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BLACKSAD

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

QUICKSTART RULES

INTRODUCTION

Based on the successful, multiple Eisner Award-winning series of graphic novels by Juanjo Guarnido and Juan Díaz Canales, Blacksad: The Roleplaying Game is a noir game starring anthropomorphic animals. This quickstart guide allows you to take your first steps into the game, explaining the main rules and including an introductory adventure. You and your friends can take on the role of private eye John Blacksad and his peers to discover the hidden behind a crime perpetrated on a childhood friend. It's time to put on your trenchcoat and get out of the office—the truth awaits!

What is a roleplaying game?

There's always a first time for everything, and it might even be your first time playing a roleplaying game. If that's the case, we explain everything you need to get a taste of this fascinating game system. **Blacksad: The Roleplaying Game** has been designed for people like you, comic fans that want to enjoy the stories of Blacksad, Weekly and Inspector Smirnov along with other characters you can create yourself.

"Blacksad makes his way up the flight of stairs. Something feels wrong. When he reaches the third floor, he finds that the door of the apartment has been left ajar. The landing has all kinds of belongings scattered everywhere, almost as if someone had been looking for something."

In a conventional story, the narrator would continue to tell what happened, but this is an interactive game so the narrator could say something along the lines of:

"What are you going to do, Blacksad?"

The player acting as Blacksad must decide what the private eye would do in this situation. Will he slam the door open and surprise the intruder? Will he press his cat-like ears against the wall and listen to see if someone's inside? The path he chooses affects the outcome of the story and that is the beauty of a roleplaying game.

We've already mentioned another one of the main traits of a roleplaying game: there are two kinds of players. The first player, known as the game master, is in charge of creating a story and being the main narrator. The rest of the players (usually ranging from one to four people) take the role of player characters: the protagonists of the story. In the example you have just read, the game master described a situation to the person playing as Blacksad. This player must then

react while thinking about what Blacksad from the comics would do in this situation.

One of the most entertaining qualities of a roleplaying game is that the players don't have to make rational and logical decisions in order to solve problems. Instead, they can behave and act according to how their character would in any given situation, just like actors do. Think of the comics: sometimes, John Blacksad doesn't react rationally and is often overcome by his own passions and morality. This is an essential trait in noir fiction, also known as roman noir.

Taking the role of a character in a roleplaying game is exciting because we can even take it to another level. Roleplaying games give us the opportunity to play characters very different from ourselves. Someone very prudent could play as someone cocky and quarrelsome, and someone quiet could take the role of someone very loud and talkative. You can even take the role of someone from the opposite sex, a different age or culture. The only limit is your imagination!

To play, a player must have their **character sheet** at hand, a written depiction of their character. The character sheet is used when the rules come into play during the game. Every game has its own rules, and roleplaying games are no exception. In these kinds of games the rules resolve key moments in the story, that is to say, decide what happens when something can affect the outcome of the story (like a fight scene, for example). By means of the character sheet and the game rules, we know if the characters are successful in their task or not. For example, going back to Blacksad and the open door, if he were to stop and listen, his character sheet and game rules would tell us if he is successful or not. If he isn't successful, however, he finds the house empty and gets ambushed from behind. You will find more about the rules in the following pages.



Characters

All characters are represented by a series of features. In the case of player characters, this information is presented on the character sheet. At the end of this quickstart guide you will find the character sheets of five iconic characters in the setting: Detective John Blacksad, Journalist Weekly, Boxer Jake Ostiombe, Novelist Alma Mayer and Circus Artist Luanne.

All character sheets have the features described below:

- **Concept:** A one-phrase summary of the character, consisting of three elements: the character's animal species, occupation and circumstance (character's present state). For example, John Blacksad has the concept "Detective cat with an ambiguous morality."
- **Characteristics:** Values that represent the different areas of action in which the characters may be involved. There are four: Fortitude (brute force, resistance, etc.), Reflexes (coordination of movements, ability to react, etc.), Willpower (presence, poise, etc.) and Intellect (intelligence, cunning, etc.). All characteristics have a value between 1 and 5 and a descriptive phrase (aka traits). For example, Weekly's Fortitude is 1 and its descriptive phrase is "Small +1."
- **Traits:** Areas where the character stand out and further differentiate them from the others, in a manner consistent with the chosen concept. Traits are associated with a characteristic, so that characters have one or more in each of them with values between +1 and +3. For example, Jake Ostiombe's Will trait is "Stubborn +2."
- **Milestones:** Four short phrases summarizing past experiences or characteristics that had a deep impact on the character. The milestones don't have to be negative or positive per se: they reflect personal history and can be interpreted one way or another, whatever best fits the idea you have. During the game, the milestones serve as a guide for interpreting your character and the situations surrounding them, and may also affect the outcome of the rolls in a positive or negative way (page 17). One of Luanne's milestones is "In the circus she learned to be self-sufficient."
- **Complication:** A limitation that prevents them from developing their full potential and limits them, as a "human." John Blacksad's complication is "He can't resist a pretty face."
- **Combat scores:** All characters have an Initiative value (how fast they act in stressful situations), Defence (how difficult it is to hit them), Endurance (the margin

in which certain wounds can cause complications), Resistance (the damage they are able to endure) and Protection (the defence, natural or not, against damage).

- **Conscience:** The integrity and moral rectitude of the character, their inclination to do the right thing. This value marks the status of your character in their personal story of a descent into hell.
- **Drive:** The character's ability to give the best of themselves and to take advantage of the situation, their motivation and, in a way, their heroism.
- **Instinct:** The strength of the character's impulses, the degree to which they trust them and can use them to their advantage.

Rules

The scenes in **Blacksad: The Roleplaying Game** are continuous and the players normally narrate how the story advances without interruption: many situations are simply resolved with dialogue, and the plot progresses with consequences along the way. Nevertheless, a system that enables us to know if the characters have been successful or not may be necessary at times.

Basic mechanics

Blacksad: The Roleplaying Game captures the intensity of the original comic, bringing all the action through a simple and narrative system. Throughout the game you will want your character to do certain things or interact with the environment just like your heroes (or antiheroes) in the comic books. All these interactions are known as **actions**.

The actions your character carries out always depend on one of their characteristics. These characteristics serve as a scale of their abilities in said action. To determine a result we use **six-sided dice**.

Every time you want your character to perform an action, the first thing you must do is describe it. That is to say, tell the rest of the players and game master that your character wants to do something and how they are going to do it. This helps determine which characteristics and elements are involved and what kind of action it is. It also determines if rolling the dice is necessary to resolve it.

Many actions, the simplest ones, can automatically resolve themselves but sometimes, given the difficulty or the need to know who was successful (like in a fight), a system that values the level of success will be required. This is important for the story's progress and the narration, which intertwine with the system to create a game session.





A game system becomes necessary when a situation doesn't guarantee our character's success. Trying to get the snitch rat to talk and tell us what we need to know, finding out if the voluptuous and attractive panther is lying about her husband or having to fist fight a furious rhino boxer are only some examples of when we have to use the game rules. This is how we know if our character succeeded in their task and on what level. There are three kinds of actions: challenges, conflicts and teamwork.

Challenges are actions where a character tries to overcome an obstacle in a situation, without having to interact or compare their stats and abilities with another character. Some examples would be: Inspector Smirnov searching for clues at the crime scene, Blacksad jumping across building rooftops or Weekly trying to sneak into a house.

Conflicts, on the other hand, are actions where two characters need to know which one of them is the victor and what consequences the losing party might have. Examples of conflicts would be the clash between Hans Karup and Huk when the previous discovers that the latter had an affair with his wife Jezabel, when Ivo Statoc tries to convince Blacksad to join him or when Ivo's thug (the mongoose) chases down his partner (the lizard) to the pool hall called "La Iguana."

Teamwork is an action aiming to help other people. Teamwork doesn't expect to resolve the main issue. It's not about overcoming the challenge or beating a conflict; it's about making things easier for another character to do something. Examples of teamwork would be when the barman at La Iguana distracted Ivo's thug to let the lizard escape through the back door or when Cougar held down Sergei Litvak so that Coyote could inject him with truth serum.

In order to resolve any of these actions we'll make use of the basic mechanics, which enables us to know the outcome.

DICE FOR BLACKSAD: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

ALTHOUGH IT'S PERFECTLY POSSIBLE TO PLAY WITH ORDINARY DICE, **BLACKSAD: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME'S** OFFICIAL DICE SET OFFERS YOU FIVE ACTION DICE (BLACK), FIVE COMPLEMENTARY DICE (WHITE) AND TWO TENSION DICE (RED). THEY ALL FEATURE THE FACE OF JOHN BLACKSAD TO REFLECT THE SUCCESSES AND, IN THE CASE OF COMPLEMENTARY AND TENSION DICE, BULLET HOLES TO REFLECT THE FAILURES. WITH THE HELP OF THESE TWELVE CUSTOM DICE YOU WILL FIND IT EVEN EASIER TO INTERPRET THE RESULTS OF YOUR CHARACTERS' ACTIONS.

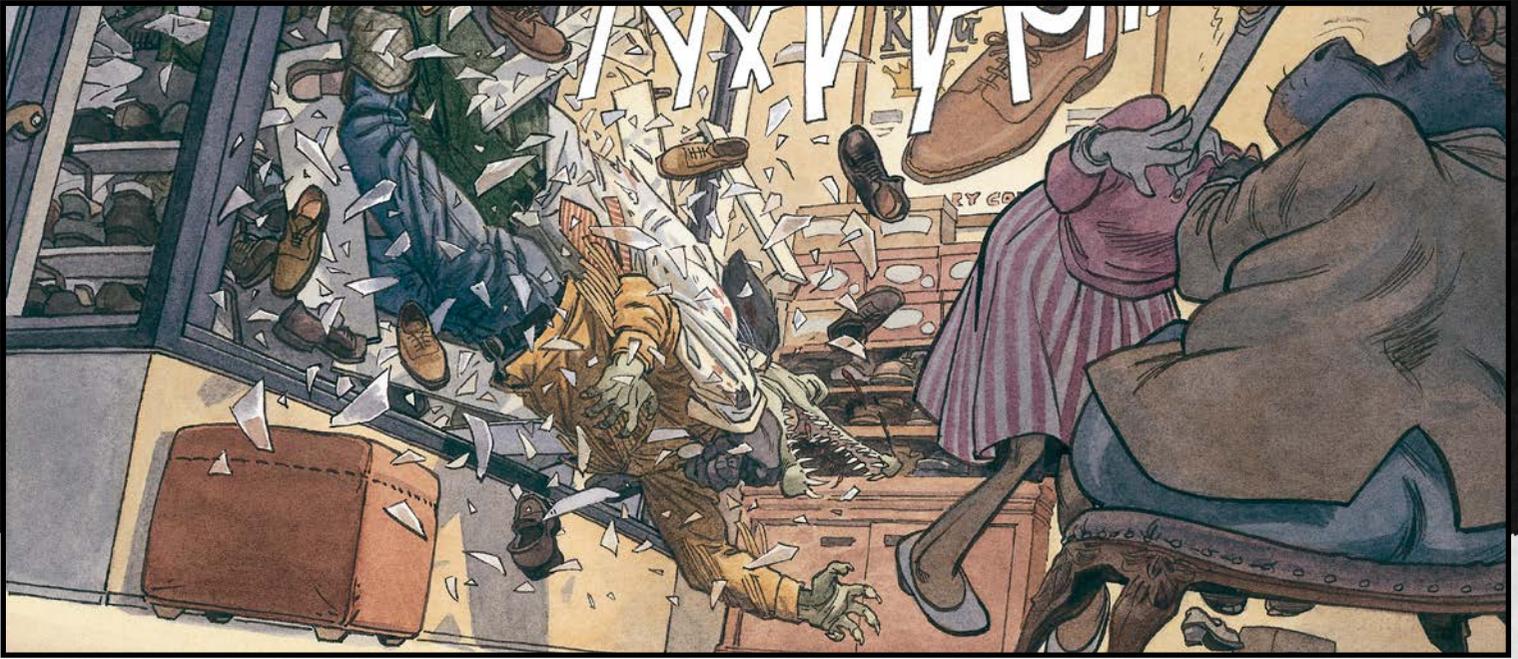
Action resolution

The only dice used in this game are six-sided dice but they are three different colours to represent three different categories. You can choose whatever colors you want; you can even have many multi-colored dice, as long as you can tell them apart. To make it simple, in this text we use red, white and black dice.

The **action dice** (black) represent the ability the character has to accomplish their task. With these dice, any result of 4, 5 or 6 is considered successful while the other results are discarded.

The **complementary dice** (white) represent those elements that don't depend on the character such as luck, circumstances, etc. With these dice, any result that is a 6 is considered a success, while every result that is a 1 represents a failure and nullifies a success. The rest of the results are ignored. The successes of action dice are nullified before the successes of tension dice, while complementary dice are the last to be ruled out. When it comes to successful rolls of action and tension dice, the higher results are nullified before lower results.

Tension dice (red) are used in the special occasion when the character acts against their own principles, giving way to



their dark side and making the easy choice instead of doing the right thing. With tension dice, a 4 or a 5 is considered to be a success, while a 6 equals two successes. Additionally, with these dice a 1 is a failure and nullifies a success, while other values are ignored. Remember that failures first nullify action dice successes, then tension dice and finally, complementary dice. With tension dice, while a six is considered to be a double success, one single failure can cancel this.

In a normal challenge you roll at least six dice. Your character's stats determine how many action dice (black) you use. The tension dice (red), if any, are added to the set. If the total dice is less than six, then the rest will be complementary dice (white) until they add up to a set of six dice. If the action and tension dice are more than six dice, there will be no complementary dice used in this roll.

Tension dice (red) are only used in certain situations. Most of time only action dice (black) will be used along with complementary dice (white): action dice equal to the character's stats plus complementary dice in order to complete a set of six dice.

Some game mechanics, like invoking aspects (page 17) or the support actions (page 9), allow the player to reroll dice. Any action dice (black) or complementary (white) can be rerolled, no matter the result, but tension dice (red) cannot. Each die can be rerolled; dice can only be rerolled once, and this result must always be accepted as valid.

Furthermore, in special situations (explained on page 17), the results of a 6 (in action and complementary dice) could be two successful results instead of one, like what normally happens with tension dice (red), or action dice could have results of 1 nullifying successes.

After rolling the dice or rerolling, if the character has a relevant trait for the action, some dice values can be moved around. Specifically, one bonus point can be added to the die for each +1 of that trait. Thus, if a trait has a +2, two points can be added to the value of one die (from 2 to 4, for example), or one point can be added to two dice (from 3 to 4 and another from 5 to 6, for example). This allows turning dice into successes, which can be done with action dice (black), tension dice (red) and complementary dice (white). There's only one exception to this: the failure result of a tension die or a complementary die, that is to say, a 1, cannot be changed this way.

Only in the case of Instinct (page 15), where failing benefits the character, can traits be used to subtract points from dice for each +1 the trait has.

Once the results of the dice have been modified with the character's traits (if applicable), the successes of both types of dice are added up, while keeping in mind that a 1 in complementary and a 1 in tension dice are failures and therefore cancel one success each.

CHALLENGES

In a challenge, the character confronts an obstacle in the environment. Thus, the possibility of success essentially depends on the character's abilities. The game master determines which characteristic is the appropriate one and then the player suggests the trait they believe to be the most useful in this specific action. Afterwards, the player must roll the dice just as we've seen before.

However, not all challenges have the same difficulty: forcing a lock open is not the same as forcing a safe open. The difficulty of an action indicates the number of failures that are added to the result of the dice. These difficulty failures nullify successes in the usual way:

First the action dice (black), then the tension dice (red) and finally, the complementary dice (white) and the higher numbers always get nullified first.

Difficulty		Example of a challenge
Easy	0	Climb a low wall.
Medium	1	Dodge a moving car.
Hard	2	Write a specialized informative text.
Very difficult	3	Run across the roof of a moving train.
Extremely difficult	4	Decipher the atomic bomb formulas.

Once all successes and failures have been cancelled (including the added failure(s) due to difficulty), the final balance of surplus successes or failures determines the action's result. If there exists one or more successes, the character achieves what they want, but if the result has one or more failures, the character will have not. If the balance equals zero (the same number of failures and successes), the character does not exactly achieve what they intended but it still isn't a total failure.

When a character fails an action, they cannot try again unless they change their strategy, which would be considered a new action. Surplus failures aren't necessarily harmful; they simply indicate a less desirable outcome of the action. Nonetheless, results followed by "No, and what's more..." can still be dangerous for the character.

CONFLICTS

When a player takes action against a player character or a non-player character, it will be necessary to compare their abilities. This is called a conflict. Don't assume that conflicts are necessarily an active clash between two characters. Sometimes one can be an active actor while the other is more of a passive agent amidst the action. For example, when a character is trying to trick or convince someone.

In a conflict, the game master determines the appropriate characteristic for the characters to use. It can be the same one for both, for example: two characters arm wrestling (Fortitude) or a game of chess (Intellect). They can also be different: one of them trying to move in silence (Reflexes) while the other remains alert (Intellect). The same steps happen with challenges; players can suggest which trait their characters can apply, while the game master determines the trait for the non-player characters.

The action is resolved with a dice roll from each character, each of them competing with each other's successes. The player with the highest number of surplus success results wins the conflict. For all intents and purposes, the successes of the player who lost count as failures and cancel the successes of the winner. That is to say, the number of additional successes with which the character defeats the opponent determines the result of the conflict.

Sometimes, conflicts are uneven: convincing a friend who works on the police force to let you see some reports on a case is not the same as expecting him to be your false alibi for a murder where you are the primary suspect. In an uneven conflict, the opponent at disadvantage receives

Failure or success	Result	Effect
2 or more failures	No, and what's more...	The character not only fails at accomplishing the goal, but things turn out worse than expected. The character receives a temporary negative aspect that lasts for the rest of the scene.
1 failure	No	The character isn't successful and the action doesn't grant the desired result.
No success and No failure	No, but...	The character isn't successful, however, yet obtains a small advantage in the form of a temporary positive aspect, which can be invoked in the next action related to the initial goal.
1 success	Yes, but...	The character is successful and gets the desired result but receives an unexpected side effect. The character receives a temporary negative aspect that can be invoked in the next action related to the initial goal.
2 successes	Yes	The character is successful and gets the desired result precisely as intended.
3 successes or more	Yes, and what's more...	The character is completely successful and receives an unexpected bonus advantage. The character gets a temporary positive aspect that lasts for the rest of the scene.

automatic failures; just like what happens with challenge difficulties. Attempts at seduction are examples of an un-even conflict.

SUPPORT

The character's action doesn't always have to solve the problem directly. Sometimes, the action paves the way for another character, to set them up and improve their possibilities for success. We call these actions support actions.

When a character takes action with the sole purpose of helping another character succeed at their goal, it's safe to say that action is a support. The game master determines if the support can be resolved with a challenge (if the character trying to help has to face an impersonal obstacle) or a conflict (if the support involves overcoming another character). Support is resolved with a normal dice roll. If the result is successful, the character being helped can then use those surplus successes as free rerolls when they roll their own dice, one reroll per success.

Other kinds of actions

With what we've explained, you can already experience most of the adventures of your favorite characters from *Blacksad* by using these quickstart rules. Nevertheless, on some occasions you might need additional rules to determine more specific actions. We present a few in this section.

EXTENDED ACTIONS

Generally, both challenges and conflicts can be resolved quickly with a single dice roll. However, sometimes the action requires various successful dice rolls in order to represent the time it takes to carry out this action. To simulate this, the extended action is resolved like a conflict or a challenge, but the game master decides how many successes must be obtained in order to complete the action.

In an extended action, surplus failures from a particular roll do not subtract from the accumulated successes, but they can generate aspects for further use in successive dice rolls of that action. Additionally, the game master can add more tension to the extended action by saying that, if after a number of attempts the players cannot complete the action, a negative consequence occurs.

TEAMWORK

Some actions can be carried out with help from other characters to guarantee more success. However, not all characters can help in the same action because they might hinder each other. The game master and players' common sense determine which actions will be used for the group action.





Don't confuse a group action with support, which was explained earlier. In a support action, each character does an action on their own, but the effects of the action benefit another. On the other hand, in teamwork, the characters work together in order to achieve the same objective.

Teamwork actions are resolved similarly to what we've already seen: the players who control the characters involved in the action (or the game master if the other characters are non-player characters) declare the action and determine which characteristic is going to be used. Once the characteristic is established, the character with the highest stats of this characteristic leads the action. The other characters involved give +1 to any applicable trait (or to the virtual trait "Working in a team" if no other character trait can be used), as long as the characteristic stats are half or more than the leader's stats.

The action is resolved just like a challenge, a conflict or even a collective support action for another character.

Morality

The fight with oneself, the conflict between doing the right thing or taking the easy road is one of the main themes in

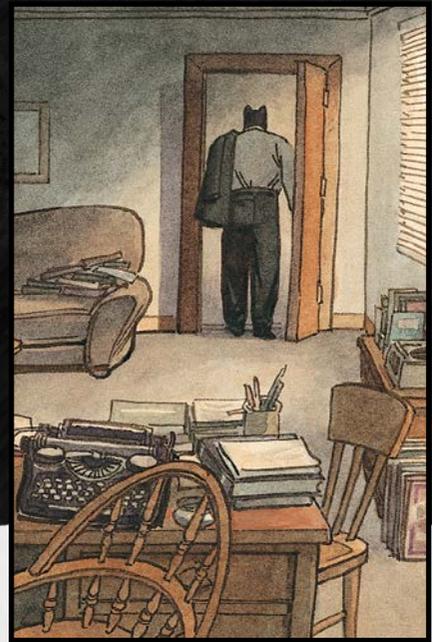
noir genre stories. The main characters of these stories are antiheroes who tread on the edge of morality, who risk becoming corrupt and turning into the story's villain or even destroying themselves.

CONSCIENCE

Will Blacksad murder the businessman Ivo Statoc in his office? Will Chad Lowell confess his crimes to save an innocent life? These are some of the questions that the characters must answer based on their Conscience stats.

The Conscience stats are a scale for the character's moral integrity. Characters with high stats are very self-confident; they follow a strict moral code and act according to justice, their values and righteousness. They keep a clean record and are measured. They act selflessly, are able to forgive easily and even make great sacrifices for others. They avoid violence and search for solutions that benefit the rest, even if that means sacrificing themselves. Characters with very low Conscience stats are full of doubts and remorse, tend to give in to their base instincts, are selfish and fall into temptation. They frequently use violence as a solution, especially when they believe they have the advantage. They are also peevish and self-destructive.





During the game, the characters will see themselves exposed to moral dilemmas and temptations, having to decide between making the right choice, no matter how hard it is, or the easy road. Every decision that compromises this integrity steps toward damnation, and this can cause the Conscience stat to fall, bringing the character closer to moral ruin.

If at any moment the character reaches 0 Conscience points, the character has become an unscrupulous creature, dishonorable, selfish, despicable and wicked. This marks the moment when they leave the story from being a player character to being in the cast... or maybe even a villain. We talk about this afterwards on (page 13).

Conscience

Morality

9-10	Acting for the greater good, even if that means sacrificing oneself for any other person. Resisting temptations and being able to subdue any desire to a personal moral code.
7-8	Acting rightfully in most situations, even sacrificing oneself for someone who deserves it, however, still has a few minor transgressions, like acting selfishly or giving into certain impulses.
5-6	Knowing the difference between right and wrong, but acting one way or another depending on the situation, frequently sacrificing oneself for loved ones.
3-4	Acting according to one's own interests knowing that they can have a negative effect on others.
1-2	Not being hesitant when breaking one's own moral code, generally for selfish reasons, or when hurting someone if there's a reason for it.
0	Looking for one's own personal benefit above all else, no matter the consequence. Hurting others for no apparent reason.





MORAL DILEMMAS

Throughout your **Blacksad** stories, the characters will have to face moral dilemmas: shoot the culprit point-blank in the face or take him to justice? Ignore the screams of a victim or get in danger to save her? Accept a bribe to forget what you've seen or tell the authorities? The decisions characters make in these situations determine which path they follow. Will they listen to the voice of reason or will they take the road to ruin?

Ideally, the game master will be the one to declare when characters find themselves in a moral dilemma, and, while all players are free to point out when a certain situation causes that kind of choice in the character, the game master always has the final say.

Depending on the importance of the moral dilemma, the game master can offer the character one to three tension dice (red) in order to help them in an action if they choose the easy road and ignore the voice of their conscience.

Remember that even though it's the game master's job to decide which situation has a moral dilemma, the player of the involved character has the right to request some tension dice (red) if they believe they have rightly earned them for a determined action.

Tension dice are a good resource for the characters, but they also might have to pay a price for them: if a tension die has a failure (a result of 1) or a double success (a result of 6), their Conscience stats immediately lose one point. Characters can only lose one Conscience point for a certain action, so if tension dice show many results of 1 or 6, the loss of Conscience points remains the same: one single point.

In certain situations, rolling the dice might not be necessary to solve the presented moral dilemma. The character can simply do what's wrong because it benefits them and thus resolves the situation by itself without the help of dice. In this case, the character still has to roll a number of tension dice the game master deems necessary to see if the character gets a result of 1 or 6, which in consequence, lowers the character's Conscience by one point.

If the character has a Drive point when this happens, then one Drive point is also lost (see page 15).



TEMPTATIONS

Sometimes, characters in the noir genre undergo moments of weakness and give into temptation, letting themselves be led by their desires without thinking of the consequences. It could be about succumbing to the charms of the wrong person, drinking excessively or making a bet in the worst possible moment. Temptation surrounds the characters in **Blacksad** and obstructs their path.

When a character is tempted, the player can normally choose whether their character falls into temptation or not: after all, the players have the power to interpret their characters however they see fit. Yet don't we sometimes act against our own will, as if incapable of controlling ourselves? This is the reason the game master can request a conflict of Willpower to determine whether the characters fall into temptation or not. In other words, if the game master believes the character's Conscience could lead the character into the opposite direction to what the player wants, then the game master can request the player to do a challenge of Willpower in order to decide what happens.

The difficulty of this challenge depends on how strong the temptation is, as is reflected in the following table:

Difficulty	Example of a temptation
0	Make out with a hookup in an alleyway
1	Agreeing to an abundant feast offered by a neighborhood gangster
2	Taking part in a scheme where you can get dollars for five cents
3	Making love to the celebrity of your dreams
4	Keeping a large amount of money you've stumbled upon

If the character overcomes the challenge of Willpower then they resist temptation: thus immediately gaining one Drive point and avoiding or rejecting the temptation accordingly.

If the character were to fail, they would fall entirely into temptation: the game master would narrate what would happen to the character based on their impulses. In this case, if at least one failure (a 1 result) were to appear on one of the complementary dice (white), the character would also lose one Conscience point.

Under certain circumstances, the player can request a challenge of Willpower if they aren't sure about how the character would act in that moment, or if the player prefers to let the dice decide the outcome of the situation. It can be really fun to let the character's fate rest in the hands of their conscience... it's also a way to recover Drive points if the character is able to resist. In any case, the game master has the last say on whether a challenge of Willpower is necessary or not. The game master should also avoid having players take advantage of this mechanic with irrelevant temptations: they should be granted in dramatic moments where giving into temptation or resisting it can make a true difference in the story or in the character's development, not every time the character enters a bar or someone attractive makes a pass at them. If this temptation won't have any effect in the story, then where's the conflict?

HITTING ROCK BOTTOM

If a character's Conscience reaches 0, this character has fallen completely: the character has been balancing on the edge of the abyss for the last time and now their fall has come to an end. The character has hit rock bottom. The moral decadence is complete and nothing matters other than their own self-interest. They no longer have an ethical code and will be capable of any kind of atrocity without a single feeling of remorse. The character will be trapped forever in their corruption and vileness.

Importance	Tension dice	Examples of moral dilemmas
Serious	1 dice	Killing someone who deserves it in order to protect a loved one, allowing a small act of injustice to happen without intervening, keeping an act of injustice a secret because a family member has been threatened...
Major	2 dice	Trying to kill someone in cold blood because they deserve it for vengeance or covering for someone who did, ending an innocent life to cover for a loved one, not testifying out of fear of getting hurt...
Critical	3 dice	Ending an innocent life to cover oneself, accepting bribes to look the other way for a serious crime...



Forever? Well, not yet. The character still has one opportunity: if they redeem themselves before the story ends (see next excerpt, “Redemption”), there will still be some hope left for them.

A character that finishes the story with Conscience 0 is lost forever and will not be able to continue as a player character. This character can still be a secondary character or even take on the new role of a villain, but in any case this character goes on to be one of the game master’s.

REDEMPTION

Even though spiraling into ruin is the easiest and fastest path for characters in **Blacksad**, they can also redeem themselves. Yes, in the process of the story, if the character stars in a scene of sacrifice, puts themselves under grave danger to protect an innocent life or rejects an important personal benefit to not wrong others or a similar act, then this reveals the character still retains a spark of hope.

It’s important not to trivialise redemption: it’s not about making occasional good deeds here and there in order to keep Conscience stats high. The redemption scene has to be an important sacrifice, a complete change of direction from the road downhill, ultimately, a true and significant gesture. If the game master and the rest of the players don’t see the scene as a real act of redemption, then it isn’t one.

When starring in a scene of redemption, the character automatically recovers one Conscience point and faces a challenge of Willpower on a hard difficulty (2). If the character overcomes the challenge, one additional Conscience point is recovered for each success. Since this challenge isn’t an action per se, ignore the chart regarding the effects with surplus failures or successes (page 8)

A character’s redemption is not something to be taken lightly and shouldn’t happen often. Characters only have one single chance to redeem themselves in each story.

DRIVE

Drive represents personal identity, being true to yourself, the ability to give it your all in the most difficult of situations. When starting the story, characters have the same number of Conscience points as Drive points, and when Conscience loses one point, the character immediately loses a Drive point as well. During the game these points will generally be spent on invoking aspects, but they are also used for other things:

Getting a head start: In a combat situation, a character can spend a Drive point to get a head start and act beforehand (see page 18).

It’s not as bad as it looks: When a character is injured, they can spend one Drive point or more to make the injury less severe than it seemed at first. Injury levels can be reduced by one point with each Drive point spent (see page 21). This doesn’t affect the received damage, which is the same even though the injury is reduced to a lower level.

Strength out of weakness: A character that’s lost Resistance points can use their inner resolve to recover. The character can recover half the Resistance points that they lost by spending one Drive point, effectively suffering half the amount of damage they took (see page 20).

Taking advantage of the situation: A character can take advantage of the situation by invoking aspects, explained on page 17. Invoking any aspect requires the character to spend one Drive point.



Resisting a temptation: When a character is faced by a temptation, they can spend one point in order to subdue it. This decision has to be made before rolling the dice; once they've been rolled, the result must be accepted (page 13).

Try again: The rules indicate that if the character fails an action, they cannot try again (for example, trying to intimidate other characters). However, you can try this action again by spending one Drive point. Trying again isn't rerolling the dice; it's trying to carry out an action you couldn't normally repeat.

Every time a story starts, Drive restarts to the same value of Conscience that the character has. During the game, they can also increase (even surpass the level of Conscience) in the following cases:

Facing adversity: When an aspect is invoked against a character, that character gains a Drive point. The invoked aspect can be from the character or from another source (see page 17). It's important that the result of this invocation be directly adversarial to the character (see page 17).

Resist a temptation: When a character faces a temptation and resists it by means of a challenge of Willpower, the character wins a Drive point. If the character resists the temptation by using a Drive point, they win nothing (page 13).

Redemption: If a character is starring in a redemption scene (see page 14), one Drive point is gained for every Conscience point recovered during that scene.

Non-player characters don't have Drive stats to keep count. The game master can utilise the effect of these points at any moment. Nevertheless, the player characters affected must be given a corresponding Drive point.

INSTINCT

We all have an animalistic side, and in **Blacksad** that animal becomes obvious. Like all animals, we have an **Instinct**, an impulse that tells us how to act for our own survival, which frequently ignores ethical and moral considerations.

Characters with low Conscience stats are more prone to give into their instincts and let them be their guide regardless of the consequences. After all, it's a conscience that makes us human, but in certain circumstances it can get in the way. Unless the game master says otherwise, only the characters that have a Conscience 6 or less can use Instinct. Those who have Conscience stats at 7 or more are too limited by their system of values and moral standards, so their animal side is subdued.

When a character is in a stressful or dangerous situation, the player can request a challenge of Conscience to let the character be guided by their instincts. Use Conscience as a characteristic to determine the action dice (black) used. Add complementary dice (white) if necessary to complete the set of six dice, as usual. The difficulty level depends on how stressful the situation is or the level of real danger that a character has to undergo, as seen in the following table:

Difficulty	Situation
0	There could be negative consequences for the character in the long-term, like losing a job or a reputation.
1	The consequences can affect the character in the short-term, like being evicted or letting go of an important case.
2	The character is about to receive a savage beating or a major social humiliation.
3	The character or loved ones are under immediate grave danger, the threat is often death.



If the result of the challenge of Conscience is a failure, then the character is given one Instinct point. If the results of the complementary dice (white) show a failure (that is to say, a 1), the character also loses a Conscience point. Inversely, if the result of the challenge is a success, the character wins no points and, not only that, the character won't be able to use Instinct points for the rest of the scene. Just like with Redemption (page 14), this challenge also ignores the chart regarding the effects of surplus successes or failures (page 8).

As you can see, in this situation, failing the Conscience challenge actually benefits the character, because the Instinct point can be used in their favor, which we will see later on. That's why in this case it's possible to use traits to decrease the result of the dice (see page 17). Nevertheless, keep in mind that failing a challenge also implies the risk of losing some humanity through the possible loss of Conscience. Failing this challenge means giving into the animal side and obtaining advantages from it; while success, on the other hand, represents the triumph of morality and rational control, which isn't always the most effective solution.

The accumulated Instinct points can be used at any time during the game to invoke an impulse. An **impulse** is a special action where the character's animal side becomes dominant and makes them act extraordinarily. Generally, an impulse only affects one single strip (see page 17), but it doesn't count as an action, in such a way that the character can invoke the corresponding impulse and then do the action that benefits them. An impulse can only be invoked once per action.

We offer two examples of impulses. The game master and the players are free to suggest new ones, as long as they are balanced with the existing rules.

- **Fury.** Adrenaline surges through the character's body, making them lethal in hand-to-hand combat. The character receives +3 in Fortitude when calculating damage in their next attack.
- **Elusive.** The character's reflexes become sharper than usual and enable them to react quickly to any attack. The character receives +2 in their Defense starting from this strip until the next strip on the following page (see page 18).

Aspects

The *Blacksad* characters are painted with shades that make them unique, not only because they're anthropomorphic animals, but also because they have a series of facts that talk about their background.

In roleplaying, this is represented as aspects. Aspects serve as a way to determine what characters are like throughout the different scenes, what scenery they are in and the story they are living. These aspects aren't only descriptive elements, rather, they synthesize in one sentence the story of the characters and the places they are or have been to.

We've categorized four kinds of aspects from the character's point of view: personal aspects (belonging to that character and included in the character sheet as the concept, characteristics description, milestones and complication), external aspects (which belong to all of the characters, main characters and secondary characters), situation aspects (belonging to the scenes and situations that the characters experience) and implicit aspects (implied even though they aren't specified).

USE OF ASPECTS

Aspects have two main functions: allowing the game master and the players to interact with the story in a more vivid manner, getting them directly involved, and the other is to serve as a tool to obtain certain advantages.

The first function is already implied in the personal aspects. Just one look allows us to capture the important peculiarities of the characters, objects and environment, while having fun bringing them into play.

The second function is carried out by the invocation of aspects. A player can invoke an aspect in order to create a series of advantages, as long as the following factors are fulfilled: firstly, the invocation of the aspect has a narrative cause (that is to say, that the use is relevant), the aspect also has to be available for invocation and finally, the player must spend one Drive point.

If these factors are met and the players along with the game master reach a common consensus, the aspect can be invoked to gain one of the following effects:

- **Positively affect a personal dice roll:** The player can reroll any dice they want from their current dice roll. Also, the result of a 6 in action dice and complementary dice are now considered two successes, instead of one, like what usually happens with tension dice (red). Like we explained on page 7, tension dice cannot be rerolled when invoking an aspect.
- **Negatively affecting the dice roll:** The player forces an opponent (or their own character, if failing the roll benefits them, like in the case of *Instinct*, page 15) to reroll the dice the player chooses. Also, in that dice roll, the results of 1 in action dice are considered to be failures that nullify success, like what usually happens with complementary dice and tension dice. Once again, tension dice cannot be rerolled.

- **Adding a narrative element to the scene:** The player can introduce an element to the story related to the invoked aspect.

If at any moment the invocation of an aspect negatively affects another player's character, said character receives a Drive point. This includes the way the game master makes use of aspects: secondary characters do not have Drive stats and the game master is free to invoke aspects without having to spend any of these points. However, the player character negatively affected by how the game master uses an aspect receives a Drive point.

COMPLICATIONS

Generally, in film noir and particularly in *Blacksad*, the characters not only have to fight against their enemies or struggle with solving enigmas, they also have to fight with themselves and their own weaknesses. As we have seen before (page 4), the player characters have a complication, which is considered an aspect for the purpose of the game rules.

A character that becomes negatively affected when invoking a complication receives one Drive point in the usual way. However, in this case, the affected player can reject the Drive point and spend one of their own to avoid said invocation, which shows that the character is able to live with this limitation and occasionally overcome it.

Combat

One of the most important elements in the *Blacksad* stories is combat. Some examples would be when *Blacksad* faces the lizard man in the middle of a street covered with fog or when Chad Lowell shoots his friend Abraham Greenberg in an outburst of rage. Violence is one of the key ingredients in the noir genre, and in the **Blacksad** roleplaying game we have opted for a quick system to represent this. This system uses the basic game mechanics we've seen and utilizes the same concepts. Generally, combats are resolved through challenges where the difficulty is defined by the Defense of the target. To understand better how an action is carried out, the combat is divided into a series of sequences that define the time in the scene.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

Combat is a constant where the characters attack and respond to the attacks they receive. The combat sequence allows us to encapsulate the combat in pages, much like a comic book. Each page is divided into **strips**, which correspond to each character's turn. Thus, a page is made up of strips of each character and, once everyone has taken action, it moves on to the next page. A **page** is a way to measure time in an abstract manner and is equivalent to five to ten seconds in the game's story. Each strip is a fraction of this time range and many

successive strips can practically occur at once, but they are sequentially resolved to make it simpler. The basic combat sequence develops in the following manner:

1. The game master decides which characters are aware of the presence of their opponents. If there exists fighters unaware of the presence of their opponents, an initial page of surprise is created before starting normal combat. On this surprise page, only the characters aware of the combat have a strip; those surprised are unable to act yet. If all of the characters are aware of their opponents, the surprise page doesn't exist and combat directly starts on a normal page where all characters have their strips to act.
2. On a page, characters act in turns and in order based on their Initiative. If one of them wants to get a head start, they can spend one Drive point to act whenever they want. On the other hand, if they want to delay the action, spending a point isn't necessary. In any case, the order is reestablished in the following page. In the surprise page, the surprised characters do not participate and, therefore, cannot take action.
3. Once all of the characters have had their strip and have carried out their action or actions, the page ends and a new one begins: the character with the highest Initiative acts once again and step 2 and 3 repeat until the end of the combat.

INITIATIVE

Initiative stats are fixed values determined by adding the character's Intellect and Reflexes. This means that, under normal circumstances, the characters act in the same order.

If a player character and a secondary character happen to have the same Initiative, the player character decides who gets to act first on each page. If the characters happen to reach an impasse or if we are dealing with only secondary characters, the game master decides the order of the strips.

Nevertheless, during a combat page, any player can spend one Drive point to give their character a head start and act before their turn. When many players decide to get a head start, the one who acts first is the one who declared head start first.

ATTACK

The attack action should be, according to the logic explained previously in the section "Basic mechanics," a conflict (see page 8). However, to reduce the number of dice rolls and to keep combat thrilling and brief, it is resolved like a challenge. Additionally, one single dice roll determines if the attack has had an impact and how much damage it has inflicted.

To perform an attack, we use the character's Reflexes along with a trait that seems appropriate. As opposed to other



challenges, the difficulty of dice rolls isn't a value fixed by the game master, rather it is determined by the target. The difficulty level of an attack corresponds to the value of the target's Defense, since it's presumed that the target will be defending itself. If by any chance the target isn't defending itself, the Defense would be a 0.

Like in any challenge, the character rolls the dice, rerolls if there exists the possibility to do so, applies the appropriate trait and, last but not least, adds up the successes. Remember that the target's Defense is the attack's difficulty, hence, the failures nullify the successes of that dice roll. If the final result has one or more successes, the attack has landed and the harm inflicted depends on the number of successes obtained (see below).

LONG-RANGE ATTACKS

Unlike what happens in hand-to-hand combat, with long-range attacks there exists another factor that must be considered when determining the difficulty of the attack: the distance between the assailant and the target.

In **Blacksad**, we have simplified distance in an abstract way into four categories: immediate reach, short, average and long. Melee weapons are used for close combat and can only be used at immediate reach, that is to say, when the attacker and the target are at a touching distance, while long-range weapons can be used in the other categories, depending on the weapon. You can see the weapons and their reach on this page in the "Attack and weapons" table.

The distance between the shooter and target is added to the target's Defense, according to the following table:

Reach	Distance	Defense
Immediate	Less than 3 m	+0
Short	3 to 20 m	+1
Average	21 to 50 m	+2
Long	51 to 200 m	+3

Remember that the target's Defense is at 0 if they aren't aware that they are being targeted. This is important, because it's hard for characters at an average or long distance to know that they are being attacked until it's too late.

DAMAGE

When an attack is successful, it's time to determine the damage it has caused. This depends on the surplus successes in the attack dice roll (after discarding those nullified by failures, including the target's Defense, which as we can recall, acts as extra failures). Each success inflicts damage that depends on the kind of attack performed, as seen on the next

chart. Remember that a 6 on a tension die equals two successes, so it inflicts double damage. By game master choice, a result of "No, but..." (A balance of zero between success and failure) could be considered a scratch instead of a failure with a temporary positive aspect. A scratch only inflicts half of the damage shown on the chart, rounded down.

Attack or weapon	Damage	Reach
No weapons	Fortitude	Immediate
Knife	Fortitude+1	Immediate
Saber, sword	Fortitude+2	Immediate
Shotgun 10	10	Short
Shotgun 12	9	Short
Hand gun .22	6	Average
Hand gun .38	7	Average
Hand gun .45	8	Average
Rifle	8	Long
Hunting rifle	10	Long

PROTECTION

In this game, a gunshot could end with the dramatic death of your character. Generally, the characters don't wear armor, but they can wear thicker clothing, take cover or have unusually tough skin.

To represent this, the characters and some objects can possess Protection. A leather jacket or a tough polar bear skin could give 1 Protection point, a thick jacket made of furs or scaly skin like that of a crocodile gives 2 points, a brick wall a 4 and a metal plate, 5 or more. Characters with Protection subtract those points from the total damage inflicted upon them.

Natural and external protections don't wear away because this game doesn't intend on being simultaneous. We consider that during a brawl, the gunshots, blows, stabs and other strikes won't always hit the same place. The game master can decide, however, if there is any wearing away depending on the situation or if parts of the body remain unprotected (like a bulletproof vest, which was still unsafe in *Blacksad*'s time and its use not very common). Moreover, if a character has many different sources of protection, they aren't added together, instead, the highest value is the only one taken into account to determine the total Protection.

Health

In the violent stories of film noir, the lives of the characters always hang by a thread. An argument can unleash a violent bar fight with broken bottles, and a chase can culminate into deadly gunfire. The violence in *Blacksad* is very present and, therefore, so is mortality in these stories.



RESISTANCE

This represents the character's vigor and resistance to physical harm, and is usually the value of triple their Endurance. When a character suffers a certain amount of damage, these must be subtracted from their Resistance points.

For the purpose of the game, a character does not suffer penalties when their Resistance drops: it is an abstract measurement of how much a character can endure until they yield. So, when it reaches 0, the character becomes unconscious.

Resistance points represent exhaustion, pain and shock more than a real or some injuries (see the next section for more information about this), in such a way that they recover quickly. Once the character has time to rest, like in-between scenes, Resistance points are completely recovered.

In combat, the character can spend a Drive point during their strip to regain half of their Resistance points lost from a source of damage, even if the character is unconscious.

HEALTH AND INJURY STATS

Even though reducing Resistance points is the main effect of damage, as we've seen in the previous section, sometimes characters can receive a little more than bruises. Injuries represent real damage, grave wounds, broken bones, bleeding, ruptured organs...

Every time a character receives damage from an attack, the inflicted damage must be compared to their Endurance. If the damage is less than the value, it then produces a loss of Resistance points and nothing more: it's not serious enough to injure the character. However, if the damage is equal to their Endurance or more, it produces additional injury.

The gravity of an injury is determined by how many times the damage surpasses the character's Endurance. If it's the

same or more, but it doesn't double it, it's a minor injury. If it doubles Endurance, without being tripled, it's a serious injury, and so on and so forth. The following table shows the kind of injury inflicted based on the damage.

Inflicted damage	Kind of injury	Health level
Less than Endurance	None	0
Equal or more than Endurance	Minor	1
Equal or more than Endurance ×2	Serious	2
Equal or more than Endurance ×3	Grave	3
Equal or more than Endurance ×4	Lethal	4

When a character receives an injury, their health bar advances towards their death a number of times based on the gravity of the injury. So, if the character suffers a serious injury, the health bar advances two levels from being Healthy to being Injured. If the character then receives a minor injury the health bar moves to Badly Injured.

- **Healthy:** The character is in good shape and hasn't suffered any kind of serious injury.
- **Bruised:** The character is harmed, but it isn't a major injury so they can act normally.
- **Injured:** The character is seriously wounded. All of their actions have an automatic failure added to the results of the player's dice rolls. While they are Injured, the highest value of Resistance points they can have are double their Endurance.



- **Badly Injured:** The character has multiple injuries and possibly even a bone fracture or a damaged organ. They receive two automatic failures in all of their actions and, while in this state, they cannot have Resistance higher than their Endurance.
- **Dying:** The character's life is hanging by a thread because of their injuries. The injuries won't stop bleeding and their body might very well have reached its limit. The character only has a few seconds to say their last words and will then inevitably die if someone doesn't do something fast.

Like we said on page 14, one of the uses for Drive points is to reduce the gravity of an injury: spending one Drive point per level so the inflicted injury becomes mere superficial damage and only a loss of Resistance points. So, a grave injury can become a serious injury by spending one Drive point, to minor by spending two points or completely ignored by spending three points. This does not affect the loss of Resistance points; instead it keeps the inflicted damage from being serious, with only pain and shock, which passes as soon as the character rests.

CONSEQUENCES

Characters that have reached the Dying state and have been able to recover do not do so entirely. A character that recovers from this state receives a new complication related to the cause of that received injury, such as losing an arm or an eye or getting a permanent limp. This new complication can be invoked the usual way by following the invocation rules for aspects (page 17).

FIRST AID AND INJURY RECOVERY

In the *Blacksad* stories, characters die dramatically and only a few recover from their injuries (usually the main characters, such as Blacksad and Weekly).

First, remember that Resistance points recover to their maximum value with a resting scene, but keep in mind that this depends on the character's state of health (see the list on page 20). In relation to injuries, this becomes a little more complicated. A character needs rest and medical care to recover from these injuries. According to the character's state of health, the recovery will be more or less slow or complicated. The moment a character is injured, they can receive first aid care to reduce the gravity of the injury. The character that provides aid must overcome a challenge of Intellect at a difficulty determined by the suffered injury, according to the following table.

Injury	Difficulty
Minor	0
Serious	1
Grave	2
Lethal	3

A character can only receive first aid care one time per injury, no matter the result. If the challenge is overcome, the severity of the injury is reduced one level and, therefore, the character's health is improved by one level. This is the only way a character can recover from a Dying state.

SCENES

Scenes are an important part of any noir genre story. Sometimes a scene is considered a character in of itself. As a game master, you must bring the scene to life, describe it and make it real in the mind of the players. This is as important to the story as building a case worth investigating.

While true that noir genre stories can take place anywhere, if you review your *Blacksad* comics and compare them with a noir novel or movie, you can identify patterns: a series of

recurring tropes in which these stories often develop. If you take it a step further, you'll discover that these details are not used interchangeably, that what usually happens in a gym is not what happens behind the stage of a theatre. In this way, the setting also tells the players something about the story, prepares them for what's going to happen.

Scenes have a concept, like characters, and descriptors that differentiate them from other similar scenes. You'll find scenes described in "Ode to a Friend," the adventure of this quickstart guide.

Ode to a Friend

This adventure is designed as an introduction to the game so it's quite versatile. It can be played by a single character or by a little troupe.

Synopsis

Lester Leight is an old friend of the characters that just got back to the city after a long while. He has become a famous pianist; there are posters with his face all around the city. To celebrate the reunion, Lester has sent an invitation to all the player characters to come to the *Flamin' Flamingo* where he'll be playing. But he never gets to the stage: some thugs have beaten him up and left him seriously injured. The clues guide the player characters to the *La Iguana* pool hall. There, they discover that Lester was just trying to protect his assistant, Andrew Milven, from an underworld criminal named Tony Krovan. They have to decide to deliver the assistant to Krovan or help Milven leave the city.

Adventure scenes

This adventure takes place in four scenes: the Flamin' Flamingo, the La Iguana pool hall, Camille Hotel and Krovan's pawnshop. They're as follows:

FLAMIN' FLAMINGO

CONCEPT: TRENDY COCKTAIL BAR.

DESCRIPTORS: THERE ARE PERFORMANCES EVERY NIGHT, ALL THE WORKERS ARE FLAMINGOS.

The Flamin' Flamingo opened recently and has been getting more and more famous among the wealthy people of the city. It's elegant. It has all kinds of performances and an inventive cocktail menu. Any scandal could end its growing success.

ONE-HOUR ADVENTURE

IF YOU HAVE LIMITED TIME, WE SUGGEST THE STORY BEGINS WITH THE CHARACTERS IN THE FLAMIN' FLAMINGO WAITING FOR LESTER TO ENTER THE STAGE. AFTER THAT TAKE THEM SWIFTLY TO THE DRESSING ROOMS AND LET THE SCENE PLAY NORMALLY, INCLUDING THE MOMENT WHEN THE PLAYERS ARRIVE AT THE LA IGUANA POOL HALL. THERE, THEY SHOULD TALK TO THE THUG AND DISCOVER THAT IT IS ANDREW MILVEN WHO TONY KROVAN WANTS, BUT THE CRIME LORD HAS ALREADY CAUGHT MILVEN AND IS QUESTIONING HIM. THIS WAY, YOU CAN SKIP THE HOTEL CAMILLE AND JUMP DIRECTLY INTO THE LAST SCENE, IN WHICH THE CHARACTERS DECIDE IF THEY HELP MILVEN OR NOT.

LA IGUANA

CONCEPT: POOL HALL FREQUENTED BY REPTILES.

DESCRIPTORS: ILLUMINATED BY FLUORESCENT LIGHTS, HAS A BACK DOOR TO AN ALLEY, THE PATRONS ARE ALWAYS SMOKING.

As its name suggests, La Iguana is a meeting point for New York saurians and lizards. To enter the hall you have to climb a flight of stairs where juvenile delinquent lizards always loiter in the sun. The bar is close to the door, so provides enough space for pool tables illuminated by fluorescent lights and a couple of tables for drinking. Behind the bar there is a back door to an alley parallel to the main street. Paulie, the fat-bellied iguana barman with a cigar in his mouth, has an excellent relationship with his patrons, to the point they defend each other against undesirable "customers."

HOTEL CAMILLE

CONCEPT: MID-RANGE ACCOMMODATION.

DESCRIPTORS: SLIGHTLY REMOVED FROM THE DOWNTOWN, SMALL AND POORLY PAID STAFF .

Hotel Camille was built twenty years ago and nowadays keeps its head above water. The rooms have a fair price, but it struggles to cut down expenses and hires less and less workers. Regardless, most people still consider it a good place to stay.

KROVAN'S PAWNSHOP

CONCEPT: COVER FOR ILLEGAL DEALINGS.

DESCRIPTORS: BEEN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AN ENTIRE LIFETIME, NO ONE HAS COME TO PAWN IN YEARS.

Krovan's pawnshop was an honorable store until Tony, the son of Clive, the founder, inherited it. Tony uses the pawnshop as a headquarters for his dirty business and spends most of his time here along many of his most loyal hitmen. The police, bribed as they are, don't come near here.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

SO THE PLAYERS CAN HAVE AN EXPERIENCE CLOSE TO THE WORLD OF **BLACKSAD**, WE'VE USED SOME OF THE CHARACTERS FROM THE CAT DETECTIVE STORIES FOR THIS ADVENTURE. FOR THOSE WHO WONDER ABOUT CANON AND CONTINUITY, YOU CAN THINK OF THIS TALE TAKING PLACE AFTER THE PUBLISHED COMICS, AND ALL CHARACTERS HAVE RUN INTO EACH OTHER BY SHEER CHANCE WHILE ONLY SOME OF THEM (IDEALLY, **BLACKSAD** AND **OSTIOMBE** OR **BLACKSAD** AND **WEEKLY**) KNOW **LESTER LEIGHT**.

Scene 1: Piano Night at the Flamin' Flamingo

The player characters are good friends, although the players can determine the level of closeness with each other. Something they do have in common is their friendship with Lester Leight, a Dalmatian piano virtuoso. Lester left the city many years ago to try and make a living with his talents and it looks like he made it. A couple of days ago, the player characters received invitations for Lester's performance at the Flamin' Flamingo, a trendy place, and they can see their friend's photo all around the city on posters and in the press. It looks like Lester is a rising star and it won't be long before he records his first album.

Use this first scene for the players to define their characters: you can ask them to say how they arrive to the bar and their attitude regarding the event. In this moment, convey the feeling this is an important event. The players won't take long to notice the energy: flamingos, working as waiters, come and go serving cocktails to the crème de la crème of the city, including some celebrities. If a player character shows interest, an Intellect challenge on an easy difficulty lets them recognize several stars of the time and some high-ranking government officials. If the players are *Blacksad* comic fans, they recognise both characters, but this time they are mere touch of color in this adventure.

On stage, an elegant flamingo announces Lester Leight's arrival and the audience applauds enthusiastically. The flamingo leaves the stage and after some minutes of uncomfortable silence, he returns apologising in a sweat for the delay and signals to



one of his coworkers to start up the record player. Then, he leaves the stage again to the dressing rooms.

At this point, it is expected the player characters take the initiative and try to access the dressing rooms. For that, they should overcome a challenge on a medium difficulty using a suitable characteristic to their approach: Reflexes if they want to get in undetected, Intellect if they want to reason with the bar crew or Willpower if they want to intimidate their way in. Either way, our purpose is that the characters can get into Lester's dressing room and get used to the game mechanics, so even if they fail the roll, they should be able to get into it later, perhaps suggested by the bouncer who recognizes them as the pianist's guests.

When they enter in the dressing room, they find the manager and one of the waiters looking at the scene stunned and clearly nervous. There are clear signs of a fight, and Lester lies on the floor in a pool of blood with several bruises and his fingers twisted in an impossible position. An Intellect challenge on an easy difficulty is enough to check he is alive but seriously injured. It is necessary to call an ambulance as soon as possible. If any character wishes to give him first aid, they get to stabilise him, but he won't regain consciousness.

Unexpectedly, it looks like a case has fallen into the characters' laps. Someone has hurt their friend and they should want to know who and why. For that, they need to inspect the crime scene, which requires an Intellect challenge on medium difficulty (it may be interesting to have the player characters make a teamwork action). If they overcome the challenge, they find a faint set of tracks that goes from the pool of blood where Lester is; the alleged assailant must have stepped in it when he ran away. Based on the tracks, the assailant ought to be tall and slim.

Close to those footprints is another track much harder to find (Intellect challenge on hard difficulty) because it's not blood but wet footprints in mineral water, slowly drying. They belong to a much smaller figure who left the dressing room before the fight started. The track leads to the performer's entrance that goes to a back alley. After that, the track vanishes.

Overcoming an Intellect challenge on an easy difficulty to inspect the place finds a half-used matchbox from a pool hall called La Iguana. Additionally, if they ask around, a witness states that a very mean-looking crocodile left the alley, looked around like he was searching for someone and then hailed a taxi.

In addition to investigate the crime scene, the characters might want to talk with the bar crew and any other possible witnesses. In the midst of all the confusion, it will be difficult to get useful information, but if they overcome a Willpower challenge against a waitress, she reveals that she took mineral water and white wine to Lester's dressing room, where he was with a companion, a small capuchin monkey whose

footprints could be the small ones the characters found before. The waitress is sure Lester and the capuchin were friends; she even thinks the capuchin was his agent or something like that. Another successful challenge against another Flamingo's crew member confirms the waitress suspicions: the capuchin monkey arrived a little late and introduced himself as Lester's personal assistant, but he doesn't remember his name.

After these inquiries, both the ambulance and the police arrive. The cops will question the witnesses. The characters can decide to inform the cops about what happened or to slip away and continue their own inquiries. This option requires a Reflexes conflict against the cops' Intellect (3). Now, the most likely course of action is to visit the La Iguana pool hall, but if the characters insist on finding the capuchin monkey first, scene 3 takes place instead.

Scene 2: Making the crocodile cry

As every *Blacksad* reader knows, the La Iguana pool hall is a rough place. When the characters make their entrance, they realise that only those who look the part from the criminal underworld receive anything other than disdain. If the player characters know they are looking for a crocodile, they see only one there. In fact, he won't stop glancing at them during their visit.

If they don't have that clue, they can ask the customers, something that calls for a Willpower conflict. Use the crocodile's (named Harry) stats, since he fears being discovered. Overcoming the conflict means they spot Harry as he tries to escape using the back door, less quietly than he'd like. The players then can use that moment to invoke a suitable aspect, making him spill a chameleon's drink, for instance, causing the chameleon to confront him. This allows the player characters a surprise attack to subdue the crocodile.

One way or another, the player characters face Harry. He's ready to fight but if there is a character with Fortitude 4+ or they are a big group (three or more player characters), he tries to get away with talking. If they use the combat approach, they must knock Harry out first so he talks when he wakes up. If they try the speaking approach, it's a conflict between the leading character's Willpower (depending on the approach, be it rational or intimidating, although the other characters can help) and Harry's.

If they win, Harry admits he beat Lester, but only because he got between him and "that damn capuchin monkey." It looks like the capuchin, Andrew Milven, is blacklisted by a dangerous man called Tony Krovan, who paid Harry to terrorise him. Harry has no idea where Milven is, but if he finds him, he intends to finish the job. He has no problem admitting his involvement because there is no evidence that incriminates him, but if the characters make him think he can get into real trouble, raise the difficulty of the conflict by 1. After that, if Harry is detained, the player characters get an enemy for life.

From this moment, the action can take two different courses: they search for Andrew Milven (scene 3, which leads them inevitably to scene 4) or search for Tony Krovan (scene 4).

Scene 3: The sins of Andrew Milven

Searching for Andrew Milven can be like looking for a needle in a haystack, unless the player characters use their Intellect. A quick search in the phone guide shows no one with that name in the city. That could lead them to calling every hotel searching for information, an Intellect extended action in which they must accumulate 15 successes, although they can split the phone numbers. Every roll means 4 hours. However, there is a quicker way: if they know Milven is Lester's personal assistant, they can try to contact the pianist's agent to ask for information. This means an Intellect challenge on hard difficulty and it confirms that Milven is a good friend of Lester's. It looks like they met during "the bad times" and, although Lester has thrived more than Milven, both of them lodged in the Camille Hotel.

The Camille is then the next stop for the characters. When they arrive there, getting Milven's room number has a medium difficulty (the characteristic to use depends on their approach: Reflexes if they try to glance the check-in book or Willpower if they try to bribe the receptionist). When they get to the room, they hear someone snoring inside. If they knock, Milven wakes up instantly and tries to run out through the fire escape, as he believes the characters are Harry. Catching him requires a Reflexes conflict. If they force the door or break it down, they catch him by surprise.

Milven is not a tough guy at all, but the characters can win his trust over and show him they want to help him. Explaining who they are will be enough, as Lester talked to him about them before, but if they don't think about that, they must overcome a Willpower conflict using the right arguments. Once persuaded, Milven says he's very sorry for what has happened, but he doesn't know how to solve his problem.

It turns out that some years ago, Milven had a relationship with Margaret, an attractive young girl of humble background also courted by Krovan, a gorilla that was just barely more than muscles who terrorized her. Milven asked her to run away with him, but she accepted Krovan's marriage proposal instead. Milven never heard any more about her. He was surprised as Lester when the crocodile appeared threatening to break his legs. Lester got in the middle and told Milven to run and he... well, he ran away without thinking.

Milven knows that's matter of time that Krovan's thugs find him, but he's afraid to leave the hotel. He's afraid to go to the police too, as Krovan had contacts there even before becoming a crime lord. The player characters are a truly advantageous accident for him. He will do anything for their help, offering all kind of exaggerated promises and referring

to Lester's sacrifice. His concern for his friend is sincere, but right now he's too nervous to think clearly. After some moments, he suggests the characters speak with Krovan on his behalf, and if they reject that idea outright, he asks them for help to leave the city. At this point, the story can move to scene 4 (visiting Krovan) or, if they choose to help Milven to run away, they need to plan how to get him out of the hotel first and out the city later. This plan might imply an attack by Krovan's men, who find them at the worst possible moment in a climactic fight scene in the middle of the city.

Scene 4: Krovan gets what Krovan wants

At the La Iguana pool hall or through any crime contact they have, the characters discover that Tony Krovan runs his business from Krovan's pawnshop in the slums. By now, it's possible Krovan has heard of the player characters and he's waiting for their visit. If that's not the case, giving the name Milven will be enough for the clerk at the shop to conduct them to the back room, where a huge gorilla is helping, with his homework, someone who could be his son... a capuchin monkey who resembles Milven. Tony Krovan tells his son to go to play somewhere else and he asks the player characters to sit down so they can tell him whatever they have to say.

After that, he tells a story very different from Milven's. Krovan and Margaret were a couple and Krovan was about to propose to her. Then Milven appeared, cajoled her and they slept together. When Margaret was about to break up with Krovan, he showed her that Milven was a nobody who didn't have any of the riches he bragged about. Margaret, resentful, went back to Krovan's arms and they got married... but she was already pregnant with Milven's child.

For Krovan, who aimed to be an important crime lord, the child was a constant reminder that his wife wasn't faithful to him, but she died a year after giving birth to Tony Junior. Krovan learned to love the kid as the only memory of the woman he adored. However, when he saw in the newspaper that Lester and Milven were coming to town, he knew he had to give that bastard what he deserved. That's why he sent Harry. His intention now is to find Milven when he visits Lester at the hospital later and finish the job himself.

Krovan is pragmatic: he wants Milven for himself and he's willing to reward the characters if they give him up. He could be willing to take care of Lester's expensive medical bills. If it's necessary, he promises to not kill him, but to beat him up enough to make him wish he was dead.

Otherwise, he sends his thugs to find Milven and he gets what he wants, but now with the player characters as enemies. They have to choose. What are they going to do? It's a dilemma that, depending on the kind of characters they play and their Conscience values, can create an interesting scene.

Aftermath

Our story has an open ending in which the characters have the last word. If they choose to give up Milven to Krovan, they won't just get richer, they get a powerful ally in the underworld. However, if they decide to be upright, they will have to watch their steps from now on, and the person they defended is not as innocent as he looks. The climax can be sustained for as much time as necessary: they can talk with Milven or, during the exchange, get caught in a police raid. These are just some of the ways to enrich the story and deepen in the consequences for the player characters, however the way things develop. A good ending scene could take place in the hospital, where the player characters visit their friend Lester and he asks about Milven. Their answers can be a sincere tale or one full of lies... It's in their hands to decide what's right.

THE TRUTH

WHO IS TELLING THE TRUTH? MILVEN OR KROVAN? THERE'S PROBABLY A BIT OF TRUTH AND A BIT OF FALSEHOOD IN BOTH TALES, BUT THIS TIME, THE GORILLA IS CLOSER TO TRUTH: MILVEN SEDUCED MARGARET WITH CHARM AND LIES. AFTER THAT, HOWEVER, HE BECAME A BETTER PERSON, A COWARDLY ONE, BUT A BETTER ONE. KROVAN TURNED TO DARKNESS, INSTEAD, BECOMING A CRIME LORD. THAT'S THE TRUTH, BUT... DOES MILVEN DESERVE PUNISHMENT? DOES KROVAN DESERVE TO FIND PEACE IN ALL THIS? WE'RE NOT ONE TO JUDGE, BUT THE CHARACTERS ARE.

Discover much more in *Blacksad: The Roleplaying Game!*

Now that you've entered into detective John Blacksad's universe, expand your experience with **Blacksad: the Roleplaying Game** corebook. Among its pages you will find all you need to recreate the comic's noir universe, including:

- Easy, quick and complete rule systems to create complex and deep characters in 5 minutes, characters able to handle the frantic situations in the *Blacksad* comics. Action, chases, seductions and morality are covered by these systems to fill your game table with emotional and dramatic moments.
- Game stats and biographies for the comic's main characters so they can be part of your stories: become Blacksad or Inspector Smirnov and face Hans Karup, Ribs or the agents Cougar and Coyote.
- Advice to design and stage your noir stories, as well as scenarios and supporting characters ready to play.
- One full-fledged story ready to play and four more in short format the game master can develop easily, as well several story hooks so you never get short of ideas.



Non-player characters

Harry

PRAGMATIC CROCODILE HITMAN

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE INTIMIDATION +2, GIVING BEATINGS +2
REFLEXES RUNNING +2, STEALTH +1
WILLPOWER LYING +2, RESISTING THE PAIN +1
INTELLECT ORGANISED CRIME +1, NEGOTIATION +1

MILESTONES

- HE HAS SERVED HIS TIME, AND HE HAS PROMISED TO HIMSELF HE WON'T GO BACK TO PRISON.
 - HE HAS WORKED WITH A LOT OF CRIME BOSSES.

COMPLICATION

HE HAS A POLICE RECORD.

COMBAT STATS



Tony Krovan

WRATHFUL CRIME LORD GORILLA

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE HIT WITH RAGE +3
REFLEXES EXCELLENT COORDINATION +2
WILLPOWER INTIMIDATION +2, LOOKING UNSHAKEABLE +2
INTELLECT ORGANIZED CRIME +2, CITY'S HISTORY +1

MILESTONES

- HE HAS CONTACTS IN THE POLICE.
 - HE HAS TO RESORT TO FREELANCE CRIMINALS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH MINIONS.

COMPLICATION

HIS BASTARD SON REFLECTS HIS INABILITY TO KEEP ORDER IN HIS OWN HOME.

COMBAT STATS



Andrew Milven

COWARDLY CAPUCHIN MONKEY ASSISTANT

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE DRINKING +2
REFLEXES RUNNING AWAY +2, CLIMBING +2
WILLPOWER SEDUCTION +2
INTELLECT ACCOUNTING +2, ACHIEVE GOALS +1, CONS +1

MILESTONES

- HE LIVED IN MISERY UNTIL HE MET LESTER LEIGHT.
 - HE HAS SOME SECRET SAVINGS FOR THE BAD TIMES.

COMPLICATION

HIS ATTRACTION TO WOMEN ALWAYS CAUSES HIM PROBLEMS.

COMBAT STATS



Krovan's men

CLOSE-MINDED ORANGUTAN THUGS

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE BEATING +1, DRINKING +1, AWAKE ALL NIGHT LONG +1
REFLEXES CLIMBING +2, CHASING +1
WILLPOWER RESIST QUESTIONING +2
INTELLECT STREETWISE +2

MILESTONES

- THEY MET KROVAN WHEN HE WAS JUST A THUG.
 - THEY'VE BEEN GETTING PAID FOR "PROTECTING" THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD FOR YEARS.

COMPLICATION

THEY FEAR ENDING UP IN PRISON.

COMBAT STATS



Cops

POLICE SAINT BERNARDS AFTER A HARD SHIFT

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE NIGHT WATCH +2
REFLEXES CHASES +2, HITTING THE DECK +1
WILLPOWER DOG FACE +2
INTELLECT POLICE PROCEDURES +2, LAWS +1

MILESTONES

- THEY'VE BEEN ON THE NIGHT SHIFT ALL THEIR LIFE.
 - THEY WORK IN A QUIET NEIGHBOURHOOD.

COMPLICATION

THEY HAVE ONLY FACED SMALL-TIME THUGS.

COMBAT STATS



Player characters

John Blacksad

DETECTIVE CAT WITH AN AMBIGUOUS MORALITY



CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE [4][4][4][4][4][4] RESISTANT +2, ATHLETIC +1
REFLEXES [4][4][4][4][4][4] CATLIKE AGILITY +2, STREET BRAWL +2
WILLPOWER [4][4][4][4][4][4] PERSISTENT +2, CHARISMATIC +1
INTELLECT [4][4][4][4][4][4] HISTORY +1, SHARP-NOSED +1, FOLLOW CLUES +1

MILESTONES

-RAISED IN AN INSTITUTION FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN
-EXPULSED FROM THE UNIVERSITY HIS FIRST YEAR
-HE FOUGHT IN WWII BUT HE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT IT
-THE ONLY JOB HE'S KEPT UP IS BEING A PRIVATE DETECTIVE

COMPLICATION

HE CAN'T RESIST A PRETTY FACE

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE 7 **DEFENSE** 2 **PROTECTION** 0 **ENDURANCE** 6 **RESISTANCE** [10][10][10][10][10][10][10][10][10][10]

MORALE

CONSCIENCE 6 **DRIVE** [X][X][X][X][X] **INSTINCT** [X][X][X][X]

Blacksad spent his childhood and teenage years in an institution for underprivileged children. The center taught their charges to read and write, but only a few of them had the motivation and capacity to progress beyond that. That was Blacksad's case, who even got to matriculate at Harvard, but it only took a year before he was expelled for indiscipline. Rebellious and quarrelsome, he ran away from the police more than once. (He never imagined he would side with the law as a private investigator.)

At the beginning of the War in Europe, he enlisted in the army and partook in several combat missions. Although his performance was exemplary (worthy of several awards), he fell to ennui, perhaps due to the extreme violence of the War. Back in the States, he got and lost one job after another in quick succession. Only when he opened his private eye office did he find stability.

John Blacksad is a tall and slender cat with black fur except for a white snout. He's still young and in top shape. The ladies consider him attractive, something he has used as a tool to get information, yet he has been very unlucky in matters of the heart. He normally wears a suit and a tie, although he can be seen without jacket, wearing only a shirt. Though not a compulsive smoker, he sometimes finds himself with a cigarette.

Blacksad is polite and kind, but can be a little rough and aggressive if provoked. He is eloquent and has a big sense of humor, though it can be a touch dark. He has occasionally accepted jobs (usually short and badly paid ones) as a bodyguard or debt collector. However, these jobs don't inspire him and he only takes them when drowning in debt: Blacksad is an investigator, not a thug. While he doesn't believe violence solves most problems, he is usually forced to use it. He doesn't even carry a gun; when he finds one, usually he has fallen into a situation where his life depends on it. That said, Blacksad is not a coward and knows how to defend himself; he has used his fists frequently in his career as private investigator and has learned some tricks dealing with the underworld.

He is trained in firearms and has experienced killing while in the midst of the War. He has only killed once in cold blood: when he avenged the death of his friend Natalia. Killing the one responsible, the millionaire Ivo Statoc, was a crucial moment in the cat's life, putting him in a gray and dangerous place. On one hand, he couldn't walk away from the injustice of Natalia's murder. On the other hand, he recognised once you step across that ethical line, something changes inside you and your soul becomes blacker. But ending up with a black soul looks like the destiny of anyone who sticks their nose in this dirty business.

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE [●][●][●][●][●][●] SWEDISH GYMNASTICS +2
REFLEXES [●][●][●][●][●][●] THROWING KNIVES +2, DANCE +1, BALANCE +1
WILLPOWER [●][●][●][●][●][●] NICE +2, RESOLVED +1
INTELLECT [●][●][●][●][●][●] CRAFTING TALES +2, LITERATURE +1

MILESTONES

- HER BIOLOGICAL FAMILY HAS A LOT OF WEALTH AND CONTACTS.
- THEY FORCED HER TO HAVE AN ABORTION WHEN SHE WAS 14 YEARS OLD.
- SHE RAN AWAY FROM THAT WEALTHY LIFE TO AN UNCERTAIN LIFE AS A CARNY.
- SHE LEARNED HOW TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN THE CIRCUS.

COMPLICATION

SOME PEOPLE AROUND HER KNOW WHO SHE REALLY IS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE 7 **DEFENSE** 2 **PROTECTION** 0 **ENDURANCE** 5 **RESISTANCE** [|||||]

MORALE

CONSCIENCE 6 **DRIVE** [X][X][X][X][X][X] **INSTINCT** [●][●][●][●]



This young cat is a clear example of why a wealthy life isn't necessarily the best if you have to live it by the designs of others. Nowadays, Luanne works at the Sunflower Circus, as an assistant to Tchang, a knife throwing panda bear. The carnal life is hard and demanding, itinerant and exacting; however, for this young woman, it's better than everything she left behind. Luanne, a name she created herself, hides that she's really Eva Lange, the tabloid tycoon Aaron P. Lange's granddaughter.

When she was 14 years old, she got pregnant and it didn't take long before her family noticed. It wasn't just a baby conceived out of wedlock, but the father was a nobody unworthy of the wealthy family. For the Langes' conservative environment this wasn't acceptable, even less with her grandfather being a famous personality. Luanne's family forced her to have an abortion. After that, she ran away and hasn't overcome the trauma. Her family keeps searching for her and, in fact, has offered a reward with several zeroes for information about her whereabouts.

In the Sunflower Circus no one asks questions about its workers' past, as many of them have histories they want to escape from. Thanks to that, the little girl easily created a new identity and got a discreet job. The Sunflower Circus is, as most of them, an

itinerant show. It travels from one county to another, from one state to another, searching for a place near towns where it can be at full capacity for a time. When the audience's attendance runs low, it's time to dismantle marquees and tents and change the scene.

Although Luanne had a sheltered childhood, she soon got used to the circus rhythm and its peculiar members. Recently, the owner has fired Filipe Papaleguas, a stagehand who drank too much. To substitute him, he hired Chad Lowell, a writer lion, who works in the circus hoping not to be brought to justice for homicide. This will cause a lot of problems to the Sunflower, especially to Luanne, who feels a special attraction to the good-looking fugitive...

Luanne is a Siamese cat with blue eyes and short soft cream-coloured fur, except for the black fur in her head, nose and around her eyes. She dresses with a much more relaxed standard than the society she ran away from, taking advantage of the freedom the circus gives. She can be seen sunbathing with very few clothes on or doing her everyday tasks with a top and pants. When she is ready for her show as the knife thrower's assistant, she uses a long sheer skirt that matches a violet brassiere, both of them decorated with Eastern-style golden pendants.

Alma Mayer

WRITER CAT WHO KNOWS HOW TO CARRY ON



CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE [●][●][●][●][●][●] RESISTANT +1, TIRELESS +1
REFLEXES [●][●][●][●][●][●] EYE-HAND COORDINATION +2, JUMP +1
WILLPOWER [●][●][●][●][●][●] CONFIDENT +2, SEDUCTIVE +1
INTELLECT [●][●][●][●][●][●] LITERATURE +3, PIANO +1

MILESTONES

-SHE RAN AWAY WHEN SHE WAS 18 AND THEN TRAVELED AROUND SEVERAL STATES
 -SHE MARRIED TWICE BEFORE MEETING SAMUEL GOTFIELD
 -SHE HAD A SHORT AFFAIR WITH JOHN BLACKSAD
 -SHE HAS BEEN UNDER FBI SURVEILLANCE FOR HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TWELVE APOSTLES

COMPLICATION

BAD LUCK IN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE 7 **DEFENSE** 2 **PROTECTION** 0 **ENDURANCE** 5 **RESISTANCE** [|||||]

MORALE

CONSCIENCE 7 **DRIVE** [X][X][X][X][X] **INSTINCT** [X][X][●][●][●]

This cat is a model of self-improvement and success for a woman in a conservative and mainly masculine world. Alma is daughter of a distinguished American diplomat, although she ran away from home when she was 18 to live with a New York journalist. That relationship ended abruptly, as he died in an amphibian UN attack in Korea. Alma Mayer wandered around Chicago, San Francisco and Hollywood for years. In the latter she got a job fixing screenplays and began networking with leftist groups.

Standing out among them, philanthropist Samuel Gotfield promoted the creation of an informal countercurrent thinkers group known as the Twelve Apostles. For a time, Mayer had a romantic relationship with the sponsor. It's difficult to know what success she would have had without Gotfield's support and protection, but her works would have been known independently from her patron's name regardless. Her professional rise has been coupled with several disappointments in love. Far from feeling frustrated, Alma is resigned to suffer, in words of Ella Fitzgerald, "that old black magic called love."

The writer has been investigated by the FBI in several occasions because of her relationship with Samuel Gotfield and

other leftist intellectuals. Although they have never been able to connect her with subversive activities, she has been labeled as someone of dubious ethics. Single and living a dissolute life, Mayer has been considered an enemy to the traditional values of order and family. During the Security Committee actions against Communist activities led by Senator Gallo, Gotfield's protégée decided to fly away and move to Switzerland. Although she was never accused of any crime, nowadays she only returns to the USA for presentations of her books.

Alma is a graceful, light-coloured fur cat, with a short brown hairdo worn in a practical ponytail when she works. She also dresses practically: dark trousers and pullovers fastened with a belt. Her brown hard-rimmed glasses round her efficient and pragmatic feminine look. However, Alma can appear as a very seductive and attractive woman, just by letting her hair down, using a couple of earrings and wearing a smile. The effect is much bigger, as detective John Blacksad could testify, when the writer wears a dress that emphasizes her womanly curves. With a bohemian lifestyle, it is easy to see her with a cigarette or a glass of wine in her hands.

Jake Ostiombe

BOXER GORILLA RAISED IN A MARGINAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE [●][●][●][●][●][●][●][●] HAYMAKER +3, HARD FUR +1
REFLEXES [●][●][●][●][●][●][●][●] COVERING HIS BODY +3
WILLPOWER [●][●][●][●][●][●][●][●] STUBBORN +2
INTELLECT [●][●][●][●][●][●][●][●] FIRST AID +1, FRESH NEWS +1

MILESTONES

- HE MADE HIMSELF.
- HE FOUND RELATIVE SUCCESS IN BOXING AT AN EARLY AGE.
- HE HAS WORKED AS A BODYGUARD FOR WEALTHY PEOPLE.
- HE KNOWS A LOT OF JOURNALISTS, THUGS AND SPORTS PROMOTERS.

COMPLICATION

IRRITATING

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE 5 **DEFENSE** 2 **PROTECTION** 1 **ENDURANCE** 7 **RESISTANCE** [|||||]

MORALE

CONSCIENCE 4 **DRIVE** [X][X][X][X][●] **INSTINCT** [X][X][●][●]



Jake is a professional boxer who competes in the heavyweight category. The gorilla rose up from the lower categories in his neighborhood until he reached the professional circuit. Having been born in the city slums, his choices were either scraping by in the suburbs or living out in the country, but he chose a third option: taking advantage of his great size and incredible strength to earn a living boxing.

Ostiombe is already a mature man. The fur on his back is getting more and more gray, his lustrous belly looks round and his best moment as a sportsman has probably already passed. If he had grand dreams about the world championship, he forgot them long time ago. However, the veteran boxer still hits hard. His big burliness and hitting range help him win matches against younger opponents. In the ring, the gorilla is an overwhelming image, with red shorts and gloves that contrast against his black fur. He knows how to move in the ring and to give the show the audience demands; the boxing press's photos confirm it. If there is something Ostiombe enjoys, it is bragging of his success and feeling embraced by the audience's cheers.

But the gorilla is someone with his feet on the ground. Appearing in local newspapers every time he wins a match or being a respected figure didn't get to his head. He knows his limits and where his career can go. That makes him modest, but he also has a cynical attitude. He knows life is some kind of joke and celebrates ironies with a laugh. Of course, he doesn't hesitate to try and make others see that, so the gorilla can be a little bit irritating. Jake is not a bad person, but he doesn't avoid using violence to solve a problem. At least the kind of violence he can employ using his fists.

If boxing brings him fame and prestige, the winnings don't allow him to pay his bills. Because of that, when not training or competing, he sells his services as a thug or bodyguard, a role he fulfills perfectly, at least for now. His presence is imposing, and perhaps his successful boxing record makes those tasks easy for him. Detective Blacksad has recommended him more than once. If the pay is good, Ostiombe clears a space in his schedule.



CHARACTERISTICS

FORTITUDE [1][2][3][4][5][6] SMALL +1
REFLEXES [1][2][3][4][5][6] ELLUSIVE +2, ACTING IN THE EXACT MOMENT +2
WILLPOWER [1][2][3][4][5][6] CHATTERBOX +2, CURIOUS +1, EXTROVERT +1
INTELLECT [1][2][3][4][5][6] PHOTOGRAPHY +2, WRITING +1

MILESTONES

- THANKS TO HIS JOB HE HAS MET A LOT OF PEOPLE OF THE JOURNALISM WORLD
- FOR HIM, A GOOD STORY IS MORE SATISFYING THAN ANY OTHER REWARD
- HIS BODY ODOUR HAS RUINED MANY OF HIS OPPORTUNITIES WITH WOMEN
- MOST OF HIS CO-WORKERS RESPECT HIM FOR HIS BOLD ARTICLES

COMPLICATION

LACK OF HYGIENE

COMBAT STATS

INITIATIVE 7 **DEFENSE** 2 **PROTECTION** 0 **ENDURANCE** 5 **RESISTANCE** [1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20]

MORALE

CONSCIENCE 7 **DRIVE** [X][X][X][X][X] **INSTINCT** [X][X][●][●][●]

This intrepid journalist works for *What's News*, an unimportant newspaper with a loyal audience. Weekly is a short weasel with a small and sharp snout. His fur is abundant and brown, except from his jaws to his thorax, where it's white. He wears comfortable clothes and covers himself with an aviator leather jacket. Chatty and optimistic, he's a good companion, although chit-chat is his ruin and he sometimes talks without thinking. It's not unusual to see him wearing a fabric flat cap.

His bag holds his notebooks and his inseparable photo camera with flash. In fact, he carries a second camera, because you can never be too cautious. When he tries to sell himself, Weekly says his nickname comes from the fact he appears once a week in the office, hands in his articles ready to print and disappears again. Yet actually, with a trusted confidant, he will confess the nickname comes from the frequency people says he bathes... Be it truth or not, his body smell is torture for his collaborators that have a sharp nose.

Weekly is curious and meddling, traits usually irritating to others. When at a new place, he touches everything in range, with a curious and nosy attitude that earns his host's antipathies, but

helps him to be a good reporter. He'd like to be a Casanova, but his appearance and lack of hygiene make that hard. However, Weekly never loses the opportunity to whistle at any woman that looks attractive... a seduction strategy that doesn't get him very good results.

Despite his flaws, Weekly is an intrepid and effective journalist. Brave and a bit reckless, he has the perfect personality to stick his nose where it doesn't belong. If there is an infidelity case to report on, the weasel will be there with his camera, spying through the window to get the perfect shot. If there is a corrupt politician to investigate, he'll be there intruding to get certain documents. As normal with all brave journalists that risk everything for the right photo, Weekly's career can go one of two ways. Through one, he can reach fame and fortune for his exclusives and his great, weighty articles; perhaps he'll even win a Pulitzer for his boldness and scope. On the other hand, meddling in other people's secret business can entail a fast and direct road to a shallow grave in some open lot. Although too young to admit it openly, Weekly would like to be a prestigious journalist, known and praised (as well as desired by the ladies). Perhaps, the weasel dreams, some day he'll get to be the chief editor of *What's News*.