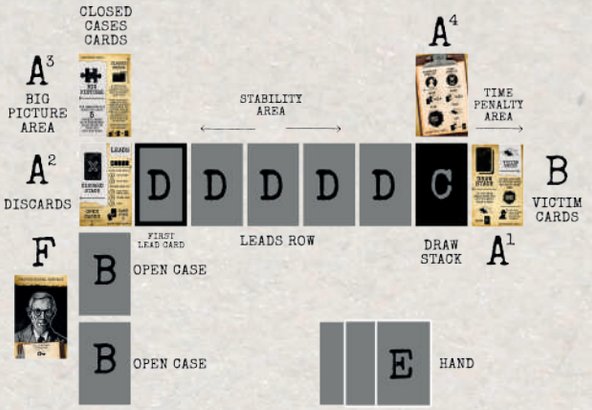
INVESTIGATIVE TECHNIQUES



ATTRIBUTES



SETUP



A. Place the four Reference cards on the playing area, as pictured. Use the sides without an asterisk (*) for a standard difficulty game.
B. Shuffle the Victim cards. Return one to the box, unseen, and place the others in a face-down stack to the right of Reference card 1. Draw two Victim cards and place them face up below Reference card 2. These are your open cases.
C. Shuffle the Clue cards. Place them in a face-down stack to the left of Reference card 1. This is the draw stack.
D. Draw 5 Clue cards and place them face up, from right to left, in the five spaces to the left of the draw stack. This forms the Leads row. The first card on the left of the main row will now be referred to as the First lead card.
E. Draw 3 Clue cards and hold them face up. This is your hand.
F. Place the Professional Contact card to the left of your open cases. If you have more than one Professional Contact card (from other cases in this series), you can choose any of them to play this case.

GAME PLAY

The game is played over a series of turns until one of the three game-ending conditions is met (see GAME END).

One turn consists of 2 phases:

1. Action Phase: You must take the First lead card and perform one of the five actions, which are described in detail in the following section.

2. Maintenance Phase: Perform all four end-of-turn maintenance actions and check the three game-ending conditions.

1. ACTION PHASE

a. Take the First lead card in hand

Take the First lead card and add it to your hand. Your hand size is limited to 3 cards. If you ever have more than 3 cards in hand, you must immediately discard until you have only 3 cards left.

DISCARDING CLUE CARDS / TIME PENALTY

Whenever you discard a Clue card for any reason, put it in the Time penalty area if it has the icon. Otherwise, put it in the discard area.

a. Play the First lead card to an open case

Take the First lead card and play it to an open case. Each open case starts with a Victim card and forms its own line of investigation, with Clue cards added to the right of previously-played cards.

You can play the Clue card to an open case if the investigative icon on the left edge of the card matches one of the icons on the right edge of the last card in the line of investigation. The Clue cards with the ANY icon can be played in any open case and can be combined with any other research method.

LOCKS, KEYS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Some Clue cards have a lock or card minimum attribute on their top left edge. In order to play these cards, the open case must meet the additional requirements described below:

- To play a Clue card with the attribute to an open case, there must be a Clue card with the attribute already in that line of investigation. Each card allows you to play one card. The cards do not have to be played consecutively.

- To play a Clue card with the 3 attribute to an open case, there must be at least that many Clue cards already in that line of investigation.



MENTAL STRAIN RULE

Long investigations are draining. Each Clue card played to an open case after the seventh (which lines up with the Reference card 1) requires a Stability check before you resolve that card's printed effect(s).

STABILITY CHECK

To perform the Stability check, draw the top card of the draw stack. If the card has the icon, place it in your Stability penalty area. Otherwise, discard the card (see DISCARDING CLUE CARDS).

CARD EFFECTS

As soon as a Clue card is played to an open case, you must resolve the card effects printed at the bottom of the card, in order from left to right. These effects are described in detail in the card effects reference (black effects are mandatory and brown effects are optional).

c. Discard the First lead card and play a card from your hand to an open case

Discard the First lead card (see DISCARDING CLUE CARDS) and play a Clue card from your hand, using the same rules described previously.

d. Discard the First lead card and close an open case

Discard the First lead card (see DISCARDING CLUE CARDS) and close one of your open cases.

An open case can be closed if its line of investigation consists of at least five different types of Clue cards. The Victim card is not a Clue card.

You can score any Clue cards with the attribute in that case if, when these are removed, there are still at least 5 different types of Clue cards remaining in the case. Place the scored Clue cards in the Big picture area, and all other cards from the closed case in your Closed cases area (above Reference card 3).



If you have no more open cases, reshuffle all cards in the discard and Time penalty areas into the draw stack, then draw a new Victim card.

STABILITY BONUS

If you close a case which contains all 6 types of Clue cards (before scoring the ✚ cards), you may draw one card from the Stability penalty area.

e. Discard the First lead card and pass

Discard the First lead card (see DISCARDING CLUE CARDS) and proceed to the maintenance phase immediately.

2. MAINTENANCE PHASE

Before starting your next turn, you must perform each of these steps in the following order:

a. Check victory condition

If you have five or more ✚ Clue cards of different types in your Big picture area, you win. Otherwise, continue playing.

b. Check Stability penalty area

If the number of cards in your Stability penalty area is equal to or greater than 5, you lose.

c. Check Time penalty area

If the number of cards in your Time penalty area is equal to or greater than 5, you must:

- Draw a new Victim card and start a new open case below the others. If there are no Victim cards when you must draw one, you lose.
- Place all cards currently in the Time penalty area in the discard area.

d. Refill Leads row

Move all the Clue cards in the Leads row to the left, closing any gaps. Draw cards from the draw stack to fill the empty spaces in the Leads row, from left to right.

RUNNING OUT OF LEADS

At any point during the game, if you must draw a card from the draw stack but find it empty, you must:

- Draw a new Victim card and start a new open case below the others. If there are no Victim cards when you must draw one, you lose.
- Take all cards from the discard area, shuffle them, and form a new draw stack with those cards.
- Draw the necessary card(s) and continue with your turn.

PROFESSIONAL CONTACT

At any time during the game, as a free action, you can use the card effect listed on either side of your contact. Remove the card from the game once used.

- **Side 1: Key.** Play a Clue card with the 🔒 attribute as if you had a card with the 🔑 attribute in that open case.
- **Side 2: Exchange.** Exchange a card from your hand with a card from the Time penalty area or the Stability penalty area.



GAME END

The game ends immediately when any of the following conditions is met:

1. The number of ✚ Clue cards of different types in your Big picture area is at least 5 during your maintenance phase. You win.
2. The number of Clue cards in your Stability penalty area is equal to (or greater than) 5 during your maintenance phase. You lose.
3. There are no Victim cards remaining but you must draw one. You lose.

GAME SETTINGS

These are settings that you can change to adjust the difficulty level of the game. Each of the settings can be changed independently of the others. The rules assume the default setting for each of these options. Adjust the rules to reflect the new settings when playing.

OPTION 1: Victory condition
Adjust by using the reverse of the Reference card 3 during setup.

- 5 different ✚ Clue card types (Default and easy)
- 6 different ✚ Clue card types (Difficult)

OPTION 2: Number of Victim cards
Adjust during setup, step B.

- 4 Victim cards (difficult)
- 5 Victim cards (default)
- 6 Victim cards (easy)

OPTION 3: Stability and Time limits
Adjust by using the reverse of the Reference card 4 during setup.

- Limits of 5 (default and difficult)
- Limits of 6 (easy)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This game owes a large intellectual debt to Howard Phillips Lovecraft, a close reading of whose short stories clearly inspired this case, and a small debt to other game designers who have tackled the same subject matter differently, including Charlie Krank (Mythos CCG, 1996) and Robin D. Laws and Kenneth Hite (Trail of Cthulhu RPG, 2008). Many private investigators have playtested the game and helped guide its development. These include Dominick Lauzon, Jean Rivière, Sean Ross, Graeme Jahns, Jasen Robillard, Louis-Nicolas Dozois, Thomas Girard, Stéphane Gerard, Mike Young, Martin Ethier, Gaëtan Beaujannot, and others.

Ludonova wants to thank Paco Cantarero, David Ferrero and Antonio Varela for their collaboration during the playtesting.

CREDITS

Game idea: Yves Tourigny
Illustrations: Yves Tourigny
Graphic design and layout: David Prieto
Rules: Juan Luque y Rafael Sáiz
Development: Juan Luque y Rafael Sáiz

Ludonova SL· San Pablo 22 · Córdoba
www.ludonova.com
© Ludonova 2017

CARD EFFECTS REFERENCE

EFFECT	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL	TYPE
	Take 1 card from Leads Row	9	Voluntary
	Take 1 card from discard area	4	Voluntary
	Take 1 card from Closed Cases	2	Voluntary
	Take 1 card from Stability Penalty	2	Voluntary
	Take 1 card from Time Penalty	4	Voluntary
	Search Draw Stack for 1 card	2	Voluntary
	Shuffle discards into Draw Stack	2	Voluntary
	Discard 1 card from Hand	3	Mandatory
	Discard 1 card from Leads Row	5	Mandatory
	Perform a Stability Check	19	Mandatory