

Blood from Black Wattle

A man with a mustache, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, a dark bow tie, and a dark hat, stands in a field of black wattle. The wattle is illuminated with numerous small, glowing green lights, creating a dramatic and atmospheric scene. The man is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

Kenneth
The Poet

God's gold-grey-green religion,
Burned bright on winter's bone.

— 'Wattle Hymn', from the
Notebooks of Cyrus Browne.

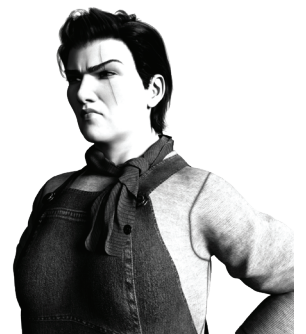


Kenneth Slessor



DULCIE DEAMER

The Queen of Bohemia! A charismatic beauty who has become a dear friend. She is a talented writer and muse to Sydney's bohemian community.



HOPE

An enigmatic sculptor and street tough. Hope keeps his distance from most, and lies about his past, but I have caught glimpses of his talent and his unique way of seeing the world. He seems to have suffered. He may be like me.



MERRIN BROOKE

A bright, talented and beautiful young woman, still innocent of so many things in life. In need of guidance. A beguiling creature, experienced in exposing flim-flamery.



WILLIAM BOYNE

A hard man with a mysterious but undoubtedly violent past. Northern Irish. He is adept in confronting the horrors that surround us. Sometimes he seems close to breaking.

FLAW	← INNER STRUGGLE →	STRENGTH
This is your spotlight flaw		This is your spotlight strength
<p>Kenneth's struggles Choose one as your flaw/strength test for this game</p> <p>Standoff / Engage Unemotional / Passionate Fearful / Courageous</p>	<p>Test 1 (Set Up) Overcome <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Fail</p> <p>Test 2 (Point of No Return) Overcome <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Fail</p> <p>Test 3 (Crisis) Triumph <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Loss</p>	

IN-GAME CHARACTER CHANGE

One transformation during play. A relationship, an inspiration, an obsession, a sundering, a personality change, an outpouring of emotion either positive or negative. Bring your inner life into gamespace. How does the transformation change you?

SKILLS

- Bushcraft (Australian).....2
- Cthulhu Mythos.....0
- Dapper.....5
- Disguise True Feelings.....4
- Dodge.....2
- Education.....4
- Find Another Way.....4
- Fit in (Uncomfortably).....4
- Gift for Words.....3
- Hide.....2
- History (Australian).....3
- Impress.....4
- Listen.....4
- Pistol.....0
- Pub Etiquette.....4
- Ride (Horse).....3
- Rifle.....0
- See the Beauty/Terror.....4
- Spot Hidden.....3

HEALTH

- Dead as a Maggot (0)
- Carking It (1)
- Crook as Rookwood (2)
- Completely Rooted (3)
- Sick as a Dog (4)
- A Bit Bugged (5)
- Fit as a Malee Bull (6)

SANITY

- Off to Woop Woop (0)
- Full Bunta (1)
- Mad as a Cut Snake (2)
- Off like a Frog in a Sock (3)
- Gone a Bit Troppo (4)
- Loose a Few 'Roos (5)
- The Full Bottle (6)

FEARLESS (DC + 1) (MAX 5)

-

LUCK

-

QUEER

-

SENSUAL

-

MYSTIC

-

Before I left Sydney I ...

(Researched something, purchased something, talked to someone (Flashback)
Use once if required.

KENNETH: THE WOUND, THE SCAR, THE LIE

<p>Kenneth's Wound: Detachment <i>Kenneth watches the world go by. He observes, but always maintains an emotional distance. He is difficult to reach emotionally.</i></p> <p>Kenneth's Scar: Withdrawal Kenneth is charming and sociable when required, and always good company. Yet he usually keeps his emotions and opinions to himself—at least to strangers. He loves solitude and quiet.</p> <p>Kenneth's Lie: Distance Kenneth maintains a reserve,</p>	<p>a distance between himself and other people. His intellect and superiority are a shield. He can sometimes feel somewhat detached from reality. He observes, he watches, he listens.</p> <p>Associated Emotions Anxiety, depression, disappointment, guilt, sense of being overwhelmed, sadness. Lust and fantasising. Dreams of freedom.</p> <p>Positive Aspects Kenneth is a keen observer of people and places, and is gifted in</p>	<p>calming others. He can have deep insights into others motivations.</p> <p>Negative Aspects Kenneth can appear callous and smug. Relationships can appear superficial. He finds it very hard to express emotions, ask for help, or to criticise friends.</p> <p>Healing As an artist, Ken might heal himself through the creation of a great work, or by confronting his failings through action and deeper engagement.</p>
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Enter stage left: a young journalist called Kenneth Slessor, wearing purple socks and smoking a pipe, with piercing blue eyes in 'a cold German face'.

Quite proper when it suits him, gingery, well combed and dandyish, Slessor is no bohemian, despite spending much of his time 'midst Sydney's Bohemian community, and building his closest friendships there. He describes his relationship to his companions as that of 'a very amused and detached observer'. Kenneth likes to watch.

Kenneth (only his friends dare call him 'Ken') is getting on with his life as a journalist.

Kenneth Adolphe Schloesser was born in March 1901 at Orange, NSW. The family moved to Sydney in 1903. His father, a German Jew, changed the family surname to 'Slessor' in November 1914, just after the outbreak of World War I.

Kenneth's parents encouraged him to love music, food and books, and instilled in him a European sophistication. Gaining first-class honours in English in the Leaving Certificate in 1918, Slessor joined the Sydney *Sun* newspaper as a cadet journalist. In the 1920s he worked for the *Sun*, *Melbourne Punch* and *Smith's Weekly*. His early journalistic writing was full of brilliant description and poetic flourishes.

In August 1922 Kenneth married 28-year-old Noëla Beatrice Myee Ewart Glasson. Theirs is an often tempestuous, sometimes distant relationship, but Slessor is a devoted if frequently-absent husband. They are childless. The older Noëla has little time for bohemia or bohemians. Surrounded by free spirits, Kenneth struggles with notions of fidelity, and fantasizes about unfettered love and wild romance.

Kenneth's first collection of poetry, *Thief of the Moon*, was published in 1924, printed on a hand-press in a Kirribilli bathroom. The poems looked backward to Europe, invoking the genius of the past. Its sales were aided by the inclusion of three woodcuts by the (infamous) artist and novelist Norman Lindsay. A second volume named 'Earth-Visitors' is being laid out; it, too, is illustrated by Norman.

Kenneth is that rarest of Australian poets: he feels no compulsion to talk about his work, (some of his friends on the Inky Way of journalism are ignorant of his poetry), he is published(!), and he is well off financially, earning a high salary as a journalist.

After a period of several years closely associated with the Lindsay clan and their war on modern life, Kenneth is tentatively writing serious pieces about contemporary Sydney. Rather than looking to an imagined European past, he is *listening* to the world about him.

Recent events in Sydney have shattered Kenneth's tranquil world view. He has glimpsed horrors both human and inhuman, and his most cherished convictions have been overturned. Once a quiet agnostic, Kenneth has been awakened to mystery, and to terror. He has little understanding of the Mythos, save its danger.

For Kenneth, the world is a puzzle, and reality a mystery barely glimpsed. He is increasingly haunted by time, by the past and future, by memory. Clumsily, he searches for the depths, the greater truth beyond surface perception. He feels blind. Words shape themselves painfully in his mind, and while he can turn a light verse or satire easily, the real poetry, the meaningful poetry, comes painfully slow. Few people see the world as he does.

The letter with its plea for assistance provides an opportunity for a few days escape in amiable company, with the prospect of achieving good, and writing an article about it.

Kenneth's Notebook

*Where have you gone?
The tide is over you,
The turn of midnight water's over you,
As Time is over you, and mystery,
And memory, the flood that does not flow.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*And over the flat earth of empty farms
The monstrous continent of air floats back
Coloured with rotting sunlight and the
black,
Bruised flesh of thunderstorms....*

*While even the dwindled hills are small
and bare,
As if, rebellious, buried, pitiful,
Something below pushed up a knob of
skull,
Feeling its way to air.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*Burnt utterly the stick you had to burn,
Lived once, loved well, gave thanks, and
won't return.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*Stars of a film without a plot,
Snippings of idiot celluloid.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*FEELING hunger and cold, feeling
Food, feeling fire, feeling
Pity and pain, tasting
Time in a kiss, tasting
Anger and tears, touching
Eyelids with lips, touching
Plague, touching flesh, knowing
Blood in the mouth, knowing
Laughter like flame, holding
Pickaxe and pen, holding
Death in the hand.... Feeling.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*Over the huge abraded rind,
Crow-countries graped with dung, we go,
Past gullies that no longer flow
And wells that nobody can find,
Lashed by the screaming of the crow,
Stabbed by the needles of the mind.*
—Fragments in a notebook.

*Those terraces
Filled with dumb presences
Lobbed over mattresses,
Lusts and repentances,
Ardours and solaces,
Passions and hatreds
And love in brass bedsteads . . .*

*Lost now in emptiness
Deep now in darkness
Nothing but nakedness,
Rails like a ribbon
And sickness of carbon
Dying in distances.*
—Fragments in a notebook.



Blood from Black Wattle by John and Philippa
Hughes. This is a playtest version.
Enquiries: john.hughes@anu.edu.au
Game page: [https://myth-o-logic.org/
convention-modulz/blood-from-black-wattle/](https://myth-o-logic.org/convention-modulz/blood-from-black-wattle/)