

## THE CURSED BONE

### A One-Shot Scenario for Cat

This scenario was designed to be played in two hours, including teaching the rules and making characters. The text in blue is designed to be read aloud. A map and a custom character sheet is included at the end.

#### Introduction to the Game

*In this game you all play cats. Every thousand years or so all of the animals have a contest to see who is the best – the cleverest, the fastest, the fiercest. And the cats won! This pissed off dogs, obviously, and the two have had troubled relations at best ever since. The other bittersweet result of winning the competition is that cats were given the responsibility of watching out for the creature that came in last ... which is us humans! If you have ever seen a cat stare off into space and wondered what it was looking at, the fact is that cats can see things we cannot. And some of those things are out to do us harm.*

#### Character Generation and Rules

- Hand out the character sheets and lay out some pencils.
- Explain names and have the players come up with either a Given or a Cat name.
- Ahead of time, write each of the traits on an index card. Deal them out one by one onto the table and explain what each trait is good for, then have players each choose/take one so that no two players have the same best trait. Remind them that they can still be “Strong” at a trait that someone else is “Best” at. Have them mark the traits on their sheet, pointing out that the distribution is repeated at the top of the Traits box.
- Explain reputations and give them some examples: Champion Ratter, Walks Unseen, Always Underfoot, etc.
- Explain Lives and Risks and gloss over the rules on the reverse side of the character sheet.
- Have the players introduce their characters.
- Finally, lay out some crayons or colored pencils for them to use if they want to color their cat.

#### The Scenario

The cats fight off mysterious boggins and rid the house of their source – a cursed bone.

#### Scene 1

Place the map of the house on the table.

*You all live in an old two-story house with Madam. Upstairs are some bedrooms, a bathroom, and access to the attic. The attic is a big musty magical room full of boxes and sunbeams! But Madam only goes up there every two or three years and some of you have never been there. You have only heard about it from your housemates. Downstairs is a parlor, living room, solarium, bathroom, dining room, kitchen, and a room that has been converted into another bedroom because Madam doesn't like going upstairs much anymore. It is an old house, comfortable but creaky. There are no modern conveniences, like a cat door; Madam has to let you in and out all day, whenever you can get her to hear your meowing.*

*You are very happy and cozy in your home, though there are less pleasant residents as well. The chief annoyance is Pepper, Madam's toy poodle, which she treats as if it were a human child. She even lets it sit at the table and eat off of good china. Pepper seems to think her job is to guard Madam from cats and the dog is so sense-blind that he doesn't even believe in boggins!*

*And, oh yes, there are boggins in the house! But you know how to deal with those and you keep the main living areas free of their influence. There are a few pesky regulars though, such as the Sink Troll who lives in the cupboard underneath the sink that Madam never leaves open. And the raucous Attic Goblins. There are many different types of boggins, and they spring up in dirty, dark, and hard to reach places, so you have to stay on your paws to guard against them!*

*One day you find Madam in the solarium watering plants. She seems to be feeling her age more than usual. One hand is on her bent spine and she is making soft moaning noises as she shuffles from one plant to another. That's when you notice the pale shapes of half a dozen strange boggins clinging to her legs and sapping her strength. They are pale creatures that look a bit like hairless bats – all gangly arms with stubby legs and smashed in faces. You need to get them off of her, but Pepper is hanging out near Madam's feet and glaring at you.*

The cats will need to get rid of the boggins, but Pepper will try to keep them away from Madam.

The cats may split up, some of them fighting the boggins and some tackling Pepper or luring him away. Pepper won't leave Madam's side unless first infuriated somehow (Average/2 Difficulty). A scratch to the nose (Claws) or even shouted insults (Coat) might do it. Cats could also try the Chase Your Tail Whammy. If the cats and Pepper actually fight, Madam will be upset and scold each alternately. If it goes on long enough, she will put Pepper out in the yard. (It's easier to grab one dog by the collar than herd several cats.)

**PEPPER:** Loyalty 3 OOO

Jaws 4, Legs 3, Eyes 3, Ears 3, Nose 3, Coat 2, Claws 1

Pepper is feisty, but will cower or retreat after taking 4 scars.

The boggins are "Bonelings." Make the players describe how they are fighting the creatures. It will probably look like play to Madam ... the cats leaping around her legs swatting and biting at the air. If the cats get rid of the bonelings, Madam will straighten up and laugh at their antics. If any bonelings escape, they flee underneath a shelf of potted plants too low for the cats to go under and disappear. In reality, they go down a furnace grill and they can later be found in cellar.

**BONELINGS:** BP 6 (1 each) OOOOOO

Claws 2, Fangs 3, Eyes 0, Ears 3, Nose 0, Coat 0

For each three scars, a boneling will flee or be destroyed. They are fairly weak. Once it is clear the cats are dealing with them effectively, have the remainder flee.

## Scene 2

After the bonelings have been dispersed, the cats pick up a strange scent. The cat with the highest Face roll that beats difficulty 2 will associate the smell with the strange earthy scent of an old bone that Pepper dragged in a few days ago.

If asked, Pepper has hidden the bone and he isn't about to tell them where it is.

Searching the house means rolling Face in each room. If someone succeeds vs. 2 in the Kitchen, they will find the scent is strong in there, though the bone is not in sight.

Remind them with some random banging or monotone humming that the Sink Troll lives there in the closed cupboard. The cats may think to ask him anyway. If they don't, you can have them catch him sneaking around in another room looking for his pet mouse. Or, they may associate the earthy scent with the outdoors or with the cellar without interacting with the troll.

If approached in the kitchen the troll will huddle wide-eyed in a hard to access corner and wave a scrub brush at them threateningly. In the other hand is a dead mouse, his unfortunate last pet. He likes to keep pets, but never puts them down and forgets to feed them. The Sink Troll knows things ... such as the fact that Pepper was playing with the bone in the kitchen, but moved took it outside. He will give up this information if beaten or intimidated (Coat vs. 3). He can also be convinced to trade it (Coat vs. 2) for Madam's slipper (to lick) or if they catch him a new pet mouse.

**SINK TROLL:** BP 3 OOO

Face 2, Legs 3, Thumbs 3\*

The Troll has been around a long time and has a vaguely humanoid form. He can wield a stick or brush as a club giving him +2 dice in fights.

When the cats try to get Madam to let them out, it is hard to get her attention. She is watching the glow-box. The first cat to try and get her attention is affected by the Bauble Curse. The glow box is calling the cat to nap on top of it because of its warmth!

## Scene 3

Outside, a few rounds of smelling (Face vs. 2) will reveal a few interesting details: 1) the small garden snake that is usually in the garden is out sunning himself today, 2) the earthy smell of the bone is strongest near the closed cellar doors.

Remember, if Madam put Pepper out he will be here. You can start him off lazing in the sun, but have him cause trouble at some point.

Access to the cellar is through two big wooden doors that rest at a 30-degree slant to the house. They are heavy, open out, and are locked, but they have some dry rot. Getting into the cellar requires some thought. A

good Doorslip will do it, and the garden snake would make a good offering. If the cats use this spell, make them describe how it works, just for fun. If they use the snake for an offering, you might suggest that they take on a sinuous, bendy form that lets them slip through cracks that would normally be too narrow. In any case, if they ask, let the spell cover all of them. If they don't use Doorslip, the cats can dig/chew at the wood, getting splinters in their paws: assign 2 scars to the Claws of each cat working at the door. It will take three cats one round or one cat three rounds to get in (essentially make them work until they get 6 scars.) If one cat does all the work, make a big deal out of his sacrifice, noting the bloody paws and how tender they are to walk on.

Nabbing the garden snake is tricky; it has only one stat worth noting: Tunnel 2. If the snake wins in a roll against a cat, it escapes down one of its holes and will be unavailable again until the next day. Give the cats advantage dice if they think to scout out the snake's holes first, or give one of them a second chance to pounce on the snake as it darts for the hole that cat is guarding.

The cellar has sweaty, cinder block walls and an earthen floor. There is a furnace in here. The pilot light is light, but it's summer and there is no fire. There is an old table that Madam couldn't bear to get rid of. It was the family dinner table for years, but is now in serious disrepair. Also along the wall near the table is an old rickety shelving unit filled with old preserves.

Once in the cellar the cats will pretty quickly find the bone in one of the many holes Pepper has dug here, no need for a roll. Pepper got in when Madam came down to get some jelly. It will be roughly in the center of the room. The bone looks to be an old human finger bone. It has an ancient scent to it and has been buried here for decades if not centuries. On its surface are some black scratches of the kind Madam sometimes makes on the white squares. You like that because she often crumples up these squares to give you something to play with and you assume the marks are some kind of human magic.

Shortly after finding the bone, the cats will spot a fluffy, gray orb suspended from the floor joists by cobweb-like strands. It looks like dirty, colorless cotton candy. As they look at it, there is a small squirming motion that ripples along its sides! (It is a boneling egg sac.)

A cat can climb up on an old table and make a *Dangerous* leap vs. 4 to knock it down and destroy it. Or, they can knock over the shelf by climbing it

(making it top heavy) and pushing it away from the wall. This reduces the leap to simply hard (3) because the shelf falls against the table making a kind of ladder, but first the cats will have to hang on (Claws) or leap away (Legs) to avoid taking scars. Roll 3 dice against them.

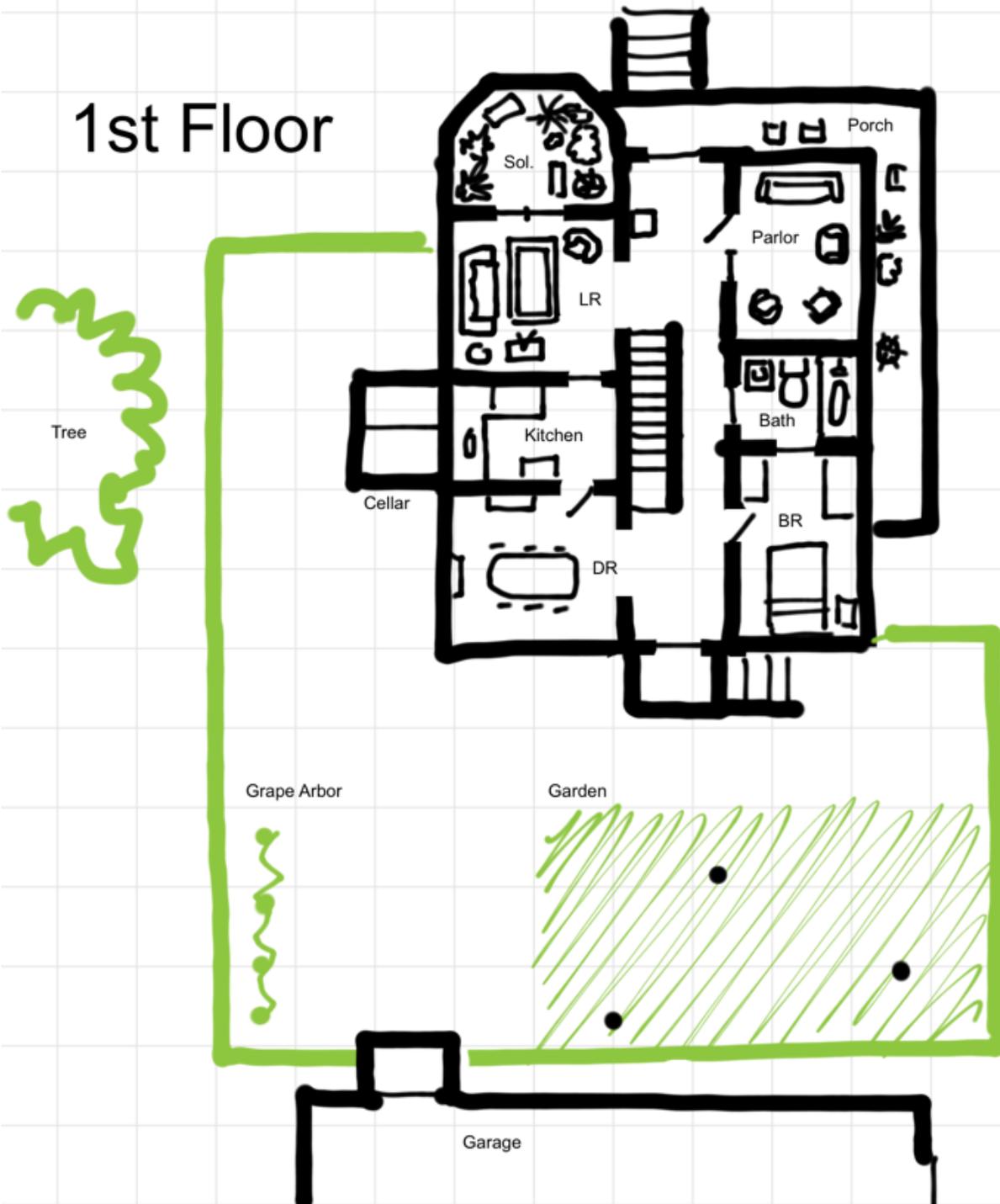
Toppling the shelf will make a lot of noise, and they will hear the floorboards above creaking. (Madam is coming!) When the sac comes down it will split open and little wormy bonelings will swarm out. The cats can kill these quickly and with the satisfaction a human might feel when popping blisters in bubble-wrap! Describe the squealing of the bonelings and their goo sticking to the cats whiskers.

If the cats are locked in (they might use Doorslip and then realize they don't have an easy plan for getting out), have Madam come down because of the noise or allow them to push the rotting old doors outward enough to slip out. It's a lot easier to force the doors out a few inches than it is to force them in.

The cats need to get rid of the bone. If they simply hide it, Pepper might find it, and if they move it to another yard it could plague someone else. If they take it outside and Pepper is there, he will certainly chase/fight them to get it back. One or more cats may have to fight a rear-guard action to let the others escape.

Some acceptable notions for getting rid of the bone: throw it in a river, invent a magical ritual to cleanse it, drag it into the dream world, etc.

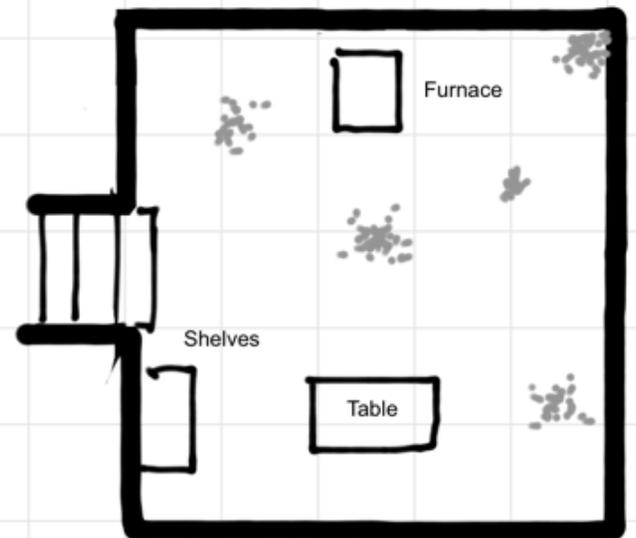
# 1st Floor



# 2nd Floor



# Cellar



# Cat

by John Wick

A little game about little heroes.

**Names:** one humans use, one cats use, one you keep to yourself!

Given Name:
Cat Name:
Secret Name:

**Traits:** choose 1 Best, 3 Strong, 2 Good

Trait	Used for	Best	Strong	Good	Scars
Coat	protection, persuasion	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Legs	jumping, balance, speed	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Claws	fighting, climbing	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Face	senses	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Fangs	fighting, carrying	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Tail	magic!	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 3	ooo/ooo/ooo
Magic points = Base 5 OOOOO + Tail OOOOO					

**Reputations:** create and assign 1-3 points to each, up to 7 points

Reputation	Rating

**Lives:** 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 X

**Risks+:** When you take a risk, roll dice equal to the related trait. You may get advantage dice or a bonus for a reputation. Evens are successes. You need 1 to pass an Easy risk, 2 for Moderate, 3 for Hard, and 4 for Legendary. If you fail at a *dangerous* risk, you get scars equal to your lowest *odd* die. In fights, you roll against an opponent and take scars for each of their evens. Traits get a 1-die penalty for every three scars. Once per game, in a very dangerous situation, you may use one of your lives to heal all your traits. To do this, you have to describe how your cat could have died, but didn't!

Color your cat!



## CHARGEN/TRAITS

See reverse.

## RISKS

See reverse.

## SCARS

For each three scars a cat has on a trait he gets a 1-die penalty. Good traits go to "Hurt" (2) and then to "Crippled" (1). If there isn't enough room to note all your scars on the character sheet, just make extra hash marks on the appropriate row. You cannot take any tests on a Crippled trait. A cat with four Crippled traits loses a life.

## REPUTATIONS

If one of your reputations applies, you may add dice equal to its rating to the roll. (Only one reputation can be used in any situation.) Cats can lose a reputation if they ever act in a contrary manner and don't fix it within the session. For instance, a "Good ratter" who runs from a fight with rats and doesn't go back to face them at some point, can lose that reputation.

## ADVANTAGE DICE

The GM may give you extra dice to roll for great role-playing or for pointing out your character's advantages in a situation.

## STYLE

Cats do things with style. If you roll more evens than you need, you can either keep them to use later or you can add something to the scene that puts you in a better position or simply makes you look good.

## LIVES

(Different rules apply for the one-shot version of the game, see reverse.) You may spend a life to automatically succeed at a risk, regardless of your trait or the difficulty. Or, you may use a life to dodge any/all scars in a single round.

## FIGHTING CATS

Cats only fight each other to prove dominance or who the better fighter is. Each rolls fangs or claws. Both cats take scars equal to the other cat's evens and the one with most evens wins. Cat vs. cat fights are quick scuffles, one round only.

## FIGHTING NON-CATS

Roll fangs or claws. You take scars equal to the number of evens your opponent rolled. The cat (or non-cat) with the most evens wins the fight. This can continue for multiple rounds, but adjust stats for scars accordingly.

## DODGING

During a round of fighting, a cat may dodge instead of trying to cause scars. Roll legs instead of fangs or claws.

## HEALING

Cats heal one scar per week and one at the beginning of each game session.

## MAGIC

Cats don't cast spells; they play tricks. Cats have magic points equal to 5 + their Tail. To attempt a magic trick, the cat must have enough tail (equal to or greater than the trick) and spend one or more magic points. One point gives you dice equal to your tail. Extra points give you 1 advantage die per point spent. If a cat gets soaking wet, he cannot use his magic for the rest of the day.

Fall on all Fours (Var) – 3 for  $\leq 20'$ , 4 for  $\leq 40'$ , 5 for  $\leq 70'$

Hide in Plain Sight (Var) – 3 if no one is paying attention, 4 if no one is looking directly at you, 5 to disappear "in the blink of an eye"

Sneak (Var) – 3 through a shadowy area, 4 through a room full of people, 5 to pass over a sleeping person without disturbing them!

Doorslip (4) – slip through a locked door, requires a small sacrifice (e.g. mouse)

Dinner Dance Ritual (4) – get a human to fulfill a basic-need request

Dream Bite (4) – mark a human/boggin to better find them in the dream world

Chase your Tail Whammy (5) – jump over a dog to befuddle him for d3 turns.

Fighting Frenzy (4) – gain actions in a fight equal to your Tail (e.g. attack an opponent X times or attack X opponents); also costs a Life!

## BAUBLE CURSE

If a cat sees a ball of yarn or similarly distracting gewgaw, he must pass a Hard test (vs. Tail) to ignore it or be enthralled. Enthralled cats play with the item and can do nothing else except test vs. Tail each round. If they pass a test or if they fail three times they are free.