



## ERNEST

### Personality

*Restrained:* You devoted your life to the secrets of the mind, yours in particular. Every gesture, every word is the fruit of careful reflection.

*Sympathetic:* Insanity is not a fault, just a condition that afflicts us all in different measures. Not unlike old age.

*Visionary:* Problems exist to be solved, maladies exist to be cured. No destination is too far for those who know where they're going.

### Relationships

*Past:* You attended the best schools, achieving excellent results, but you never could quench your thirst for knowledge. After a degree in psychology you analysed every theory, scientific or mystical, western or eastern, that referred to the mystery of the human mind. Now you own a private clinic, you're considered a luminary and you enjoy the utmost freedom in the medical field.

*Friends:* You were never well-liked in the classroom: It's lonely at the top, even more so when you enjoy being the discordant voice. It's no surprise that there are no doctors among your closest friends. To be honest you always found the patients to be more interesting. Take Wilson, a man reduced to an empty shell by a hard life and the treatments of your less imaginative colleagues. You gave him a place in the world, a job in the clinic as a janitor, and against all advice you helped him get back in balance. Now he is a diffe-

rent man, about to be reintegrated into society. He only needs to leave behind his fixation with William, the imaginary friend to whom he turns much too often. At the risk of sounding sentimental, you must admit that you are in no hurry to send him off: Once his therapy comes to an end, you will miss chatting with this gentle soul. At least you will still have Auguste, your oldest and dearest friend, who comes to visit whenever he manages to overcome his aversion to the clinic. As a policeman, he has been trained to see the danger in every man, rather than their capability to heal themselves and others.

*Tonight:* A patient in long term residential care nicknamed the Old Man has been murdered tonight. You were not close to him; in fact, you considered him one of your few lost causes, but this does not make the crime less disturbing. You intend to lock yourself in your office and call Auguste over the phone to ask for his help: Even if you saw him this afternoon for the usual session and you are sorry to bother him again, you know he is the only one that can solve the matter with the right amount of discretion. You will also need to call Wilson over the intercom, to discover whether he saw anything unusual in his nightly wanderings and prevent him from spreading the word with his careless chatting. Everything you've built here is at risk of shattering and the emergency prompted you to take a couple of tranquilisers to help you keep your cool. You need to hang on to the hope that everything can go back to normal.

*Quote:* "All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream".

## Body language

*Cat* (Metaphorical reference to help with the physical portrayal of the character, from posture to gestures)

## Revelations

*Handling entrances and exits:* You start the game alone on stage, in your office. You will need to play out the phone call to Auguste and the intercom call to Wilson to get them there. Remember to invite Wilson to bring William along. When everyone is inside, close the door and keep the key on your person: No one can leave without asking for it, or taking it from you.

*Medicine bottle:* You only have a couple of tranquillisers left. They have no immediate effect on those who take them.

*Nota bene:* William does not exist to you. If he whispers something in your ear or raises his voice, attribute his words to Wilson, otherwise ignore them. Ignore his actions as well, except the violent ones, which you will still attribute to Wilson.

▀ You are the only one who saw the Old Man's corpse. Five bullets wiped the sneer off his face, as confirmed by the five shells you found at his feet. You should have shown them to Auguste, but you know enough to notice that they belong to a revolver not unlike his service pistol. Could his gun be the murder weapon? To be sure, you would only need to check whether there is a single bullet left in the cylinder.

▀ Ever since his colleague was murdered by a lunatic, Auguste has been suffering from terrible nightmares. Guilt and resentment are so ingrained in him that you cannot begin to scratch their surface, no matter what therapy you attempt. Auguste has confessed to you that in dreams he often assaulted your patients, and in tonight's session the imaginary victim was none other than the Old Man.

▀ William is not Wilson's imaginary friend, but the tragic past you helped him bury. Before his depression, before your colleagues' mistakes and the beginning of your therapy, William Wilson was a poet, renowned for his dark and decadent rhymes. There was nothing meek about him, just a morbid and destructive will.