

# The Villain Wore Black

**A Penny Dreadful Scenario  
by Debbie and Matt Cowens**

*In which the Villain kidnaps the young heroine, and her fiancé and friends must overcome countless dangers to rescue her.*

## **The Villain**

*The fiendishly clever and diabolical Sir Walter Outrage.*

Walter Outrage is a middle-aged gentleman with a tall, slender body with long, thin limbs and hands. He has a dark swarthy complexion and a black, curled moustache which he infamously twirls when contemplating his next dastardly scheme. His cold black eyes show no emotion save when his twisted intellect turns to some heinous act of iniquitous villainy. Outrage has had a prosperous career as London's leading industrialist. He bought himself a peerage with the vast fortune made from factories and railways.

It is common knowledge amongst London's underworld and law enforcement officers that Outrage is also one of London's foremost criminal masterminds. Scotland Yard would dearly love to put this fiend behind bars for once and for all. However, Outrage has many allies and underlings and is always just out of reach of the law although he is undoubtedly the fiend behind countless despicable crimes.

His wealth and devilish cunning have enabled him to deftly evade the law thus far, but will our intrepid heroes and heroines be able to prevent his next nefarious plan?



*The fiendishly clever and diabolical  
Sir Walter Outrage*

## **The Mystery**

Arthur Winthorpe, the aging patriarch of the Winthorpe family, is secretly a compulsive gambler. He has lost the lion's share of his family fortune. No longer able to get into gentlemen's games, he now resorts to gambling in seedy locations (such as the *Dog and Badger*), often gambling away heirlooms and personal items. During card games Winthorpe likes to talk, and he mentioned to some disreputable types that he had a friend coming to visit, who had built a marvellous machine. The information made its way back to Sir Walter Outrage, and he took an interest in Arthur. Outrage has been secretly stealing Arthur's mail, reading it, and forging new envelopes and stamps so that Winthorpe will not suspect. Outrage has arranged for his henchmen to break into the Winthorpe house and steal the device, and as an insurance measure he has also arranged to kidnap Melody Winthorpe. This will allow him to extract whatever information he needs to take full advantage of the machine.

## **Main Cast:**

**Melody Winthorpe** – a beautiful, innocent young lady

**Juliette Winthorpe** – the headstrong younger sister of Melody

**Arthur Winthorpe** – wealthy and distinguished widower, patron of science

**Colonel Hewitt Winthorpe** – Arthur's older brother. A highly decorated veteran who served in India

**Gwyneth McNamara** - lady in waiting and friend to Melody and Juliette. Gwyneth is like a third daughter to Arthur.

**Sebastian Gray** – a dashing young hero

**Simon Callahan** – a foppish friend to Sebastian (secretly in love with Juliette)

**Doctor Michael Bothrington** – a brilliant Scottish inventor (secretly in love with Juliette)

**Bubbles The Pekinese** – Melody's faithful hound. Arch-nemesis of one of the PCs [roll to see who it hates, lowest loses]

## **Other Characters of Note:**

Mr Bowls – the aging manservant of Arthur Winthorpe.

Mrs Carston – middle-aged servant and cook for the Winthorpe house.

Inspector Lestrade – a fine detective from Scotland Yard, polite but occasionally impatient.

Old Bess – a peg-legged bookie, who knows Arthur Winthorpe.

## **Chapter One** - *in which a dinner party for several distinguished guests is interrupted by fiendishly shocking intruders.*

**Author's Intention** – to introduce the characters and begin building their relationships. To introduce the 2 elements of tension that are to drive the game (kidnapping and theft of the machine), and to establish a tone of Society Comedy.

**Key Events** – the characters meet, Bothrington describes his machine, Sebastian asks for Melody's hand, the dog is infuriating, the one-legged woman is heard, the machine is discovered missing, Melody disappears.

Arthur Winthorpe is hosting a dinner party to welcome his good friend Dr Michael Bothrington (who is secretly in love with Juliette) to London. Dr Bothrington has come to display his latest invention, a Particle Accelerating Destabiliser, at a meeting of the West London Scientific Society's Bi-Annual meeting. During the dinner, Sebastian Gray plans to ask for Arthur's daughter Melody's hand in marriage. Also present are Melody's sister Juliette, Winthorpe's older brother Colonel Hewitt Winthorpe, and Sebastian's good friend Simon Callahan (who is secretly in love with Juliette).

As our scene opens, pleasantries are being exchanged over the soup course. Dr Bothrington has just been asked to explain his new invention, the PAD, to the assembled revellers.

### **The Winthorpe Home:**

The Winthorpe townhouse is a large, richly furnished home in a respectable street of London's Devonshire Terrace district. The house spans 3 floors, and contains a number of rooms of note.

- ❖ The **basement** contains a coal chute and bin, a small workshop area where the servants perform minor repairs, and a large open storage area. It is here that two trestle tables have been set up to temporarily hold the PAD.
- ❖ The **ground floor** contains an entranceway, with a door leading down to the basement, a door into the sitting room, a door into the dining room, and a staircase leading up to the **first floor**. There is also a discreet door leading back into the servants' areas – the kitchen, the servants' quarters

During the course of the dinner, the servants will wander in and out carrying trays and soup bowls and so on. Several important events should take place:

- Arthur excuses himself and leaves the room for a short time, just after a strange clomp-clack, clomp-clack noise is heard faintly from the street outside. It is the one-legged woman Old Bess, a bookie who takes small bets. Arthur is gambling away an old necklace of his wife's, on a horse race scheduled for the next morning.
- The dog causes mischief, biting and dragging clothing and tablecloths and yapping annoyingly.
- The tensions between the characters are introduced (encourage this by describing people's glances and expressions/blushes if need be).

- Arthur, having returned from his wee rendezvous, suggests that the party goes downstairs to inspect the machine.
- The machine is discovered to be missing! Sooty footprints are found on the stairs, and the coal chute is unlocked. It appears that fiends have slipped in through the coal-chute, opened the front door from the inside, and absconded with the machine *right past the dining guests!* They bundled it into a carriage and fled, though this cannot be snooped out unless the PCs talk to Old Bess, who witnessed the events.
- Young Melody's kidnapping is discovered! Whilst 2 thugs were manhandling the machine out the door, another thug climbed a ladder to Melody's window, drugged out the poor girl with ether, and climbed out the window with her. A flowerpot was knocked from the windowsill, and the pattern of dirt below the window indicates the presence of a ladder. The ladder itself has been thrown into the neighbour's garden.

### **Possible Actions and Useful Information:**

- The players may choose to rush out into the street and confront the villains. The street is dark and foggy, with shapes any distance away becoming indistinct and sinister. A black carriage can be seen fleeing the scene, though no taxi stands waiting for pursuit. If the players have been particularly prompt or inconvenient, you may wish to have a physical confrontation between our heroes and the dastardly kidnappers. If this is the case, make it clear that both the machine and Melody are already in the carriage, so that the villains may abscond with them regardless of the outcome of any fisticuffs.
- The police may be attracted by some vigorous shouting, or by sending a servant to collect one. The first officers on the scene are simple Bobbies, polite and deferential but unsure of how to help. An inspector can be contacted, but they will not arrive until the early hours of the morning.
- The dastardly kidnappers will prop pillows in Melody's bed to make it appear that she is sleeping.

#### ***The Involvement of the Police***

*It is likely that the player characters will contact the police at some point. In order to retain character freedom and player involvement, the police should not be a strong presence in the game. Any uniformed officers contacted will render immediate assistance, but will defer decision making or involved action until a detective arrives.*

*Inspector Lestrade will be assigned to the case, and fearing for Melody's safety will advise the characters to cooperate with the requests of the kidnappers, whilst he does everything he can to secure her release. He will agree to have the house watched, and will assign plainclothes officers to follow and keep an eye on the characters in their dealings with the kidnappers. He will not, however, bow to pressure to deal with the matter directly. In his long experience he feels that the best chance for Melody to come out of this intact is for the family to think about it rationally, and take care of matters. If pressed, he will insinuate that there is a conspiracy at police headquarters, possibly Masonic (none of the principal cast are Masons), and that whilst he will help all he can, his hands are somewhat tied.*

**Chapter 2** – *in which our heroes receive a missive from the elusive villain, and decide they must take matters into their own hands.*

Once the actions of the previous chapter have been resolved a letter will arrive. Outrage wants the plans for the PAD, and wishes to use Melody as an exchange. He is well aware that the victims of this crime will likely go to the police, but he warns them against it anyway. A young street urchin delivers the letter, saying that “some toff gave it me. Said I was to bring it here right quick, and gave me a shilling.” If asked to describe the toff, the boy can only say that he was rich looking, and had a moustache. He was taller than the boy.

Winthorpe,

I have your daughter, and your machine. If you fail to yield the plans for your device, I shall be forced to inflict upon your kin the gravest of injuries. I trust that, as a doting father and respectable member of Society, you will do all in your power to keep young Melody from harm. I await your response at *The Dog and Badger*, in Whitechapel.

O.

The PCs may choose to inform the police, or to follow things up themselves. Whatever preparations they would like to make should be accommodated and elaborated upon. Should Juliette wish to go along, the handout at the end of the scenario may be of use - it informs the player that Juliette has access to disguise supplies, should she wish to go in the guise of a man. Having her present disguised as a police officer is particularly apt, and can lead to some hilarious results. The chapter title is to be used as a means of encouraging players to follow matters for themselves - as you would expect a roleplaying group to do.



One of Outrage's Henchmen

### **Chapter 3** – *in which our heroes travel to London's East End, and patronise an establishment of ill repute.*

The East End (or Cheapside) is a dangerous, filthy place filled with loathsome poor people and coarse criminal types. The sights and smells are lurid and provocative, and the gentlemen and ladies will be quite out of their element. To successfully interact with any of the denizens of this area, the PCs must make a successful rapport roll (8+). They may add any debauchery they possess, and will of course be more favourably received if they purchase drinks for those to whom they wish to speak.

*The Dog and Badger* is a watering hole popular with dock workers, builders and labourers. The clientele are not terribly sinister, but they will appear that way to the characters. They will happily string along any toff who's willing to buy them a drink to get them to talk, and will attempt to bluff money out of the characters at every opportunity.

*You enter a dimly lit, grimy establishment. There are coarse looking men and women hunched over tables, drinking foamy, pungent drinks and squinting at you. The barkeep is a grinning troglodyte creature, his face scarred and his body somehow disturbingly twisted. He regards you with what you assume to be warmth, and begins polishing glasses for you. Two huge bruisers lean against the bar, exuding an air of menace, while a group of young men are playing a hand of cards in one corner, and a young man and woman seem to be sharing an intimate moment at a small table near the door. They do not look up from their busyness, nor do they seem to comprehend the most basic rules of decorum. You feel that you are distinctly out of your element.*

Outrage has agents planted in the inn, and is lurking nearby (in his black carriage). His agents are to send word to him when the characters are leaving, and he plans to confront them in the street if needs be (he in his carriage, face in shadow and prepared for a getaway, with a cane-pistol at the ready to deter acts of heroism).

#### **Possible Actions and Useful Information**

The characters may want to search *The Dog and Badger* to find information about the kidnapping. There are a number of people here to whom they can talk, and a few hints as to Winthorpe's connection with the place.

- Juliette or Gwyneth will recognise a brooch that a young lady is wearing. She is fawning over one of the gamblers in a lascivious way, and is wearing a distinctive brooch that once belonged to Mrs Winthorpe.
- The gamblers will try to entice a player character into joining them. They will then cheat (as a group) in an attempt to swindle the character. They are fairly artful, but a player who succeeds in a Games roll of more than 12 will catch them in the act.

- The gamblers will attempt to hide the fact that they have met Arthur Winthorpe (and gambled with him), but are much less concerned about hiding this fact than they are about getting hold of some toff's money. If it seems like it will encourage one of the characters to join the game, or if they are directly bribed (a sovereign would be their ludicrously high asking price, but they'd settle for a few shillings), they will admit that they have met Arthur Winthorpe ("He just stopped in for a drink a couple of times, guv") and, if pressed, that they have gambled with him.
- Two large, brutish gentlemen by the bar are Outrage's servants. They will eye up the PCs, then ask for a quiet word. They will demand the plans, and if they are not forthcoming they will ask the PCs to step outside with them.

*There are a number of options at this point, depending on the actions of the players and the pacing of the game. As a guide, the following versions of Chapter 4 are given. Author's should, as always, feel free to modify events to suit.*



## **Chapter 4A** *[the exciting, pacey version] – in which our intrepid heroes are confronted by the villain, and arrangements are made for an exchange*

**Author's Intention:** To raise the tension level, give the players a glimpse of the villain, and to invite some exciting action.

**Key Events:** The characters meet the villain, he makes his threats concrete, and he names a time and place for the exchange of plans for Melody (train tracks). A chase scene and possibly some violence may ensue. Whatever the case, Outrage will escape (to be confronted later).

*The two large gentlemen from inside the Dog and Badger ask you to step outside. As you do so, a large black carriage pulls up outside the inn. The lanterns on the front of the carriage are dimmed, and the driver sits with the collar of his large black cloak turned up. The door to the carriage swings open and a rifle barrel protrudes a few inches. Inside the carriage all is shadow, save for the glowing ember of a cigarette and the hint of a pair of dark, glinting eyes. A refined, highly educated sounding voice greets you:*

*“Good evening. I hope that you are well, and that you are reasonable. You will note, I hope, that I am one of the finest shots in England, and that should you move unduly I shall not hesitate to fire. I should hope that you would also realise that I am not alone, nor are we unwatched by my agents. If you realise these things, our conversation can be much more... civil.”*

Outrage will continue in this fashion, giving the following information:

*He wishes to exchange the girl for the plans for the machine. He is a reasonable man, but he does not have time to waste. He will meet the concerned parties 25 miles north of the town Foxbridge [2 hours by train or carriage north of here]. They are to travel along the main road, and he shall signal them when they reach him. He will meet them at sunset tomorrow. If they go to the police, Melody will suffer.*

### **Possible Actions and Useful Information**

*If the players choose to attack the cab:*

Outrage will shoot to wound. He is a crack shot (a skill of 6 in firearms). His goons are large, experienced muscle. They will try to subdue the PCs also. Nobody wants to die in this situation, so discretion will be the better part of valour. If the driver of the cab is incapacitated, Outrage's second in command, a retired colonel (Moran) will tear down the street on horseback, guns blazing, and rescue Outrage. Whatever else happens, Outrage should be able to escape – he is well prepared and has vast resources to draw on.

If Outrage has escaped and the PCs have not been able to pursue, move to Chapter 4B. If they give chase, skip ahead to Chapter 5.

*If the players choose to follow the cab:*

They should be able to do so without too much trouble. The carriage returns to a warehouse near the docks, where a pair of goons open the doors and close them again quickly behind the carriage. Skip straight on to Chapter 5.



## **Chapter 4B** – *in which our heroes return home to ponder what they have learned.*

Having visited the *Dog and Badger*, the characters may opt to return home and regroup. If this is the case, the following information may be of use:

- The mail has been tampered with over previous weeks. Ant character who checks Arthur's correspondence will have a chance of spotting the forgery. This is a difficult task – Bothrington is the most likely to succeed as he was a stamp collector as a boy.
- A letter will arrive detailing the place and time for the exchange of the plans for Melody.
- A sleazy thief known as 'Weaselly Frank' will break into the house in an attempt to steal the plans for the PAD. He is not working for Outrage, though he would like to be. He has overheard details of the plan, including the location of the warehouse where Melody is being held. He is a competent burglar, but is unlikely to succeed in a crowded house that is on edge from the events of the night before. Under pressure or bribery, he will tell the characters all he knows (about half of the plan).

At this point, you may wish to run the encounter at the factory (Chapter 5).



## **Chapter 5** – *in which the heroes search the abandoned factory, find a stolen PAD and several hired goons, and uncover a fiendish plot.*

**Author's Intention:** Some action, a few 'clues', then romp on to the gripping climax.

**Key Events:** PCs confront (and trounce) some goons, rummage through the warehouse, and strengthen their resolve to save poor Melody.

The factory was once a bustling hive of industry. As the fortunes of this area decline, it fell into disuse. It is now a looming, rusted, dark form hunched by the riverside. A large double door, big enough to fit a carriage through, stands closed. Alongside it, a smaller door is slightly ajar, and the figure of a man smoking a cigarette can be seen in the doorway.

Melody is inside, though Outrage plans to take her immediately to his northern countryside hideaway. If the PCs are in hot pursuit, Outrage and the colonel will ride off with Melody whilst their goons do everything in their power to delay the PCs. The goons are willing to be arrested if needs be – they know that Outrage will take care of them when they get out if they keep their mouths shut.

If the PCs enter the building by stealth, they will need to overpower the 2 guards on the door. As they enter, Melody has just been thrown over the back of a horse, which Outrage rides off through a back entrance.

### **Possible Actions and Useful Information**

This can be a good opportunity for some daring action, if such is required, or it can be an opportunity for heartfelt lamentation.

Items of note in the factory:

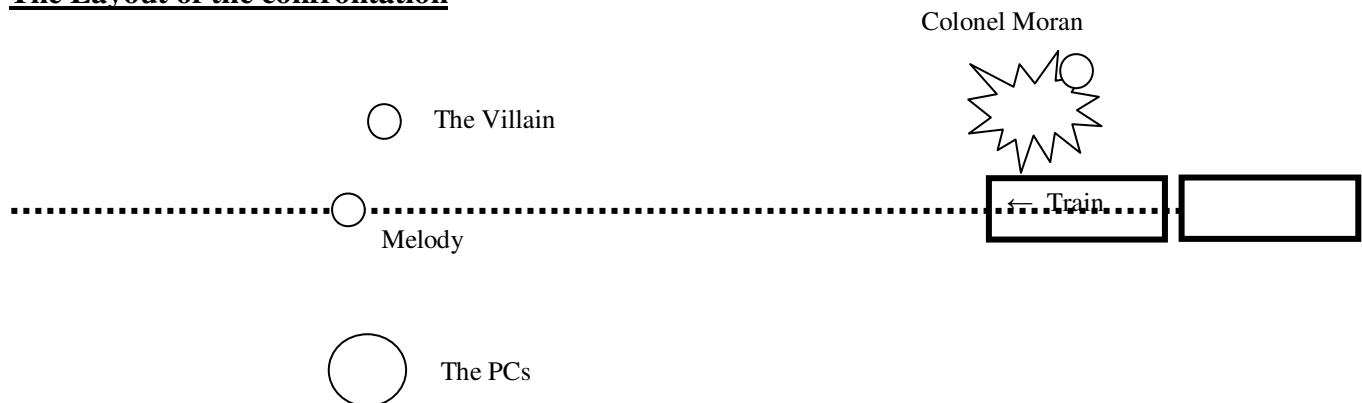
- The PAD sits on a table near the back door. It has been dismantled, and certain key components are missing. Bothrington will quickly work out that whoever dismantled the machine was a skilled scientist/engineer, and that they have taken all of the machine's unique and essential parts.
- There is a rough bed, where Melody has obviously been kept. There is a small scrap of cloth from her nightdress on the bed, and the lingering smell of her perfume. Her pillow is wet (with tears).
- A gentleman's handkerchief lies near the bed, with the initials *W.O.* stitched into it.

## Chapter 6 – in which our heroes trace the kidnapped beauty to a deserted stretch of train tracks, and confront the villain in an epic showdown.

**Author's Intention:** This is the stereotypical moustache-twirling ending to a gripping tale of villainy. Melody tied to a train track, the villain gloating over his master plan, the heroes confronting him...

**Key Events:** Characters find Melody tied to train track, villain is confronted, Colonel Moran is spotted, a train rumbles past, events reach their climax!

### The Layout of the confrontation



The PCs travel up the main road, and are signalled by a flashing light from a position some 200 yards to the east of the road. The train track from London runs parallel to the road, and Melody is tied to the track. Sir Walter Outrage stands waiting, mirror in hand, and he signals the PCs when he sees their carriage (having been informed by his spies of the departure time of the carriage).

As the PCs approach, Outrage will greet them, and warn them not to get too close. As the map above shows, Colonel Moran is hiding in a copse of trees some 50 yards away. He has a high-powered air rifle, and is a crack shot. He has instructions to fire a couple of warning shots if anyone gets too close to Outrage, and to shoot anyone who poses a mortal threat to Outrage. The rifle is almost silent - certainly it is too quiet for the PCs to hear - but it is quite deadly.

The intention for this scene is to have a face off, where the PCs cannot reach Outrage. Events will quickly move to their climax with the timely arrival of a train from London.

As the train nears, Outrage's moustache twirling will become ever more enthusiastic. Moran and Outrage plan to jump onto the moving train (with the plans), and make good their escape. They will use the passing of the train as cover to get away. It is important to note (and the PCs should realise this also) that in the 30 seconds before the train reaches Melody, it will block Moran's line of fire. This should be emphasised to spur the PCs into action.

### **Possible Actions and Useful Information**

The game may end in fisticuffs with Outrage, a gun battle (this is likely to be lethal and should be discouraged), or with Outrage getting what he wants and disappearing over the

horizon with the plans, laughing maniacally. Every effort should be made to help the players reach the climax outlined above - the structure of the story is after all simple. The fun is in *how* the PCs get there, and the manner in which they play out their characters.

Heroism should be rewarded, and a satisfying conclusion ought to be reached. Having the Player Characters rush Outrage in a last minute effort to save Melody as a steam-engine bears down on them is a fantastic end to the game if it can be engineered. Whatever else, an upbeat ending would be in keeping with the tone of the scenario.

### **Chapter 7** – *in which the rescued heroine reveals all she has seen over comforting brandy, smelling salts and strong tea.*

**Author's Intention:** This is a nice wrap up to the session, in which Melody reveals any information the players have not yet found, the situation is resolved, and any last-minute proposals or confessions of love can be fitted in. This is unlikely to take long.

**Key Events:** Story told by Melody, unanswered questions addressed.

Melody has had a traumatic time, and will be happy to talk about it at length. Arthur will make a full and forthright confession about his gambling if confronted, or if his heart-strings are tugged particularly hard. He will offer to take up a hobby, such as opium or gardening, to keep him away from the terrible cards.

The Pekinese will find true love with a particularly outrageous hat, and as a consequence will fall out of favour with the Winthorpe's for a short time.

The police will take statements, but as this is a Society case they are willing to let sleeping dogs lie so long as someone respectable assures them that everything is back as it should be.

Fini.

***Character Sheets and Player Handouts Follow:***



# Penny Dreadful



*The shocking and terrifying truths of the Victorian Empire*

**Name:** Colonel Hewitt Winthorpe

**Birth:** High Class

**Age:** 58

**True Love:** Hunting

**Description:** A slightly stuffy, slightly deaf old gentleman

**Status:** Retired Colonel

**Nemesis:** Bally tigers

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experience</b>						
O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	●	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	●	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
O	O	O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	2
Games	2
Deduction	1
Dodge	1
Escape	0
Fence	2
Firearms	4
First Aid	2

Intuition	1
Languages: _Hindu_	4
Tinkering	2
Theatrics	0
Music	1
Navigate	3

Observation	1
Outdoor Pursuits	4
Pugilism	2
Rapport	1
Read/Write	3
Science	1
Stealth	0
Track	2

### Equipment Carried:

Pipe, tobacco and matches  
Shaving mirror, badger brush, straight razor  
Photograph of yourself with a dead tiger

### Accommodation:

The Winthorpe family home (with your brother and nieces)

### Contacts:

Major Charles Duckett (retired) and the boys at the Bugle Gentlemen's Club

**Background:**

You are the older of 2 brothers, and you live with your younger brother Arthur and his 3 daughters. You thought he only had 2 daughters when you left for India, but there seem to be 3 young ladies in the house - Melody, Gwyneth and Juliette. You returned to the family home after you left the army. You might move on to a plantation somewhere one day, but for now you're happy to share a home with family.



You either spend your time with your brother, or down at the Bugle, a gentlemen's club for retired servicemen. You love to tell the story of the time in India when you came across a tiger in the jungle whilst you were shaving. The blighter tried to eat your badger brush! You managed to wrestle him to the ground, and get your service revolver out. You had the mighty beast stuffed, and had him in your regimental office for several years, until a tragic fire destroyed the building. In a way, you're glad your old friend had a good send-off.

You think that all the gunfire and shouting of your army days may have damaged your hearing a little - you certainly seem to talk louder than most people, and have to ask others to repeat themselves from time to time.



**Name:** Doctor Michael Bothrington

**Description:** A Hibernian tinkerer

**Birth:** Upper Middle Class

**Status:** Respected Scientist

**Age:** 34

**True Love:** Gwyneth McNamara (secret)

**Nemesis:** Dr Ivan Ramovich (physicist)

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experiencee</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	5
Games	1
Deduction	3
Dodge	0
Escape	0
Fence	1
Firearms	0
First Aid	2

Intuition	3
Languages: _Latin_	6
Tinkering	6
Theatrics	0
Music	0
Navigate	3

Observation	4
Outdoor Pursuits	2
Pugilism	2
Rapport	1
Read/Write	3
Science	6
Stealth	0
Track	0

### Equipment Carried:

Small tool kit  
(screwdrivers, tweezers  
etc.)  
Pipe, tobacco and matches  
Small wooden flute

### Accommodation:

Temporarily staying at The  
Red Lion Inn, near the  
Winthorpe family home

### Contacts:

Arthur Winthorpe  
The West London Scientific  
Society (President Nicholas  
Larsen)

**Background:**

You are a hard working, brilliant Scottish inventor. You have been working on a machine which will destabilise atoms, moving them out of the visible spectrum. The machine, the *Particle Destabilising Accelerator*, vibrates matter at a frequency which phases it out of the visible spectrum. Currently, the process only works on inanimate matter. You have brought the machine to London with you to show at the West London Scientific Society's Bi-Annual meeting. It is currently set up in your friend Arthur Winthorpe's basement, awaiting a demonstration tonight. The machine is a large device - it took 2 men to carry it from the station to Winthorpe's house, and install it in the basement. You hope to design a smaller, more portable version in the near future.



Winthorpe is an old friend of yours - you have corresponded for years. He saw an monogram of yours in a Scottish scientific journal years ago, and has followed your work ever since. You have been in London for five days now, and have visited him several times. You thought he only had 2 daughters, but there seem to be 3 young ladies in the house - Melody, Gwyneth and Juliette. Gwyneth is the most beautiful woman you have ever seen - you would love to be able to tell her how deeply you have fallen for her in the past few days - but would it be proper?





# Penny Dreadful



*The shocking and terrifying truths of the Victorian Empire*

**Name:** Juliette Winthorpe

**Birth:** High Class

**Age:** 24

**True Love:** Suffrage

**Description:** A headstrong but beautiful young lady

**Status:** Socialite (out)

**Nemesis:** Thomas Morsen (Staunch anti-suffragette)

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
O	O	O	O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experience</b>						
O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
O	O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	●	O	O	O	O	O
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	2
Games	1
Deduction	0
Dodge	3
Escape	3
Fence	0
Firearms	0
First Aid	2

Intuition	1
Languages: _French_	4
Tinkering	0
Theatrics	3
Music	4
Navigate	0

Observation	4
Outdoor Pursuits	2
Pugilism	0
Rapport	3
Read/Write	6
Science	0
Stealth	2
Track	0

### Equipment Carried:

A universal suffrage pamphlet  
 A membership card to the Ladies' Suffrage League  
 A .22 calibre pistol

### Accommodation:

The family home

### Contacts:

Susan Lycanor, a fellow suffragette  
 Penelope Fox-Morton, an incredibly well connected society dame

**Background:**

You are the youngest of 2 daughters. You live in your rather spiffing family home with your older sister Melody, and your darling father Arthur Winthorpe. Your mummy died whilst you were quite young, so you don't remember much about her. You also have a nanny of sorts, Gwyneth. She's the same age as your sister, and she's pretty nice. Very serious though.



Your driving passion is Suffrage - you think it's about time women got the chance to vote, because you are just as smart and able as men, if not more so. You've been on many protests, have chained yourself to railings, have ridden a bicycle through the centre of London. You believe in The Cause with all your heart, and you're not afraid to break social taboos to prove it.

Once, you even dressed as a man and infiltrated one of their secret men's clubs. It was frightfully boring - just lots of old fogeys playing cards and sleeping, but you felt liberated just being there.

Your sister is engaged to a nice, serious young man called Sebastian. They'll be good together - they're both rather conservative. You think his friend Simon is pretty nice, but you're worried he might have a crush on you. You could never love anyone who didn't support women's suffrage, and he doesn't *look* like the type.

A friend of your father has come down from Scotland to demonstrate a device he has created. Some sort of machine which he's been keeping in the basement since he arrived 2 days ago. Probably some silly boys' toy.



# Penny Dreadful



*The shocking and terrifying truths of the Victorian Empire*

**Name:** Gwyneth McNamara  
**Birth:** Destitute High Class  
**Age:** 26  
**True Love:** Sebastian Gray

**Description:** A serious, proper young lady in waiting  
**Status:** Companion to the rich  
**Nemesis:** 'Ferret' Budge (blackmailing low-life)

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experience</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	2
Games	2
Deduction	3
Dodge	1
Escape	1
Fence	0
Firearms	1
First Aid	2

Intuition	0
Languages: _French_	2
Tinkering	0
Theatrics	1
Music	2
Navigate	0

Observation	4
Outdoor Pursuits	2
Pugilism	1
Rapport	3
Read/Write	4
Science	0
Stealth	2
Track	0

### Equipment Carried:

A clothes brush  
Powder and rouge  
Spare hat-pins and hair clips  
A small cudgel

### Accommodation:

The Winthorpe family home

### Contacts:

The Winthorpe sisters  
'Ferret' Budge  
Sven Ollafson - a burly Norwegian butcher

**Background:**

You are the nanny and confidante of the two Winthorpe daughters. Their father, Arthur, took you in when you were but 3 years old. Your family had become destitute (your father lost the small family fortune gambling, and hung himself, and your mother left for an uncertain future in the colonies). You have lived in the very comfortable Winthorpe family home with the older sister Melody, the younger sister Juliette, and Mr Arthur Winthorpe ever since. You have grown very fond of the family, and would do anything to protect them.



Recently a man named 'Feret' Budge has begun blackmailing you. He has letters written by your father which would cause a great scandal if they were to come to light. Your family may have lost all they once owned, but your name remains intact. You will do anything to keep those letters from being released. Budge has asked for small amounts of money so far, but once he demanded that you let him into the house. You did so, but only for half an hour. Nothing seemed to go missing...

Melody's fiance's best friend Simon is thoroughly dreamy. You are a sensible, serious girl, but your heart begins to flutter whenever he's around. Your family name is good enough for a match to be made, if he would ever notice you...



# Penny Dreadful



*The shocking and terrifying truths of the Victorian Empire*

**Name:** Sebastian Gray

**Birth:** High Class

**Age:** 24

**True Love:** Melody Winthorpe (fiance)

**Description:** A dashing fop

**Status:** Socialite

**Nemesis:** Daniel Rudkin (American Dilettante)

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experience</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	3
Games	2
Deduction	3
Dodge	3
Escape	0
Fence	2
Firearms	1
First Aid	2

Intuition	1
Languages:	
_____	
_____	
Tinkering	0
Theatrics	0
Music	1
Navigate	0

Observation	3
Outdoor Pursuits	1
Pugilism	3
Rapport	1
Read/Write	5
Science	2
Stealth	0
Track	0

### Equipment Carried:

A cheque book  
A spare kerchief  
A magnifying glass

### Accommodation:

Shared rooms with Simon  
on Baker Street

### Contacts:

An old Cambridge Boys' gambling group, known as "The Swallows". They currently operate out of the East End.

**Background:**

You loved studying at Cambridge. You were a studious fellow, and enriched your mind with all manner of useful knowledge. After leaving University, you took up a clerking position in a large legal firm. Your work is stimulating in its way, and you see a bright future ahead.

You are engaged to be married to the lovely Melody Winthorpe. She has agreed to marry you, and you are sure that her father will give his consent. You mean to ask him tonight, at dinner.



Unfortunately Melody owns a demonic little dog - a Pekinese from hell. The little beast can't stand you!

You greatly enjoy invigorating walks with Melody through parks, reading good novels, and perhaps a little poetry now and again (in appropriate circumstances, of course).

A friend of Mr Winthorpe has come down from Scotland to demonstrate a device he has created. You are very curious about what it might be, but so far your soon-to-be father-in-law has been rather tight-lipped about the whole affair.



# Penny Dreadful



*The shocking and terrifying truths of the Victorian Empire*

**Name:** Simon Callahan

**Description:** A dashing fop

**Birth:** High Class

**Status:** Socialite

**Age:** 24

**True Love:** Juliette Winthorpe (secret)

**Nemesis:** Bubbles (the Pekinese)

## Qualities

<b>Propriety</b>							<b>Debauchery</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Innocence</b>							<b>Experience</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Levity</b>							<b>Gravity</b>						
○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		
<b>Imagination</b>							<b>Reason</b>						
○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
+3		+2		+1			+1		+2		+3		

## Skills

Academics	1
Games	4
Deduction	1
Dodge	3
Escape	0
Fence	2
Firearms	1
First Aid	1

Intuition	2
Languages:	
_____	
_____	
Tinkering	1
Theatrics	3
Music	0
Navigate	0

Observation	0
Outdoor Pursuits	0
Pugilism	2
Rapport	3
Read/Write	5
Science	0
Stealth	2
Track	0

### Equipment Carried:

A steel hip flask (filled with brandy)  
 a box of matches  
 a pen-knife  
 a moderate quantity of cash

### Accommodation:

Shared rooms with Sebastian on Baker Street

### Contacts:

An old Oxford Boys' gambling group, known as "The Ringers". They currently operate out of the West End.

## **Background:**

You loved studying at Oxford. You didn't learn much, but you met some smashing blokes, learned all sorts of fabulous card games, and discovered all manner of cocktails.

Your best friend Sebastian has hit it off with a young woman called Melody. You were delighted to learn that Melody's sister Juliette is the most gorgeous woman in London. You'd love to ask her out, you just haven't plucked up the courage yet.

Unfortunately Melody owns a demonic little dog - a Pekinese from hell. The little beast can't stand you!

You tend not to let on, but you really find it jolly difficult to resist a wager. You love cards and dice and all manner of gambling - it's just such fun!





*Winthorpe,*

*I have your daughter, and your machine. If you fail to yield the plans for your device, I shall be forced to inflict upon your kin the gravest of injuries. I trust that, as a doting father and respectable member of Society, you will do all in your power to keep young Melody from harm. I await your response at The Dog and Badger, in Whitechapel.*

*O.*

**You believe that you are being followed!**

**You know that Mr Limely at the theater would gladly lend you a costume if you asked – a policeman’s uniform, or a gentleman’s attire (complete with moustache) perhaps?**

**This man is hardly respectable!**

**You are beginning to grow hungry.**

**Your heart aches whenever you look upon this vision of loveliness!**

**You must do something about this!**

# A Quick Introduction to Penny Dreadful

by Matt and Debbie Cowens

Penny Dreadful is an RPG designed to put an emphasis on roleplaying. It is set in the Victorian era, and is intended to be suitable for a range of playing styles.

There are two features of paramount importance in the Penny Dreadful system: Firstly the use of **Chapter Headings** during play; and secondly the use of a set of **sliding scales** to represent aspects of the characters.

**Chapter Headings** are intended to be read (or made up) by the GM (referred to as the *Author*) at the start of each scene. As in the literature of the period, chapter headings should give the players (or *readers*) a good idea of the purpose of the coming scene, and some hint as to what the content of the scene may be. The players will not necessarily know the *outcome* of the scene, but they will have some idea of where it is going. The intention of this is to allow the players to enjoy roleplaying their characters as much as possible, and to allow the possibility of foreshadowing and irony on the part of players and authors alike.

On the character sheet there are a number of *qualities*. These qualities are represented on a set of **sliding scales**, with opposing characteristics at each end. These qualities are intended to change temporarily during play, and permanently at the conclusion of each gaming session, storyline, or campaign.

The qualities represent social and physical aspects of the characters, and can be used in certain situations to gain bonuses on rolls. For example, a very large or serious gentleman is likely to reside towards the *Gravity* end of the scale, rather than the *Levity* end. As a result, in situations such as convincing a police officer that a minor burglary is more significant, or holding shut a door against a burglar, the gentleman will have a greater chance of success than a flighty young girl. It is worth noting that while Gravity and Levity represent both the physical and social sides of the character, an author may choose whether to allow a bonus at any given time.

## Basic Rules:

**Core Mechanic:** Roll a d12 and add relevant skill. Where player can supply appropriate justification, they may add a quality bonus. High is good.

**Swoon Check:** You may be asked to make a swoon check under trying circumstances. You may add your Experience or your Gravity to the roll, depending on whether it is a shocking sight (Experience) or a physical blow (Gravity).

**Combat Rules:** Roll a d12 and add relevant skill (Firearms for ranged attacks, Fence for hand-held weapons, or Pugilism for old fashioned fisticuffs). The victim of an attack may attempt to dodge (rolling d12 + dodge skill). At the author's discretion, Quality bonuses may be added in certain circumstances.

Damage is rolled on a d12, with the result being compared to the following chart. Certain weapons will have a bonus to damage, and Gravity may be added in cases of pugilism.

<b>Damage</b>	<b>Effect</b>
13+	Good Lord! Someone call a medic!
9-12	A forceful blow. Stunned for a round, Swoon check required at difficulty of damage rolled.
6-8	A substantial knock. Stunned for a round.
1-5	A glancing blow. Clothes likely ruffled.

### ***Player and Author Calls:***

During the game, there will be times when the players wish to deviate from the Chapter structure set out by the Author. There will also be times when the players wish to add to the tension of the game. The following player calls may be printed out on cards, or otherwise made available to the players. They may be used to alter events in the game as described below:

**“And now, a short digression in which...** [eg. our hero Simon has an illuminating conversation with a Barber on the merits of wedlock and moustaches.]” – to be used when a player would like to introduce a sub-chapter of their own, to explore a character action or detail.

**“No doubt it will not be as easy as all that!”** – to be used by players or Author to indicate that, whilst progress may appear steady, darker times are bound to be ahead.

**“Preposterous! This cannot be the end for our intrepid heroes!”** - when fate has taken a turn for the worst, and it seem that the characters will meet a sticky end, this reader favourite can open all manner of possibilities to ensure their survival.

**“I imagine our readers would like to hear more of the exploits of...”** – a call for a sequel, or the recurrence of a character who proved to be highly compelling or entertaining for the readers.

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<http://kapcon.rpg.net.nz>