RATS IN THE WALLS

A roleplaying game of cosmic horror

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Apart from the logo, the Horrors beyond the Wall of Sanity, Old Ones and Wonders beyond the Wall of Sleep sections, the rest of the game's text is released under a CC BY 4.0 license.

Many thanks to the Forums de l'Ours members and their precious feedback

This game is dedicated to Sandy Petersen and H.P Lovecraft

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INTRODUCTION

« *Prying curiosity meant death* »

H.P Lovecraft, *Rats in the Walls*

What is RATS IN THE WALLS?

An rpg where intrepid investigators face cosmic horrors in a desperate struggle to save mankind.

What is the setting?

By default the game is set between 1920 and 1936.

Does it use the Lovecraftian Mythos?

Though it is strongly inspired by the writings of H.P Lovecraft, it does not directly use its gods and creatures. If you wish to run games using the Mythos though, you should find this very easy to do with this game.

What are the game mechanics?

Roll 2D6, add an attribute score, if the result is higher or equal to 8, the character gets what he wants and if it's less, he gets into trouble. Only the players roll the dice, the GM has better things to do.

Do I use minis?

You don't need them. In my experience though, there are instances where a sketched plan and a few minis allow you to avoid misunderstandings and keep the game going at a good pace.

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CHARACTER CREATION

Creating your character follows 4 simple steps:

1. Attributes and secondary attributes
2. Choose a profession
3. Choose a reputation
4. Pick your gear

ATTRIBUTES

A character is made of five attributes.

BRAWN: raw physical strength and endurance.
DEXTERITY: deftness and agility.
VIOLENCE: a character's ability to hurt and kill.
WITS: mental acuity and resourcefulness.
WILLPOWER: self-control and fortitude.

You get 5 points to distribute among your attributes (Minimum score is 0, maximum is +3).

If you want your game to be a bit more harsh, only allow characters whose profession employs violence (Boxer, Soldier…) to put points in VIOLENCE. Each point put in Violence should be associated to a traumatic event.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Where we measure your character's resistance to mental and physical stress.

HIT POINTS: how much punishment can the character take? Starts with a score of 10 + BRAWN.
SANITY POINTS: how long before the horror breaks the character's mind? Starting score is 10 + WILLPOWER.

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PROFESSION

Pick one profession for your character.

ARTIST: regain all your SANITY POINTS by creating a work based on what frightened you. You need 1 hour to do so.

BOXER: when fighting bare-handed, roll 2D6 for damage and keep the die giving the best result.

BURGLAR: you can open any safe or pick any lock in 1D6 minutes (if you have the adequate equipment).

DETECTIVE: you have contacts in the police force and a successful WITS roll allows you to see if someone lied to you.

JOURNALIST: you're good at making people talk. Spend 1 hour with them and you get all the info you want.

LUMBERJACK: you're used to hard living conditions. +2 HIT POINTS.

MAGICIAN: the character automatically succeeds at doing small magic tricks (palming objects, escape from bonds...).

MECHANIC: you can repair anything in 1D6 minutes.

MEDICAL DOCTOR: restore 1D6 HP to a wounded person. You need 5 minutes to do so.

OCCULTIST: you know one spell (see page 10) and two dead languages.

PSYCHOLOGIST: you can restore all SANITY POINTS to one person in 1 hour. You cannot use this on yourself.

SCHOLAR: Pick one field of study. You're always successful in any tasks requiring that knowledge.

SOLDIER: during a combat TURN, choose when it's your turn to act.

ZOOLOGIST: get +2 to damage when you hit a creature you already defeated once.

All professions also come with the same advantages: you have a network of contacts related to your profession and you automatically succeeds on all mundane tasks related to your line of work.

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REPUTATION

Pick one reputation for your character.

ANONYMOUS: people only have 1 in a 6 chance to notice you when you try to be sneaky.

DILETTANTE: you have friends in high places and are welcome in the higher circles of society.

FAMOUS: most people will try to meet your demands.

FEARED: most people will back down if they know who you are.

HAUNTED: your own nightmares are a shield against the Horror. SANITY POINT losses are reduced by 1 (except when learning a spell).

LUCKY: once per session you can reroll any dire roll you've made.

OLD: you've seen and heard it all. You are immune to any kind of mind control.

SHADY: you have contacts in the Underworld and access to illegal stuff, from drugs to firearms.

WEIRD: you make people uneasy. Animals never attack you.

WELL-TRAVELED: you never get lost as long as you're above ground. You learn new languages quite fast.

Don't get too attached to the words used if it doesn't fit your character concept. A *Weird Scholar* can just be an *Unorthodox Scientist* and a *Well-traveled Journalist* might be a *War Correspondent*, or maybe you want your *Shady Detective* to be a *Crooked Cop*... Make the game your own.

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