

INVESTIGATOR



Amherst is rapidly becoming one of an uncomfortably long list of names that I dread seeing in a statement. Could this be an ancestor of John Amherst? Or, given the many apparent deaths of the soldier in the book, might it be the same being, well over a hundred years old? If so, I wonder how many times it has died of sickness and disease.

—MAG 68: “The Tale of a Field Hospital”

In many games, the Investigator might be a side or minor character. But in The Magnus Archives, they are prominent. If the group is going to have multiple players with the same type, it makes sense that they would be Investigators.

The darkness can be overwhelming. You bring the light into the shadows and expose the truth. There may be secrets humans weren't meant to know, but you've never found one. To you, it's always better to know.

Sometimes the work can be tedious. You haunt libraries and records offices more than spooky houses or cemeteries. When you need to, though, you're good at slipping in where you're not supposed to be to learn a secret or discover a clue.


Individual Role: Investigators are smart, perceptive people. They're more likely to overcome a challenge using their wits than by other means, and occasionally their curiosity or persistence can get them into trouble.

Group Role: Investigators serve as the core of the team, as “investigating” is so much of what PCs do in The Magnus Archives. As previously mentioned, though, they can get into trouble and sometimes need someone to protect them or help them talk their way out of a bad situation. When it comes to solving mysteries or delving into a topic, they lead the way.

Societal Role: Investigators can also be called researchers. They can serve as private investigators, insurance investigators,

researchers in a university setting, or even librarians. Mostly, though, in the context of The Magnus Archives, they are archivists or assistant archivists, checking on details found in the statements about the paranormal that people provide.

Advanced Investigators: As Investigators advance, their skills get better and better, and they grow more adept at finding and—perhaps even more important—assembling clues to make sense of what would otherwise remain a mystery.

Supernatural Investigators: Investigators who gain paranormal abilities can use their powers to acquire information impossible to gain otherwise by reaching out in dreams, clairvoyance, or seeing into the past or the future. Such abilities are marked with .

INVESTIGATOR STAT POOLS

Stat	Pool Starting Value
Might	10
Speed	9
Intellect	9

The player has 6 additional points to assign to the stat Pools as they wish.

FIRST-TIER INVESTIGATOR

First-tier Investigators have the following abilities:

Effort: Your Effort is 1.

Fit: You have a Speed Edge of 1, a Might Edge of 0, and an Intellect Edge of 1.

Investigative Skills: You are trained in two investigation-related skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two of the following: discerning motive, forensics, intimidation, perception, persuasion, researching, or tracking. Enabler.


Cypher Use: You can have two cyphers at a time.


Weapons: You're practiced with light and medium **weapons** and suffer no penalty when


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using them. You have an inability when using heavy weapons. Enabler.


Investigative Abilities: Compared to most others, you're clear-headed, quick-witted, and perceptive, and your abilities reflect that. Choose two of the abilities listed below. You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise.


 **Careful Observation (1 Intellect point):** You take a minute to examine your surroundings. If you succeed at a difficulty 4 perception task, you take note of an inanimate object within an immediate distance that is related to your current investigation. You see a particular color of mud on some boots, a loose thread in a coat on a hook, the disturbance of dust on a bookshelf that reveals the most recently examined book, or some other detail that another person would have likely passed over. If there is no such detail in the area, you learn that too (and know that you can move on, as there's nothing of note there). If there are two or more such details, you still just make one roll; you learn one detail if you succeed at a difficulty 4 task, a second detail if you succeed at a difficulty 5 task, the third detail if you succeed at a difficulty 6 task, and so forth. Action.


 **Decipher (1 Intellect point):** If you spend one minute examining a piece of writing or code in a language you don't understand, you can make an Intellect roll to get the gist of the message. The difficulty is usually 3 but may be higher based on the complexity of the language or code. Action to initiate; one minute to complete.

 **Fleet of Foot (1+ Speed points):** Instead of being able to move an immediate distance as part of another action, you can move a short distance as part of another action. Instead of moving a short distance as your entire action for a turn, you can move a long distance. If you apply a level of Effort to this ability, you can move a long distance and

make an attack as your entire action for a turn, but the attack is hindered. Enabler.

 **Follow the Trail:** When you apply Effort to a perception or tracking task because you are attempting to find a specific person or place, you can apply a free level of Effort. Enabler.

 **Knowledge Skills:** You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two areas of knowledge such as history, geography, forensics, and so on. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose two different skills. Enabler.

 **Missing Detail (2 Intellect points):** You listen to the words of an NPC, read a transcript of something that was said, or read an account written by someone—such as a statement—and you immediately note something that *wasn't* said. This can be something implied by what was said or written, or something obviously left out. The GM provides this brief fact to you. The words written or spoken must be substantial, like someone giving an eyewitness account, telling a story, or—as previously mentioned—giving a statement. Enabler.

Missing Detail isn't meant to force GMs to come up with new information, but rather to allow them to reveal a hint that will be helpful in the investigation. GMs can give the hint, and then—if desired—the player and GM can work together to come up with the actual missing detail.

EXAMPLE MISSING DETAILS

- The dates of the three appearances by a strange creature suggest that it only comes out at night, when the moon is waxing.
- The person telling the story never mentioned locking the door, so the intruder could have come in that way.
- The statement giver claims that they had never met the strange man before, yet later they know his name without being told.
- There's a voice in the background of the recording, but supposedly the house was empty.



🦋 Operate in the Dark (1 Intellect point):

For the next hour, you use your other senses to compensate for a lack of vision. If you're blinded or just in the dark, you operate without any hindrance. Action to initiate.

🦋 Ready for Danger: You are trained in initiative. Enabler.

🦋 Surging Confidence (1 Might point): You can use your one-action recovery roll as part of another action. Enabler.


SECOND-TIER INVESTIGATOR


Choose two of the investigative abilities listed here (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. In addition, you can replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.


🦋 Escape (2 Speed points): You slip your restraints, squeeze through the bars, break the grip of the creature holding you, pull free from sucking quicksand, or otherwise get loose from whatever is holding you in place. Action.


🦋 Eye for Detail (2 Intellect points): When you spend at least five minutes thoroughly exploring an area no larger than a short distance in diameter, you can ask the GM one question about the area and get an answer. You cannot use this more than one time per area per 24 hours. Action to initiate; five minutes to complete.


🦋 Hand to Eye (2 Speed points): This ability provides an asset to any tasks involving manual dexterity, such as pickpocketing, lockpicking, games involving agility, and so on, for one minute. Action to initiate.


 **Just a Hunch (2 Intellect points):** A flash of insight provides you with a small clue or suggests a course of action with regard to an urgent question, problem, or obstacle you're facing when you have no idea how to proceed. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until after your next ten-hour recovery roll, and then only if you've followed up on the clue or course of action suggested by your last hunch. Action.

 **Research (2 Intellect points):** If you spend at least two hours with an appropriate source of information (such as the internet, a library, the archives, or a single informative book), you learn one relevant fact about a topic you choose. Essentially, you ask the GM a question and they give you an answer appropriate for the topic based on the source. The internet or a small-town library might not have accurate esoteric occult information, while a book on ancient architecture might have everything you need on that topic. Enabler.

 **Skill With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are not already trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You are trained in defense tasks of that type. Enabler.

 **Skim (2 Intellect points):** Taking just a minute, you can skim through a book, a computer database, a diary, an accounting ledger, or a similar information source and get the gist of the contents. If you succeed at a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task, you also learn a prominent or surprising bit of information you didn't already know. Action to initiate; one minute to complete.

 **Surveillance:** All tasks involving monitoring, watching, or tailing a person or place are eased. This includes setting up cameras, microphones, or other equipment. Enabler.


 **Travel Skills:** You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two of the following: driving, endurance, geography, piloting, or riding. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose two different skills. Enabler.


THIRD-TIER INVESTIGATOR


Third-tier Investigators have the following abilities:


Expert Cypher Use: You can have three cyphers at a time.

Investigative Abilities: Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.


 **Interaction Skills:** You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Choose two of the following: deception, discerning motive, intimidation, or persuasion. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose two different skills. Enabler.


 **Quick Recovery:** Your ten-minute recovery roll is only a single action. Enabler.


 **Scarred and Hardened:** You reduce the Stress you suffer from physical injury by 1. You still suffer Stress from mental shock or despair normally. Enabler.



 **Seen Some . . . Stuff:** You reduce the Stress you suffer from mental shock or despair by 1. You still suffer Stress from physical injury normally. Enabler.

Just a Hunch is there for the GM to give a hint to the player when they're stuck and don't know what to do.

 **Skill With Attacks:** Choose one type of attack in which you are not already trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are trained in attacks using that type of weapon. You can select this ability multiple times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of attack. Enabler.


 **Think Your Way Out:** You can use points from your Intellect Pool rather than your Might Pool or Speed Pool on any noncombat action. Enabler.


 **Trapfinder (3+ Intellect points):** You find any traps (like a floor that would give way beneath you) or mechanical triggers to a trap or defense system that might pose a threat. You can do this without setting them off and in lieu of making a roll to find them. This ability automatically finds traps of level 4 or below. You can use Effort to increase the level of traps that can be found by 2, so using two levels of Effort can find all traps of level 8 and below. Action.


  **Unnatural Dream (3 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** When you fall asleep, you have a dream that provides insight into a situation you currently face (although you do not consciously choose the topic). The GM provides you with the information you learn, probably details you couldn't learn conventionally. Action.


FOURTH-TIER INVESTIGATOR


Choose two of the investigative abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.


 **Credible Hypothesis (4 Intellect points):** You examine an immediate area (basically an average room) and learn precise, useful details about the past (if any exist). You can ask the GM up to four questions about the immediate area; each requires its own roll (the GM determines the difficulty, but the default is level 4). Action.


 **Heightened Skills:** You are trained in two tasks of your choosing (other than attacks or defense). If you choose a task you're already trained in, you instead become specialized in that task. You can't choose a task you're already specialized in. Enabler.


 **Look for the Tell (4 Intellect points):** After spending at least a minute with a person in conversation, for the next minute you know when they are lying. Action to initiate.

 **Perfect Tracker:** If you find a set of tracks, you can follow them without error unless the conditions absolutely prohibit it (heavy rain, complete darkness, etc.). Enabler.

 **Subtle Steps:** When you move no more than a short distance, you can move without making a sound, regardless of the surface you move across. Enabler.

 **Take Their Measure (3 Intellect points):** You learn the level of all creatures you can see. If they have any special weaknesses (such as a vulnerability to fire), you learn what those are. Action.

 **Versatile Mind:** When you make a Speed defense roll, you can use points from your Intellect Pool instead of your Speed Pool. Enabler.


 **Supernatural Senses (4 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** You have an uncanny intuition when it comes to finding things. While exploring, you can extend your senses up to 1 mile (1.6 km) in any direction and ask the GM a very simple, general question—usually a yes-or-no question—about that area, such as “Is there a library nearby?” or “Are there any bodies buried in that yard?” If the answer you seek is not in the area, you receive no information. Action.


FIFTH-TIER INVESTIGATOR


Fifth-tier Investigators have the following abilities:

Adroit Cypher Use: You can bear four cyphers at a time.


Investigative Abilities: Choose two of the abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.


 **Hard to Kill:** You can reroll any defense task you make but never more than once per round. Enabler.



 **Mastery With Defense:** Choose one type of defense task in which you are trained: Might, Speed, or Intellect. You become specialized in defense tasks of that type. You can select this ability up to three times. Each time you select it, you must choose a different type of defense task. Enabler.

 **Seize the Moment (4+ Speed points):** If you succeed on a Speed defense roll to resist an attack, you gain an action. You can use the action immediately even if you have already taken a turn in the round. You don't take an action during the next round, unless you apply a level of Effort when you use Seize the Moment. Enabler.



 **Shrug It Off:** You ignore the negative effects of your first Stress level. Enabler.

 **Vigilant (5 Might points):** When affected by an attack or effect that would daze or stun you, or anything that would specifically make you lose your next action, you are not affected. Enabler.


  **See the Past (5 Intellect points and 3 Stress):** You touch an object, read the subtle echoes of its existence through time, ask the GM a question about the object's past, and get a general answer. The answers are often in the form of brief images or sensations rather than specific answers in a language you know. The GM assigns a level to the question, so the more **obscure** the answer, the more difficult the task. Generally, knowledge that you could find by looking somewhere other than your current location is level 1, and obscure knowledge of the past is level 7. After you use this ability, you have an asset on identifying the object. Action.


"Obscure" is a relative term. A historian might not know how a collector acquired a specific artefact, but someone using See the Past on that artefact would have an easy time sensing that event.




SIXTH-TIER INVESTIGATOR

Choose two of the investigative abilities listed below (or from a lower tier). You can't choose the same ability more than once unless its description says otherwise. You can also replace one of your lower-tier abilities with a different one from a lower tier.

 **Advanced Research (6 Intellect points):** Through luck, a hunch, or just general preparedness, you already researched the topic that now faces you, providing you with information and answers as if you took a full week with an appropriate source of information to learn what you could. Action.

 **General Knowledge:** All tasks involving knowledge, research, observation, or assessment are eased. Enabler.

 **Impossible Clue (6 Intellect points):** You focus for one action on an immediate area or a single individual, after which you learn (no roll needed) a fact about that area or person that you seemingly couldn't possibly know. Like Sherlock Holmes, you notice a detail no one else would and come to a conclusion that is always correct. The GM provides the fact (the conclusion) and then you and the GM can work together to come up with the clue. Alternatively, you can skip coming up with the specifics of the clue and just focus on the information gained. Action.

A few examples of facts that might be learned (and the clue that might reveal them):

- There was someone in the room at 6:30 a.m. (There are a few raindrops on the window sill even though the window is closed, indicating that someone closed it after it started raining, but before it started truly pouring.)
- The owner of the house hates children. (Other houses and yards in the neighborhood show signs that kids play there, but not this one.)

- The man has been divorced twice. (His ring finger bears the marks of two different rings, but he wears no ring now.)
- The woman is allergic to flowers. (A child in the lobby of the building is giving out daisies to all the ladies passing through, but she doesn't have one.)

Mastery With Attacks: Choose one type of attack in which you are trained: light bashing, light bladed, light ranged, medium bashing, medium bladed, medium ranged, heavy bashing, heavy bladed, or heavy ranged. You are specialized in attacks using that type of weapon. Enabler. (If you aren't trained in an attack, select **Skill With Attacks** to become trained in that attack.)

See the Future (6 Intellect points and 3 Stress): Based on all the variables you perceive, you can predict the next few minutes. This has the following effects:

- For the next ten minutes, your defense rolls gain an asset.
- You have a sort of danger sense. For the next ten minutes, you gain an asset in seeing through deceptions and attempts to betray you, as well as avoiding traps and ambushes.
- You know what people are probably thinking and what they will say before they say it. For the next ten minutes, you gain an asset to tasks involving interaction and deception.

Enabler.



INVESTIGATOR EXAMPLE

Isla decides to create an Investigator character, someone who began her career as an aspiring journalist who prides herself on getting the real story. She puts 2 additional points into her Speed Pool and 4 into her Intellect Pool; her stat Pools are now Might 10, Speed 11, and Intellect 13. As a first-tier character, her Effort is 1, her Might Edge is 0, and her Speed Edge and Intellect Edge are 1. Isla's character is fairly well-rounded so far.

Isla then chooses two investigative skills and settles on **forensics** and **researching**, which seem like great options for figuring out how weird a particular area of interest might be.

She can also pick up a couple of type abilities for her character. She selects **Careful Observation** and **Decipher**, figuring that the first is vital for getting a clear sense of what's going on during her investigations, and the second is ideal in case things become dangerous and she needs to act decisively.

Isla's Investigator can bear two cyphers. The GM decides that one is **strange music** that allows her to rid herself of a few points of Stress, and the other is a **curiosity** that increases her Intellect Edge for an hour.

Next, her character needs a **descriptor**. After looking over the options, she selects **Scholarly**, thinking that explains her training and still speaks to who her character has become. Scholarly grants her training in two knowledge skills; she chooses **history** and **psychology**. She also opts for a second—or, in her case, third—descriptor skill, and selects **identifying**. Opting for an additional skill means also choosing an inability, so she goes with the suggested one: **discerning motive**.

For her focus, Isla chooses **Explores Dark Places** (which for her are likely to be abandoned homes, basements, old farmhouses, and weird tunnels underground). This gives her three additional skills: **perception**, **endurance**, and **gymnastics**.

For her **character arc**, Isla chooses **Assist an Organization**. She figures her research fits hand in glove with the group she's part of, which seeks to document supernatural events.

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