

BLACK WATER

DESCRIPTION:

A strange lizard-man has apparently been captured by a travelling carnival. Is it real?

ADVENTURE HOOKS:

- **BPI:** If the characters are agents of the BPI they should be sent to examine the creature to determine its authenticity, and the need for intervention.
- **Curiosity:** The characters may read an article about the travelling show, or see an advertisement or poster depicting the main attraction.

PLAYER DETAILS:

The Nabokov Travelling Carnival is a small operation consisting of a small sideshow, prize booths, and a handful of outdated rides. It is currently operating for a limited time on a disused ball field at the outskirts of the city.

The owner, Casper Nabokov, has begun to advertise a new attraction: a hideous lizard-man from darkest Africa. The attraction is to be put on display within the week, but it has gained only limited interest so far from local press who downplay his claims as common sideshow charlatantry. They claim that the recent disappearance of the Carnival's strong man, Toby Miles, must be related. The common belief is that Toby will be putting on the lizard costume for the act.

GM DETAILS:

The Nabokov Travelling Carnival is a small-time operation with a outdated collection of rides, booths, and side-show attractions. It has been dangerously close to bankruptcy several times. The carnival's proprietor, Casper Nabokov, and several of the performers found the creature while walking the riverbanks near their most recent venue in Florida. The Lizard Man attacked the carnival's strong man. The other performer's battered the Lizard Man unconscious with tree branches, but did not succeed in saving the man's life as the Lizard Man had managed to bite off most of his leg by then.

Nabokov immediately realized that the Lizard Man would make an excellent replacement attraction, and possibly save the show. The group's strong man, Toby Miles, was a drifter with no known family so the performers agreed to help hide the body and allow him to effectively disappear. If the death was made known the creature would probably be taken from them, leaving them with nothing but one less performer. The only member of the group upset over the loss was Nina Bartok, the bearded lady, who had a relationship with Miles. She is unaware that he is dead, but suspicious that he chose to leave at the same time they found the thing.

Nabokov will be highly suspicious of the investigators, but they can easily charm their way into his graces if they masquerade as members of the press. Nabokov will claim the creature is a hideous mutation he imported from darkest Africa. If players are allowed to view the beast it will be in a cage surrounded by curtains in the side-show. It will lie still on its stomach regarding them until Nabokov prods it with a pole, at which point it rears up on its hind legs - hissing and changing colors.

If given any opportunity the creature will escape wreak havoc. Nabokov will be a primary target if he becomes visible during the creature's escape, as the creature remembers his mistreatment at the man's hands. After Nabokov, the creature's primary goal will be to flee to a nearby water source. Ideally this would be the small rivers and tributaries leading to the Gulf of Mexico, the Everglades, or any convenient ocean, but it is limited by where the characters encounter the creature.

If the creature is not released *and is held near the area where it was initially found*, its plight will eventually attract 6-8 other Herposapiens, who will descend on the carnival en masse. The creatures will attack any humans they find in the area, intent on driving them off. If left alone they will then attack the cage until it falls open, releasing the captive.

TIMELINE:

The timeline varies, depending on where the GM wishes to place the adventure. The farther away from Florida, the longer it will have been since Toby's death and the creature's capture. The proximity to where the creature was captured will also determine if other Herposapiens will be drawn to their captured brother, and how long this will take.

LOCATIONS:

A map of the carnival and side-show can be made impromptu. The carnival should be divided into three distinct areas: the sideshow; the fairway; and the amusements.

The sideshow area has the following attractions: the Bearded lady; the Rubber Man; the Blockhead (pain insensitive who drives nails into his nose); a Juggler/Fire-Breather; the Three-legged Man; and the spot where the Strong Man once was is now occupied by a tent for the Lizard Man. Each has a tent for the paid attraction, with a small stage out front for someone to work the crowd and sell tickets.

The fairway is a collection of common carnival games. There is a shooting gallery, hoop toss, dime toss, and a few others.

The amusements include the basic, out-of-date rides. There is a Ferris Wheel, Tilt-a-Whirl, a small Roller Coaster, and motorized swings. All are in good repair despite their age.

Trailers for the crew and performers are behind the amusements. There are always at least 3 carnies walking the grounds even when the carnival is closed.

NPCs:**CARNY**

Type: Typical Carnival Employee

Physique: 2D+1

Reflex: 2D

Dodge 4D, Melee Weapons 3D, Unarmed Combat 3D

Canny: 2D+1

Stage Magic 3D, Streetwise 3D

Education: 1D+1

Technical: 2D

Trade Skills 3D+2

Will: 2D

Special Abilities/Disadvantages: None

Story Hooks: None

Life Points: 29

Survival Points: 0-3 normally

Move: 10

Equipment: Knife (PHY+1D), \$50, Basic Clothes

CASPER NABOKOV**Type:** Showman / Carnival Owner**Physique:** 2D**Reflex:** 2D

Dodge 4D, Firearms 3D+1, Melee Weapons 3D

Canny: 4D

Stage Magic 4D+2

Education: 3D+1**Technical:** 2D+2

Trade Skills 3D+2

Will: 4D**Special Abilities/Disadvantages:** None**Story Hooks:***Showman* – Casper loves to show off, the more attention he gets the more pleased he becomes.**Life Points:** 27**Survival Points:** 3**Move:** 10**Equipment:** IAR Model 1872 Derringer, Ithaca Stakeout Shotgun, Travelling Carnival, Dressy Clothes

Casper Nabokov is the son of Russian immigrants who worked as trapeze artists for the Ringling Brothers Circus. Casper was unfortunately born without their grace in the air, but growing up in such an atmosphere gave him many ideas. Casper would commonly help the other performers make changes to their act, and dealt closely with the administration of things until the day he had saved enough to start his own small show.

The Nabokov Travelling Carnival has had its ups and downs over the years, but has not weathered well the storm of indifference in recent years. At times Casper has featured some innovative acts, but his lack of capital inevitable leads to their being lured away to stage shows for more lucrative money. Casper sees the Lizard Man as his last chance to save the show from ruin, and he will guard it jealously.

SHADOWS:

HERPOSAPIEN

Type: Herposapien

Physique: 3D

Swimming 4D

Reflex: 2D+1

Unarmed Combat 3D

Canny: 2D

Hide/Sneak 3D+2

Will: 1D

Intimidation 2D+2

Special Abilities/Disadvantages:

Bite – PHY+1 damage

Claws – PHY+1D damage

Color Changing – Herposapiens can change color chameleon-like to blend into any environment. As long as they are still, they receive a +15 to the difficulty of finding them when they are using this ability.

Water Adaptation – Herposapiens are equipped equally for land and water. Their long tails provide excellent propulsion while swimming (+2D Swimming), and they can hold their breath up to 20 minutes before surfacing.

Story Hooks: none

Life Points:

Survival Points:

Move: 10 / 30 swimming

Size: 5-8 meters long (2-3.5 meters tall when erect)

The herposapien, or 'lizard man' is a massive iguana-like creature 5-8 meters in length, including the tail. It is carnivorous, aggressive, and will attack any large animal that comes close to the water where it lives. Like crocodiles, it often drags its prey under water to stash in a cave or hole until it decides to feed.

The creature is smart, and fast, but it's most dangerous feature is its natural ability to change coloration to blend into most any environment. The creature does not actually become invisible, but will usually be able to remain unseen when it is not moving.

This creature is sentient, but only at a rudimentary level - like a cave man. It mainly uses its intelligence for problem-solving and limited tool use. It communicates with others of its kind through growls and color changes, and cannot understand human speech. It's equally comfortable with quadrupedal or bipedal movement, but usually only stands upright in order to get a better view of its surroundings or to threaten an enemy.

It is a native of the Amazon region, but its people have begun to migrate elsewhere to avoid encroaching development. It is possible that there could be more than one of the creatures in a given area.

SOLUTIONS:

Characters can either capture or kill the creatures. If extremely resourceful, they may even be able to arrange for the creatures to be shipped back to the Amazon region, or set up a preserve for them. If they capture any they will most likely need to make arrangements with the BPI or other suitable agency for pick-up.

The BPI would not recommend letting the creatures existence become public knowledge, even though they are neither alien nor supernatural. People might either attempt to hunt them down in the Amazon, destroying current preservation efforts, or simply attempt to exterminate them by eliminating the rest of their territory.