

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

A Story for



COYOTE & CROW

Credits

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Coyote & Crow: What's the Damage?

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STORIES OF THE
FREE LANDS

“What’s the Damage?”

Introduction

Cultural Acknowledgement

This Story takes place in the fictional setting of Makasing, and uses concepts, names, and naming conventions of the Apsáalooke tribe, from which the author descends.

Prologue

This is a Story for the *Coyote & Crow* roleplaying game and is a one-shot Story that Story Guides can use to challenge Players and help them develop their own stories within and around Cahokia. This one-shot uses the rules and information provided in the *Coyote & Crow* Core Rulebook.

This Story begins with a **Scene Synopsis**, giving the Story Guide a brief breakdown of the Scenes and how they should flow together for a clear Story. Each Scene may or may not contain Encounters.

Throughout the Story itself, there are pieces of boxed text. These are meant to be read aloud to help the Story Guide set the scene for their Players and describe interesting people and features. Additionally, there are Skill Check and Success tables, giving Story Guides an idea of how the results of various Skill Checks might advance or change the Story.

When the Story reaches the stage where Players make important decisions, different paths are offered and described. These paths detail directions that the Players might take the Story, and ways in which the Story Guide can help to guide them down the path that they’re looking to explore. Story Guides can use these paths as starting points to navigate common outcomes of the Players’ choices.

Throughout this Story, you’ll find various words capitalized. Any capitalized word that isn’t a proper noun is a specific game term. The definition of each can be found at the back of the Core Rulebook or on the Wiki at WWW.COYOTEANDCROW.NET.

Finally, at the end of this Story there is an **Appendix** with lists of information you might need during the course of the Story, including things like important NPC and character stat blocks, equipment, maps, and other information unique to this Story.

Background

Opening Fiction

The sound of construction equipment had hummed throughout the morning, echoing through the old building as residents went about their daily lives. There was a rumble, as a part of the wall gave way, as well as a sudden shriek of surprise, before a voice called out to the foreman.

"Alright, alright," he muttered as he made his way over, expecting to see a rat's nest or some other such nuisance, "what's the damage?"

One look was enough to stop him cold, and a hush spread from him to his crew. Tools stood silent, held in idle hands as workers crowded around the remnants of what had once been a wall. The collective quiet drew on, as all present held their breath in hopes that their eyes deceived them.

"Call the constables!" the foreman managed to shout, dispersing the crowd. Faces peered from doorways as a group of workmen took up protective places around the site. None of the residents needed to see this, at least not until the proper people had gotten a chance to look it over.

Then again, none of the workers had really needed to see a withered corpse collapsing out of the wall, either.

Story Introduction

Within this Story, Players take on the roles of people investigating the murder of a wealthy man. The Characters will be forced to explore several areas of the city and interact with NPCs from many backgrounds over the course of the Story. By diving deep into Cahokia, they can uncover the truths behind this grisly crime.

When the killer is proven to be Iisché, the popular comedian who had hired them to clear his name, the Characters will be left with a moral dilemma. Do they turn this man in, who has and will continue to do good in the world? Or do they let a murderer walk free, enjoying the spoils of his crime for years to come? The Players will be forced to question what justice truly is and whether one can rise above their past immoral actions.

Story Background

A corpse was found in the walls of a building within the Nabanamo district. The suspect is Iisché, a high-profile comedian and a well-renowned healer, so law enforcement is doing their best to build a bullet-proof case before they arrest him. Unfortunately, one of the officers working the case was a fan of the suspect and leaked the details to the press. Now the entire city knows that Iisché is the prime suspect in this case.

Iisché has helped many people since his rise to stardom. Now that the story has broken, many of his fans are worried for him. Some are desperate enough to offer nizi, artwork, and many other things to help him. Even people on the wrong side of the law appear willing to offer up their underlings as helpers or muscle to ensure that Iisché stays free. The constabulary and Suyata, of course, are still investigating this, and some of the Characters may well be members of either of these groups.

Thus, Characters can come from almost any background, and have any skill set. They can already be a group, or they can become one through the course of this Story. The only important thing is that, for whatever reason, each of them accepts an invitation to meet with Iisché.

Scene Synopsis

Scene 1: Debut

Characters meet backstage before Iisché's performance and speak with him.

Scene 2: Body of Work

The group arrives at the crime scene. They will have to get by a constable guarding the corpse and question the neighbor for clues. They discover that the victim was killed using an Anicha blade.

Scene 3: Appealing to Justice

The Characters go to the constabulary to speak with someone who knows more about the victim. The lieutenant reveals Iisché's connection to a prominent businesswoman. If this is the Characters' first stop, a group of Street Toughs will confront them.

Scene 4: Old Friends

The group heads to the Chizi district, seeking information from someone who knew and dealt with Iisché before his rise to stardom. If this is the Characters' first stop, several constables will meet them and bring them to the station.

Scene 5: Magnum Opus

The group questions a wealthy woman, chasing a lead that could shed light on everything.

Scene 6: Curtainfall

The Characters return to Iisché as his show ends. If confronted with evidence, he will confess his crimes and leave the Characters with a difficult choice.

Non-Player Characters:

Iisché (*Eesh-cheh, he/him*) is a member of the Apsáalooke tribe and a very popular comedian. He uses song and grandiose showmanship in his performance. He's very welcoming,

friendly, and incredibly charming. Mostly he performs in hospitals, but will still work smaller venues as well.

Sakari (*Sah-car-ee, he/him*) is the victim—a wealthy man who had lived as something of a shut-in before his death. The other residents of the communal lodge he lived in saw him so little that it took them months to realize something had happened to him. By all accounts, he was a very unpleasant man who gathered his wealth through unsavory means.

Lieutenant Tawitak (*Tau-wee-tack, she/her*) is the constable in charge of the case. She has records of Sakari’s finances available. Depending on the group’s makeup, she’ll be more or less amenable to helping them, but is reasonable enough that she can be convinced to share information, so long as she’s treated with respect.

Akiichiweé (*Awk-eee-Chee-wah, he/him*) is another member of the Apsáalooke tribe. His name means “The Storyteller” in their tongue, and he lives up to it. He’s got a hundred stories, and is happy to tell them—for a price. While he can’t swear to the authenticity of all of them, most of them seem true. While technically a resident of Cahokia, he travels the length and breadth of the known world, operating under too many aliases to list.

Zahatiita (*Zah-hah-tee-taa, she/her*) is Iisché’s former employer, and was an associate of Sakari, the victim. She now works as a loan shark. She has the clearest answers to the Characters’ questions, and can

provide evidence to back them up. A firm and unyielding woman in most regards, she is definitely in this for her own ends.

Common Knowledge

This information can be given to Players by various means or people or may already be known by them depending on their Skills and background. Once it has been established that the Characters have this information, you can give them this page for reference.

Comedians play an important role in society. They are entertainers, yes, but the very best are used in hospitals, as they are considered a crucial part of the healing process.

Iisché is one of the most popular comedians in Cahokia. Most people at least know his name, and many people are his fans.

Iisché is a philanthropist. He has natural charisma, a quick wit, and a generous nature. He has made use of his wealth and influence to help the city as a whole. He continues to fund several public works programs to this day, and many people adore him.

Akiichiweé is a name most people know, though what he’s known for depends on who you ask. He is a storyteller, although not one who performs in venues. Mostly he stays in the Chizi district, acting as a teller of tales and a broker of information. He travels the vast land of Makasing, collecting stories

and “stories,” and makes it a point to make his presence known whenever he’s in town. Although considered unpredictable, he is known to deal fairly and keep his word.

Zahatiita is a well-known, wealthy, successful businesswoman in Cahokia these days, who enjoyed a notable uptick in her net worth after Sakari’s disappearance. Her company, Nazood, is one of the largest construction and renovation companies in the city and is often contracted by both public and private entities. Zahatiita’s home in the Nahikoongi district is often featured in publications as a beautiful work of art and architecture, and the address can easily be found using a niisi.

The Story

Nudity in Cahokia

Scene 1: Debut

SYNOPSIS: The Characters are brought together through various means and introduced to Iisché as he prepares for his show. He is very kind and very friendly. He is also of the opinion that the rumors will go away on their own, but would greatly appreciate it if the Characters could find evidence to clear his name.

As the Story begins, read the following aloud:

Each of you has received an invitation to meet with the popular comedian Iisché before his show tonight. Interestingly, although he performs most often at the city's hospitals, tonight he is performing at a smaller venue in the Nabanamo district. You have each elected to meet him for your own reasons. When you arrive, you are led backstage where Iisché stands naked as he examines the outfit for his performance this evening. As soon as you arrive he turns, with arms thrown wide and greets you warmly.

"Welcome, kola! Welcome! I'm so pleased that you accepted my invitation tonight!"

He approaches each of the Characters in turn, offering a friendly hug, but takes no offense if it is not accepted. He then offers the group refreshments, and personally fetches them from the kitchen. After this, he sits with them on a circular rug to discuss the reason they have come.

In Makasing, there is no societal taboo against nudity. The human body is not considered shameful. While it's not incredibly common to see people walking down the street in the buff, if it happens, it's not worth commenting about.

"Thank you, kola. I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today, even if I wish it could be under better circumstances. You see, I have been falsely accused of a terrible deed. A man I once lived beside, and had many disagreements with, is dead, and there are rumors that I, of all people, killed him. Sakari was a very unpleasant man, I will not hesitate to say... a cruel man, in fact. But I did not murder him.

"Already, some have begun to whisper that I did not do this deed. I'm not concerned. However, for the people who care about me, I must ask you, kola, will you look into this for me? I know that it is very short notice, but... people are suggesting that they are going to start a protest in my defense at the end of my performance tonight. I am going to do my best to dissuade them, and if you've turned up something I can give them to clear my name? That can only help! But, if you can't? Then I understand!"



While Iisché himself is not overly concerned with the rumors, he recognizes that his friends worry for him, and so he personally asks the group to investigate to set minds at ease.

If the Characters are with law enforcement, he will be a bit more formal with them, but still asks them to do their best and offers his full cooperation.

If the Characters press him for details about the time of the murder, he claims that he was working and performing so much back then that he hardly remembers, and, like the other tenants in the building, knew nothing about Sakari's disappearance.

Iisché checks his niisi for the time, and realizes that he must start getting ready for the show. He suggests that, if the Characters need a place to start looking, they do so at the communal lodge where he and Iisché once lived, and where the body was found.

If Players are skeptical, have the Characters make a Deception Check to see if Iisché is lying.

SUCCESSSES	DECEPTION
3+	Iisché isn't quite sure that he can trust the Characters. He may not be telling the whole truth.
5+	Iisché is lying about something. Though it's difficult to tell what about. The man is an experienced performer, after all.
8+	Iisché knows what happened but he's clearly not going to confess to anything. It's going to be impossible to make any accusation stick without some kind of proof, so you may as well play along for now.

Following this conversation, Iisché thanks the Characters profusely for meeting with him and points out that the crime scene, apparently at the communal lodge, may yet provide some clues. He thanks the Characters again and returns to selecting his wardrobe for the coming show.

≡ **Scene 2: Body of Work** ≡

SYNOPSIS: The group arrives at the communal lodge in the Nabanamo district. The body has yet to be moved, but the constables are still on duty, keeping it secure. The Characters will attempt to examine the body and speak to a resident who remembers when Iisché and Sakari lived next to one another.

When the Characters go to the communal lodge, read the following aloud:

The Nabanamo district is a hub for trade and an ever-expanding center for nightlife in Cahokia. No matter the time of day or year, one can always find people out on the street. There's a sense of wonder and magic in the air here—one which doesn't fade as you approach the quieter end of the district.

You arrive at the former residence of both the victim and the suspect. Communal lodges such as these are meant for the unluckiest members of society—those who have lost their families and have not been

adopted into other groups. It is a place for people to go and retain that sense of community.

From the street outside, this communal lodge doesn't appear strange at all, aside from the quiet, subdued feeling that has swallowed the area. One by one you enter the building, the sound of your footsteps on the brick seeming almost profane in the heavy silence.

Once the Characters are inside, they quickly find a constable, who introduces himself as Constable Lanuuz, guarding the doorway to the crime scene, still waiting for the Suyata to arrive to perform an examination. If any of the Characters are law enforcement or Suyata, then gaining access to the body is only a matter of showing their credentials.

If the group has no such connections, then a Character can make a Coercion, Deception, or Skulduggery Check in an attempt to con their way past the constables, or Stealth Check to slip by unnoticed. A single Success on a Stealth Check is enough to slip past.

SUCCESSSES	COERCION / DECEPTION / SKULDUGGERY
1+	The constable is concerned, but lets the Characters through as he calls this in to double-check with his superiors. After several minutes, he comes to chase the group away from the body, threatening to incarcerate them.
3+	The guard believes the Characters and lets them through.
5+	The guard lets the Characters through, and confides in them that he thinks the murder weapon was an Anicha blade. He also mentions that the old man in the apartment down the hall keeps harassing him for being part of a conspiracy.

If the Characters make it past the guard, they are able to examine the crime scene. Inside, they see a brutalized corpse with many stab wounds. A single success on a Medicine Check is enough to

recognize that the victim was killed with an Anicha blade. The corpse is too old to reveal much more than that, but Characters can still make an Investigation Check to see what they may be able to uncover.

SUCCESSSES	INVESTIGATION
1+	There would have been a lot of blood stains if Sakari was killed here. Since no one reported that at the time, it is likely that Sakari was killed somewhere else.
3+	In addition to the information above, the Character realizes that whoever killed Sakari had to have access to the tools and building supplies necessary to build the wall, so they likely worked with whoever was doing the last repair job.
5+	In addition to all of the information above, the Character realizes that in order for absolutely no one to have seen the murder and for Sakari's body to be hidden in the walls like this, he likely was killed in the nearest apartment.

In any case, after the Characters have left the body or abandoned their attempts to get past the constable, an old man pokes his head out of his door and inquires if the Characters are with the Suyata. If they say that they are, he swears at them, proclaiming that "Iisché is a good man! A *Natso*! He does nothing but help!" and attempts to slam the door in their faces. A successful Coercion Check or speaking positively of Iisché will cause the

old man to be more friendly and invite the Characters in.

If they tell him they are not Suyata, he invites them in, curious to know what they talked about with the constable.

The old man introduces himself as Niszaaka, and is happy to reminisce about Iisché's time living in the building.

SECTION 3

