DOES LOVE FORGIVE?

TWO ONE-TO-ONE SCENARIOS FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Collected Player Handouts
Handout: Love 3

**Officer Bart Cicharski:** you've known Bart ever since you began working as a private eye. For all his rough edges, Cicharski is a good and honest cop—something of a rarity in Chicago. You've helped each other out many times in the past, and you know you can rely on him.

**Billy “Little Comb” Brock:** you meet all sorts in your line of work, some good, some bad. Billy's not a bad apple at heart, but he got in with the wrong crowd at a young age and bought into the whole “romance” of being a hoodlum. It would've gotten him killed if you hadn't been there to pull him out of the fire, so he owes you. Billy seems to know everyone in the Chicago underworld, which makes him a very useful contact.
You grew up in an orphanage. It was a tough life, but one you managed to survive, in large part due to your friendship with another of the orphans: a young girl called Hattie James. Whenever you got yourself into a scrape, Hattie was always there to stand up for you, be it against the staff or your fellow orphans—as she is older than you, she had more respect among the other children than you did. In your eyes, Hattie was always brave and self-confident, and you looked up to her.

One of your favorite games when you were younger was playing “riddles,” word games that you used to write down and hide behind a loose tile near the bathtubs. Hattie was always better at this game than you, and always used to tease you about it. In a kind-hearted way, of course—Hattie was never mean to you.

You remember the day Hattie shared her big secret with you: she’d found a litter of puppies in an abandoned building near the orphanage and was taking care of them. This shared confidence brought you even closer together, and you would sneak off to see the puppies whenever you got the chance. One day, however, you weren’t careful enough, and without you realizing, one of the orphanage’s staff members noticed you going out and followed you. Luckily, another orphan, Ellen O’Sullivan, got ahead of you and warned you of the danger. Ellen was an Irish girl, younger than both of you, who always stuck close to you and Hattie, but up until then had always been too shy to make friends with you both. Thanks to her intervention, the staff member didn’t learn about the puppies and you avoided any consequences for your illicit trips. From that moment, the three of you became practically inseparable.

However, all good things must come to an end, and as you grew older, Ellen fell in love with you, but you could not reciprocate that love. Heartbroken by your rejection, she told you that she never wanted to see you or Hattie (who she seemed to blame, too, for some reason) ever again. Soon Ellen was adopted, which made the situation less awkward for you and Hattie, as Ellen had refused all attempts to repair your broken friendship. Not long after her adoption, Ellen started writing letters to you, but did not give a return address. In fact, she still writes to you every now and again, with the latest letter arriving a couple of weeks ago. You’re not sure how she knows where you live, but presumably she looked you up in the city’s directory.

You still have a faded photograph of the three of you, taken when you were around 12 or 13 years old, in pride of place in your office. Although you haven’t seen or spoken to Ellen since she left the orphanage, your friendship with Hattie stood the test of time, even after she married her sweetheart, John May. You see her as often as you can, work permitting.
Handout: Love 2

January 13th, 1929

My Love!
This time I’m writing to you from Chicago. I know you still live here and I hope we will be able to meet one day. I can see that famous old water tower from the windows of my apartment and I admire how it’s lit up by the setting sun.

Today was a cloudless and beautiful day, so I could even spot part of the shore from my special high perch up on the roof. No one (but you) knows I come up here. The janitor wouldn’t be pleased if he did. He’s such a fussbudget—just like our old Director at the orphanage! Do you remember him?

Someday, I would like to share every sunrise and sunset with you. Our lives would then be filled with all the splendid colors of the sky and our love would become everlasting.

Be sure I think about you every day, and know that I plan our next meeting every chance I get. I think I’ll be able to make our paths not only cross very soon but also lead in the same direction! You may no longer recognize me as the woman I was, but deep down, it will still be me. Look forward to more news from me, my Darling.

Forever yours,

Ellen
Statement taken by: B. Cicharski
Witness: Frank Guseenberg
Place: Provident Hospital of Cook County, room No. 27
Date: February 14th, 1929

Despite suffering from 14 gunshot wounds, Mr. Guseenberg initially claimed that no one had opened fire on him. When his level of painkillers was reduced, it was possible to gain limited information concerning the course of events. The victims were in the buildings at 2122 North Clark Street. Two men dressed in police uniforms and armed with submachine guns entered the property and ordered the occupants to line up facing the wall, under the pretext of arresting them. The witness many times emphasized that a German shepherd dog, also present in the building, started to bark as soon as the killers entered the garage. He claimed that the attackers took several shots at the dog. The animal initially appeared to have been killed, but “revived” after the gunmen left the building, and was apparently unharmed. The witness did not give any information that could be helpful during the investigation.

Signed by
Officer Bartholomew Cicharski, Chicago P.D.
Handout: Love 7

[Handwritten text and drawings]


1. Even without being asked, it will answer willingly.
And it can speak any and all languages fluently.
Although, bashfully, it will not speak first,
It will repeat after you the things most versed.

2. It has no bones but has a spine,
And while its leaves turn, they do not change color.
It cannot speak,
Yet is never short of tales to tell.
INTRODUCTION
Welcome to Does Love Forgive? This is a collection of one-to-one scenarios for the Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game.

Usually, Call of Cthulhu is played with one Keeper and between two to six investigators. Sometimes, though, it can be hard to get a group of players together, so the scenarios in this collection have been specifically designed for just two people: one Keeper and one player-investigator.

Each of the scenarios can be played over the course of one session, although the Keeper may wish to expand the adventures (based on the investigator's actions), or create their own follow on adventures. While the first scenario, Love You to Death, is tied to a historical Valentine's Day event in Chicago, the other two scenarios—Mask of Desire and Double Take—can be moved to different locations and, potentially, different time periods other than the ones specified, and advice is provided in both for how to handle such moves.

The scenarios are one-shot standalones and not designed to be linked together in a mini-campaign or to be used as sidetracks in an ongoing campaign. A determined Keeper could do so if they wished, although this would require a lot more work on their part to make the scenarios fit together.

In terms of rules, the Call of Cthulhu Starter Set or the Call of Cthulhu: Keeper Rulebook can be used to run these adventures. All are suitable for Keepers and players of any level of experience, and guidance is provided throughout to help less experienced Keepers support their player during each game. The scenarios build in complexity, as indicated by the number of stars each one has been assigned: 1 star (Love You to Death) means that it's a straightforward scenario, while three stars (Double Take) means it's a bit more complex and the Keeper will need to improvise more around the basic plot. Advice and guidance is given on creating investigators for each scenario, as well as how existing investigators might be adapted to fit.

LOVE STORY?
Originally, these scenarios were released in Poland by Black Monk Games for February 14th, 2020. Unsurprisingly, the loose connecting motif of all three scenarios is love, in one form or another. By their very nature, one-to-one scenarios tend to be a more intense experience than games involving larger groups, so there are some extra considerations to take into account when running and playing them, especially with that underlying theme.

Handout: Mask 1

About Anna Konrad
One of the things you love most about Anna is her wonderful singing voice. She knows much about music theory, art, and philosophy, and she'll happily bend your ear about these topics for hours at a time. Not that you mind, because you know it's a sign that she's comfortable around you. It's a completely different matter with strangers—with other people, Anna is hesitant, shy, and a little awkward. Sometimes this means she overcompensates and tries too hard to appear relaxed and witty, when, deep down, you know she's struggling. If she could overcome this, and her stage fright, you have no doubt she could be a big star.

Lucas Neston has hired an agent—a woman called Emily Webster—so look after Anna's professional interests. You hope she will be able to help Anna realize her dreams of becoming a professional singer. Webster's managed to line up an audition for tomorrow night with the famous jazz violinist and orchestra leader Nancy Turner. But, before the audition, you have a party at Madame de Tsisson's to attend—another one of Webster's ideas to get Anna's face and voice known by the local artistic community.

About Lucas Neston
For all his family's wealth, you kind of feel a little sorry for Lucas. His life was planned out for him since the day he was born—all the best schools, all the best clubs and societies, Yale University, then joining his father's law firm—regardless of what he wanted. It's a real shame, because while he might make a good lawyer one day, you know he'd be much happier if he could be an artist; a pursuit that you feel would better suit his sensitive and superstitious temperament. He's a good artist, too—especially his charcoal sketches, if only he could have a little more faith in his own abilities, you're sure he could make a go of it. Lucas has managed to put off joining his father's law firm for the moment, largely by concentrating on helping Anna achieve her own dreams. But, he can't postpone the inevitable forever.

About Anna and Lucas
You, Anna, and Lucas share a brownstone (courtesy of Lucas' father) in New York City. You know from the hours of the three of you have spent talking, and from his determination to help Anna succeed in her career, that Lucas is very fond of Anna, but you can't quite figure out in what way. Is he trying to live out his dreams through her, or is there more to it? Whatever his thoughts on the matter are, you know Anna sees him only as a good and trusted friend.
Depending on the nature of their out-of-character relationship, the player may feel uncomfortable roleplaying romantic or highly emotionally-charged scenes with their Keeper, and vice versa. The Keeper should discuss any potentially problematic plot elements with their player as, depending on their own or their player's personal past experiences, one or other of them may not be comfortable with the nature of some of the non-player characters' (NPCs') behavior toward the investigator, or certain elements of the plot in general. Regardless of the reason, the Keeper and player should discuss any concerns they have before the game session begins in earnest to establish boundaries and consent for each scenario. Even if the player doesn't raise any concerns, it is the Keeper's duty of care throughout each game to make sure that the player still agrees with the way the story is progressing.

Handout: Mask 2

Handout: Mask 3
If the player is not comfortable with any aspect of their investigator's relationships with the various NPCs, or how those relationships are used in the plot, the Keeper should work with them until they are. If the player is uncomfortable with any plot element, for whatever reason, either before or during the game, the Keeper must respect their wishes and, as necessary, change or draw a veil over a particular scene. It works the other way, too—the player should not insist on focusing on elements that are uncomfortable or distressing for their Keeper. The idea of the game is to have fun and respecting each other's wishes is key to that experience.

Advice is given in the Creating the Investigator sections of each scenario about how to build or adapt an investigator so they “fit” the story being played. One of the last things the player will need to do before a scenario begins is to determine their investigator’s Luck value. To do so, have them roll 3D6 and multiply the result by 5, and then circle the appropriate number in the Luck box on their investigator sheet.

Handout: Mask 4

It is best to make decisions quickly. You have until tonight. The price is high, but it's worth it!

P.

Handout: Mask 5

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blood

Handout: Mask 8
One of the main differences in one-to-one play is that the investigator has a relatively limited range of skills at their disposal for investigating the mystery at the heart of each scenario. In games with multiple players, an investigator without a particular skill isn't necessarily a problem, as someone else in the group will (most likely) be able to cover that shortfall. Combat is also more fraught with danger in a one-to-one game, as the investigator is the sole focus of an aggressor's attention and can easily be outnumbered if there is more than one assailant involved.

Even though these are all one-to-one scenarios, it's important to remember that the investigator is not alone. Each scenario has NPCs the investigator can call on for support as the story progresses, be that in terms of specialist expertise—such as Dr. Nielsen in *Double Take*—or just in terms of muscle power—such as Officer Cicharski in *Love You to Death*. How helpful each NPC may be depends on the investigator's relationship with them. Hints and advice are provided in the roleplaying hooks section of each character's Dramatis Personae entry.

There should always be someone who can help the investigator, though, as it's no fun for either the player or the Keeper to have the story flounder for want of the right skill or some much needed back up. Of course, there might be a price for asking for that assistance, one the investigator may or may not end up regretting in the end.