

# HUNDLEDÄMMERUNG TWILIGHT OF THE DOGS



A 24-hour RPG by Michael Walton

# **HUNDEDÄMMERUNG**

## **TWILIGHT OF THE DOGS**

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Too Dark to Read: Introduction – p. 3**

**A Dog's Life: Character Creation – p. 8**

**Obedience School: Rules – p. 14**

**Call of the Wild: Playing the Game – p. 21**

**Afterword – p. 28**

**Appendix: Character Sheet – p. 29**

# TOO DARK TO READ

Professor Keeton bounced around the lab like a one-man chain reaction. He adjusted a camera here, a sensor there, checking to insure that everything was perfect. "Today is the big day, Ozymandias," he said to a ponderous gray tabby that rested on a pile of books in one corner, "My big experiment. Now we'll see if I'm as brilliant as I think I am or as kooky as my detractors say." The professor chuckled, enjoying the joke at his own expense, and sat down before his computer. "Let's see what Hal has to say, shall we?"

As the professor waited for the diagnostic sequence to run a furry blur launched itself at him from across the room. The living missile came to rest in the professor's lap, furiously wagging a stumpy tail and practically vibrating with glee. The dog was a rather disreputable looking mutt, small yet powerfully built, with kinky brown-on-white fur from snout to tail. "Well, good morrow, MacDuff!" said Keeton, "I was wondering when you'd get back from your morning constitutional. Chase any squirrels, my good man?" The dog yipped ecstatically and pushed his head under the professor's hand. Keeton laughed and hugged the dog to his chest. He idly stroked MacDuff with one hand while working the keyboard with the other. Even one-handed, his gestures had a swiftness and fluidity that could only come from being used to working with a dog in his lap. "Well, I'm glad you're back, boy. You know what Groucho said; 'Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.'" The dog barked as if he was laughing at the man's joke, and Professor

Keeton laughed with him. The cat opened his eyes halfway to give the proceedings a bored look before lapsing back into feigned slumber. When the laughter subsided Keeton gently put the dog on the floor and shooed him away with a last pat on the head. "I have to work now, boy," he said. As he flipped a bank of switches he added to both animals, "I'll be recording this whole thing, so you two try not to make any noise during the experiment." He jerked a thumb toward the back of the room, which was replete with cages holding dozens of cats, mice and white rats. "I expect you to set an example for our guests." MacDuff took the hint that no more petting was forthcoming, so he found his customary spot on the floor and curled himself into it. Professor Keeton lifted a microphone to his lips and began to record.

"11:18 a.m.," he intoned in a voice that belied his shriveled frame, "Quantum genetic experiment, take 1. I have long believed that quantum effects have determined the shape of all life on Earth by selecting the timing and nature of genetic mutations. To prove this theory I have constructed this Quantum Mutagenesis Chamber. It is similar in concept to the famous Schrödinger's Cat experiment – which, to my knowledge – has never actually been tried." The professor paused to drink some water from a handy glass, frowned as the taste revealed the drink to be a bit older than he expected, then bravely continued. "Instead of using a cat – which would be inhumane, to say nothing of illegal – I will be using a lifeform that no one will feel sentimental about; a virus. Today I



will be working with a simple rhinovirus – a strain which I have already had, no less, so even if something goes horribly wrong and the virus gets loose it won't kill anyone."

The professor scowled as he glanced at some readings, adjusted a few settings and nodded in satisfaction before continuing his narration. "The QMC is a breakthrough in quantum energy field manipulation if I do say so myself. Right now the virus is being held in an unstable quantum state in the sealed container with a powerful mutagen and a radiation source, something to provide a quantum stimulus, as it were. True to Schrödinger's experiment, the virus is both mutated and unmutated while the quantum state remains in flux. By carefully controlling both the rate of field decay and the frequency of field modulation I can prevent the quantum state from collapsing until a moment of my choosing, at which point I can influence the direction of the mutation with a simple EM burst. If this works, I will have mutated a rhinovirus so that it can infect bacterial cells. I will have created a synthetic lifeform! And with control of mutation come all sorts of medical benefits. Elimination of genetically transmitted diseases, eradication of certain superplagues, even

cures for some canc..." Keeton was interrupted by Ozymandias suddenly getting up and darting across the room while MacDuff let out a howl like that of a lost soul. "What the... MacDuff! Quiet, dog!" the professor bellowed. MacDuff threw his head back and continued to howl. Ozymandias ran back and forth across the chamber, eyes wide in panic, as if searching for a way out. "Of all the times..." the professor grumbled. He got up and strode toward MacDuff to chastise the dog for interrupting the recording.

He got halfway there before the first shock hit. The first tremor knocked Professor Keeton off his feet. The second damaged the foundations of the building enough to kick in the emergency power. Unfortunately, the wiring in the old building wasn't rated for Keeton's experiment. The quantum chamber shorted out in a shower of sparks that sent scientist, dog and cat scurrying for cover. Then, invisibly and instantly, the quantum state collapsed in ways that Professor Keeton had never anticipated. The chamber exploded, vaporizing its contents and spraying them all over the room. The dog, cat and man all sneezed upon inhaling the virus-laden spray. The professor was spared any speculation about what the newly mutated virus would do to them. True to the laws of dramatic necessity, the ceiling came down and buried him, Ozymandias and all the lab animals. Only MacDuff remained safely outside the area of falling debris. He was still there three days later, too weak from hunger and thirst to continue digging, when the firefighters arrived to look for survivors.

Pictures of the brave little mutt being carried out of the wreckage where he faithfully waited for his master made the national news. Hundreds of families

clamored to adopt the dog, and he finally went to a good home after an auction that raised nearly \$20,000 for the professor's favorite charity. MacDuff's new family considered themselves blessed to have such a loving, loyal – and strangely intelligent – pet.

About a week after the search for survivors had become a search for bodies, four cats clawed their way out of the wreckage of the lab. One was a large gray tabby. The others were of various common cat colors and patterns. Ozymandias shook his head in a vain attempt to clear the sensation of pain that hummed between his ears. He looked over at one of the other cats, somehow instinctively knowing that this creature was the source of his pain. He surveyed the damaged feline, noting the dragging rear leg and the broken ribs jutting from beneath the skin, and made a fateful decision. He unsheathed his claws and, with one blindingly swift motion, tore out the other cat's throat. The pain subsided immediately. When he could think again it occurred to the cat that, for the first time in memory, he could actually think. On the heels of this revelation came another, more basic yet somehow far more profound. *I... I am Ozymandias,*

he marveled. He turned his attention on the two remaining lab cats and projected at them with the full force of his newly actualized will. *I am Ozymandias!*

The two other cats looked unperturbed at this outburst. In unison they turned their eyes on him, yawned prodigiously and projected, *So what? So am I.* It wasn't until that moment that Ozymandias realized that none of them were breathing.

*I'm... we're... I'm different,* the cat thought to his selves.

*Yes,* replied the others, *I'm better. Better than that stupid dog. Better than other cats. Better even than humans.*

Ozymandias nodded, a gesture that he didn't remember picking up from the professor. *I remember... something...* he mused.

*I remember the professor,* thought one of the others.

*I remember his theories,* said the other.

*I know what we must do,* the pair said in unison.

Ozymandias nodded again, secure as only they can be who have a mission and know that their cause is just. *I have work to do,* he thought. Then, in perfect lockstep, without any sound, one cat in three bodies walked out of the wreckage and vanished into the night.

## IN THE DOGHOUSE

Hundedämmerung is something different in the world of role-playing games. Most games allow players to portray beings of greater than human power wielding forces that ordinary people barely understand. This game allows you to play... a dog. Not just any dog, but a dog that has been lifted to human levels of intelligence, albeit the lower end of the scale, and endowed with minor telepathic powers that serve as speech. In this game you will fight for

the survival of your pack or the safety of "your" humans. And always, in the background, there looms the specter of a cat that is many cats – the undead, the undying, the (probably) evil Ozymandias.

In Hundedämmerung you have no spells, you wield no magical or high-tech weapons and your psionic abilities aren't much good for combat. What you have are your wits backed by natural canine ability. Use them right and evil will be

your chew toy. Mess up and Ozymandias will use you as a scratching post.

Welcome to the doghouse, sucker.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- A pencil
- A set of dice (see the glossary below; you'll need as many as two of each kind)
- Blank sheets of paper
- Copies of the character sheet in the back of this book
- Easy access to these rules (either through a printed copy or through a pdf reader on a computer)
- A willingness to not take this role-playing stuff too seriously.

## GLOSSARY

This game is mainly written for people who have some experience with role-playing games. For those who don't the following list of terms will alleviate some of the confusion.

*Character:* the imaginary person to whom all the bad stuff in the game really happens; never, under any circumstances, to be confused with a *player*. A character under the control of a player is a Player Character, or PC. A character controlled by the Pack Leader (see below) is a Non-player Character, or NPC.

*Dice:* simple and ancient devices used to adjudicate random chance. The easiest way to classify dice is by the number of sides. The most familiar type, a cube, has six sides and is abbreviated d6. There are also 4-sided (d4), 8-sided (d8), 10-sided (d10), 12-sided (d12) and 20-sided (d20) dice. *Hundedämmerung* uses all of these varieties of dice. You can probably find them at your local comic store if you don't already have them.

Two other "artificial" types of dice are the 2-sided (d2), which entails rolling a die of any other type and reading an odd result as 1 and an even result as 2, and the 3-sided (d3), in which the player rolls a d6. Read results 1-3 as normal. For

results 4-6 subtract three and read the difference as the result. Hence, a d3 roll of 4 = 1, 5 = 2 and 6 = 3.

*Hundedämmerung:* (noun) hoon-deh-DEM-eh-roong – from the German words *hund* (dog) and *dämmerung* (twilight). 1) fictional disaster of potentially global proportions that could lead to the utter extinction of dogs on Earth. 2) light-hearted, really fun RPG in which you get to play a dog.

*Pack Leader:* the person in charge of running the game; in other game systems called the Game Master (GM), Dungeon Master (DM), Narrator, Storyteller, Games Operational Director (GOD) or something equally pretentious. The Pack Leader interprets rules, arbitrates disputes between players and sets up the scenarios for the players to enjoy. A good Pack Leader is 25% improvisational speaker, 20% armchair general, 10% scriptwriter, 30% actor, 15% lawyer, 10% historian and 5% coach.<sup>1</sup>

*Player:* a real person who exists outside of the game, *a la* the person reading this document. A player controls a character;

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<sup>1</sup> Yes, the game designer knows that this adds up to more than 100%. Deal with it.

the reverse should never be true. If forced to choose between the well being of a player and that of a character, the Pack Leader and other players should always – this cannot be overstated, *always* – choose in favor of the player.

*Role-playing Game (RPG)*: a game of "let's pretend" with written rules. The

players take on the roles of fictional persons and act out a story that they cooperatively make up as they go. It's basically making a TV show, only without the make-up, costumes, props, sets, special effects and probably most of the acting talent.





# A DOG'S LIFE

Hundedämmerung is a role-playing game, so the first step in playing is creating a character. You begin by choosing what kind of dog your character will be. This game makes no attempt to list all of the hundreds of breeds of dog in the world. Instead you choose from a short list that describes different kinds of dog in very general terms; each type encompasses many different breeds. The type of dog determines the initial values of a character's ability scores.

## ABILITIES

A character has eight abilities that determine how well he performs various tasks. Each ability consists of an adjective – as in, how [blank] your dog is – and a die notation. Each character also has up to three pips – represented on the character sheet as dots – associated with each ability.

### Quick

This ability measures how fast a dog can run, how far he can jump and how good he is at dodging and acrobatics.

### Strong

This ability is used for lifting, carrying or dragging things, breaking out of holds or smashing through obstacles. Strong also determines how much damage a dog inflicts in combat.

### Tough

The tougher a dog is the more he can withstand combat damage and stresses like disease, poison and temperature extremes.



### Alert

All dogs have sharper senses than humans do (except for vision), but not all dogs are created equal. Greater alertness makes a character better at tracking, finding hidden things or noticing danger.

All dogs have a bonus of +2 to any Alert roll when using the sense of smell, but they suffer a penalty of -2 to Alert rolls that use sight.

### Sly

This ability measures how tricky a dog is. Use Sly for tasks that involve stealth, lying to or tricking other animals, setting traps and detecting subterfuge from others.

### Smart

Smart is about raw brainpower. Use this ability for figuring out puzzles and analyzing human technology.

### Cute

Cute is a dog's ability to look harmless or pitiable. Use Cute to deceive or look appealing to humans.

## **Dogged**

This ability represents a character's willpower and inner strength. Use it to resist fatigue, fear and distractions (like a bitch in heat two blocks away...).

## **BREEDS**

There are seven types of dog in Hundedämmerung. Each entry on the list below includes two or more examples, but these aren't even a significant fraction of the breeds of dog that exist in the real world. Each type also has a size rating of 1-4 and a unique special ability.

### **Toy Dog**

Toy dogs are the smallest dogs – when fully grown they are the size of other dogs' puppies – so they can't rely on brute force to solve their problems. They are adept at finding ways around problems that they can't go through.

*Examples:* Chihuahua, Lhasa Apso, Toy Poodle

*Size:* 1

*Abilities:* Quick d10, Strong d4, Tough d6, Alert d10, Sly d12, Smart d8, Cute d12, Dogged d8

*Special:* a toy dog is considered to be actively dodging any attack unless he is immobilized. When a toy dog declares an active dodge he gets a bonus of +2 to the roll.

### **Small Dog**

Only slightly larger than toy dogs, small dogs are masters of avoiding contests of strength. They prefer to use speed and stealth, but they are also gifted with superior brainpower.

*Examples:* Cocker Spaniel, Jack Russell Terrier, Scottie

*Size:* 2

*Abilities:* Quick d12, Strong d6, Tough d6, Alert d8, Sly d10, Smart d12, Cute d10, Dogged d8

*Special:* +2 to Quick rolls for jumping or acrobatics.

### **Wiener Dog**

Wiener dogs have long bodies and short legs. They lack speed and agility, but they are the most proficient diggers of the dog world and are blessed with incredible persistence.

*Examples:* Basset Hound, Dachshund

*Size:* 1 or 2

*Abilities:* Quick d6, Strong d6 (size 1) or d8 (size 2), Tough d8, Alert d12, Sly d10, Smart d10, Cute d8 (size 1) or d6 (size 2), Dogged d12

*Special:* +2 to any roll for squeezing through small spaces or digging.

### **Lean Dog**

Lean dogs are the fastest runners of the dog world. They prefer to outrun problems rather than outfight them, but when forced to fight they are adept at turning contests of strength into contests of speed.

*Examples:* Greyhound, Whippet

*Size:* 3

*Abilities:* Quick d12, Strong d8, Tough d10, Alert d10, Sly d12, Smart d6, Cute d6, Dogged d8

*Special:* +2 to Quick rolls for running and to Tough rolls for resisting fatigue.

### **Big Dog**

Big dogs have an excellent mix of strength, speed and intelligence. This makes them the favored working dogs among humans.

*Examples:* Bulldog, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever

*Size:* 3

*Abilities:* Quick d10, Strong d10, Tough d12, Alert d8, Sly d8, Smart d10, Cute d6, Dogged d8

*Special:* a big dog may roll a d20 on one task check per scene.



### **Monster Dog**

The largest and scariest-looking dogs are all of this type. Monster dogs have astonishing stamina and power, but they are not the smartest or most agile dogs.

*Examples:* Great Dane, Rhodesian Ridgeback, St. Bernard

*Size:* 4

*Abilities:* Quick d8, Strong d12, Tough d12, Alert d8, Sly d8, Smart d6, Cute d6, Dogged d10

*Special:* +1 to all damage inflicted; can re-roll one failed Strong test per scene.

### **Mutt**

A mutt is a mixture of two breeds of dog. In the real world this can be any two breeds, but for game purposes a mutt is a mixture of two of the other six types.

To create a mutt, start with one of the other types. Add the special ability of one of the remaining five types, with the restriction that both types must be the same size or of adjacent sizes. For example, toy dogs can only mix with small dogs and wiener dogs, while monster dogs can only mix with big dogs and lean dogs. This creates a dog with

two special abilities. Mutts pay for this by having a lower threshold of pips for their abilities (see below).

### **Optional Rule: Best of the Breed**

Players can further customize their characters to more closely match the traits of specific breeds or the particular merits of individual dogs. The player may increase one – and only one – ability by one die size at the cost of decreasing another ability by one die size (i.e. upgrading Quick from d6 to d8 at the cost of decreasing Sly from d10 to d8). No ability may be increased to higher than d12 or decreased to less than d6.

### **BACKGROUND**

Characters begin with one of three backgrounds. Background determines where the dog lived before becoming infected with the Schrödinger Virus and provides starting Tricks and Pips (see below).

### **Junkyard Dog**

You had humans of your own, but you were mostly left to your own devices.

Your job was to guard some area, and your people intended that you be tough and vicious. You are familiar with humans, but you don't really like most of them. This category includes military and police dogs. *Starting Tricks: 3*

### **Pet**

You are a pampered pooch who is used to being cared for by humans. You have a lot of experience in being Man's best friend, but you don't know much about pack etiquette or surviving on your own. This category includes show dogs and racing dogs. *Starting Tricks: 5*

### **Stray Dog**

You are accustomed to life without human care. You eat whatever people throw away or whatever you can catch. You may not fear humans, but you are at the very least wary of them. You certainly don't have much experience in dealing with them, with the exceptions of animal control officers and teasing children. *Starting Tricks: 1*

### **PIPS**

Not all dogs of the same type have the same capabilities. To represent these individual differences each character gets pips to distribute among the eight abilities. A starting character receives the following number of pips based on background:

- Junkyard dog: 5
- Pet: 3
- Stray dog: 7

The number of pips placed in an ability is a bonus to all rolls that use that ability. This is covered in more detail in the rules chapter. Any ability may have up to three pips in it unless the character is a mutt. Mutts may only have up to two pips per ability.

## **TRICKS**

Dogs don't really have skills, but they may learn tricks. A trick helps a character in certain situations by providing a bonus. A character who has a trick that applies to the task at hand may roll two dice of the appropriate type and add the results together to determine success or failure. Starting characters get a number of tricks appropriate to their backgrounds. Benefiting from a trick requires that the dog actually perform some version of the action named.

### **Beg**

This trick helps in convincing others to give you things. It works just as well on other animals as it does on humans.

### **Fetch**

This trick aids in following fast-moving targets – catching a thrown object, biting running prey, etc.

### **Heel**

Heel is good for moving silently or for concealing one's trail.

### **Play Dead**

A dog can use play dead with Sly to appear weaker than he actually is or with Tough to resist damage.

### **Point**

This trick aids in tracking tasks. It can also be used to help someone else's tracking task.

### **Roll Over**

Humans find this cute, but its real use is to convince other animals that you're harmless. Too bad it doesn't work on cats or vermin.

## Shake

Shake helps a dog to ingratiate himself with humans; it's good for looking friendly. The trick is useless for dealing with other animals.

## Sic 'Em

There is only one use for this trick; biting things. The target doesn't have to be a living thing, but the goal is always to do damage.

## Sit

Sitting is a good posture from which to scan your environment. Use this trick to help you notice things.

## Speak

A good loud bark can help to avoid a fight by intimidating foes.

## Stay

Hiding and/or remaining in place for extended periods are functions of stay.

## Up

This trick aids tasks related to jumping or moving on two legs.

## Optional Rule: Old Dogs, New Tricks

Tricks, as written, are very powerful (especially in combat). A scaled approach to tricks both reduces the power of tricks and increases their cost. If this rule is in place a player may purchase a trick more than once. The first level of the trick lets the player roll 1d4 in addition to the normal ability die for any task check to which the trick applies. Each level after the first increases the die size by one level (d6 at the second level, d8 at the third, etc.) up to a d12. Each level of a trick counts as a new trick at character creation and for experience purposes (see *Advancement and Rewards*).

## LIFE

A dog's Life is a measure of how much damage the character can take before being rendered unconscious or dead. There are three Life tracks:

- *Healthy*: a character has Healthy points equal to half the die value of his Dogged ability (for example, a dog with d8 Dogged has 4 points of Healthy). Once these points are gone further damage applies to its Bruised track.
- *Bruised*: a dog has Bruised points equal to half the die value of his Tough ability (d12 Tough = 6 Bruised, and so on). A character who is reduced to his Wounded level has a penalty of -3 on all rolls. When all Bruised points are gone the dog is knocked out and further damage applies to its Wounded track.
- *Wounded*: a dog has Wounded points equal to its size. When these points are gone the dog is dead.

## SEX

A dog is either male or female; pick one for your character to be.

*A note on gender and language: while Hundedämmerung characters can be of either sex, this book usually employs male pronouns. This is not intended as a slight against women (of whom the author is a huge fan). It is merely done for simplicity's sake and as a nod to the fact that most of the people who play rpgs are male.*

## DESCRIPTION

Decide what your character looks like, within the limits of his breed. Write down the colors of the dog's fur and eyes, and note any significant patterns. It may be a good idea to write down fur texture and appearance as well (wiry, scruffy

curly, silky, etc.). It is recommended that you decide on the dog's specific breed.

### **EQUIPMENT**

Equipment? Yeah, right. You're playing a dog, for cryin' out loud! Okay, okay, don't give me the puppy eyes. You can have some starting gear just to stop the whining, jeez.

A junkyard dog or pet begins play with a flea collar. You have also had all your shots.

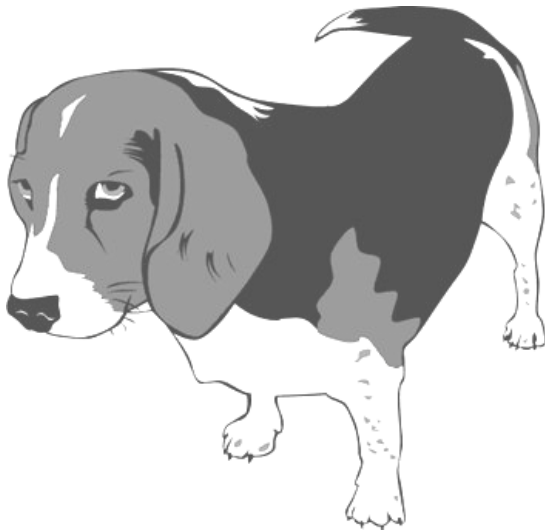
A stray dog begins play with the knowledge of where to find the best scraps in your area and which ditches and streams are safe to drink from. You also

know what animal control uniforms and vehicles look like. A stray also knows a number of safe places to sleep equal to 2 + the greater of his Sly or Smart pips.

### **NAME**

The last step in creating a character is choosing a name. For junkyard dogs and pets a name can be anything that humans would think to call a dog. For strays a name is usually descriptive of the dog's appearance or manner. Most dogs have simple names consisting of 1-2 words – i.e. Missy, Spike, Brownie or Lady Jane. Only pets have long, fancy names.

# OBEDIENCE SCHOOL



## TASK RESOLUTION

Like most rpgs Hundedämmerung uses dice to resolve events. Not everything requires a roll, however. You should only roll dice for actions that have both dramatic import and for which the outcome is somehow in doubt. Don't bother to roll if the action has no real effect on the plot, or if either failure or success is assured.

Task resolution for Hundedämmerung involves rolling a single die of a size determined by the ability used by the acting character. Take the die result, add the character's pips in that ability, add any bonuses that the character has (i.e. from breed special abilities) and subtract any penalties that apply. If the result is higher than the difficulty that the Pack Leader assigns for that task the character succeeds. A final result that is equal to or less than the difficulty is a failure. One major exception bears mentioning – a result of "1" on the die, regardless of any other modifiers, is always a failure.

Assigning the difficulty of various tasks is a job for the Pack Leader. The table below gives a basic idea of the

difficulty structure for various tasks. The Pack Leader may also assign situational modifiers as either bonuses or penalties to any given roll; anything that makes the task easier can earn a bonus, while anything that makes the task harder can impose a penalty. Situational modifiers can be anywhere from -3 to +3. A condition that creates a really serious obstacle might require the player to redo a successful roll and take the lower result instead of or in addition to subtracting a penalty. The amount by which the player succeeds or fails the roll determines the degree of success or failure.

Task Difficulty	Target Number
Easy	4
Routine	6
Challenging	8
Difficult	10
Overwhelming	12

*Example: Rex and Elsa are trying to jump a fence to get away from a dogcatcher. Rex is a big dog with d10 Quick and two Quick pips, while Elsa is a wiener dog with d6 Quick, one Quick pip and the Up trick. The Pack Leader determines that the fence is high enough to make the maneuver challenging, so Rex and Elsa have to beat a difficulty of 8. Rex's player rolls 1d10 and gets a result of 7. Rex's two pips add +2 to this result to make it 9. This is higher than the difficulty, so Rex gracefully sails over the fence. Elsa's player rolls 2d6 + 1 (she adds one for the pip and gets an extra die because of the trick) and gets 2 and 5. Since 2 + 5 + 1 = 8, Elsa doesn't beat the difficulty. The poor dachshund bumps her nose on the fence and sprawls*

*on the ground to face the dogcatcher alone. The brave little dog stands her ground and snarls while hoping that Rex will come back for her.*

### **Opposed Tests**

The procedure above applies to tests that don't face any active opposition. If there is another living being actively trying to stop the acting character the task becomes an opposed test. In an opposed test both parties roll their respective dice. Whoever gets the higher result wins. In a combat test – the most common type of opposed test – the degree of success is how much damage the attacker inflicts (exception: an attack that is based on the Quick ability can never inflict more than two points of damage). Whoever initiates a combat test is considered the attacker. Ties go to the defender.

*Example: the dogcatcher reaches for Elsa, who tries to bite his hand in response. Because Elsa was standing her ground the dogcatcher is considered the aggressor. The dogcatcher has d8 Strong versus Elsa's d6 +1 Quick (she is going for a quick nip rather than a vicious grab-and-tear; if she wanted to really savage the dogcatcher's hand she would use Strong). The dogcatcher gets a 7, while Elsa gets a 6. Elsa's final result = 6 + 1 = 7. The result is a tie, and ties go to the defender. Elsa stops the dogcatcher's grab with a quick nip that inflicts one point of damage.*

The defender in a combat can try to dodge, counterattack, move out of range or resist. The first three options use Quick, while the fourth uses Tough. A Quick-based defense takes up one of the defender's combat actions. A defender can perform two defenses by forgoing his attack. If he does this, the better of his

defenses applies to all attacks on him that turn. In the example above Elsa's defense was a counterattack.

A character can also use social actions to defend himself from physical attacks – for example, a well-timed growl to make a human hesitate before he swings a kick. For more information see below.

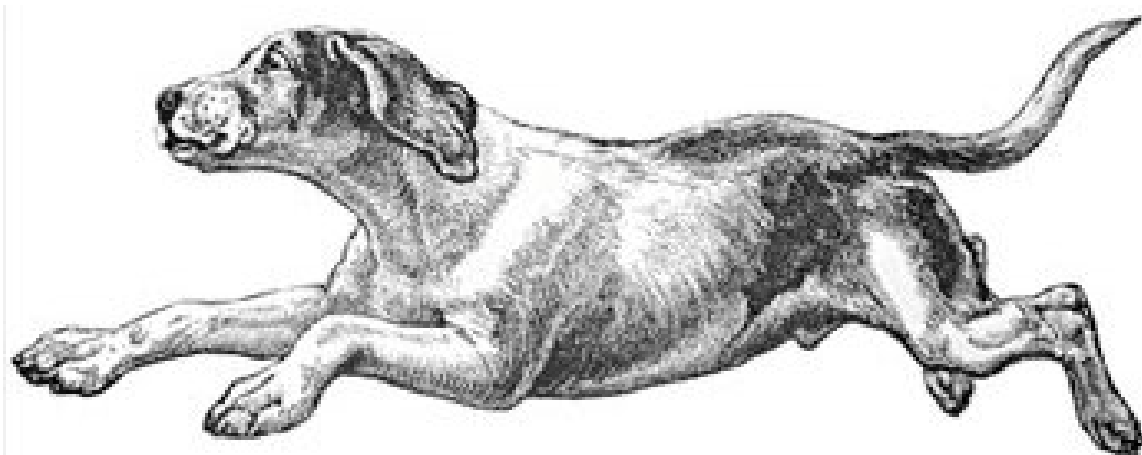
### **Combat Rounds**

Combat occurs in increments called rounds. A round is a variable amount of time, usually just a few seconds, in which every party involved in the fight takes up to two actions, one of which must be either movement or dodge.

Characters act in an order determined by initiative. At the start of combat each party involved – a group of NPCs can be treated as one party for simplicity's sake – rolls Quick and adds their Quick pips. Everyone keeps the same initiative number for the duration of the fight. If two or more characters are tied whoever has the highest Alert rating has the higher initiative. If there are still ties the Pack Leader decides who has the higher initiative; PCs usually take precedence over NPCs in this case. The character with the lowest initiative states their action first, thus giving the faster combatants a chance to react appropriately. This continues with the next lowest initiative until everyone has stated their actions.

When all actions have been stated the character with the highest initiative resolves his action. When that action is resolved play passes to the character with the next highest initiative, and so on. If a faster character's action negates a slower party's action the slower combatant may replace his action with a move or dodge, or he may switch targets. Once everyone has either resolved their actions or chosen





not to act the round is over, and a new round begins.

### Weapons

Dogs (and fortunately, cats) don't have hands, so the only weapons that they can usually employ are the ones that they were born with. Humans are another story; they often arm themselves with implements that increase their combat effectiveness. This is a problem when PCs are up against human opponents.

Using a weapon adds to the damage that a human inflicts with a successful attack. The bonus only applies to damage, not to the attack roll. Rather than waste valuable space on a woefully incomplete list of weapons, this game uses a generic weapon creation system. Just add up all the modifiers from the chart below that apply. The result is the total damage bonus for that weapon type.

Modifier	Damage Bonus
Light	+1
Medium	+2
Heavy*	+3
Edged	+1
Missile	+1
Firearm	+3
Enhanced**	+1

\*Relative to other weapons of the same type

\*\*The weapon has a mechanical enhancement that makes it more damaging, i.e. the pulleys on a compound bow or the articulation on a nunchaku.

### Social Combat

Physical beat-downs aren't the only form of combat that characters may face. Social conflicts work just like physical combat except that different abilities are in play.

- *Emotional Manipulation*: toying with someone's emotions – seduction, oratory and the like – uses Sly on another animal or Cute against a human. The target defends with Smart.
- *Force of Personality*: using one's will to overwhelm someone else's (i.e. to inspire awe or fear) uses Dogged. The target resists with Dogged.
- *(Twisted) Logic*: dazzling someone with brilliance, baffling him with bull chips of persuading him with reason uses Smart. The target defends with Sly. Dogs can't use this form of combat against humans, but humans can use it against dogs – they just don't know that they can.

### Healing

Damage is not permanent – unless it kills the character, that is. The rate at which damage heals depends on which track it is on. The Bruised track must be

fully healed before the Healthy track will heal, and the Wounded track must be full before Bruised points will come back.

- *Healthy*: 1 per scene, and a character heals to his full Healthy level after a good night's sleep.
- *Bruised*: 1 per day of game time
- *Wounded*: 1 per week of game time

## BAD STUFF

Combat is not the only danger that characters may face; disease, poison and adverse environments pose threats of their own. These threats, and anything similar that isn't listed here, are grouped under the generic heading of "bad stuff."

Bad stuff imposes some kind of penalty – or, at the highest level, inflicts damage – on characters who are exposed to it. Characters can resist the effects with a successful Tough check. For disease and poison the first successful check ends the effect. For environmental hazards resistance only negates the penalty for one scene; the character must continue to make resistance rolls until he returns to a hospitable environment. The levels of bad stuff, the difficulty of their respective resistance rolls and their effects appear on the chart below.

Level	Resistance Difficulty	Effect
Mild	Easy	-2 penalty
Moderate	Routine	Do-over*
Severe	Challenging	-4 penalty
Extreme	Difficult	Combo**
Lethal	Overwhelming	1 damage per scene

\*Re-roll the test and take the lower result.

\*\*Combine the penalties of the previous two levels.

Dogs who have had their shots have a bonus of +2 to any roll to resist disease.

## Parasites

Fleas are treated as a mild disease, while ticks are equivalent to a moderate disease. Having had shots does not confer any resistance to fleas or ticks, but drug-based flea and tick treatments do. Flea collars, flea-and-tick "dip" and being bathed in flea shampoo confer temporary immunity – 30 days for a flea collar, 90 days for dip and one week for a flea bath.

Heartworms are a much more serious ailment. A heartworm infestation is a lethal disease that can only be treated with heartworm pills.

## Optional Rule: The Gang's All Hair

Shaggy dogs have an easier time resisting cold, while shorthaired dogs have it easier when resisting heat. A shorthaired dog has a bonus of +1 to the roll when resisting high temperatures but a penalty of -1 to the roll when resisting cold. For a dog with a thick, shaggy coat it's the other way around. This is cumulative with the optional rule below if both are in effect.

## Optional Rule: Size Matters

Heat is hard on bigger dogs while cold is hard on smaller ones. A toy dog has a bonus of +2 to any roll to resist heat but suffers a penalty of -2 to any roll to resist cold. For monster dogs these modifiers are reversed. This is cumulative with the optional rule above if both are in effect.

## The Schrödinger Virus

The S-virus is a special kind of disease that is transmitted both sexually and genetically; all dogs who have it either got it by mating with an infected partner or were born with it. This is for the canine strain of the virus, of course; transmission works differently for cats. All PCs are infected, and they may have to infect others in the course of the game.

Genetic transmission is the most reliable method. The virus is transmitted on the X chromosome, so all male puppies born to an infected mother will also be infected. Female puppies sired by an infected father will be carriers while males will be uninfected unless the mother is a carrier. In that case the puppies have a 50% chance of being carriers, and females have a 50% chance of being infected. Puppies born to two carriers have a 50% chance of being infected, a 25% chance of being carriers and a 25% chance of being uninfected.

Contracting the virus from sexual contact is easy to avoid; treat the S-virus as a moderate disease with no resistance bonus from shots. The subject makes one resistance roll upon initial exposure. If this fails the subject makes another roll 24 hours later. A second failure inflicts the effects of a moderate disease for one full day, after which the dog makes a full recovery. Over the course of the next few weeks the subject gradually develops increased intelligence and telepathic abilities. Increase the Smart ability by one die type per week until it reaches the standard rating for the subject's breed. When Smart reaches d6 the subject also develops telepathic ability at the rate of one mode per week (see Telepathy below). When Smart reaches its full rating and all three modes of telepathy activate the subject becomes contagious.

Transmission between cats is through saliva; a zombie cat must bite a potential recruit to pass along the virus. The victim makes a routine Tough test upon initial exposure. Success renders the subject forever immune to the S-virus. After a failed test the victim must make another routine Tough test in 24 hours. Again, success brings immunity after a day of fever and weakness. Failure brings on another day of sickness and a

challenging Tough test. Failure of this test results in the cat's death. Success creates another zombie cat.

## **DEPRIVATION**

A character can only go without food or water for so long before the lack does harm. The deprivation rules describe the game effects of starvation and thirst. Damage from deprivation heals at the normal rate.

### **Starvation**

A dog can safely go without food for a number of days equal to the die value of its Tough ability (4 days for d4 Tough, 6 days for d6 Tough, etc.). After this the dog takes a point of damage every day until he either eats or dies.

In cold climates the safe fasting time is halved and the damage is doubled.

### **Thirst**

A dog can safely go without water for a number of days equal to half the die value of its Tough ability -1 (3 days for d8 Tough, 5 days for d12 Tough, etc.). After this the dog takes two (if size 1-2) or three (size 3-4) points of damage every day until he either drinks or dies.

In hot climates the safe period without water is halved (round up) and the damage is doubled.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Dogs aren't normally tool users, but the Schrödinger Virus has given its beneficiaries increased ability in this regard. A dog can interface with human technology in one of two ways.

### **Analysis**

Figuring out what a device is and roughly how it works requires nothing more than a successful Smart check. The



difficulty varies according to the item's complexity.

### Use

Actually using human tech is a bit more difficult. Any test to do so uses the character's *lowest* rating from among Quick, Strong or Smart. To make matters worse, a dog can't use any tricks with this roll. Finally, any attempt by a dog to use human devices takes the dog at least twice as long as it would take an unskilled human to get the same result. Using human tech in combat imposes a penalty of -4 to initiative.

### Literacy

The S-virus makes dogs smart enough to read, but they still have to learn that

skill. This task is complicated by the fact that canine eyes don't work as well as human ones; dogs see better in the dark than humans do, but humans can see further and are better at pattern recognition. Starting PCs are illiterate, but they can spend earned experience to gain literacy (see Experience).

### TELEMPATHY

The virus that grants dogs sapience also allows them to communicate telepathically. Schrödinger-infected dogs have three modes of telepathy.

- *Sense*: a dog can detect the presence of strange dogs, or the locations of familiar dogs, within a radius in miles equal to the die value of his Alert ability (i.e. 10 miles with d10 Alert).

- *Empathy*: a dog can sense the emotions of other dogs or transmit his own feelings – including sensory data – within a radius in yards equal to 50x the die value of his Sly ability (for example, d6 Sly = 300 yards).
- *Mind Speech*: a dog can send his thoughts as mental speech into the mind of another dog within a radius in yards equal to 10x the die value of his Smart ability (d8 Smart = 80 yards, and so on).

## TIME

Game time other than combat rounds takes place in the following increments.

- *Scene*: the time it takes to resolve a single task, conflict or conversation. A scene lasts anywhere from a few minutes to an hour.
- *Episode*: a single game session. An episode takes as little as a few hours to as much as a week.
- *Story*: a group of several sessions in which the action is related. A story can take over a month of game time.
- *Series*: a group of stories that star at least some of the same characters. A series can encompass many years of game time, possibly even the PCs' entire lives.

## Optional Rule: Dog Years

Heroes don't live forever, especially if they're dogs. If the Pack Leader chooses to keep track of character ages, use the following rules to simulate aging.

Dogs are fully-grown at the age of one year except for big dogs and monster dogs, which are full-grown at two years

of age. These are not exact values, just approximates chosen for simplicity's sake. Dogs begin aging at a predetermined critical age. The base critical age is 10 years. For all dogs except those at size 1 subtract their size to get the revised critical age. Size 1 dogs subtract three instead. A dog who gets older than this age begins to suffer age-related deterioration.

For every year beyond the critical age a dog loses one die size in Quick, Strong or Tough; a d10 becomes a d8, a d8 becomes a d6, and so on. The player decides which ability is reduced each year, but no ability may be reduced two years in a row. Every other year the dog also loses a die size in Alert, and every third year the character loses a die size in Cute. Reducing abilities to d0 (the last reduction possible after d4) has the following effects:

- *Quick*: the dog is lame; he can't jump anymore, and he can no longer move faster than a slow walk.
- *Alert*: the dog becomes blind and deaf. He can still use his senses of smell, taste and touch, but they are reduced to d3.
- *Cute*: the dog is no longer capable of using canine wiles against humans.
- *Strong/Tough*: the dog dies.

Even if this rule is in effect players shouldn't worry about it much. Player character dogs are likely to die in battle or be euthanized at a pound long before they die of old age.

# CALL OF THE WILD

There are three important things that the Pack Leader and the players need to know about playing Hundedämmerung; what the characters do in the game, who's trying to stop them from doing it and what they get out of it.

## CAMPAIGN TYPES

There are four basic types of campaign in Hundedämmerung. The campaign type determines what sorts of things PCs will be doing and where they'll be doing it. Some types of characters fit into a given campaign type better than others, but the Pack Leader should allow any reasonable concept.

### Dogs of War

In a dogs of war campaign the PCs will be part of some (probably top secret) government program that pairs them with human partners. This, of course, means that the government knows about the Schrödinger Virus and the threat that the zombie cats present. Making this work requires that the dogs have some way of communicating with their human partners. Perhaps the government has developed a special sign language that the dogs can use to send simple messages. The Pack Leader may decide that the dogs' telepathy allows them to send their thoughts into human minds – or maybe the human partners are infected with a strain of the S-virus that makes them telepathic!

This kind of campaign will mostly involve combat missions, though reconnaissance and rescue missions aren't out of the question. This is a good campaign type for a group of players who mainly want to kill things. Dogs of war

will be the best-equipped PCs possible; the government spares no expense. Most equipment will consist of things like cold weather clothing and body armor. Dogs of war will also be very well fed, and all of them will have had their shots.

This kind of campaign can easily accommodate any breed of dog except toy dogs. If they are allowed at all they will be specialists whose primary mission is not combat. Any background works, but the people who assign missions will prefer junkyard dogs; they are both tough and used to working with a select group of people.

### Mongrel Horde

A mongrel horde is the exact opposite of the above campaign type; the PCs are completely without human support. In this campaign missions will consist mainly of survival – finding food and safe sources of water, establishing dens away from the prying eyes of animal control and recruiting uninfected dogs to



replace packmates who are lost in battle. The war with the cats will be restricted to border skirmishes and attacks on targets of opportunity.

Mongrel hordes will have almost nothing in the way of equipment, and they will regard all humans as enemies until the humans prove otherwise in play. Stray dog will be the most common background, but a pack may include one or more escaped junkyard dogs and/or abandoned pets.

### **Secret Shelter**

This type of campaign relieves the PCs of the stress of finding a suitable den, for they already have one – they operate out of a local animal shelter. The feel of the game will be very much like the film *Stalag 17* or its TV parody *Hogan's Heroes*, with the PCs sneaking out at night to go on missions that further the cause of dogdom.

A secret shelter campaign focuses on intrigue. The characters will act as a headquarters in the war against zombie cats, using their advantageous position to funnel human-made supplies to their allies on the outside and to recruit new arrivals to the shelter. If the recruits are adopted by human families the pack will gain contacts in the pet community – and those contacts may request help from their upline from time to time. Keeping the shelter free of vermin and preventing the enemy from recruiting among the shelter cats will be major activities of the campaign.

Dogs of any background and breed fit in a secret shelter campaign.

### **Undercover Pets**

The film *Cats and Dogs*, minus the high tech, is the best example of this campaign type. The local pets are part of a secret army, unknown to their owners,

that keeps the neighborhood safe from the depredations of the zombie cats. This type of campaign combines elements of all of the other campaign types. There won't be much recruitment because most of the dogs in the area will already be members; new recruits will mainly be the pets of new families who move in. Combat is a larger concern than it is in any other campaign except dogs of war.

Undercover pets will be well fed and will always have their shots, and they will often be well equipped in terms of inclement weather gear and squeaky toys. Any breed is possible. It's unlikely that any of the PCs will be strays, though a neighborhood "everybody's dog" is a viable character. If such a character is allowed there probably shouldn't be more than one.

## **ADVANCEMENT AND REWARDS**

Hundedämmerung characters come into the world with nothing, but they don't have to remain in that state. In the course of the game characters will improve, gaining new capabilities, skills and goods along the way.

### **Experience**

Experience Points (XP) are the simplest reward that characters can earn, and the only one that always has a game mechanic attached to it. The player spends earned XP to improve his character in any of the ways shown on the chart below.

All PCs that take part in a game session get the same XP award. The standard award is 1 XP per session. The Pack Leader should add bonus XP based on the pack's accomplishments and the difficulties that they faced. Achieving a mission goal and facing an unusually challenging situation are both worth +1, and these modifiers are cumulative. Any

mission where the PCs engage in combat is also worth +1 XP. The maximum XP award for a single session is 5 XP.

Purchase	XP Cost
Increased Ability*	20
Literacy**	10
New Pip	5
New Trick	10

\*This is an optional rule; the Pack Leader may choose not to let PCs increase their abilities beyond starting levels. If the Pack Leader does allow ability increase it can only be applied once to each ability and it cannot raise any ability past d12. Ability increase is only possible if the PC has the maximum allowed pips for that ability, and increasing to the next die size erases all pips (which can be bought back later with XP earned in the future).

\*\* Smart die type + Smart pips must add up to 11 or more. For example, d8 + 3 pips, d10 + 1 pip and d12 + 0 pips all qualify ( $8 + 3 = 11$ ;  $10 + 1 =$

$11$ ;  $12 + 0 > 11$ ), but d10 + 0 pips doesn't ( $10 + 0 < 11$ ).

### Stuff

Normal dogs don't have much use for material things, but sapient dogs are another story. Balls and squeaky toys help to relieve the boredom of long periods spent huddling in the den, while coats and booties are precious in cold climates. Flea collars are like gold, at least while they're still working, and heartworm pills are as close as dogs get to drug abuse.

The Pack Leader can use "stuff" to reward players for teamwork, good role-playing and for making the game fun for other players. This is as simple as allowing a character to find a useful item. The player then decides what the character will do with the item – keep it,





give it to someone else as a gift (which can earn or pay off a favor; see below) or use it to barter for something else.

Some items have game mechanics that apply to their use. For example, a doggie sweater might give the wearer a +2 bonus and/or a free re-roll on rolls to resist cold while heartworm pills reduce the difficulty of any test to resist heartworm infection to easy. Any item that has a game mechanic costs 1 XP to keep; the PC can barter the item or hold onto it indefinitely at no cost, but he hasn't figured out how to use the item until the XP cost is paid.

### Status and Favors

Status in the pack and favors from NPC dogs – usually, but not necessarily, packmates – are another reward for the same sorts of things that earn "stuff."

Of the two favors are the easiest to quantify. Simply put, doing a favor for someone else causes him to owe you a return favor. The bigger the favor you do the bigger the favor you are owed in return. This feature of dog culture – which is strictly enforced by public opinion – means that it's very much in a character's best interests to help other dogs out. Dogs who don't pay back their favors find themselves without allies who are willing to do favors for them. Even worse, a chronic deadbeat may even find himself losing pack status.

Status is harder to get a handle on. Dogs are very hierarchical creatures – a trait that they share with humans – and their packs have a pecking order that is at once quite strict and highly fluid. Pack members constantly move up or down in their packmates' esteem based on mission success, services rendered to the pack, bravery in battle and expertise in their chosen fields. Another currency of status is how well a dog respects higher-ranking

packmates; those who respect dogs of higher station are acknowledged as up-and-comers, while upstarts frequently find themselves challenged to back it up.

Pack status comes in three flavors; alpha, beta and omega.

- *Alpha*: alpha dogs are pack leaders; everyone is expected to submit to them or issue a challenge. There are only two alphas in any pack, one female and one male.
- *Omega*: omegas are at the bottom of the pecking order. Among sapient dogs being physically weak is no longer enough to earn omega status. Now the omega dog is more likely to earn that place by being cowardly, disrespectful of elders or too slow to repay favors. Omegas have no mating rights and are expected to submit to all other pack members. Most packs have only one omega, but larger ones will have a male and a female. The largest have 3-4 omegas.
- *Beta*: the most common pack status is beta, which is all of the dogs who aren't alphas or omegas. Betas have limited mating rights (only with someone of equal or lower status) and must submit to the alphas. How much one is liked or trusted by the alpha largely determines position within the ranks of betas. The alpha's cronies lord it over the other betas while dogs whom the alpha distrusts are treated as little more than omegas.

The short description of the benefits of status is this – the higher a character's status, the easier it is to get favors from others (or the favors owed you paid back) and the more likely that higher-ranking dogs will listen to your suggestions. The more you are a team player, the higher your status will be. The latter is only true to a point, however. Attitude also plays a

role in status. At the higher levels one earns dominance by acting dominant, but one must take care not to challenge dogs of greater rank when doing so (at least until one is ready to issue a challenge).

### **Challenges**

Most challenges are simple stare-downs in which the first to look away is the loser (both characters roll Dogged, higher result wins).

A more serious challenge involves growling and shoving until one party concedes and shows his throat. This requires tests of both Dogged and Strong, and a dog must win both tests to win the challenge. Sapien dogs can tolerate a draw, but they don't like having ambiguity in the hierarchy.

The most serious challenge is a challenge for the alpha's position. This always involves a physical combat to the death, so no dog undertakes such a challenge lightly. One would think that big dogs and monster dogs would have an advantage in these contests, and one would be right. However, sapience has taught smaller dogs how to fight smart or to turn contests of strength into battles of wits. There could conceivably be dogs somewhere developing canine martial arts that will allow a toy dog to defeat a monster dog in single combat. If so, beware the serene Chihuahua... he may know something that you do not.

### **ADVERSARIES**

There wouldn't be much point to having combat rules for a game in which there was nothing to fight. Adversaries are meant to be defeated, but defeat can take a variety of forms. Some fight to the death, others can be driven off or made to submit and still others must be outwitted. Except where otherwise noted adversaries don't have pips. If pips are

present the entry lists the pips as a bonus to the appropriate ability die.

### **Vermin**

Vermin are small animals that have mastered the art of getting into places that humans want them kept out of. Humans and dogs are alike in having a single word that applies to all such creatures. The difference is that for humans that word is "pest," but for dogs the word is "food." Vermin are individually weak, but they sometimes travel in groups.

*Examples:* rat, squirrel, weasel

*Size:* 1-2

*Abilities:* Quick d12, Strong d3 (size 1) or d4 (size 2), Tough d4 (size 1) or d6 (size 2), Alert d8, Sly d8, Smart d2, Cute d6, Dogged d6

*Special:* +2 to Quick rolls for dodging or hiding; one other species-specific ability (for example, a rat's ability to squeeze through openings smaller than its head or a skunk's scent glands). Domesticated vermin – they can have the pet background – know one trick.

### **Cat**

Cats are the bane of dogs' existence. There's no way of knowing when an innocent-looking tabby will turn out to be a zombie cat. Even normal cats make life harder for dogs; the two species both eat vermin, so there is fierce competition for a finite food supply.

Cats never know any tricks, even if they are pets. Cat lovers say this is because cats are fiercely independent animals that would never debase themselves by performing tricks. Dog lovers say it's because cats aren't smart enough to learn tricks. Game designers wisely remain silent on the matter.



*Size: 2*

*Abilities:* Quick d12 + 3, Strong d6, Tough d6, Alert d10, Sly d8, Smart d2, Cute d10, Dogged d8

*Special:* +2 to all damage inflicted in melee combat when using their claws. Increase to +4 if the cat is on its back and can use both sets of claws.

### **Dog**

Uninfected dogs are both a resource and a problem. They are potential recruits and potential mates, but gaining access to them for either purpose often means going up against a hostile pack. Inter-pack conflict can also be very bloody; if two packs want the same territory, one has to give way – and neither will give up a regular food supply without a fight.

*Abilities:* as per breed except that Smart is d3.

*Special:* as per breed.

### **Typical Human**

Humans are the most gifted tool users on Earth; having opposable thumbs has

that effect. Even an average human is brilliant by dog standards, and the smartest of them have intellect that is literally beyond canine understanding. By far the most dangerous qualities of humans are their technology – which even their children have access to – and their tendency to gather in large groups. Many dogs don't like humans, but none can afford to antagonize them. Conflicts with humans usually involve animal control, outdoor cooks who took their eyes off the meat or angry pet owners who don't want "that mangy mutt" mounting their prize pedigreed bitch.

*Size: 4*

*Abilities:* Quick d6, Strong d8, Tough d8, Alert d4, Sly d8, Smart d12, Cute d6, Dogged d6

*Special:* +3 on any roll to deal with technology. A typical human also knows human variants of up to three tricks, and may have 1-3 pips for any ability up to a total of nine pips.

### **Exceptional Human**

Like the typical human, only more so. In addition to being stronger, tougher and smarter than other humans an exceptional human is likely to be better equipped. Use this template for police officers, soldiers and other highly trained people.

*Size: 4*

*Abilities:* Quick d8, Strong d10, Tough d10, Alert d6, Sly d10, Smart d12, Cute d4, Dogged d12

*Special:* as per typical human. An exceptional human also has nine pips to distribute among his abilities and knows human variants of up to five tricks. An exceptional human may have 1-3 pips for any ability to a total of up to 12 pips.

### **Zombie Cat**

Zombie cats are the result of the S-virus infecting a normal feline. The

disease doesn't just make the cat sapient, however. It overwrites the mind, such as it is, of the cat with the virus-enhanced mind of Ozymandias. The Schrödinger Virus also suspends biological activity in such a way that the cat no longer ages, but neither can it recover from wounds. Zombie cats are also incapable of mating. Zombie cats always travel in groups of six or more when they know that there are dogs about.

*Abilities:* as per cat, except that Tough is d8, Sly is d12 and Smart is d12 + 3.

*Special:* as per cat. In addition, zombie cats don't suffer die roll penalties when wounded; they fight on unimpeded until they are slain.

## MYSTERIES

The writer never intended for this book to answer all of the questions about the world of Hundedämmerung; some blanks have been left for the Pack Leader to fill in. PCs – and even players – should only discover the answers to these questions during the course of play.

### Where is Professor Keeton?

Was the good doctor killed in the earthquake, or did he survive? Does he know about his accidental creations, and if so is he looking for them? Does he want to help the dogs, cure them, or eliminate them? And what are his plans for Ozymandias?

### Other Species

The Schrödinger Virus is currently known to affect only two species; dogs and cats. This state of affairs might not last forever. The virus might already be able to infect wolves – *Canis familiaris* can interbreed with *Canis lupus*, after all. What happens if wolves start to become

sapient? Most dogs like humans, or at least respect them. Wolves don't.

The situation with cats is even more precarious. For now the feline strain can only infect genus *Felis*, but it would only take a minor mutation to allow the virus to infect a closely related genus like *Lynx* (bobcats and lynxes) or *Puma* (cougars). Heaven help humanity if the S-virus mutates enough to infect genus *Panthera* (lions, tigers and leopards). Could such mutations occur naturally? Could Ozymandias be actively working to bring them about?

What about animals other than dogs and cats? What would Earth become if bears discovered fire or whales developed the power of speech? What if the S-virus adapted to infect apes? Would there still be a place for Man in a world where he is no longer the only advanced tool user?

### What Does Ozymandias Want?

The zombie cats are spreading... slowly, methodically, but inexorably. Are the rate and direction of contagion dictated by opportunity, or does the cat have a plan? What are Ozymandias' motives, anyway? He has collected vast amounts of knowledge, but how does he plan to use it? Is he protecting humanity from what he thinks is the threat of the dogs, or does he hate humans for what Professor Keeton has made of him?

Ozymandias has suffered countless stonings and drownings at the hands of cruel little boys. His avatars have been torn apart by hundreds of dogs, run over by thousands of automobiles and disemboweled by tens of thousands of other cats. He regularly has to euthanize badly damaged avatars. What effect has all this suffering had on his sanity? Surely he means to kill, but does he hate all life... or just his own?

# AFTERWORD

I began this project at 8:33 a.m. on Wednesday, May 27, 2009 and completed it at 8:32 a.m. on Thursday, May 28, 2009. I undertook the work as part of a contest; I chose the theme "Schrödinger's Other Pet." Did I get it right? You be the judge.

Hundedämmerung was actually my second entry in this contest. The first was a piece entitled Apotheosis Blues, which in many ways is a better game but I wasn't able to complete it. Alas, the concept was too grand for me to do it justice in a mere 24 hours. But, like most perfectionists, I tend to beat myself to a pulp over any failure, even (heck, especially) a minor one. For the sake of my self-esteem I really needed one in the win column, which is the reason for the book that you've just read. I hope that you enjoyed my attempt to redeem myself as much as I enjoyed earning redemption.

Michael Walton

# HUNDEDÄMMERUNG

## CHARACTER SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Background: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed Special Ability: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M ☐ F ☐

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

### ABILITIES

Quick	Strong	Tough	Alert	Sly	Smart	Cute	Dogged
d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
○○○	○○○	○○○	○○○	○○○	○○○	○○○	○○○

### TRICKS

(Check if Known)

Beg ☐ Fetch ☐ Heel ☐ Play Dead ☐ Point ☐ Roll Over ☐  
 Shake ☐ Sic 'Em ☐ Sit ☐ Speak ☐ Stay ☐ Up ☐

### LIFE

Healthy	Bruised (-3 to all rolls)	Wounded (unconscious)
○○○○○○○ □□□□□□	○○○○○○○ □□□□□□	○○○○○ □□□□

### NOTES

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Player: \_\_\_\_\_ Experience (total/spent): \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Your enemies are everywhere...**

You have no weapons.

You have no superpowers.

You have no magic.

And most importantly, you have no thumbs.

Man's worst nightmares are about to come true –  
and you are Man's Best Friend.

Hundedämmerung is the game that lets you live a dog's life.

Defend your pack with strength and power.

Defeat your foes with speed and stratagem.

Survive, if you can, after coming face to face  
with the feline evil that is Ozymandias.

The Twilight of the Dogs is at hand.

Will you step forward to lead your pack into the light?

**Welcome to the doghouse, sucker.**

**Hope you brought biscuits.**

Warning: this game does not take itself entirely seriously.

May be offensive to the pretentious and overblown.

No animals were harmed during the making of this game. The writer might have been, but who cares about people, eh?