Lovecraftesque Scenario Creation Guidelines

General overview: Lovecraftesque aims to capture the feel of a Lovecraft story without copying his monsters or gods. Players create their own Lovecraft-like mythos.

Everything in a Lovecraftesque scenario is for inspiration and to enable quick-start play. Players will create their own material, building on or supplementing what you write. Moreover, they will build their own mystery using your Clues. So, don't provide a complete story waiting to happen - offer ingredients that they can use to tell their own story. There are some great scenarios at http://www.blackarmada.com/lovecraftesque-downloads/ if you want to see an example.

The scenarios in the Lovecraftesque rulebook are 600 words long (maximum) and we recommend that you stick to this limit for the scenario.

Structure of a scenario

A Lovecraftesque scenario normally consists of the following elements:

Theme: something to give the scenario a coherent feel.

Witness: the main character, who rotates between the players. The Witness should have:
- A name and role
- A reason for being at the scenario location
- A personality trait
- A source of strength that keeps them going when things get tough

Other characters who may show up. Four is the recommended number. Give each:
- A name and role
- Any additional details needed to bring them to life

Location and era: A single main location and a time period that the scenario is set in.

Other locations: Other specific locations that might show up in the story and/or sub-locations within the main location. Four is the recommended number.

Cards: Lovecraftesque uses randomly drawn Special Cards which allow you to break the normal rules of the game when using them. You may optionally choose 2-5 Special Cards from the list here which will automatically be in play, replacing the normal random draw.

Clues: A Clue should be something that is definitely strange and certainly noteworthy but not clearly and indisputably supernatural. 10-12 is the recommended number. The ideal Clue is something that could be picked up and used in a variety of situations, so "a trail of slimy footprints" not "a trail of slimy footprints leading from the church to the grave of Albert Smith".

Notes on Racism and Mental Health:

Lovecraft's stories contain open and subtle racism from the Horror at Red Hook to the parable against intermarriage in The Shadow Over Innsmouth. We are keen on scenarios that provide a fresh take on Lovecraft, removing these elements and making the stories more inclusive. When writing scenarios, check you aren't unconsciously adopting or expanding on his racist themes - e.g. evil races, racial stereotypes, uniformly white characters.

Similarly mental illness in Lovecraft is portrayed simplistically and insensitively. If you wish to include elements of mental illness in your scenario then please avoid dismissive language e.g. "No-one believes Ms Jones she's a crazy lunatic". Steer clear of anything which indicates that reading a book or similar will just "drive you insane".

The Lovecraftesque rulebook contains lots of helpful guidance on how to handle race and mental health in a Lovecraftian setting.