Starter Decklists

Version 2.0 December, 2016—The Dunwich Legacy Edition

This document contains sample starter decks for each released investigator for Arkham Horror: The Card Game. The most recent version of this document is considered a supplement to the Arkham Horror: The Card Game Rules Reference.

**New Investigator Starter Decks:** Zoey Samaras, Rex Murphy, Jenny Barnes, Jim Culver, “Ashcan” Pete.

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[Image: Arkham Horror: The Card Game]
**We Unfortunate Few**

It is an unfortunate fact that relatively obscure men like myself and my associates, connected only with a small university, have little chance of making an impression where matters of a wildly bizarre or highly controversial nature are concerned. It is further against us that we are not, in the strictest sense, specialists in the fields which came primarily to be concerned.

—H. P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*

**Sample Starter Decks**

Investigating the events occurring throughout Arkham is dangerous work. You will confront monstrosities far beyond your ken, and the knowledge you seek may cause irreparable harm to your psyche. You’ll need the best tools, strong allies, and useful skills if you are to succeed in the campaigns to come.

To help you in your investigations, we have provided a sample starter deck for each investigator in *Arkham Horror: The Card Game*. These decks are a gateway into the world of Arkham, and are each one example of the kinds of decks that can be built for each investigator in the game. These decks are ideal for players who wish to get into the action as fast as possible, or for inexperienced deckbuilders who wish to be provided with a starter deck they did not need to assemble on their own.

Each of the provided decks is accompanied by tips and tricks for playing that deck, explaining how to make the best use of an investigator’s ability, or demonstrating card synergy within the deck. These starter decks are meant to be used at the beginning of a campaign, and thus have 0 experience points spent. The number in parentheses next to each card is its card collector number. If a card does not specify the number of copies you should use, use only 1 copy of that card.

**Core Set Starter Decks**

The following starter decks are for the five investigators included in the *Arkham Horror: The Card Game* core set. Using the contents of only a single copy of the core set, up to two of these starter decks may be built at the same time, in the following combinations: Roland and Agnes, Roland and Wendy, Daisy and Skids, Daisy and Wendy, or Agnes and Skids. With a second copy of the core set, any four of these starter decks may be built simultaneously.

**Roland Banks Strategy Tips**

Roland is a capable fighter and clue gatherer. Since his ability allows him to automatically discover clues by defeating enemies, you will want to hunt down any easy-to-kill enemies you can find, especially if they are in a location with a high shroud value. Try to get a weapon out as soon as possible (such as a .45 Automatic, Machete, or Roland’s .38 Special) so that you are prepared to tackle any enemies that may appear. Beat Cop, Guard Dog and Physical Training can all help you take down enemies, as well.

If you are still having trouble investigating, you may wish to carry a Magnifying Glass or have Dr. Milan Christopher help you. Evidence! and Working a Hunch can also allow you to discover clues automatically in locations with high shroud.

While Roland is physically tough, he has a low sanity and is especially susceptible to horror. Allies like Beat Cop or Dr. Milan Christopher can help soak some horror if you uncover something terrifying. Otherwise, don’t be afraid to play First Aid and use an entire turn healing horror if you are close to being defeated—you want to avoid mental trauma at all costs!

Should you be compelled to Cover Up any strange events happening in your vicinity, don’t forget you can use card effects such as Roland’s ability, Evidence!, or Working a Hunch to remove these clues, instead of investigating.
Daisy Walker Strategy Tips

Daisy is a high-intellect investigator who favors a support role or a rush-for-clues approach. Since her ability is dependent upon Tome assets, getting one in play as soon as possible should be your primary concern. Old Book of Lore is the ideal Tome to get out early, but having Medical Texts with Daisy’s high intellect can be a life-saver. If you don’t draw either of these cards in your opening hand, a Research Librarian can help you search for one, and also serves as a convenient damage buffer when the going gets rough.

Daisy’s intellect is high enough that she doesn’t usually need help investigating, but if you’re trying to rush for clues, equip a Magnifying Glass and get Dr. Milan Christopher into play as soon as possible.

Because her combat and agility are both on the low end, dealing with enemies can be problematic for Daisy. Luckily, you have a few tricks up your sleeve. Blinding Light and Shrivelling allow you to use your willpower instead of agility or combat to evade or attack enemies, respectively. You can also use Holy Rosary to boost your willpower higher. If you find a location with lots of clues and there are hunter enemies around, you can use Barricade to gather those clues in relative safety. Finally, Mind over Matter is your clutch card. Because Daisy’s intellect is so high, try to save Mind over Matter for the turn you need it most!

If you already have both your Old Book of Lore and Medical Texts in play, try to get Daisy’s Tote Bag out before The Necronomicon enters play, otherwise you’ll end up losing one of your other books.

“Skids” O’Toole Strategy Tips

“Skids” is a well-rounded character who is decent at combat, evasion, and investigation. Your investigator ability and weakness both require you to have resources, so keeping a high quantity in your resource pool is usually a good idea. You can generate extra resources by making judicious use of Burglary and Emergency Cache, or simply by taking a “Gain 1 resource” action whenever you’re unsure what to do.

Because “Skids” has high agility and decent combat, you have the option of deciding whether to take enemies on through brute force or avoid them altogether. It is usually best to decide based on the enemy in question—fight enemies with high evade values and evade enemies with high health and fight values. As you have quite a few weapons in your deck, don’t be afraid to take a guns-blazing approach when you have to!

Extra actions are your most powerful tool as “Skids.” Between Leo De Luca and your investigator ability, you may have as many as 5 actions in a single turn. Save your resources early on to play Leo and your other assets, but mid to late game, spend your money and use your extra actions to take out enemies, investigate locations, or move to right where you need to be.

Your low willpower means you are likely to succumb to many of the encounter deck’s tricks. If you’re feeling swamped, On the Lam is your panic button. The ability to essentially ignore all non-Elite enemies for a whole round is extremely potent. Use it to take move or investigate actions while engaged with enemies, or to engage enemies away from your allies without fear of reprisal. Using this event at the right time can mean the difference between defeat and success.
Agnes Baker Strategy Tips

Agnes is a high-willpower spellcaster who is particularly good at dispatching enemies. Since her ability can trigger once per phase after she takes horror, the more on-demand ways you can deal horror to yourself, the better. Forbidden Knowledge is probably your best tool for fueling Agnes’s ability: Take 1 horror, gain 1 resource, and deal 1 damage anytime you want! You can also trigger her ability through Ward of Protection, or even Shrivelling if you are lucky (?) enough to draw a chaos token with a ⚗, ⚗, ⚖, ⚖, or ⚖ symbol on it. Use this ability to easily take out enemies with only 1 health remaining, or to put extra damage on bigger enemies.

But beware! Since Agnes’s ability only triggers when horror is actually placed on her, you’re going to want to soak or deal horror as well. Holy Rosary is a must-play card, since it boosts Agnes’s willpower and also provides you with a way to protect against horror when you don’t wish to trigger Agnes’s ability.

Shrivelling and your investigator ability are your two primary ways of defeating enemies, but a Baseball Bat is a good back-up plan. If you are having trouble investigating, you can use “Look what I found!” or Drawn to the Flame to discover as many as 4 clues without having to succeed at an intellect test.

Finally, since you are quite dependent upon your Spell cards, getting an Arcane Initiate in play early can be a huge benefit to you. Make sure the doom threshold on the current agenda isn’t close to being satisfied, then play Arcane Initiate and make the most out of its ability each turn. When doom is close to the threshold, if you can discard it from play (usually by assigning damage or horror to it), you can be rid of the doom on it as well.

Wendy Adams Strategy Tips

Wendy is a slippery investigator who is great at avoiding danger. Making use of her ability to cancel and re-draw chaos tokens during critical skill tests is key to succeeding as Wendy. Be sure to keep enough cards in your hand to fuel her ability at all times. Pickpocketing and Rabbit’s Foot are both ideal cards to put into play early, allowing you to draw cards through evading enemies and failing tests.

Her high agility and low combat means you should primarily be evading and running from enemies, but a well-timed Backstab or Sneak Attack can also get rid of a troublesome enemy. Strawberry Cat, Cunning Distraction, and Survival Instinct can all help you get out of sticky situations. When all else fails, pull out a .41 Derringer or a Baseball Bat and don’t be afraid to overcommit cards!

Wendy’s Amulet is a tricky card, but playing around its ability and Forced effect can be especially rewarding. It is usually best to keep the Amulet in hand until there are a few events in your discard pile. Once it’s in play, always be aware of the topmost event in your discard pile, (especially if it’s Lucky!) since you can play it using Wendy’s Amulet. Don’t forget that once the Amulet is in play, all events you play are placed on the bottom of your deck (regardless of whether you are playing the event from your hand or using the Amulet’s ability).
Zoey Samaras, the Chef
Investigator
• Zoey Samaras (TDL 1)
Assets (16)
• Zoey’s Cross (TDL 6)
• .45 Automatic (Core 16)
• Physical Training (Core 17)
• Beat Cop (Core 18)
• First Aid (Core 19)
• Machete (Core 20)
• Guard Dog (Core 21)
• Holy Rosary (Core 59)
• Rite of Seeking (TDL 28)
• Vicious Blow (Core 16)
• Overpower (Core 89)
• Machete (TDL 36)
• 2 copies of Knife (Core 86)
• 2 copies of Flashlight (Core 87)
• 2 copies of Emergency Cache (Core 88)
Events (9)
• Evidence! (Core 22)
• Dodge (Core 23)
• Dynamite Blast (Core 24)
• Blinding Light (Core 66)
• Taunt (TDL 17)
• Teamwork (TDL 18)
• 2 copies of Taunt (TDL 17)
• 2 copies of Emergency Cache (Core 88)
Skills (6)
• Vicious Blow (Core 25)
• Fearless (Core 67)
• Overpower (Core 89)
• Guts (Core 92)
Weaknesses (2)
• Smite the Wicked (TDL 7)
• 1 random basic weakness

Zoey Samaras Strategy Tips

Zoey is a straightforward monster hunter who excels at engaging and dispatching enemies. As her ability rewards you for engaging enemies, you should be able to maintain a steady stream of resources simply by hunting down monsters. Use these resources to play weapons and allies that can help you stay alive and defeat even the toughest of foes.

Since you want to engage enemies whenever possible, Taunt is your best friend. Use it to engage Aloof enemies without spending an action, or to engage enemies that are threatening other investigators. Once you have Zoey’s Cross in play, you can forego the extra resources from Zoey’s ability in exchange for automatic damage, which is almost always better.

While your high willpower allows you to resist many of the effects the encounter deck will throw your way, this deck also contains a few other ways for you to make use of your willpower. Rite of Seeking allows you to investigate with your willpower, while Blinding Light allows you to evade using your willpower (and do some damage). Finally, Holy Rosary boosts your willpower and shores up one of Zoey’s weaknesses—her sanity.

Speaking of sanity, should you feel the need to Smite the Wicked, it is important to consider how far away the newly-spawned enemy is, and how tough it is to fight. An easy-to-kill enemy that is also nearby should absolutely be a priority. But be careful of biting off more than you can chew—trying to smite a dangerous enemy may end up costing you, in the end.
Rex Murphy Strategy Tips

Rex is a high-intellect investigator and an expert at discovering clues. Because he has the potential to discover multiple clues each time he investigates—especially in locations with a low shroud value—he can discover clues at a rapid pace. If you can get a Flashlight out early, you can advance quickly and rush through the act deck.

Additionally, this deck has a few tricks you can use alongside Rex’s ability to great effect. For example, if you investigate using Burglary and succeed by 2 or more, you can gain resources and discover a clue simultaneously. Likewise, if you investigate using Seeking Answers and succeed by 2 or more, you can discover a clue at your location, in addition to a clue in a connecting location.

Rex is also adept at holding onto a large hand, using his elder sign ability, Laboratory Assistant, Pickpocketing, and Search for the Truth to keep his Laboratory Assistant, Pickpocketing, and Search for the Truth to keep his cards hand flush with cards. Use these cards to guarantee success in crucial skill tests, especially when attempting to evade dangerous enemies. Rex isn’t shabby at evasion, but a well-timed Think on Your Feet or Mind over Matter can help bail you out of a sticky situation.

Unfortunately, Rex’s bad luck often catches up with him at the worst time. When you are afflicted by Rex’s Curse, you will eventually fail a test, and spend them with Hard Knocks, which will help tremendously in dealing with enemies, either by defeating them or evading them.

If you find yourself overflowing with resources, play Jenny’s Twin .45s and pile on as much ammo as you want—the more, the better. Finally, if you are playing with other investigators, you can also share the wealth using Teamwork! You might also play an expensive asset and pass it to another investigator using Teamwork!

While Rex is adept at many aspects of the game, his greatest downfall is that he is not a specialist. You will have to depend on your assets and skills when you need to succeed at high-difficulty tests.

If you find a sign of your sister Isabelle, you might find yourself compelled to drop everything you’re doing and begin Searching for Izzie. While this is often the correct choice, Jenny has a decent amount of sanity, so don’t be afraid to abandon this task should it prove too difficult.

Jenny Barnes Strategy Tips

Jenny is the quintessential jack-of-all-trades, with a value of 3 in each skill and a steady influx of resources to help you pay for any cards you want. She is a great solo investigator, but is also very good at shoring up an investigation team’s weaknesses by providing whatever is needed at any given moment.

Jenny has the tools to handle pretty much every aspect of the game. Because you get extra resources every round, building a heavy board state with numerous assets is a viable strategy. You can also collect a bank of resources and spend them with Hard Knocks, which will help tremendously in dealing with enemies, either by defeating them or evading them.

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Jim Culver Strategy Tips

Jim is a reliable spellcaster with high willpower and a "toolbox of spells" approach. His ability to treat the modifier on skull tokens as a "0" improves his chances of success at nearly any test, and the more he is able to leverage and manipulate this power, the better. Ritual Candles is a must-have tool for Jim, giving him even greater odds of success, so get at least one out early. Because this deck doesn't have too many options for hand slots, you should be able to leave it in play for the entire game.

Jim has many tools for investigation as well as combat. Rite of Seeking, Drawn to the Flame, and "Look what I found!" can all help you gather clues, while Shrivelling, Kukri, and Blinding Light can help you deal with enemies. You can also heal horror with Fearless, Clarity of Mind, and the soothing tones of Jim's Trumpet. This makes Jim a good choice to go up against the most terrifying of creatures, although he is not quite as good at avoiding or healing damage.

With his ability, Ritual Candles, and Lucky!, Jim has a greater-than-normal chance for success at tests where his skill value is equal to or less than the test's difficulty. His ability may even completely negate the effect of skull tokens in certain scenarios. When playing as Jim, don’t be afraid to attempt skill tests that might otherwise be foolhardy for other investigators.

Final Rhapsody is a weakness you absolutely must plan for. Because it can appear at any time and potentially deal a lot of damage and horror, you should try to keep your health and sanity above half whenever possible.

“Ashcan” Pete Strategy Tips

“Ashcan” Pete is a unique character who is at his best when working with his dog, Duke. Alone, Pete has lower-than-average skills, health, and sanity. However, when allied together with his trusted hound, Pete and Duke become more than just the sum of their parts. Taking advantage of Duke’s abilities is the key to playing as “Ashcan” Pete. Duke can help you fight against dangerous enemies, or lead you toward clues and help you discover them. Use Pete’s ability to ready Duke liberally, and you will find many uses for his loyal partner.

Don’t forget that you can also use Pete’s ability to ready other assets besides Duke, such as Old Book of Lore or Rabbit’s Foot. Because Duke doesn’t take up your ally slot, you can play Laboratory Assistant to get more cards in your hand, or Peter Sylvestre to help soak horror and resist treachery cards that might discard Duke from play. While there are generally no long-term repercussions if Duke leaves play, keeping Duke safe is crucial to survival for Pete.

Pete’s weakness, Wracked by Nightmares, is a hindrance you will want to get rid of as soon as possible. While it won’t hurt you in the short term, it shuts off your most valuable cards, and slows you down. Keep in mind, however, that most assets can still be used while exhausted—you can still investigate with a Flashlight or take a swing at enemies with a Baseball Bat while Wracked by Nightmares is in play.