

Dr. Caligari

Age: 50

Subsistence: Doctor in a sanatorium; recently appointed as its director.

Idea: Sanatorium director by day; carnival hypnotist and sadist by night.

Background: Tell us the tale of how you found the secret to mind control in an obscure diary, and how it drove you to become... the *mad* Dr. Caligari.

Opening Scene: It's your office at dusk. There is a visitor. Who can it be? How can you control your transformation into the carnival hypnotist—top hat, creepy expression and all—before him?

Dramatic Qualities

I Am a Doctor: People just, I don't know, *trust* you and your word unconditionally. Your position in society permits you to be heard, to have a cushy salary, and to be trusted over others when speaking. When you're at the Shadow Carnival, people all still accept your title.

Mind Control Others: When you are wearing your creepy top hat and looking into the eyes of another, you can hypnotize them to Do. Your. Bidding.

Personality: Gentle by day, intense and fascistic at night!

Intrigue Magnets

Bloodlust Through the Hands of Others: During the day, you save people's sanity and run a tight sanatorium. During the night, however, you get this itchy need to kill people... but only through the actions of others. You will never pick up an instrument of violence yourself, but always act through others.

I Must... Confess! Pick another character in the game. You somehow trust her/him with your secret, and must tell it to her/him despite your best interests. What will happen, you wonder...

Supporting Characters

Cesare, the Somnambulist: A former patient from the sanatorium whom Caligari now keeps sleeping in a box in his carnie wagon. At night, Caligari hypnotizes him to kill others.

Francis: Another inmate at the sanatorium, who suspects something is amiss with the sanatorium's director... You like him as your play-thing, for now.



The Woman

Age: 28

Subsistence: Farmer's Wife.

Idea: Long-suffering spouse, recent mother.

Background: Tell us your version of how you and The Man met. Now tell us about the baby you share, and your wondrous farmland.

Opening Scene: You will be on a boat ride with your husband, The Man. You will be absolutely shocked and terrified when he tries to murder you.

Dramatic Qualities

Thirst for New Life: If you see a future in it, then it must be worthwhile. Get inspired by any sign that the future bodes well for you and your family.

Survival of the Fittest: You will endure, even if the pain is so obvious in your eyes. You will not succumb to the many forces arrayed against you and your husband!

Personality: Meek and quietly proud; you carry an even quieter-but-steady flame burning in your breast.

Intrigue Magnets

Cursed by a Selkie: Unbeknownst to The Man, you have been cursed by a Selkie, a water spirit whose pelt is stored somewhere in your attic crawlspace. You stole the pelt to secure your family's good fortune! What form this curse is to take, you're not quite sure. But you try to avoid being in the water.

Secret Suffragette: You have been campaigning for women's rights and writing letters to politicians in secret for several years. Your husband may not even know that you are quite literate...

Supporting Characters

Tetranic, the Selkie: The one whose pelt you've stolen.

The Baby: It's yours.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

The Man is your husband. Everyone else will likely be new to you.



The Man

Age: 28

Subsistence: Farmer.

Idea: A young, new father being tempted to slay his wife.

Background: Tell us the story of how you and The Woman met. Now tell us of The Vamp who seduced you and convinced you to attempt to murder her.

Opening Scene: Your first scene is between you and The Woman as you decide not to kill her in your boat out on the lake.

Dramatic Qualities

A Simple Man: Any time a character is speaking with too many big words or lofty concepts, you can shake your head and say *"I'm sorry—I'm a simple man. What was that?"* The character must now phrase their point in the most basic of terms.

Easily Swayed: You tend to think of everything through the concepts of "good" and "evil". But this often means that evil can often trick you in the mask of good. Draw one extra Chance card (in addition to the one you get this session) when you consciously let an evil character deceive you.

Personality: Naïve, hard-working, emotionally vulnerable.

Intrigue Magnets

The Vamp Is Still Around to Lead Him Astray: It may not even be the same Vamp. There is just something darn alluring about these city girls, y'know? Once you reconcile with The Woman, however, you will stop at nothing to punish The Vamp for trying to lead you astray.

Utopian Dreams of Future Cities: You dream as if in a film, special effects lighting up the streets and skyscrapers of a magnificent city from hundreds of years into the future. You don't know why you have this dream, but you secretly yearn for what Itras By has to offer.

Supporting Characters

Bruce: Your near-toothless half-brother who ran off to join the Shadow Carnival. He may be circulating in places most unexpected tonight.

The Vamp: The Woman from the City. A temptress who seemed so innocent that you fell for her. You're still falling for her, in fact. Gosh darn it!

The Baby: It's yours. You must care for it, if The Woman does not.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

The Woman is your wife. If Lulu is in play, she *might* be The Vamp (if the player agrees).



Balduin

Age: 22

Subsistence: A Student of Itras By.

Idea: A poor student who signs away his soul in a student loan.

Background: Tell us how you were doing at your studies: what's your major, etc. Now tell us how you met the evil sorcerer who promised you riches in exchange for something vague. Balduin got riches, and now he's lost his reflection...

Opening Scene: Your pact with the evil sorcerer Scapinelli, to whom you sell your soul for money. That moment you look into the mirror and see the other you come alive. What do you do next? How far does the rabbit hole lead?

Dramatic Qualities

Doppelgänger: Assuming you both agree on the plan of action, you can order your reflection to do things for you. In turn, it often takes over your own body.

Tainted Love: Balduin falls for women and men very easily, and he falls for them hard. His Young Werther-esque sense of pathos both attracts and repels those objects of his obsession.

Personality: Anxious, inexperienced, clever.

Intrigue Magnets

A Pact with an Evil Sorcerer: You have a deal: you get riches and Scapinelli gets to run amok with your soul. The doppelgänger, after all, may be the first manifestation of things to come...

Behind on His Studies: You still have to go to class, and the lessons seem to matter less and less as you amass your wealth. Why do you even keep going? Something compels you, and you know not what.

Supporting Characters

Scapinelli, the evil sorcerer who has taken Balduin's reflection.

Countess Margarita, the already-engaged noblewoman he's trying to court with his wealth.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

If Dr. Caligari is in play, he *might* be your medical professor.



Dr. Mabuse

Age: Undetermined. Looks 40.

Subsistence: Criminal mastermind. Yes, crime *does* pay.

Idea: A supervillain before there were supervillains. A man who is everywhere and nowhere at once.

Background: Tell us about the Grey Guard detectives, standing befuddled around an evidence board, trying to piece together who and what you are. Reveal a load of discordant facts, but among them also what you think your real weakness is.

Opening Scene: You are implementing a heist against a corporate office with the help of Spoerri and Pesch (see below). But you aren't there; or perhaps you *are* there, but incognito. How does the public know you were behind it all? How do you indicate to us that this heist is all part of a greater Master Plan?

Dramatic Qualities

Master of Disguise: You are a hard one to find and identify, because you are always clad as someone people would least suspect of being a criminal mastermind... or you even sometimes hide in plain sight just to throw others off the trail. You may once per scene reveal to the other players who Dr. Mabuse really is in the scene, or how the Dr. Mabuse in the scene is fake, and so forth.

Hypnotic Telepath: You can plant suggestions deep into a person's subconscious, and then activate them later with a key word. Might be useful!

Personality: Calculating, aloof, driven, and fluid in terms of gender and sexuality performance.

Intrigue Magnets

The Best-Laid Plans Ever ... On the Backs of Others: Your plans are opaque, full of twists and loopholes and other mastermind-y things. Only you would truly understand them in the end, and only you would be consumed by the guilt regarding the number of crimes you must commit to achieve your goals. Crime at a distance has a human cost, and even Dr. Mabuse has a soul.

Possession: If you should at any point die, you may opt to possess the body of another, perhaps innocuous, individual who will then go on to become a version of Dr. Mabuse. Weird, huh?

Supporting Characters

Spoerri: Your ever-faithful butler. Snorts cocaine and has these weird bug eyes, but is reliable for implementing your plans.

Pesch: An inept goon whom you manipulate and deploy as you see fit. Doesn't quite improve his competence, unfortunately. No matter—your plans will still roll along.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

Almost any character can be part of your insane, labyrinthine plans. Feel free to incorporate as many of them as you see fit...



Lulu

Age: 23

Subsistence: Prostitute working for her father, Schigolch. Mistress of the newspaper publisher Dr. Ludwig Schön.

Idea: Femme fatale who just cannot help being anything but what she is... a deadly male fantasy come to life!

Background: Tell us the tale of how an innocent country girl like yourself became the alluring and dangerous city woman you are today, and how you keep your humanity despite it all.

Opening Scene: Dr. Schön has come knocking. What a lovely man! But what is this talk of trying to “find you a husband”?

Dramatic Qualities

Determined Escapes: Until you decide you need to be punished for all your transgressions, you can always find a way out of any immediately life-threatening situation you are in. Typically, this means stumbling upon your opponent’s weakness or simply demonstrating your vigor. If you’d like, you may kill your opponent on the way out.

Playful Interludes: No matter how dire or bizarre the situation, you can temporarily put off the cares of another person while they are in your embrace, pillow-fighting with you, etc. This never interrupts your own anxieties and preparedness, however.

Personality: You enjoy the moment, flash a smile, and try to wash away all the tears of the past in a few teary-eyed blinks. You dazzle others with your wit and charm, but underneath it all is a great, surging pathos ready to be unleashed. You will shoot someone to prove that you truly loved them.

Intrigue Magnets

Men and Women Fall Madly in Love with Me: If someone is interacting with you, it is likely that they are slowly falling in love with you. People do strange things when they think they’re in love, wouldn’t you know.

Primal Form of Woman: You have a fierce zest for life that comes from your actually being a construct of male fantasy projections. This has two consequences. No matter how hard you try, you cannot disguise your womanhood, or even hide your beauty to others. But also: no matter how tired you are, you always have a void in someone’s life to fulfill, and can rely on renewed bursts of energy to keep you going endlessly.

Supporting Characters

Schigolch: A small-time criminal who just happens to be your father and a former farmer from the country. You earn more money than he does, and you hide it from him so you can buy nice things for yourself.

Dr. Ludwig Schön: The newspaper publisher who took you under his wing and educated you about the world and the ways of men. He is looking to set you up with an advantageous husband pairing.

Countess Geschwitz: An urbane lesbian aristocrat who sees you for who you truly are, but cannot voice these feelings in polite society.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

If you so wish, you may have tried to seduce The Man, an attractive young farmer, assuming the player of The Man agrees.



Rotwang

Age: 50

Subsistence: Mad scientist and robot inventor, commissioned by Joh Fredersen for special projects.

Idea: A crazy brilliant robotics engineer working in a dark, lonely house and plotting revenge.

Background: Tell us about the woman Hel, on whom you had a crush on before Joh Fredersen snatched her away from you. Tell us how she died, and how you blame Joh Fredersen for it. Tell us how Joh Fredersen nevertheless commissions you to create an evil robotic version of the religious figure Maria... which requires Maria's kidnapping.

Opening Scene: You are kidnapping Maria in the catacombs under the city. How do you surprise her? Where in your laboratory have you hidden her? Oh! There's no time to lose—you must finish her robotic duplicate!

Dramatic Qualities

Crackpot Inventor: You speak and breathe the language of invention. You create new creations very quickly and easily, though you often describe each as "the culmination of your life's work". Due to the rapid production of the prototype, however, there may be some side effects.

Mechanical Hand: This hand both embodies your superiority to society and your marker of inescapable difference. Its strength can overpower others in close quarters, and it looks very dramatic if you hold it up in the air in moments of arrogance and frustration.

Personality: Passionate, ambitious, over-the-top, vengeful.

Intrigue Magnets

Mourning Hel's Loss: It hurts you every day to see her colossal bust (in the "head statue" sense) in your laboratory. You know you can never get her back. But maybe, just maybe, you can try. You may draw an extra chance card in a session if you preface it with a monologue about Hel.

The Eternal Outsider: No matter how awesome you and your creations are, the fact is that you live in a strange little shack in the city's worst neighborhood and have a freakish fake hand. There's a part of you that yearns to be accepted as a normal human being, and it will be put in its place every. single. time.

Supporting Characters

Maria: You have taken this woman captive, but you know so little about her. She reminds you a little bit of Hel. Perhaps if you talk to her, reason with her, she may reveal her secrets.

Joh Fredersen: An Itras By industrialist and your sworn enemy. But you smile and nod when he gives you your contracts. Your revenge will be cold and sweet. And you'll start with his son Freder.

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

If Robot Maria is in play, then you are by default her creator. Otherwise, she will be played by the other players or the gamemaster and is running amok.



Robot Maria

Age: Looks 22. Is actually newly created.

Subsistence: Robots do not need money. Rotwang created you, and that's that.

Idea: An evil robot woman copied from a virtuous religious figure and designed to go forth and destroy human society by tempting them to do wicked deeds.

Background: Tell us about the first few moments you experienced in your robot body, walking through the lab. How did it feel? What did you aspire to do with this body?

Opening Scene: You perform a scandalous dance at a gentleman's club. Part of the scandal is, of course, that the real Maria is a martyr and a saint. But part of the scandal is also thanks to what risqué actions that you've taken. What do you do with the slobbering men?

Dramatic Qualities

Whip Up the Crowd: You have been built as a rabble rouser, and know how to get the human masses to riot. You can discern the mood of any gathering of people, and play to their vanities to get them to destroy their surroundings. Once they get going, they will be hard to stop.

Robotic Tricks: You are built as an artificial human. Who knows what you are really capable of, with your hard metal body and limitless power supply? You've got all the attachments.

Personality: Wild, sensuous, desirous, but also curious and newly born.

Intrigue Magnets

Soulless: Having no soul means having no conscience as everything explodes around you. But it also sparks moments of confusion. Pick a character whose soul you involuntarily admire, despite your best efforts, and tell us how you seek to acquire it.

Unnatural By Nature: You were built in the city and subsist in the city. When you encounter animals—deer, squirrels, dogs—or the darkest recesses of the woods, you are suddenly *not* in your element and will need to gather more data to find out more.

Supporting Characters

Maria: Somewhere out there in the world is your real human counterpart, and she is likely everything that you are not.

Freder: The man whom Maria loves, an aristocratic boy and son of Itras By's most powerful industrialist. Oh, how you can manipulate him! But oh, how he may get back at you!

The Other Characters (and Other Notes)

If Rotwang is in play, then he is your creator. Otherwise, Rotwang will be played by the gamemaster or other player-characters as a pathological human creator who may still be a thorn in your side.



Ivan the Terrible

Age: 54

Subsistence: Tsar of All the Russians (until recently).

Idea: A displaced Russian tyrant, still unhinged and deadly.

Background: Tell us about how you massacred and poisoned all those people in 16th-Century Russia. Now tell us how you recently came to life from a wax figure in Itras By.

Opening Scene: A flashback. A scene in your old tsar palace, at the height of your decadence. Yet something gives you pause. What was that obscure object that pierced your impenetrable wall of power?

Dramatic Qualities

The Hourglass: When you poison someone, you turn over an hourglass. The person dies when the last grain of sand lands.

Polymath: You know most things... from a 16th-Century Russia perspective (feel free to invent historical “trivia” on the fly). But you pick up on new concepts incredibly fast, which permits you to rapidly assimilate to your new time/place.

Personality: Imperious, arrogant, and decadent.

Intrigue Magnets

Cannot Stand Being Spurned: Should a potential partner reject your advances, you plot revenge. It's just your nature.

Recently Transported Beyond Time and Space: You have time-traveled, and now you're in this weird city. Pick one of the other characters to be the one who knows much more about how you got here.

Supporting Characters

Peculia: The little girl whom you first met on the streets after you woke from your waxen slumber, stark raving mad.

Napoleon: A friend at Dr. Caligari's sanatorium who may or may not have been involuntarily transported here as well...

