

ACT III – THE APOCALYPSE

APOCALYPSE MOOD

HOPEFUL BEATS

- You catch sight of a mother nursing a newborn, clearly born since the apocalypse began.
- You find an apple in your pocket that you remember putting there only now that you see it again. It's still good, crisp and sweet.
- A young woman passing in the other direction looks up into your eyes and must see the depth of the despair that haunts you, because she reaches out suddenly, takes your hand, and says simply, "It's going to be OK." Before smiling ever so briefly and moving on before you can say anything.
- You can see a chicken cross the road. You look again: Yes. A chicken, a road. You laugh out loud.

SINISTER BEATS

- You run your hands through your hair, and they come away dusted with the infernal ash that blankets the whole world, an inescapable reminder of everything horrible, your whole universe crashing down around you.
- You come around a corner, and a desperate man, unshaven for a month, hair unkempt, points a trembling knife at your chest and demands any food you have on you. But then his knife falls out of his hand, and he runs away from you, sobbing.
- You walk through a stinking cloud, the smell of sulfur catching in your throat and making you gag.
- You're jarred from slumber into terrified wakefulness by a crack of thunder. Your heart pounds. It will probably be an hour before you can find the realm of sleep again.

APOCALYPSE SPINE

SEQUENCE 1: THE APOCALYPSE BEGINS

SEQUENCE 2: REVELATION OF AZATHOTH

SEQUENCE 3: SCENES FROM THE APOCALYPSE

SEQUENCE 4: JOURNEY TO SAVANNAH – THE EYE OF THE STORM

FINALE: RETURN TO JOY GROVE

EPILOGUE

REVELATION LIST – NPCs

EDGAR JOB

REFERENCE – STABILITY LOSS IN THE APOCALYPSE

- Roughly speaking, stability loss during each sequence (including the Return to Joy Grove finale) is capped at 6 points.
- The exception is *Sequence 3: Scenes from the Apocalypse*, where stability loss in each scene is capped normally.
 - *Note:* They can regain Stability during these scenes, since many of them involve interacting with Sources of Stability.
- There will be A LOT of stimuli forcing the PCs to make Stability checks. Don't be afraid to hammer them every single time until they've capped out for a particular sequence.
- Stability spends and Stability spent to cast spells DO NOT apply to the sequence caps.

SEQUENCE 1: THE APOCALYPSE BEGINS

TRIUMPH ATOP MT. KAILASH

- Recover 1 Sanity + 1 Sanity if Pillar of Sanity satisfied by defeating the Liar
- Recover 6 Stability + opportunity for Psychological Triage as they discuss their victory (how this set everything that was wrong with the world right)

DESCENT OF MT. KAILASH

- It takes a day to manage the descent of Mt. Kailash.
- Green lights flicker in the upper atmosphere.
- During a break, notice a fine layer of ash on some of their gear.
 - Realize that the ash is falling from the sky.
- As they approach Darchen, the green lights are crystallizing in the sky. Undulating. Flickering fractal complexities that dash across the sky like mathematical heat lightning.

DARCHEN – REPORTS FROM BURANG

- Reports from Burang and some of the nomadic herders passing through town report that the lights and ash are widespread across the Himalayas.
- Somebody mentions that a scientist thinks a volcano must have erupted. Maybe even on the other side of the globe, like Mount Tambora in 1815 (the volcano which began the Year Without a Summer).

BURANG RADIO

- In Burang they find a huge crowd of Buddhist monks (from the monastery) north of town, prostrate towards Mt. Kailash and uttering prayers begging for salvation.
- A huge crowd gathered around a radio: The reports are grim. There are reports of the Rain of Ash from Delhi, Bangkok... and London.

GROWING HORROR

- **Realize Atmospheric Effect May Be Their Fault:** 3-point non-Mythos Stability test
- **Realize Effects Are Regional:** 4-point non-Mythos Stability test
- **Realize Effects Are Global:** 5-point non-Mythos Stability test

SEQUENCE 2: REVELATION OF AZATHOTH

CTHULHU MYTHOS: 8 Stability, 3 Sanity

GREAT POWER REQUIRES GREAT SACRIFICES

- The Mouth in Malta demanding the sacrifice of Montgomery's wife.
- Ayers speaking of the immense sacrifices required by the Rituals of Self-Denial

EDGAR JOB PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN ECHAVARRIA'S RITUAL

- Edgar Jobs, smoking a cigarette, declaring that he had been Chosen by Echavarria
- Brooks' mad rambling that Trammel had sent Jobs to Joy Grove out of jealousy of the Greatness which had been bestowed upon him
- A Greatness which no one could understand...

ECHAVARRIA'S RITUAL HAD TWO LAYERS

- Savitree desperately seeking to understand a ritual in two layers.
- Walking around Echavarria's barn, where the friends of Winston Rogers had died – the two rings of occult symbols, one binding what was harnessed by the other.

AZATHOTH

- The books in Echavarria's library relating to Nyarlathotep the Herald...
- The Great Eye turned down upon the Moon of Gol-Goroth...
- The stars turning their gaze upon you... upon Earth... as Y'Golonac died...

THE DREAD CONCLUSION: After 11 years, Y'Golonac finally died. And Echavarria's ritual was, at long last, completed. A sacrifice no less than a God itself. And the untold power unleashed by that titanic sacrifice...

THE GAZE OF AZATHOTH

SEQUENCE 3: SCENES FROM THE APOCALYPSE

WORLD REPORTS / TRAVEL SCENERY

- **Architectural Angles:** Become “soft”, allowing people to fall through to other dimensions (vanishing forever). And sometimes creatures come through them.
- **Clouds:** The edges of clouds are ripped asunder into sharp-edged swirls.
- **Riots:** In basically every major city.
- **Fires:** Lightning and, later, rains of fire set buildings alight.
- **Devout Gatherings:** In churches, temples, mosques, shrines, parks, public areas.
- **Apocalyptic Preachers:** Demagogues attracting massive crowds and street-corner crazies alike.
- **Howling Madness:** Hundreds of thousands simply go mad, their numbers swelling. Huge crowds of them congregate. They bark at the sky, gather pointless objects into monuments of insanity, and eat the flesh of the fallen.
- **Cities Abandoned:** Entire cities are actually abandoned as people flee into the countryside (or simply vanish).

SCENE 1: HOUNDS OF TINDALOS

- Hound of Tindalos begins manifesting around Ulysses where angles of 120-degrees or less are present.
- Memories of being hunted in previous locations:
 - It was on Ko Kruk Island, hunting at Savitree’s side.
 - When Ulysses was left alone in the graveyard in Severn Valley.
 - Sees it reflected in the polished metal frame on the picture Bunny wanted to buy in the Louvre.
- Others may start seeing the Hound in their pasts if they interact with it during manifestations.

HOUND OF TINDALOS: Athletics 6 (refreshes 2 per round, entirely between scenes), Health 13, Scuffling 30

Hit Threshold: 4

Alertness Modifier: +3

Stealth Modifier: +1

Weapon: +1 (paw, covered with living bluish pus that deals +1 damage per round until removed)

Tongue: As coup de grace, Hound’s long, hollow tongue strikes a person, bloodlessly and painlessly coring a deep hole into their torso, somehow shifting the organs around. Victim takes no health damage, but loses three *rating points* of Stability.

SCENE 2: THE PARIS BOYS

- Meinardus got Monte and Alexi out of Paris ahead of the terrible riots which have left the city in ruins. (New barricades have been erected. Horrible reports of self-mutilating, cannibalistic gangs.)
- They're holed up at Allaghmore House in London.
- The good news: Monte is cured. The Mouths on his body shriveled up and vanished when the Liar was destroyed.

SCENE 3: CHICAGO BURNS

- *Prop: Chicago Burns*
- The news in London is that America is suffering just as badly as Europe.
- Chicago is burning. The whole city.
- (There's no way to know if Cora made it out alive.)

SCENE 4: HAMPSTEAD RETREAT

- At the Hampstead estate, Janet Winston-Rogers has brought in security and is holding their family members safe.

SCENE 5: ROBERT'S VISITATION

- Visited by Corporal William Grimm, who died in the Lloigor temple beneath Argonne.
 - *How did he die?*
- He's here to talk about Edgar Jobs (although he won't name him): "He's not going to want to die alone, Robert. Be gentle with him."
- "You can tell the One-Armed Amazon that her friend didn't die in Chicago."
- "I've got to go now, Robert. I can feel the gaze shifting and the angles of Tagh-Clatur are hyper-extending."

SCENE 6: THE DEATH OF FRANK KEARNS

- At the Hampstead estate, Frank Kearns hangs himself in his room.
- *Prop: Frank Kearns' Suicide Note*

SEQUENCE 4: JOURNEY TO SAVANNAH – THE EYE OF THE STORM

SILVER SABER DOWN

- Savannah... glows. Bathed in a strange, blue-tinged light
- The Silver Sable's left engine sucks in too much ash and it burns out: There's an explosion. Black smoke billows from it.
- **Piloting** (difficulty 7): Or plane crashes.
 - **Crash:** Everyone onboard suffers +5 damage (+8 if not strapped in)

INTO SAVANNAH

- Ash stands feet thick on the ground here.
- Chimerical colors – blues that are black; reds that are brighter and purer than white; hyperbolic saturations – sheer the sky, swirling in dendritic curls.
- **The Exodus:** They're traveling upstream into an exodus fleeing a blighted city.
- **Into Savannah:** The blue-tinged light seems to emanate from everywhere and nowhere simultaneously. It casts impossible, refractive shadows from light sources that don't seem to exist in the plane of mundane reality.
- **Abandoned City:** Streets are empty. Lightning strikes are constant and very near.
- **Feral Child:** A small girl, face streaked with ash, dashes between the buildings.
 - If approached, she'll appear meek. And then savagely attack – madness gleams in her eyes as she tries to tear cannibalistic gouts of flesh from her would-be saviors.
 - A few minutes later, they'll see her again. Crying. They may be able to comfort her, but then she'll vanish from their arms.
 - A few minutes later, they see her again: This time she has a piece of chalk and is drawing on the wall. The sharp, right-angles of her drawing suddenly twist into non-Euclidean curves that defy the eyes. Two hands – or is your mind merely desperate in its hope that they're hands? – reach out and snatch her straight through the wall.
- **Meteor:** A meteor blazes its way across the sky, leaving a thick column of smoke and flame behind.
- **Lightning Strike – Athletics** (difficulty 6): On failure, +2 damage.
- **Second Meteor:** A second meteor blazes across the sky, but this one leaves a kaleidoscopic corkscrew through the heavens.
 - *Prop: Meteor's Tail*

FINALE: RETURN TO JOY GROVE

APPROACHING JOY GROVE

- Surrounded by an almost ceaseless cascade of deafening lightning strikes.
- Much of the kudzu which once grew over the hulking, Victorian building has been burned away. What remains is curling into the air – like hair suspended by an electrical charge. It feels as if the kudzu is trying to life the building into the air.
- **Entering Joy Grove:** Looking back they see a roiling wall of clouds laced with boiling fire advancing towards Savannah.
 - *Photo: Apocalypse Sky Above Joy Grove*

THE HALLS OF JOY GROVE

- The blue light of Savannah persists and intensifies within the halls.
- The halls are empty: Papers scattered. A few windows smashed. Doors hanging open. Furniture in disarray.
- A ward where bodies, wrapped in blankets, have been laid out on a dozen beds.
- **Sense Trouble** (difficulty 6): The acute angles here are actually giving off intense radiation. On failure, suffer +0 damage.
- **Lightning Strike – Athletics** (difficulty 6): Literally dancing down the hallway, ricocheting and forking off the walls. On failure, +2 damage.

FINDING EDGAR JOBS

- Edgar Job is in the basement operating theater of the asylum – a circular room without acute angles.
- Job's body seems to be simultaneously the source of the maddening blue-tinged light and a source of endlessly reflecting shadow. His skin has become translucent.
 - *Prop: Photo of Edgar Jobs Under the Gaze*
 - **2-point Mythos Stability Test**
- See *NPC: Edgar Job*.

EPILOGUE

END OF APOCALYPSE

- By the time they're back outside, the lightning storms have abated and the unearthly color has faded from the sky.
- Within 24 hours, the ash stops raining from the sky.
- It's a year or more before any nation of earth returns to any state that could be thought of as normal, but the day comes.
- They have saved the world.

EPILOGUE

- What does life look like for you one month later?
- A year later?
- A decade later?

SPOILER WARNING

- See pg. 387.
- Very easy to spoil the campaign by mentioning a single name.
- Please feel free to sing its praises. But help us keep the identity of the Liar shrouded in mystery.

EDGAR JOB



APPEARANCE: Job's body seems to be simultaneously the source of the maddening blue-tinged light and a source of endlessly reflecting shadow. His skin has become translucent.

ROLEPLAYING NOTES

- Terrified, but so bludgeoned by it that he's become emotionally dead.
- Wracked with pain. Writhes constantly; cries out intermittently.
 - His skin momentarily solidifies/reappears/turns back into our reality and you can see tears leaving streaked trails through the ash caked onto his cheeks.
- Desperately wants to be left alone... until faced with the prospect of actually being alone, and then he desperately needs human companionship.

BACKGROUND

- Apocalypse here started much as it did elsewhere – strange lights in the sky, lightning storms, panic among the staff, the broadening glow that turned to eternal daylight.
- Job's growing sense that the entire universe was focused on him.
- He admits to trying to kill himself dozens of times to avert the universe's terrible gaze... and it doesn't work.

NOTES

- Functionally immortal. Cannot be injured or killed while the Gaze remains on him.
- **Interrogation:** Forces him to interact with them, but only tersely. ("You can't kill me. So please *leave me alone.*")
- **Reassurance:** Gets him to open up and tell the full story of his experience with the apocalypse.

CONVINCING HIM TO GO

- Roughly three compelling arguments.
- Volunteering to go with him is a slam dunk.