

The Baker Street Irregulars

The rumour says that the psychological profile for experienced police officers and hardened career criminals are nearly identical. A true statement says that the psychological profile between a hunter and the slashers they hunt can get disturbingly close.

The Irregulars were formed as an offshoot from the Society of Twelve Keys; originally formed in 1890 by police detectives hunting Jack the Ripper, the Society of Twelve Keys were instrumental in the fight against serial murder until 2000, when they were eclipsed by the efforts of the regular police and faded away. Not all the members were content to go quietly into the night.

Among the Society of Twelve Keys were detectives who were, to put it bluntly, obsessed; a small group of high functioning sociopaths, narcissists, high functioning autistics, and detective savants. Unwilling to retire politely, they formed their own club and named it "The Baker Street Irregulars" after the *Sherlock Holmes* stories. Like Holmes, they wanted to be above such lowly things as tact by virtue of their deductive abilities alone.

The first year was uneventful; they met biweekly at a pub near Baker's Street, bringing with them unsolved cases taken from old newspapers, publicly released police statements and even history books. Together they would come up with a hypothesis, and then declare the cases solved. Finally they would rant at how the police were unfair idiots for ignoring them; then, they would go home.

It was not a murder, but a kidnapping, that allowed this toxic environment to refine itself into something better. A six-year-old girl vanished without a trace from her home, with both parents present in the middle of silly season. A classic case of "Missing White Woman Syndrome" and media-savvy parents kept the headlines tied up for weeks. Three weeks after the disappearance it occurred to a couple of the Irregulars that there were enough witnesses, evidence, and police statements scattered across the headlines that they could take a crack at the case. When they attempted to present their findings their suggestions went straight into the crank file.

Outraged the egotistical, Irregulars knew they needed to prove themselves correct. Within a week they'd annoyed everyone involved, been thrown out of police stations, newspaper offices and homes, pleaded various mental disorders against charges of inappropriate behaviour and found the girl hurt but alive. Having regained a foothold in the game, the Irregulars were in no desire to give it up again. They invested the reward money towards forensics equipment, sold their story to every newspaper that was buying and hired a good PR agent to keep cases flowing in.



The problem...

Is elementary.

The Enemy

What this means is that most Irregulars aren't particularly interested in what monsters are so much as what they do (and the rest get emotionally involved to a very unhealthy level). If it commits a crime or creates a mystery, then they can hunt.

Some members favour the hardest crimes possible. A witch who killed with a curse that takes effect after a year and a day, that's a worthy challenge. Other members look for high profile crimes which they solve publicly to prove themselves: kidnappings, serial murders or organised crime. There are also Irregulars who specialise in some narrow field for their own reasons – one who hunts slashers out of a need for companionship is unlikely to be interested in a case that obviously points to werewolves. Others follow their sense of morality, hunting whatever they consider to be the most evil. Not all the Irregulars try to get monsters arrested for crimes; some just try to unpick the veils of secrecy, even legal secrecy, just to prove they can.

Members are perfectly aware of the supernatural. Often they simply figured it out and the rest heard the others gossip. However, not all members hunt the supernatural or even slashers; some go their entire careers focused on perfectly ordinary humans for one reason or another.

Hunters

You've been here from the beginning, and you're an unashamed narcissist. You still remember the very first public case and the rush you got from the headlines once you solved it. You've been after the most newsworthy cases ever since; now you're a

household name. You love the fame and you love proving yourself, but you find your fans annoying and the Hollywood film ignored your scientific methods in favour of action. Still, you can't complain.

You were born with severe autism; the doctors said you'd never be independent. Luckily for you, the potential to join the Irregulars was as obvious as the solution to a crime; another member spotted you in the supermarket. Now, you're a private detective. Your partner deals with people and paperwork, you solve the crimes. You still live with your parents.

You have one of the best deductive minds this century; you can solve almost any crime without leaving your armchair. This is just as well, because you haven't left your armchair for longer than a few minutes in over fifteen years.

A lot of what the Irregulars can do looks psychic, but with you, it actually *is* psychic. You discovered you could read minds shortly after you became mute. It didn't take long for the others to figure out what you're doing, but none of them have held it against you. Which is more than what you can say for the normal people you've told?

You used to be a police detective but you never fit in. If you weren't so damn good at your job, you'd have been fired years ago. Then, the wrong case landed on your desk: a slasher who committed perfect murders. You figured it out just by talking to her but you couldn't prove it; she, unlike every other criminal you chased, chased right back, framed you and got you kicked off the force. The two of you are in touch daily. She kidnaps people, you try to stop her or rescue them before the

air runs out. One day you might even be able to prove she's behind it. It's the closest thing to romance either of you will ever know.

Archetypes

Organisation is so loose in the Baker's Street Irregulars that there are no formal groups. However, the members tend to informally sort themselves into one of several personality types (or *Archetypes*), named for characters from *Sherlock Holmes*.

Mycrofts

Free Speciality: Politics (Office)

Mycrofts are the Irregulars who have a complete life outside of the hunt. They're either really good at time management or only occasionally indulge in the game. In their real life, they use their formidable minds as research scientists, economists, accountants – they may serve on think tanks or some other form of intellectually challenging and often analytical work. Sometimes they have an investigative slant to their work but this is hardly universal. Mycrofts tend to be the most psychologically together members of the Irregulars.

Sherlocks

Free Speciality: Investigation (Crime Scene)

Meanwhile, **Sherlocks** are the most typical members of the Irregulars. For most Sherlocks, their life contains almost nothing except investigations. Some are barely functional outside their narrow role, others are too obsessed and the rest are just weirdoes or

MY DEAR WATSON

The Retainer Merit is exceedingly common among The Baker's Street Irregulars, especially among the less functional members. A "Watson" typically acts as an interface between the Irregular and the rest of the world. Less commonly they also serve as a bodyguard.

The strong partnership between an Irregular and his Watson makes both roles ideal for player characters. Watson's typically favour Social or Physical Attributes and Skills to compliment an Irregular's strong Mental focus. Many have staggering Composure to put up with their partners behaviour, or a few quirks of their own. During the course of the partnership a Watson typically picks up some Investigation through observation, after a long partnership this might even extend to a dot in Elementary Deduction (explained below).

arseholes. It is not that surprising to see a Sherlock reduced to a fugue state or living by repetitive rote script until the next case arrives.

Lestrades

Free Speciality: Subterfuge (Acting Normal)

STEREOTYPES

Long Night: It was Reverend Green, in the library, with a lead pipe. Bloody fanatics have left their bootprints all over the victim. Solve this one yourself. And don't call me until you've got a real case.

Task Force: VALKYRIE: Oh and get this, they said the explosion last week was caused by a gas leak! My plumber could see through that.

The Hunt Club: Just between you and me these guys are so much fun. A whole secret society of serial killers to investigate, this must be what Christmas is supposed to feel like. We stay in touch, to keep score.

VASCU: I had a chance to watch one of the American's in action. Piss poor investigative technique, obviously had no idea what she was doing. Winced in pain before every deductive leap of genius, couldn't have done better myself. You'd have to be blind not to notice how they really operate. They wouldn't share the details. Arseholes.

The least common Archetypes are the **Lestrades**, holding both membership to the Bakers Street Irregulars and a badge on the police force. This isn't so much of a balancing act as it might seem; membership in the Irregulars has no obligations. Instead, Lestrades must balance their role in the police with their own mental issues. Many limit their actual detective work to when they're on duty and use the Irregulars as a vital social pressure release. They also serve as an interface between the two groups getting evidence and solved cases before the courts.

Status

- You've proven that you can solve a case and have paid your (expensive) membership dues. In return you get a bi-monthly newsletter (the latest on investigation techniques and a lot of vanity pieces about solved cases). You also gain invitations to social events, discounted medical insurance for mental health and access to a forensics lab which is worth a +3 equipment bonus.

- You're reputation has reached the point where the police have to take you seriously, even if they don't want too. You get a free dot in Contacts (Police); if you already have this there are no other benefits.

..... You've solved several extremely high profile cases, and you've made it into the media. It's not unknown for the newspapers to demand that you turn your attention to the latest sensational crime. You get two dots of Fame (with a maximum of 3) whether you want it or not.

New Endowments

Elementary Deduction (● to ●●●●●)

Unlike many Endowments, Elementary Deduction is not only taught by the Compact, but also a prerequisite to join. To become a member, you must demonstrate basic competence with Elementary Deduction. After you're in, talking the trade with your fellows and getting lots of practice will usually increase your rating.

When examining evidence, questioning a witness or interrogating a suspect, an Irregular can ask the Storyteller a yes or no question and roll Intelligence + Investigation with a bonus or penalty, based on the amount of relevant evidence she has seen. On a Success the Storyteller answers truthfully. The players and storytellers are encouraged to work together to find an interesting explanation of how the Irregular made their deduction. On a Failure, the Storyteller doesn't answer; on a Dramatic Failure the Storyteller may answer however she wishes.

An Irregular may do this a number of times per story equal to their dots in Elementary Deduction.

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TWENTY QUESTIONS

So what stops a cell of Irregulars from finding a single footprint, and pooling their questions until they've built an entire profile of the killer? Well, absolutely nothing. If this happens, give the players a nice moment where the regular police stare in awe before using this lead to find the suspect - and with him, leads to some admissible evidence.

However, should the players do that, they've used up their questions for a while. Cases where you simply need to find who's done it are easy for the Irregulars to solve. Much harder are cases where they need to prove it outside their own magnificent brains, or untangle a twisty knot of interrelations and deception a murder cult has built to hide behind. If your group has all chosen to play Irregulars, you can take it as given that they wish to play an investigation-themed game. So, build appropriately, or politely insist they pick a group of characters more appropriate to the story.

Presumably, you can say they solved the normal cases during downtime, over a glass of wine with some light classical music in the background. That, or while whining about being bored and shooting mathematical puzzles into the wall.