

MONSTER OF THE WEEK

THE CODEX OF WORLDS



MAREK GOLONKA
MICHAEL SANDS

YOUR TEAM GETS STRONGER...

...THE WORLD GETS WEIRDER!

Unite your party of hunters with new **team playbooks** and take your supernatural adventures into alternate genres and fresh settings with this huge expansion for the acclaimed **Monster of the Week** RPG!

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- Don your suit and sunglasses as **Agents In Black**
- Give your game that Saturday morning cartoon vibe as the **Mystery Club**
- Protect your home from magical incursions as **Guardians of the Borderland**
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- Journey into a supernatural Age of Industry in **Gothic Century**
- Dive into a surreal and mystical alternate Renaissance in **Dreaming with the Gods**
- Contend with spirits and colonizers in the medieval fantasy of **Monster Marches**
- Strive for harmony between your enclave of Stone Age humans and the animistic spirits that surround them in **Bone Spear**

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The Codex of Worlds. The moves are bigger, the stakes are higher, and the world gets weirder. You grasp the Codex in your hands. Open its pages and step forth into new adventures!

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**GENERIC
GAMES**

MONSTER OF THE WEEK CODEX OF WORLDS



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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful,
terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events
portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real
people, real terrors, real monsters, or other horrifying realities of
your home dimension is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

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THE CRIT SHOW





FOREWORD

I picked up a copy of *Monster of the Week* at a convention after hearing it described as “like playing in the world of *Buffy*, *Supernatural*, or *The Evil Dead*.” I spent many of my formative RPG years, as many have, in a d20 system, so when I saw the playbooks, grasped failing forward, and processed the ideas in the Keeper agenda, it’s not an exaggeration to say both the way I played and ran games was changed forever.

I have now run hundreds of hours of *Monster of the Week*, not just on our podcast, but for con attendees online and all over the country—and I’ve found that no matter who is playing, one thing remains the same. Everyone wants a world and story that feels like they’re created just for them. In this book, you’ll find tools that broaden the scope of the types of games you can play within *Monster of the Week*, while also making them unique and more customizable to the taste of you and your players—adding things like group playbooks, a new type of mystery, and alternate settings for your team of hunters to adventure in.

Wanna be like the Scooby gang, where hunters never take fatal harm, and the monster might be a greedy businessman? Wanna make your hunters a touring rock band, forced to deal with vampires in the crowd between sets? Or maybe you want to shunt your players into the Stone Age, and have them hunt down primordial evils across the landscape of Pangea? This book is filled with goodies for these kinds of stories and more, while also giving you helpful guides to create your own unique settings, monsters, and mysteries so that your game fits perfectly for you and everyone around your table.

I hope you enjoy these new toys in the sandbox of *Monster of the Week*. I know I will.

Happy Hunting,
Brandon (Rev) Wentz
Host and GM of *The Critshow*



INTRODUCTION

This *Codex* provides access to new worlds for your *Monster of the Week* game. Give a contemporary setting series a specific spin with the team playbooks, or go further afield with the series frameworks.

There's some generally applicable advice and two optional rules modules up first. A discussion of safety tools is here, which would have been in the main book if it were written today. The atonement mysteries rules module was written for the *Bone Spear* framework, but can also be used to add their own touch to other games.

Team playbooks provide a specific theme and story arc to your hunter team. They cover the rulebook's team concept, and expand it with some extra details and the ability to level up the team as a whole. Use these to make a statement about what sort of monster hunters you are, and what and how you want to deal with the supernatural. You'll find a range of options here, from the familiar (Chosen One and Entourage, Always on the Road) to the really far out (The Night Shift, Interdimensional Crisis Team). Team playbooks are heavily inspired by crew sheets from *Blades in the Dark*, adding a shared playbook for the whole hunter group to use.

- **This Strange Old House** has your hunters inherit a house packed with occult secrets, and will focus the series on discovering them all.
- **Gothic Century** takes your game back to the horrors of the nineteenth century, dealing with the supernatural effects of imperialism, industrialisation, and conflict between modernity and tradition.
- In **Dreaming with the Gods**, your hunters find themselves in not-quite-Europe during a surreal, mystical alternate Renaissance.
- In **Monster Marches**, you find yourselves in a mediaeval fantasy world, where a colonial empire has riled up the spirits of the land. Here, monster hunters are outcasts—necessary but untrusted even by those they save.
- **Bone Spear** takes you into the Stone Age. Your hunters are those who protect your community from monsters. However, monsters often need healing, recompense, or mediation instead of simple killing.

It's my hope the *Codex* provides you with plenty of new ways to enjoy playing *Monster of the Week*. Have fun playing in these worlds, or in those you create!





SAFETY TOOLS

Roleplaying games can be very emotional and engaging. That's great, and a big reason why we're playing these games, but it also means players' emotions can get hurt when we're not careful, and subject matter that stops a player's engagement can be very detrimental to a game's quality. That's why it became a norm in the hobby to introduce safety tools during gaming sessions—ways for all involved, players and game masters alike, to state what topics they want to omit from the game and to signal discomfort and distress during play. Newer safety tools, like the palette, also enable you to check what the players are especially enthusiastic about. Always ensure your game group has a way to deal with these issues. The tools listed here are some commonly used techniques.

PALETTE

It's good to establish what the players are excited about and what they would prefer not to see in the game. An easy way to keep track of both is a palette—a piece of paper or an online document where you note down what you're excited about, what you're far from excited about, and what you outright don't want to see in the game.

A palette is divided into four parts. They're often written in two columns to separate the things you want from the game from those you don't want. On the left, you list things that especially excite each player, both hunters and the Keeper. This is information not only for the Keeper, but also for other hunters—if you know that Julie loves difficult dilemmas and ritual magic, try to include those things in your hunter's actions, and especially in your hunter's interactions with Julie's hunter!

The right column is a bit more complex because it's divided into three parts. The upper part contains things you just don't want to see in game because they don't appeal to you, or you're bored with them. Maybe you've seen too many vampires in other media and ask the Keeper not to prepare vampire-centred mysteries? Or you want to keep the campaign firmly in the occult horror subgenre and ask for no science fiction elements?

The middle and lower parts of the right column are a way to establish boundaries in game and talk about potential triggers. They contain the lines and veils of players.

If something's beyond the line for the player, it shouldn't appear at all in the game. Things beyond the line for any player are in the middle part of the column. If something is beyond the veil, it shouldn't appear explicitly, but can be mentioned or introduced with a “fade to black” effect, without giving details. Things beyond the veil are in the lower one.

Each player, including the Keeper, should state their preferences at the start of the game. They don't need to explain why something is beyond a line or a veil for them. Other players **cannot** try to force others to reveal their reasons. If somebody states something shouldn't appear in the game, respect it. If this person feels comfortable explaining why this element is triggering for them, they'll do it on their own, without your urging.

As a Keeper, you may decide it's more comfortable for everybody to gather information about lines and veils anonymously. Web-based surveys allow you to quickly construct a simple survey your players can answer anonymously.

It's normal for needs, comfort zones, and boundaries to shift. Any player is free to declare that their input into the palette has changed—they can add something, remove something, move something to a different part of the palette, and so on. When using an online questionnaire, if possible, allow people to change their answers after submitting them. This will allow players to anonymously signal if their lines and veils have changed between games.

THE X CARD

We can't always foresee what will be distressing or triggering for us, and lists of lines and veils are never exhaustive. That's why the X Card, designed by John Stavropoulos, became a gold standard when it comes to player emotional safety.

To introduce the X Card, simply draw a huge "X" on a piece of paper and put it on the gaming table. Then announce that anyone can tap or lift this card at any time to signal that what just happened in game distresses them or feels contrary to choices decided upon earlier. It's up to the person using the card to decide how much they want to explain why they're using it—including not at all. When something gets X-Carded, you edit it out of the game. Usually either the Keeper or the player who used the X Card suggests an exact way to do it—you can change the element to something else (like switching to snakes instead of spiders), fade the scene to black, or rewind the action to before the distressing element appeared and move it in a different direction.

You can read more about the X Card at tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg.

THE TTRPG SAFETY TOOLKIT

The tools described here are widely used and hugely successful, but by no means universal. There's an entire catalogue of safety tools, overseen by Kienna Shaw and Lauren Bryant-Monk, known as The TTRPG Safety Toolkit. It's available online as a Google Drive folder anyone can access, at <https://t.co/gA6hV6VKqm>.

Please browse it and think about what other safety tools you would like to suggest to your gaming group.





RULES MODULE:
ATONEMENT
MYSTERIES

This is an optional rules module that you can use to change the feel of mysteries in your *Monster of the Week* game. It focuses the hunters on solving the problems they find by making up for a past wrong, instead of killing the monster.

If used now and again, it will give more variety in mystery style. If used consistently for a series, it will instead change the style of the game's world (and mythology).

THE CORE IDEA

The essence of an atonement mystery is that the problems derive from a mistake, crime, sin, or wrongdoing that someone (or something) committed. The hunters will need to figure out what that was to understand and stop the monster or phenomenon.

Then the hunters need to somehow make it right, make recompense, or arrange some compromise to make the problem go away. That replaces the **WEAKNESS** as the key to solving each mystery.

CREATING A MYSTERY

Building a mystery works largely the same, with the wrongdoing in place of a weakness:

Begin with a basic concept. This might be a certain type of monster, an idea for a situation, or inspired by another story.

- What was the sin or wrongdoing that created the problematic situation? Who suffered? Who was to blame?
- The hook: What's the event that brings it to the hunters' attention?
- Think about what sorts of things the hunters might do to fix the problem created by that crime.
- What are the impending dangers? Use these to create a **COUNT-DOWN**.
- What are the main threats (monster or phenomenon, and minions)?
- What locations are involved? What bystanders are involved?

PHENOMENA?

Phenomena are an alternative to threats first introduced in *Tome of Mysteries* (page 24) and subsequently included in the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week* (hardcover page 326). Phenomena mysteries give hunters the chance to investigate an increasingly dangerous source of weirdness rather than a monster.



CONCEPT

Begin with a broad, simple concept. Do you have an idea for a monster? A triggering crime? A general situation to fix?

If you don't have a concept in mind, use one of these:

- Some kind of monster you would like them to encounter.
- A wrongdoing with a difficult moral dilemma to navigate.
- A loose end from a previous session.
- The next stage of an arc countdown.

At this point, the concept should be very simple and general. You'll fill in the details over the next steps.

THE SIN OR WRONGDOING

Instead of a **MONSTER WEAKNESS**, each atonement mystery has a **SIN OR WRONGDOING** that created the problem. This can be any moral wrong or error that somehow created the monster, brought on the phenomenon, or caused it to become dangerous. You can also have wrongdoings that don't have a moral element: a monster may usually be harmless, but somebody annoyed it and the reaction is violent or dangerous.

You can use the sin to determine the style and the theme of the mystery, although you don't have to do so in a simple and direct way.

Examples:

- A ghost wants revenge on the people who murdered her and her family.
- A scientist experimented on unwitting victims secretly, trying to develop a drug that provides extended life.
- A teenager stole a magical artefact, and is now cursed.
- A factory is dumping toxic waste into a wetland.
- A group of tourists ventured into an area that a supernatural creature calls home.

Like a weakness, the mystery can't be completed until the wrongdoing is resolved.

The destruction of the monster is not the usual—or best—way to resolve a mystery. The hunters need to make it right, make recompense, or otherwise sort out the problem that started it all.

When the hunters have somehow made up for the wrongdoing, then things will return to normal. Perhaps the werewolf's curse is broken and they return to normal life, the demon returns to its hell-dimension, the phenomenon's effect slowly fades away.

If the hunters kill a monster, this may even be a new crime to be addressed. You could use this as the basis for a later mystery.



Here are some example resolutions for the wrongdoings we just listed:

- The ghost is appeased after the murderer is revealed and brought to justice.
- The hunters get the scientist to create an antidote, so that the mutated victims can be cured and return to their normal lives.
- The artefact is respectfully returned to its owner, and some extra price is paid for the trouble (perhaps the teenager or a hunter needs to do them a favour?).
- The company is stopped and forced to repair the damage done, and close down this polluting factory.
- The tourists make a ritual apology to the creature and repair all the damage they caused when they trespassed.

There's a common theme here of coming to an agreement about the resolution. Your monster hunters may be brave and smart, but the final resolution of each mystery must be a consensus-based, restorative solution that leaves the world better for both humans and the supernatural forces that threatened them. For cases where there's no way to fix things to all parties' satisfaction, you can use rituals to expiate guilt, purify corruption, etc.

Brainstorming some ways the hunters might fix the problem is a good idea to prepare your thoughts when you build the mystery. Keep these as possible solutions, but in play it's up to the hunters to solve each mystery in whatever manner they come up with.



BUT I STILL LIKE MONSTER WEAKNESSES!

If you like, you can still use weaknesses too. There are two ways to manage that:

- Some mysteries are regular monster-killing, others are atonement mysteries. Use whichever approach works for the individual mystery idea.
- Mysteries are all atonement mysteries, but some monsters and minions have a weakness too. This means that the hunters can eliminate a monster or minion with the weakness, but they'll still need to figure out how to make things right and fix the overall situation.

THREAT TYPES

The threat types remain the same, but make sure you take the wrongdoing into account when picking them. In particular, the monster's motivation should reflect its relationship with the original wrongdoing.

For example:

- A trickster could be taking revenge for disrupting the supernatural order.
- An executioner hunts down the culprits for a terrible revenge.
- A bubble phenomenon could be trying to keep things inside because something got taken outside.

EVERYTHING ELSE

The process for building all the other elements of the mystery—and playing it—doesn't change.





RULES MODULE: **NON-LETHAL PLAY**

These rules change the tone of the game from gritty action-horror into cartoon spooky action. They're primarily intended for the Mystery Club team playbook, but can be used for any game where you'd like more of a Saturday morning cartoon style.

AGENDA AND PRINCIPLES

In the Keeper agenda, use “Make the hunters’ lives spooky and full of surprises” in place of “dangerous and scary.”

For the Keeper principles, change these:

- “Put scary stuff into everyday situations” in place of “Put horror into everyday situations.”
- “Monsters can appear anywhere” in place of “Nothing is safe...”

KEEPER AND THREAT MOVES

You’ll also need to reinterpret all your moves from the perspective of a non-lethal, spooky game instead of a horrific game. In general, the feeling behind each move should be the same, just filtered into a cartoon style.

BUILDING MYSTERIES

In general, the hunters are going to be less dangerous. Monsters and minions can have lower harm capacities than standard *Monster of the Week*. Armour should also be used less.

There’s no need to reduce how much harm their attacks cause, because harm is less dangerous and healing is much quicker.

Everything else remains the same, just with that cartoon style.

HARM AND NOT DYING

Hunters can’t die in play. When a hunter’s harm track is filled and they take further harm, instead of “dying,” they are “out of action.” The hunter is unable to act on their own and can’t resist what happens to them (being tied up, carried to a monster’s lair, etc.).

Monsters still must have their weakness found and exploited before being defeated. They are not killed when their harm track is filled, but captured, disabled, banished, unmasked and arrested, or otherwise prevented from causing further chaos. The same goes for minions.

Bystanders can be captured, knocked over, and scared. Serious harm never occurs “on-screen.” There is always a way for the hunters to save them.

HEALING

All existing moves that allow healing may be used during action scenes, taking moments only.

After a fight, all harm is removed from the hunters. Players may choose for their hunter to retain cosmetic signs of injury (bandages, slings, bumps on the head, etc.) if they want. Hunters who were out of action wake up to find themselves, well, wherever they ended up (but still on zero harm).

GEAR

To avoid guns and more horror-style weapons, allow the hunters to swap these for any of their existing gear picks:

- Furious struggle (0-harm hand 1-armor)
- Martial arts (1-harm intimate/hand)
- Martial arts master (2-harm intimate/hand 1-armor)
- Traps (1-harm hand/close/far slow capture). More elaborate traps might do 2- or 3-harm.
- Stun-gun (1-harm hand stun recharge)
- Hockey stick/bat/etc. (2-harm hand)
- Slingshot (2-harm close reload)
- Net or blanket (0-harm hand/close bulky capture)







TEAM PLAYBOOKS

Team playbooks are an optional add-on to your *Monster of the Week* game. They add a shared playbook for the whole team, giving the hunters access to certain extra moves, gear, and allies. They also provide a built-in team concept and an overall nemesis for the hunters.

The team playbooks available are:

- Agents in Black
- Always on the Road
- The Chosen One and Entourage
- Guardians of the Borderland
- IMPS (International Monster and Paranormal Service)
- Interdimensional Crisis Team
- The Last Survivors
- League of Double Lives
- Mercenaries
- Mystery Club
- The Night Shift
- Suburban Watch Group
- Touring Band
- Whistleblowers
- Wild Hunt Fugitives

TEAM IMPROVEMENT

Each team playbook comes with a question for advancement. At the end of each session, when you do the end of session experience for hunters, also ask the team's question.

If you answer "yes," you can mark one towards team improvement. If the answer is "yes, and it came up a lot," mark it twice.

Additionally, hunters may allocate their own experience marks to the team, if they wish. Each session, one mark per hunter may be used on the team playbook instead of their own.

When the track is filled, the team playbook gains an improvement. Choose one of these options:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

TEAM ENEMY

The team enemy is a major antagonist for the Keeper to use over the course of the series. Expect the Keeper to often have this enemy manipulating events from behind the scenes, causing trouble for you.

You should also not expect to defeat your enemy easily. They'll be very difficult to actually beat, so that's something to leave for the final chapter of your series rather than to do as soon as possible.

Keeper, you should create the enemy as a very powerful monster (or perhaps a phenomenon) threat. Then think about an arc for them as they work towards their goals. Some of the enemies have obvious goals, but the rest of the group may have some ideas too. Take those as a starting point, but feel free to tweak them as you create the arc (and tweak them more as you play through the series and can build on events in play).

Names for enemies are suggestions. Adjust them to suit your game's specific setting, or come up with your own, if they don't quite fit.

CHANGING ENEMIES

Once play begins, of course, your team is likely to make more enemies. If your enemy is defeated, or through play becomes unimportant, pick a new one from one of the adversaries you have gone up against.

If there are no clear contenders, pick another one of the starting enemy options or come up with your own.

TEAM ALLIES

Team allies work just like regular allies, but any member of the hunter team may call on them, not just an individual.

There's a list of suggested allies for each team playbook, and the hunters pick one to be their ally at the start. Each potential ally is listed with what they are good at helping with.

The hunter players may pick what ally type (and motivation) each team ally has. Refer to *Monster of the Week* page 119 (hardcover page 131).

Names for allies are suggestions. Adjust them to suit your game's specific setting, or come up with your own, if they don't quite fit.

ASSETS

These are useful facilities that the team shares. They provide access to certain sorts of gear, places, or other useful things. Each lists the benefits it can provide.

Mark two boxes at the beginning of play. That's what your team starts with.

More may be gained through team improvements.

CHANGING TEAM TYPE

It's not intended that changing team type is a typical development (as it can be for hunters changing playbooks).

If your group decides that you no longer belong in your current team playbook, you *can* change. Use the same process as a hunter: question each item and ask if it still applies to the new team playbook. However, take a more critical look than you would with a hunter.

KEEPER ADVICE AND FIRST MYSTERY SEED

There's also some advice for the Keeper about how to flavour each series to fit the team playbook.

I've also included a first mystery seed: a few ideas for a fitting mystery to begin your series. These aren't fully detailed, just enough to get you started and into play a bit quicker. When you add your own details to these seeds, tailor them to the hunters and the choices they made about their team playbook.

AGENTS IN BLACK

“Move out, you’ve got a type 54 saucer landing. Probably Ursooid tourists. Get them off Earth before they decide the town is a buffet.”

This team playbook has the hunters working for the Bureau—a clandestine organisation dedicated to hiding the existence of monsters and the supernatural from the general public.

It emphasises weird technology and phenomena over magic and monsters, as well as assuming the world is filled with conspiracies and secret agendas.





GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Figure out the nature of the Bureau.
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Hush:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we suppress knowledge of monsters and the supernatural?”
- The Greater Good:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we protect civilian lives?”
- By Any Means Necessary:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we stop the problem, regardless of the cost?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

THE BUREAU

The Bureau setup is determined by the group.

If you have a hunter who belongs to an organisation already—like a Professional or an Initiate—you may combine their setup with the Bureau setup. Figure out how the two perspectives work for your Bureau. If you don't like that idea, you can also keep them separate (which will lead to its own drama with split loyalties and rivalries).

Now determine the nature of the Bureau:

- Is the Bureau an open, covert, or secret organisation? An open Bureau exists openly but has a cover responsibility to distract from their real mission. A covert Bureau doesn't explicitly hide themselves, but they try not to draw attention. A secret Bureau has no official records and operates completely in the shadows.
- Who is your team's handler or commanding officer, and what are they like? Create your own or pick one of these:
 - Special Agent "Coop" is a genial, avuncular middle-aged man. He's disorganised and often loses track of details, but he always has the team's back.
 - Special Agent "Star" is a harsh boss. She doesn't really seem to like you, and you never seem to measure up to her standards of "perfection plus." She runs everything by the book (this can be good or bad for you).
 - Provisional Special Agent "Fireball" is young and excitable. They prefer you deal with problems in a scorched earth style, without regard for consequences. That is also their management style.
- Who do you think is really running the Bureau? The government? A secret global government? Some other government? A billionaire? A secret conspiracy dating back to Uruk's priesthood? Something else?

ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- General Grox, alien warlord.
- The werewolf conspiracy.
- The Order of the Silvery Stars, who worship some very bad alien god-things.
- The Old Gods, who want to return and rule the world again.
- A rival Bureau with dubious methods and goals.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose your team allies from this list:

- Doctor “Blue,” a physician. They can help you recover from harm.
- Professor “Blood,” a forensic scientist. They are who you go to when you need evidence analysed.
- Agent “Will,” a field investigator. They’re a veteran of the Bureau, and can help you navigate problems with colleagues.
- Aquila Squad, an ally team. They are unofficially known as “the Extreme Problems” squad. They can handle anything unfazed, but their solutions can be a little... messy.
- SkullFangz, an ally team. This is a group of hackers you’ve made a sort of alliance with. They can help you get information through unorthodox channels, but they sometimes need you to do some odd or dubious favours in return.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Memory Eraser:** You have been issued handheld devices to erase memories from civilians. When you target a person and activate the device, say how many hours you want to erase (1–6) and roll +Weird. On a 10+, those memories are gone. On a 7–9, the memories are gone but the target knows something strange happened.
- Authority Override:** If local officials are causing trouble, you can get them pulled off the case. This may—of course—make them *more* suspicious.
- Containment Field Projector:** Place the projector and activate it, choosing a range from 1–20 meters. A spherical shield is created, allowing nothing in or out. Lasts until deactivated by remote or in an hour when the battery runs out. There’s time to get out of the zone, but only just.
- Anonymity:** Your identity isn’t traceable via official databases or records. Enemies or bystanders can’t find out anything about your history through any official channels. Additionally, any distinguishing features are removed from photos, videos, or voice recordings of you when they’re processed by any regular computer or phone.
- Not Right:** You all have a creepy, uncanny-valley-style aura or look that counts as a reason for **manipulating** a bystander with threats.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A helicopter, aeroplane, truck, or bus with facilities and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Individual Transport:** Each mission, a regular car, motorbike, or bicycle is assigned to every team member.
- R&D Access:** Your team is issued with a useful high technology experiment from R&D each mission. The Keeper decides what it is (always useful, usually with problematic side effects).
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base in a Bureau regional facility. Everything you need to prepare for mysteries is here, and it's quite secure.
- Sky Scanners:** You have access to a scanning network that will alert you to strange events coming from space. This includes weird phenomena as well as UFOs.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Disguise Kits:** Contains costumes, makeup, and other supplies for a quick change of appearance.
- Housing:** Each member of the team is assigned a one-bedroom apartment in a generic housing project. All the apartments are exactly the same, down to scuff marks on the door.
- Rapid Response Pods:** When any member of the team needs to get to a mission site quickly, a rapid response pod appears next to them. Enter the pod, and a short, uncomfortable trip will place you where you need to be. What do the pods look like? How do they appear?
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

The Agents in Black suggest two main things about your series.

First, it's probably going to be a little on the comedy side of things. Being traditional "men in black" style characters is going to lead to a lot of silly situations.

Secondly, you'll want to focus on aliens, strange phenomena, flying saucers, cryptids, and weird technology in your mysteries. That old 1950s–1970s UFO lore lends itself to that sort of thing more than traditional folkloric monsters. If you don't know much about those close encounter stories from that period, I'd recommend reading up on it. The more recent film series is inspired by the same things, but they are a very comical take on the lore.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

This mystery deals with a flying saucer crash site. An alien has escaped, injured and confused. It is lashing out against whatever it encounters.

HOOK

The team is dispatched to check out a crash site. "We don't know what it was, but it came from outer space."

COUNTDOWN

Day	The pilot runs across someone and lashes out, killing them.
Shadows	Police investigating the attack are blasted by the pilot.
Sunset	A police armed response leads to a shootout with the pilot. Many officers are killed, and the pilot is wounded further. This only increases its desperation and anger.
Dusk	The pilot heads into the closest town looking for supplies to repair the saucer. Any people or animals in the way get blasted.
Nightfall	The pilot repairs the saucer as best they can.
Midnight	The saucer launches, then crashes into the town and explodes, killing many people.

THE PILOT

Monster: Beast (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing)

The Pilot is much larger than a human and has a shaggy bestial look. It's injured and confused, and reacts to the unexpected or surprising with violence. Normally, the Pilot is a polite and sophisticated being—it's only acting this way due to pain and confusion.

Attacks: Blaster (6-harm hand/close ignore-armour recharge); Punch (3-harm hand).

Armour: Shield generator (4-armour blurry).

Harm capacity: 15

Weakness: Treatment (if injuries are successfully addressed, the Pilot will figure out what is going on and be very sorry about any damage it caused).

THE CRASH SITE

Location: Deathtrap (motivation: to harm intruders)

A huge path smashed through the ground, ending in a large crater containing a smoking saucer. The hull is holed in many places, and broken machinery lets out caustic fluids, strange radiation, and other unrecognisable things.

The saucer itself contains extra-terrestrial high tech wonders, much of it dangerous and/or broken. Exploring it may also reveal that there was only one creature on board, and that they may have grabbed some things on the way out.

The Pilot's path away can be found, leading off into the surroundings.

CUSTOM MOVE

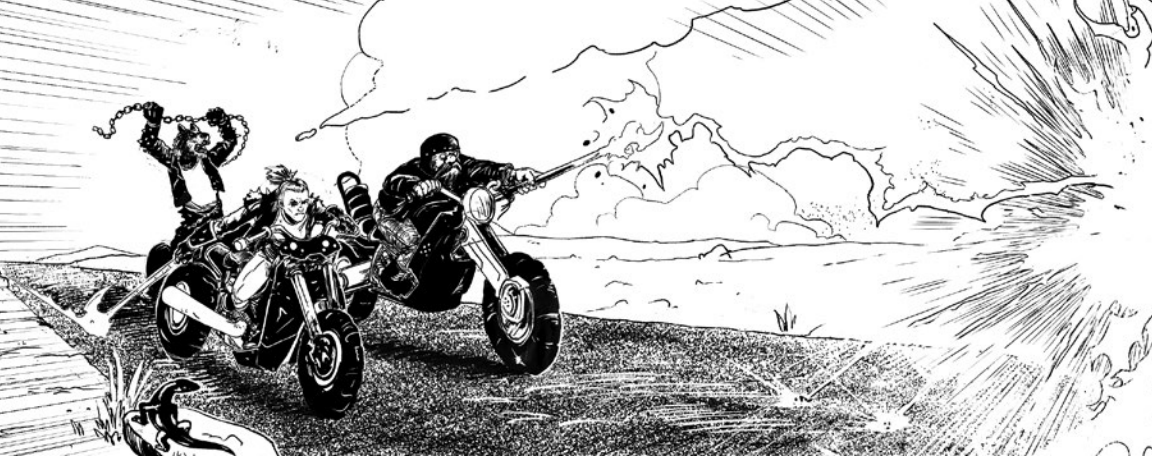
Poke Something You Don't Understand: When you mess with something in the crashed saucer, roll +Sharp. On a 10+, it's okay and the Keeper will tell you something about its function. On a 7-9, choose one: back off, or find out but suffer the consequences. On a miss, something horrible happens to you.

ALWAYS ON THE ROAD

"Another town, another monster."

You're a travelling hunter team. Every week is a new town with a new problem.





GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Put on some music and hit the road.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Family:** You're all family, or as good as. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we talk about—or pointedly not talk about—something that was troubling a team member?"
- Vocation:** Someone has to do it, and you happened to be able. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we save the people we went there to protect?"
- Excitement:** Monster hunting sure is a new thrill every time. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we take extremely dangerous risks?"
- Custom:** What's your story? _____
At the end of each session, ask: " _____
_____?"

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.



ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Halphas, a demon who has it in for you.
- All the vampires.
- Dr. Crepuscule, who steals unnatural power from captured monsters.
- The King in Yellow, a god/force of corruption, decadence, and disease.
- A cabal of ghosts trying to secure the secret of returning to life.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose your team allies from this list:

- Detective Barnes, a police detective who you saved from a monster way back when. They'll help you out with some information now and then, and possibly more when you're on their turf.
- Bingo, an always-online researcher into strangeness. They can put you in touch with people who need help, coordinate communication, and help you with research.
- Sapphire, who has the ability to manipulate time in certain ways. You suspect she may be very long-lived or even immortal. She is not always easy to contact, and can appear unexpectedly.
- Another group of travelling hunters, an ally team. They can back you up monster hunting—you've helped each other out several times, when things got tricky.
- Universal Cleanup Services, an ally team. A franchise that specialises in cleaning up messes like crime scenes and monster attacks.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Home Away from Home:** Whenever you arrive in a new town, you immediately find a motel and a cafe that are friendly and welcoming. One or the other will turn out to have a connection to the mystery that brought you here, even if just by having a bystander come by.
- Geniality:** When you meet a new person in a town you haven't visited before, roll +Charm. On a 10+, they are well-disposed towards you. On a 7-9, they're still well-disposed but the Keeper chooses one: they are marked for trouble, or they conceal something from the hunters. Additionally, when you return to a town you have already visited, you always run into the people you befriended previously.
- Handy:** You're all good at fixing stuff. Anything broken or messed up in the course of a mystery is repaired and ready to go before the next one. Gear or assets that would be described as "totally destroyed" still need to be replaced.
- No-stick:** You've had yourselves removed from official and law enforcement databases. You don't have to worry about "misunderstandings" from previous towns getting in the way of your hunts (unless someone got annoyed enough to make it a personal vendetta).
- Monster Journals:** When a mystery reminds you of something you encountered before, consult your notes and tell the Keeper what you think is the same. The Keeper will say if you got it right.
 - If you're correct, take +1 forward to **investigate a mystery**.
 - If you're wrong but had a good idea, take +1 forward to **read a bad situation**. If you're totally off base, the Keeper holds 1 to put you in a tight spot.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
- Mobile base:** A truck or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Credentials:** Real, or as-good-as-real, identification that gets you access to law enforcement and other official contacts.
- Lair:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Hunter Roadhouses:** A network of bars, diners, and motels where you can safely meet other monster hunters. Many are run by retired hunters.
- Tool Kit:** One or two of your vehicles carry tool kits. You have most tools you'll need to repair or build something.
- Mystical Ingredients Cabinet:** A box with a wide range of frequently useful supplies for magic rituals.
- Slush Fund:** The team has access to a bank account that can pay for their day-to-day needs while monster hunting, and stretches to a big purchase every now and then. Where did it come from?
- Armoury:** One of your cars has a well-stocked weapons chest. Each mystery, every hunter may take one extra regular weapon. Also, once per mystery, one hunter may ask the Keeper if the armoury has a particular special weapon: if yes, you can take it; if no, take +1 forward.
- Field Medics:** You have enough supplies and training to treat one hunter per night as if they'd had a proper doctor or trip to the emergency room.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

As this team is always moving, each mystery is usually new people in a new town. This gives you the freedom to build whatever mystery you're in the mood for, without the need to fit it neatly into existing plots and character relationships.

To give them some continuity, consider giving them some places that can act as a bit of a home base (some of the asset choices will provide this too, if they take those).

You should also make an effort to return to old mysteries now and then. You can set a new mystery in a town they visited before as a chance to meet bystanders again or revisit locations. In many cases, you can also use a loose end from an older mystery to help inspire this new one.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A powerful and angry ghost is haunting an entire town, and has the people there trapped in a mystical bubble.

If the team's enemy is the ghost cabal, Halphas the demon, or Dr. Crepuscule, then they are almost certainly behind these events.

HOOK

The team heard a rumour that sounded like a haunting or poltergeist, spread over multiple houses. Unusual! They've come to town to investigate further.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The ghost kills someone.
Shadows	The ghost burns down a house, killing everyone inside.
Sunset	The ghost causes an explosion at a business, killing several people.
Dusk	More killings. People who break free of the ghost's memory powers panic, the others carry on unsuspecting.
Nightfall	The ghost begins a final rampage of destruction and death.
Midnight	Everyone in the town is killed.

VERY ANGRY GHOST

Monster: Torturer (motivation: to hurt and terrify)

The ghost is a traditional “not properly laid to rest” haunting. They died in an abandoned house, and the body has not yet been found. In life, they were a town outcast, generally shunned or pitied.

The ghost has decided to make the town pay, and does so with fear. It meddles with the memories of the people so they forget about the world outside (which also prevents further calls for help). This required a **big magic** ritual from the ghost, creating a psychic bubble around the town.

Powers: Invisible; ghost (immune to mundane attacks); erase memories; create psychic bubble (ritual); cause an “accident.”

Attacks: Freezing touch: 1-harm intimate/hand cold; “Accident”: 2 to 5-harm, any range, other tags as appropriate.

Armour: None, but is immune to all mundane attacks.

Harm capacity: 5

Weakness: Find their body and lay it to rest properly.

THE TOWN

Phenomenon: Bubble (motivation: to keep inside things inside and outside things outside)

When you enter the town, you start forgetting about things outside.

Powers:

- **There Is Only Here:** When a hunter mentions or thinks about the world outside town, roll +Weird. On a 10+, you think “but those places don’t matter anyhow.” On a 7-9, if the hunter forgets what they were thinking about, mark experience: there’s no outside; otherwise, they take –1 forward. On a miss, they might attract the ghost’s attention or become confused.

Bystanders just don’t think about outside. If a hunter brings it up, they might be confused, or remember it for a moment, but soon the ghost’s powers will conceal the memories again.

Weakness: Undo the ghost’s spell.

THE CHOSEN ONE AND ENTOURAGE

"I'm pretty amazing, but together we can do anything!"

This team centres on a Chosen One and their friends who help with monster hunting. There's also room for a mentor.

As a slightly different take on the team playbook, you can leave out the Chosen One playbook for now, and include a hunter who is also chosen for greatness but doesn't have that as their main thing right now: the Summoned, Wronged, Spooky, and Pararomantic are good choices. That hunter may change playbooks to the Chosen later (when they uncover their destiny). Or perhaps it will turn out somebody else gets tapped to save the world?



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Await the next weird prophecy.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- First among Equals:** Sure, one of us is chosen by destiny, but we all play our part. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we all contribute in our own way to solve the mystery?”
- Sworn Guardians:** The rest of us made a solemn oath to help the Chosen One. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we save the Chosen One from serious harm?”
- Fate’s Rebels:** Screw destiny! At the end of each session, ask: “Did we fight against fate and prophecies, no matter the cost?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.



ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Alpha, an immortal werewolf.
- All the vampires.
- Seth Vail, a billionaire who wants to harness the power of monsters, starting with immortality for himself.
- The Father of Monsters, the cosmic entity who is the source of evil in the world.
- The Grey Priests, a conspiracy to bring about the end of the world and birth of a new one.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Carlito, a nurse. They can patch up injured hunters.
- Charity, an occultist. She can tell you about and sometimes find weird old items.
- Raven, a mystic. Has some ideas about the Chosen One's destiny.
- The Junior Entourage, an ally team. These are friends who aren't in the core team. Good at getting around for area canvassing or distraction.
- Destiny's Servants, an ally team. A secretive group sent to help you out. They're good at fighting and acting suspicious.
- Someone else: _____



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Ancient Visions:** An ancient ritual, to be conducted regularly, gives the whole team access to some of the visions sent to the Chosen One. Once per mystery, each hunter may ask the Keeper a question about anything they want. The Keeper answers with a vision or dream: obscure and vague, but true.
- Armoury of the Chosen:** You gain a cache of special weapons used by previous Chosen Ones. The Keeper should design a lesser version of the Chosen One's special weapon, which all other members of the team may use. When this is unlocked, the Chosen One may change or add a tag on their special weapon.
- Handing on the Torch:** When you select this, designate another character as the next Chosen One. When the current Chosen One dies, that character may change to the Chosen playbook whenever they are ready. The new Chosen One designates the next heir when they find a worthy successor.
- Friends Stick Together:** Once per mystery, a hunter may call the rest of the team to their current location. Everyone arrives as soon as they potentially can (based on their last known position and when we saw them there). That can be "right this instant," if at all possible.
- Wyrd's Favour:** When you choose this team move, all hunters erase 1 spent Luck point. If you haven't spent any Luck yet, add a new Luck box instead.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A truck or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
 - Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
 - The Prophecies:** A guidebook of all the visions about the Chosen One, to help you navigate your destiny (they're pretty hard to decipher).
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
 - Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
 - Innocent Front:** You have access to a regular business or institution. This means that your monster hunting hijinks can be concealed to an extent from your friends, family, and colleagues. For example: a cafe, a library, an antique store, etc.
 - Regular Jobs:** You have access to a place of employment for any of the hunters who need it. You earn enough to cover regular day-to-day expenses, and there's time to fit in monster hunting around your hours.
 - Cameras and Recording Gear:** You have a big collection of cameras and other recording devices that you can use during your investigations.
 - Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

This team playbook makes the Chosen One and their destiny even more central to the ongoing story than usual. It also means that you can tie the whole team into that destiny, not just the Chosen One.

When the group picks this, they're asking for big, apocalyptic stories. When you're designing mysteries, keep returning to the elements of the Chosen One's destiny. Not every mystery should be directly about it, but hints and portents should turn up even when they're investigating unrelated problems.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

The enemy sends a vampire—Tiffany—to test the Chosen One’s strength and resolve. If a vampire isn’t an appropriate monster dupe for the Chosen One’s destiny and the team setup, substitute a solitary monster that fits better.

Tiffany begins with a transparent challenge or threat. Neither the vampire nor you as Keeper should expect the hunters to just do what she proposes. She will try to torment the Chosen One as much as she can, using cruel tactics and targeting people around them. Tiffany doesn’t really want to put herself in any danger, however, and will attempt to flee if the hunters seem to be gaining the advantage.

HOOK

A family member or close friend of the Chosen One is mesmerised, and gives them a message from Tiffany: “Your fate is to die by my hand, Chosen One. Be at the graveyard, alone, at midnight.”

COUNTDOWN

(The countdown assumes that the Chosen One doesn’t walk into the vampire’s trap at midnight.)

Day	Tiffany targets another of the Chosen One’s loved ones, and begins feeding from them each night.
Shadows	Tiffany ambushes a member of the hunter team, attempting to kill them. If no hunters give her the opportunity, she’ll target one of the Chosen One’s family or friends instead.
Sunset	Tiffany uses her vampiric powers to create a gang of minions.
Dusk	The minions are unleashed on the team’s town to create havoc and distract them from what Tiffany is up to.
Nightfall	The Chosen One’s loved one, now under Tiffany’s thrall, ambushes and kills the Chosen One.
Midnight	Tiffany destroys the rest of the hunter team.

TIFFANY THE VAMPIRE

Monster: Torturer (motivation: to hurt and terrify)

In life, she was a well-liked peasant woman in twelfth-century Italy. Cursed with undeath, she glories in the capacity to do whatever she wants to whoever she wants, safe from mortal laws and authorities.

Powers: Mesmerise; vampire's bite (those killed by life drain will rise as vampires under her thrall); immortal (unaging, immune to illness, pale cold skin, a stake through the heart immobilises her); wolf-form; wolf chieftain.

Attacks: Bite: 3-harm intimate life-drain.

Harm capacity: 9 □□□□□ □□□□

Weakness: Decapitation.

WOLVES

Minion: Brute (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

The wolves called by Tiffany's magic are cruel and vicious. Use two per hunter.

Powers: Unnatural endurance.

Attacks: Bite: 3-harm intimate/hand.

Harm capacity: 6 □□□□□ □

Weakness: Not applicable: they're normal wolves gifted with a little supernatural vigour.

GANG OF MINIONS

Minion: Brute (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

If Tiffany creates minions, this is what they are like. They appear to be normal folks, just pale and sickly looking. They have unnatural strength and follow the orders Tiffany gave them, appearing to be in a fugue of some sort.

Powers: Unnatural strength; curse of undeath (if killed, they will rise as new vampires).

Attacks: Fists: 2-harm hand; Bite: 1-harm intimate.

Harm capacity: 8 □□□□□ □□□

Weakness: If Tiffany is killed, or their blood is purified, then they are cured and may return to their normal lives.

GUARDIANS OF THE BORDERLAND

"The world's edge is thin here, and we keep watch for what comes through."

This team playbook has the hunters as wardens of a liminal region: somewhere where the borders of the world are thin, where monsters and magic can slip through and cause trouble.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Check the boundaries for incursions.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Ancient Oath:** You are the holders of an ancient obligation to guard the world’s border. Decide what the oath requires of you. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we hold to our oath?”

The oath: _____

- Wrong Place, Wrong Time:** You were there to stop the first incursion, and now feel obliged to prevent anything else coming through. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we protect the world from what lies beyond?”

- Born & Raised:** You all grew up, or settled, here. Dimensional incursions are a part of life, even if a lot of people don’t like to admit it. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we look after our normal relationships with friends and families?”

- Custom:** What’s your story? _____
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.



ENEMIES

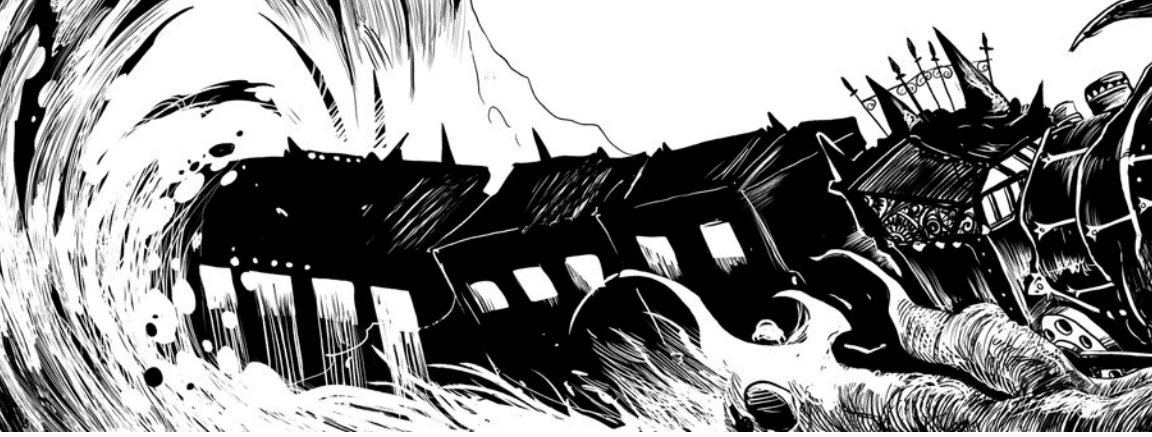
Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Lord Grash, warlord of a monster dimension.
- All the demons.
- The Anointed Hierophant, an occult sect leader who wants to break the walls between worlds.
- Chaos, a cosmic entity of disorder.
- TransWorldCorp, a business hoping to profit from other worlds via their rift machine, no matter the damage they do along the way.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose your team allies from this list:

- Hawthorn, a hedge witch. They're able to cast a variety of small but useful spells.
- Anya, a folklorist. They know a lot about the stories and history of the region.
- The Feeling of Not Knowing a Particular Fact, a visitor from another world. An explorer of worlds, they have a store of facts or rumours about many different dimensions. Describe their home world and look.
- Junior Guardians, an ally team. By tradition, younger members of your families and community are apprenticed to take over when you retire. They can help with any tasks that aren't too dangerous.
- A flock of otherworldly creatures, an ally team. These non-Earthly animals can scout and warn you of danger, and also are quite cute. Describe their home world and look.
- Someone else: _____



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Otherworldly Intuition:** When you encounter something from another world, you recognise that they don't belong here. When you encounter a place where another world is accessible, you are aware of it and may stop at the threshold.
- Wardens:** Once per mystery while you're defending a portal, wall, or border, you may ignore all harm from a single source, or treat a roll as if you rolled a 12. This works just as if you spent a Luck, except it doesn't trigger your special move.
- Outer Speech:** You have a knack for the languages of the multiverse. You can always understand, and make yourself understood, when you're talking to denizens from beyond. This is mainly the general sense of things—some details might get lost along the way.
- Walkers between Worlds:** At a suitable liminal site, you know how to step between worlds. Describe how you open the way and roll +Weird. On a 10+, you're walking to the place you intended, but the way may be difficult. On a 7-9, choose one: you're on the right path in immediate danger, or you find yourself lost and in the wrong place. On a 6 or less, you're lost and in big trouble. If more than one of the hunters is using this move together, only make one roll: the hunter with the worst Weird score rolls (but they may accept help).
- Outsider Knack:** Once per visit to another world, you may use a trick or ability from Earth to gain an advantage. The advantage allows you to roll one move using three dice, selecting the best two for your result.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Primaeval Monument:** An ancient site marking where access between worlds is easiest.
- Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
- Portal:** A stable portal to either a particular world, or a between-worlds nexus. It is hidden, but any entity that finds either side may use it just like you can. Where is it hidden?
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Innocent Front:** You have access to a regular business or institution. This means that your monster hunting hijinks can be concealed to an extent from your friends, family, and colleagues. For example: a cafe, a library, an antique store, etc.
- Regular Jobs:** You have access to a place of employment for any of the hunters who need it. You earn enough to cover regular day-to-day expenses, and there's time to fit in monster hunting around your hours.
- Exploration Gear:** You're never sure what you may find in another world. Your group has a storeroom full of all kinds of exploring and outdoor gear and clothing to use.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

This team concept opens up a big pile of fantastical elements in the game. The hunters will primarily be guarding their hometown from incursions from Beyond, which gives you an unlimited range of monster styles you can use. Phenomena should also be used, as effects can also pass between worlds.

And when the hunters decide to travel to another world, you'll have the opportunity to make up something wild for them to visit. Don't feel that a mystery in another world requires you to determine everything about the place! Just cover the basics like when you normally make a mystery, but let your imagination run. Fully detailing the world can come later, if they return (or if more from that world comes to Earth).

For the first few encounters, a sketch of what the world is like is plenty. For example:

- A parallel Earth, but kinda stuck in the 1990s.
- A land of swords and sorcery.
- The vampire planet.
- An endless forest.



FIRST MYSTERY SEED

An ember lion (from a world of heat and fire) has slipped through to look for prey.

HOOK

A partially burnt and eaten body is found near the borders. Depending on your location, this might be a farm animal, wild animal, person, or domestic pet.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The ember lion strikes again, killing a person.
Shadows	The ember lion attacks a house or shop, setting it on fire.
Sunset	The ember lion starts to build a bower of flammable material near the borders.
Dusk	Someone is killed near the bower.
Nightfall	The ember lion ignites the completed bower and opens a portal to its home world.
Midnight	A large pride of ember lions stalks the region.

EMBER LION

Monster: Beast (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing)

A creature similar in form to a large cat, as if sculpted from burning embers or cooling lava. It's huge and fast.

Powers: Breathtaking speed; ignite; intense heat (suffer 1-harm at intimate/hand range); summon pride (requires massive fire, calls another ember lion).

Attacks: Bite: 3-harm intimate messy; Claw: 1-harm hand messy fire.

Harm capacity: 12

Weakness: Oxygen starvation or extreme cold (−100°C or less).

I.M.P.S. (INTERNATIONAL MONSTER AND PARANORMAL SERVICE)

“Team 7, you’re dealing with a jaguoid swarm in Guayaquil, Ecuador—usual story. Team 8, vampire gang in Prague, Czechia. Team 10, some kind of killer robot in Hong Kong. Get going, full briefings en route.”

This team playbook sets your hunters as one of the elite IMPS teams that travels the world to deal with monster incidents.

The International Monster and Paranormal Service was created to keep humanity safe from supernatural threats. It’s not clear who funds them, although most people assume it’s some kind of United Nations agency. IMPS isn’t secret, but they keep things as quiet as possible.

IMPS has plenty of fancy gear available, including the ability to get you all to any mystery site around the world as soon as you’re needed.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Report for your mission briefing.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Hush:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we save the day without making the news or creating a ruckus?”
- Rescuers:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we save people from harm, no matter how much property damage?”
- Superstars:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did our reputation as elite monster hunters come up during the mystery?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team’s chief nemesis:

- Apollyon, a demon king who wants to rule the Earth.
- Incursions of HEDEs (Hostile Extra-Dimensional Entities).
- Masanori, a selfish tycoon chasing personal immortality.
- A rival IMPs team, who always want to make it look like they saved the day and you screwed up.
- A chaos cult who want to break down the structures of the modern world, so they can rule it with their magical powers.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose your team allies from this list:

- Ó Corra, IMPS General Secretary. Having Ó Corra on your side is always going to be handy.
- Klíma, IMPS forensic specialist. Klíma can help you get extra forensic analysis or expedite tests.
- Villaverde, IMPS librarian. Knows a lot about mystical and occult secrets.
- IMPS team EM-3. This team of IMPS agents specialise in dealing with big disasters. They can help manage and calm down civilians and provide support for your team.
- Cryptidnet, a loose organisation of interested amateurs and researchers who collate rumours of weird activity. Great source of leads and supernatural rumours.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

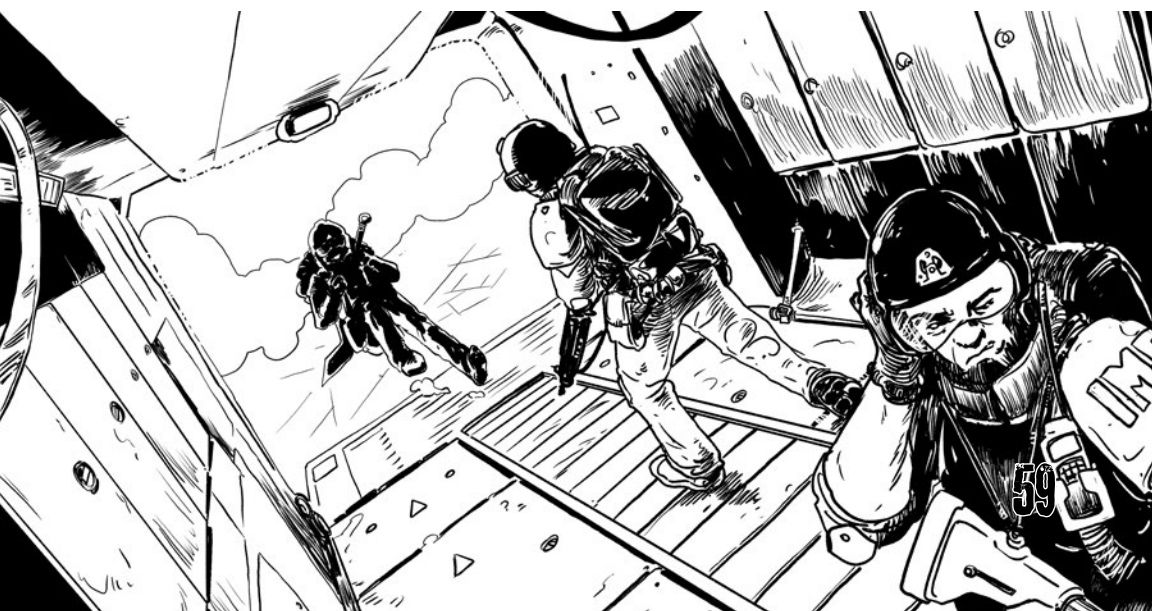
Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Drilled Coordination:** All team members get +1 ongoing when helping out another team member.
- Comms:** You have systems that keep you constantly in voice contact, regardless of where in the world you each may be. Not guaranteed to work in shielded spaces, deep underground, beyond magical portals, or on other worlds.
- Recognised IMPS Team:** Wherever you are in the world, you have authority to deal with supernatural events. Local officials will—in general—cooperate with you fully. Does not apply in nations outside the IMPS treaty.
- Rapid Deployment:** IMPS has quick-response vehicles able to deliver you (or other IMPS assets) anywhere in the world, extremely quickly. They may also be used to make a fast exit from bad situations.
- Memories of the Fallen:** When a hunter on the team dies in the line of duty, or retires from IMPS and monster hunting, all remaining team members erase a used Luck mark.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Skywarden:** A high tech transport aircraft that has all your essential gear on board and acts as your base on mission assignments. If you have the **Rapid Deployment** move, the Skywarden is upgraded with supersonic engines.
- Individual Transport:** Electric motorbikes for every team member.
- Search and Rescue Gear:** A selection of useful tools for locating and rescuing people in disaster zones.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space allocated to you in IMPS headquarters. There's room for all your gear, and includes full living quarters.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of technicians, tools, and materials.
- Medical Supplies:** Everyone carries a first aid kit, and you have enough for a fully equipped infirmary back at your base or homes.
- Fancy High Tech Uniforms:** Complete with built-in gadgets.
- Housing:** A pleasant house for each team member and their family, provided by IMPS for when you're off-duty. This may be anywhere in the world.
- Custom:** _____



FOR THE KEEPER

Your touchstones here are Thunderbirds and the BPRD stories. Use globe-trotting mysteries, huge threats, and lots of variety. Use local details of where each mystery happens (and research any folklore with care and sensitivity to the culture it comes from).

The team has a well-supported organisation behind them, so let them have nifty toys to play with if they want them.

To tie mysteries together, look at creating international conspiracies that are working to cause trouble.

With the hunters all working for IMPS, you don't have to come up with anything complicated for mystery hooks. The watch officer can just send them out with a summary of what the initial reports said.

AGENCIES, SECTS, AND OTHER LOYALTIES

If your hunters have any organisations associated with them (such as the Initiate or Professional), you'll need to figure out how that relates to IMPS. Work out something that makes sense for the group.

Good options include:

- IMPS is the hunter's associated organisation (this works well for a Professional's Agency).
- The hunter is on secondment to IMPS for some arcane bureaucratic reason.
- The hunter is keeping their real loyalty secret, without their team or IMPS knowing who they are really working for.



FIRST MYSTERY SEED

The team is called in to deal with a case of people suddenly transforming into monsters. A nearby industrial facility has had an accident, and teratogenic material has leaked into the environment. The company, Hummingstar Industrial (perhaps ultimately owned by Seabrooke), initially denies all involvement and knowledge.

Situate this mystery wherever you like in the world. Nothing here is specific to a particular region: all you need is a town and an industrial park nearby.

HOOK

“We have reports of people turning into monsters and attacking others. Sort it out!”

COUNTDOWN

Day	More people are transformed. Hummingstar (if questioned) denies all knowledge and responsibility.
Shadows	A few transformed people go on a rampage. There are two deaths.
Sunset	A second explosion and leak at the Hummingstar facility makes it obvious they are involved. This leak of material is much larger and spreads widely.
Dusk	Lots of people transform into monsters. Many go on a rampage. Lots of deaths, injuries, and general chaos.
Nightfall	Reports start coming in of the region’s plants and animals also transforming into monstrous variants. More deaths.
Midnight	The region is uninhabitable and cordoned off. Many die during the evacuations. Monsters periodically break out and cause further trouble.



CHEMICAL ZETA

Phenomenon: Teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters)

Chemical Zeta is a cloudy blue-green liquid. When exposed to the atmosphere, it rapidly evaporates and spreads as bluish clouds that look a bit like steam.

It is not clear what Hummingstar plans to use Chemical Zeta for.

Powers:

- **Mutate:** Any living thing that touches Chemical Zeta (including breathing it in) may be transformed into a monster. Physically, they become stronger and their skin thickens and becomes scaly. Mentally, they become prone to irrational rage and very violent.
- Spread quickly.
- Persist.

Weakness: It's possible to create an antidote to Chemical Zeta. The hunters will need to analyse Zeta, come up with the antidote (treat this as **big magic** if they have no other method available), and get the affected people dosed. They can then spray the antidote over the spill area to return it to normal.

Custom Move: If a hunter is exposed to Chemical Zeta, they might mutate. If they do, they gain strength and thickened skin (as listed under *Mutated People and Animals*). Also have them mark experience. They must also **act under pressure** to not attack anything that is even slightly annoying. Don't overuse this: some players might find this very difficult and not fun, and that isn't being a fan of the hunters. But if you have a player who will enjoy the challenge, or they're close to getting an antidote so it won't be for long, feel free to mutate someone!

Moves:

- If evaporated, spread on the wind.
- If contained, explode.
- Mutate a living organism.

MUTATED PEOPLE AND ANIMALS

Minions: Plague (motivation: to swarm and destroy)

The mutated people and animals are all recognisable—just. Their original form can be made out under thickened scaly skin and swollen muscles. But they can't be reasoned with, only restrained.

You may introduce as many mutants as you need. Their numbers are effectively unlimited, as any person, animal, or plant in the area might transform at any time.

Powers: Very strong.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Armour: 2 (thick scaly skin).

Attacks: Frenzied assault: 2-harm hand messy.

Weakness: The Zeta antidote (which will cure the subject). If killed without being treated by the antidote, they will slowly regenerate into an even more mutated form.

Moves:

- Scream a lot.
- Attack someone.
- Gather together for a huge attack.
- (If the antidote is applied) Turn back into original form. Victims carry over some psychological trauma from the transformation. It will be worse the longer they were a monster.

THE TOWN

Location: Hub (motivation: to reveal information)

A medium-sized town, large enough that the Hummingstar facility isn't the only industrial plant around. Name the town as appropriate for where you decide to locate it.

The people here are panicking and confused. As the mystery begins, only a few have witnessed transformations or attacks, but as time passes many more of both will occur.

Moves:

- A bystander arrives.
- Someone is transformed into a monster.
- A mutant (or group of them) attacks.
- A waft of blue "steam" (Chemical Zeta) is carried past on the wind.

HUMMINGSTAR FACILITY 23-ZETA

Location: Lab (motivation: to create weirdness)

A perfectly normal-looking industrial site. It has large buildings containing laboratories and manufacturing plants, storage silos containing chemicals, a fence with plenty of security cameras, and very little signage to hint what might go on here.

If the hunters try to get in, security will try to turn them away. If they really insist, they will be sent to meet Abel in a small office building close to the gate.

Moves:

- Security stops someone getting in.
- Someone gets lost trying to find their way around.
- A vat of Chemical Zeta explodes.
- Workers refuse to comment about what happens here.

ABEL, HUMMINGSTAR PR SPOKESPERSON

Minion: Traitor (motivation: to betray people)

A smarmy, always-positive spin doctor for Hummingstar. When the hunters get in contact, they're directed to talk to Abel.

Abel will evade any accusations, deny any involvement, and generally just try to get them to go away. Their main objective is to ensure that Hummingstar is not legally liable in any way for anything.

Moves:

- Pretend to be friendly and likeable.
- Deny anything that would be bad for Hummingstar.
- Make excuses for anything you can't deny.
- Call security.
- Make a public announcement that doesn't implicate Hummingstar in anything bad.
- Push a problem up the chain of command. "You'll need to talk to the Head of Research about that."

INTERDIMENSIONAL CRISIS TEAM

"When you've finished saving the world, move to the next!"

Your world isn't the only one that needs monster hunting help from time to time. And when others do, you travel through portals, loopholes, and other oddities to help.

This team playbook is a perfect way to use all the settings within the *Codex* in a single game.

Interdimensional Crisis Team perfectly fits over-the-top parody games. More serious stories about interdimensional problems are handled better by *Guardians of the Borderland*.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Report for your mission briefing.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Well-prepared:** You keep track of worlds that might need monster hunting help and have procedures for reaching and helping them. At the end of each session, ask: “Did things go according to our plans?”
- Led by Fate:** The universe wants you to help where you’re needed most. At the end of each session, ask: “Do we understand our place in the multiverse better now?”
- Accidental Heroes:** You always end up where you’re needed because of magical mishaps and weird coincidences. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we make use of a coincidence or unexpected resource?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Dr Weltschmerz, a bitter and angry scientist who wants all worlds to suffer.
- Jauna, a merchant from *Monster Marches* who deals in interdimensional slave trade.
- Separator, an automaton guarding borders between the worlds.
- Iron Crusade, an invading force from a futuristic world.
- Your own evil versions from a mirrored universe.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Pick one team ally to start with:

- Justinian, a paladin. He's always ready to fight evil alongside you and hopes one of you will one day be the lady (or lord) of his heart.
- NewLife, a bio-robot. They know a lot about life on various worlds, whether organic, tech-based, or magic-based.
- Darween, a diplomat. Coming from the *Monster Marches*, she hates disunity and wants good people of all worlds to cooperate.
- The Queen's Musketeers. Brave, dashing and ready to fight with monsters both in Helos and beyond, but won't do anything that directly contradicts Queen Helena the Radiant's orders.
- Spirit Healers. They come from a Stone Age world and want to heal all spiritual ills of all worlds. They oppose killing monsters because they believe monsters should be healed and reintegrated instead.
- Someone else: _____





TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Global Crisis:** Once per mystery, each of you can **read a bad situation** treating an entire world as the bad situation, including asking about the best way in or out.
- Surge of Magic:** Each of you holds 1 when you enter a new world. You can spend this hold to get an automatic result of 10 on a Weird move roll or to learn a useful **big magic** ritual known only in this world.
- Otherworldly:** You make your strangeness in other worlds work to your advantage in interpersonal situations. “I’m from another world” works as a reason for people to do as you ask when you **manipulate someone**.
- A Multiverse of Friends:** Three times per mystery, a friend you’ve made in an alternate universe can help one of you with a task as if they rolled 10+ to help out. They either manifest next to you for a moment or somehow are there in person. They can be bystanders from previous games or people from your backstories.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- World-jumping Base:** A small vehicle or building with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Translator:** A high tech or arcane universal translator.
- Stealth Module:** A device automatically changing the looks of your gear and vehicles to match the world you're in.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen. Can't travel between worlds, but you know a **big magic** ritual to come back here from any world. Invent details with the Keeper.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Clothes:** Clothes for any weather, including extreme ones.
- Published Book Series:** A successful book series written by some or all of you based on your visits to other worlds.
- Crystal Ball:** A crystal ball always showing the most breathtaking sight in the area you're in.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

Interdimensional Crisis Team campaigns usually start as episodic monster-of-the-week stories. Gradually, however, you'll be able to weave bigger arcs using team enemies or an interdimensional plot you invent when running the game.

Try to make worlds visited by hunters as different as possible. If you have two mysteries on similar worlds in mind, don't run them back to back. Feel free to prepare mysteries about the worlds of media franchises you all like or even about worlds of your other campaigns.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

Hunters discover that humans in a sci-fi world started falling prey to a parasitic alien race.

HOOK

The hunters' contact in a sci-fi parallel universe, codename NoStorm, informs them that people sent on missions into deep space stopped returning. There weren't any monsters in this world before. The contact helps them become part of the crew of the newest mission.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The spaceship detects a strange "mineral chunk" and takes it onboard.
Shadows	Rayga, the corporate manager, cuts off the rest of the crew from access to the chunk.
Sunset	The chunk hatches into a Paraxite and poisons Rayga.
Dusk	The Paraxite slithers out of the cargo bay, poisoning two more crewmembers.
Nightfall	Rayga tries to kill the poisoned crew to leave no traces of the monster.
Midnight	A new Paraxite egg matures inside Rayga, killing her.

THE PARAXITE

Monster: Parasite (motivation: to invest, control and devour)

An interstellar aberration whose first form is an egg able to survive the void and looking like a chunk of precious ore to the radars. Once taken on a ship, it hatches as a six-clawed snakelike creature whose poison causes new eggs of its kind to slowly form in the bodies of the poisoned.

Powers: Extremely cunning; slithers without making a sound.

Attacks: Claws: 3-harm hand; Brutal rend: 4-harm intimate messy; Bite: 2-harm intimate poison.

Harm capacity: 14

Weakness: Fire.

RAYGA, THE CORPORATE MANAGER

Bystander: Busybody (motivation: to intervene in other people's plans)

Rayga is the main representative of Space Bounty, a greedy cosmic mining corporation that funds the mission. She wants first and foremost to survive, then to hide the fact that cosmic missions are dangerous now. She doesn't care about other crew members' survival.

Attack: Blaster minigun: 3-harm close ignore-armour reload.

Harm capacity: 7

OTHER CREW MEMBERS

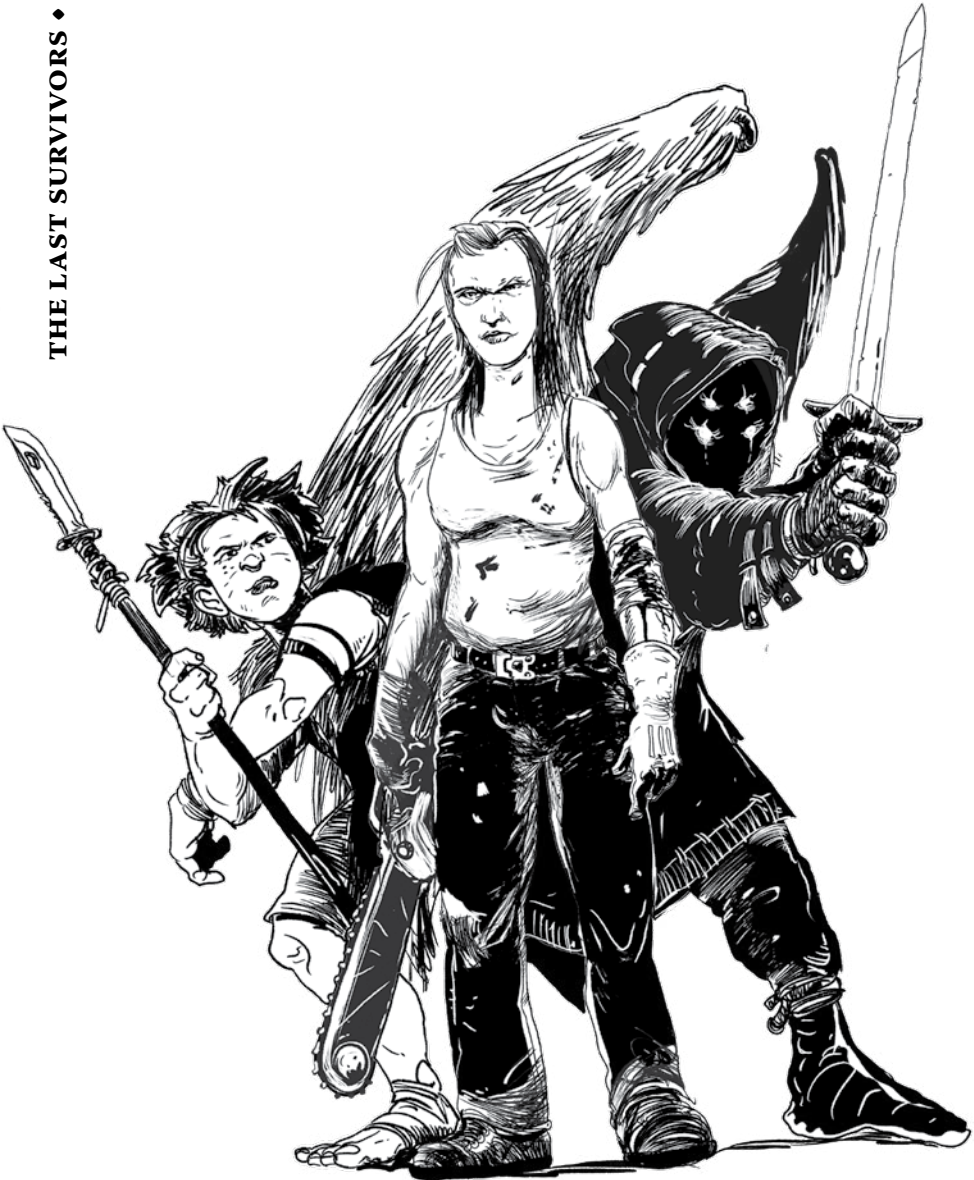
Bystanders: Victims (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

About a dozen people just trying to survive and get paid by Space Bounty. One or two heard gossip that there were lots of "accidents" during recent missions (but they don't believe in monsters).

THE LAST SURVIVORS

“We didn’t survive just to ignore it hunting someone else.”

This hunter team were the only people who lived through a terrible (maybe even apocalyptic) battle. You had many allies at your side, but they didn’t make it.



GETTING STARTED

- Determine the nature of the Event.
- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Prepare for the next disaster.

THE EVENT

What is the terrible situation you all survived together?

- A concerted assault by monsters, as you took shelter in an isolated cabin.
- A single terrifying monster invaded your homes.
- It was the only chance to avert an apocalypse.
- An invasion from another dimension.
- People around you were transformed into monsters.
- You were strangers in a small town filled with murderous monsters, on festival day.
- Something else: _____.

Decide who the allies were who fought alongside you and died in battle.

Each hunter picks one.

- A monster hunting teammate.
- Your spouse or lover.
- Your sibling.
- A parent.
- A child.
- Your mentor.
- Your protégée.
- Your dog (or other pet).
- Someone else: _____.

Then decide how you saved the day in the end. Whatever it was, it came at great personal cost (beyond the loss you just chose).

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- We're Prepared for Next Time:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did our planning ahead save the day?"
- Fatalists:** One day, our times will come. Until then, we fight. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we throw ourselves into danger to save the day?"
- Wardens:** We won't let what happened to us happen to anyone else. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we save people, no matter the cost?"
- Custom:** What's your story? _____
At the end of each session, ask: "_____?"

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis. Then decide how this enemy was involved in the event you all suffered through.

- The Black Knight, a faerie lord.
- All the walking dead.
- A necromancer, with a plan to rule the world.
- Metaphysical Exploitation Holdings (MEH), a corporation that profits from ill-advised experimentation and exploitation of the supernatural.
- A conspiracy of chaos cultists.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Zhu, a law enforcement officer. They can help you with legal difficulties in their jurisdiction.
- Davis, a therapist specialising in trauma recovery.
- Dr Basu, a medical doctor.
- The next generation, an ally team. These younger monster hunters are relatives of those who died in the battle, taking up the family calling.
- The Network, an ally team. This is a group of people who keep watch for big supernatural dangers, and can get you warnings in time to intervene.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Determined Guardians:** When one of the hunters **protects** a bystander, the target never takes harm: even on a miss, that bystander is totally safe. The hunter doing the protection still suffers the full effects of the roll result.
- Field Medics:** When you treat an injured bystander, they are stabilised and well enough to manage until they can get proper medical attention. When you treat another hunter, pick if you heal 2-harm or stabilise them. Then they take +1 forward.
- Checklists:** Once per mystery, each hunter in need of a particular item may declare they have it. Narrate a flashback explaining why they thought to include it in their gear. If the item is especially rare, strange, or unusual (this is the Keeper's call), then this move can't be used again by any hunter until the next mystery.
- Keep on Goin':** When you're **protecting** bystanders from danger, any move that would prevent you from taking action due to harm, stress, or panic has its effect deferred. You can keep going for now, but once everyone is safe the full effects of what you've been through hit you.
- Shared Dangers:** When you take a moment to share your worries and fears about a previous or upcoming battle with another hunter, you both choose one: heal 1-harm, or take +1 forward.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A truck or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
 - Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
 - Medical Supplies:** Everyone carries a first aid kit, and you have enough for a fully equipped infirmary back at your base or homes.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Mystical workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
 - Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
 - Survival Gear:** You're all well-prepped with supplies for a disaster or emergency situation. Protective gear, tools, food and water, etc.
 - Regular Jobs:** You have access to a place of employment for any of the hunters who need it. You earn enough to cover regular day-to-day expenses, and there's time to fit in monster hunting around your hours.
 - Hideouts:** Each hunter has a hidden, safe place set up where they can retreat in an emergency. This could be an isolated cabin or bunker, a safe house, or a panic room (whichever makes sense for your hunter).
 - Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

This team's mysteries will reference the event they survived. You can tie mysteries to it directly or thematically.

When a mystery directly connects to the original event, make it a scary one: whatever problems are left over from that event should be big and dangerous. Because of this, be restrained in bringing back plot threads from that initial event. Constantly retreading the same ideas is not going to be as rewarding as bringing them in for a few major mysteries.

Mysteries that thematically connect to the original event can be used frequently. In these cases, you can riff off details that the group came up with in different ways. This means the mysteries won't feel too similar, but they'll still feel emotionally connected to the hunters' core experience.

It's also a good idea to set up mysteries so that lots of people need saving. The team moves really help the hunters deal with bystanders in danger, so make sure there are plenty of them.



FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A gang of vampires has captured a group of campers and plans an evil ritual, which will both enslave the human victims as half-vampires and give the gang a boost to their supernatural powers.

HOOK

A group of campers—eleven university students—phoned in about an attack by “a gang of red-eyed attackers” before being cut off. This warning may have gone to the regular emergency services (if the hunters have a way to find out) or else to a friend or relation of one of the campers, who knows to contact the hunters.

COUNTDOWN

Day	A park ranger stumbles on the cave, and the vampire guarding it captures her too.
Shadows	The vampires kill one of the captives in a preliminary blood-magic rite.
Sunset	In the vicinity of the park, the waning moon becomes blood-red.
Dusk	A plague of rats, bats, and wolves descends on the park. People in the region become ill with a strange plague.
Nightfall	On the night of the new moon, the remaining captives are all transformed into half-vampires.
Midnight	The vampire gang and their new servants leave the area and begin planning their next move.



THE VAMPIRE GANG

Monsters: Sorcerers (motivation: to usurp unnatural power)

Use the classic vampire template from *Monster of the Week* (page 245, hardcover page 257), omitting the Master Vampire power.

New Power:

- **Create a Half-Vampire:** Using a terrible ritual of blood magic, the vampire may enslave a human victim as a half-vampire. The half-vampire gains +1-armour, extreme strength, claw attack: 2-harm hand messy, and when the creator vampire commands, they obey.

The gang has one vampire per hunter, plus one more. They're a tough group to take out completely. Ideally, the hunters focus on saving the victims, letting some of the vampires escape to come back in future mysteries.

THE CAMPERS

Bystanders: Victims (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

Just a group of young people looking for some holiday fun. Not their fault they picked a reserve infested with vampires.

THE CABIN

Location: Den (motivation: to harbour monsters)

The vampire gang has made their lair in a remote and forgotten cabin built by a wilderness club many decades ago and has since fallen into disrepair.

At first glance, it's just a run-down and overgrown hut. A closer look shows evidence of use (a pathway to the front door), and inside are the coffins and grave dirt of the vampire gang.

THE RITUAL CAVE

Location: Wilds (motivation: to contain hidden things)

The campers are currently imprisoned in a cave that will be the site of the blood ritual. The cave is a well of evil power and may have other dangerous secrets to be found.

LEAGUE OF DOUBLE LIVES

“We have a meeting in two hours and an interview in three. Problem is, the Crimson Patriarch has risen again and will gather his wraith army soon. In, I think, four hours.”

You're monster hunters but also important society members in a city. Your ties to the society give you various forms of influence but also mean you somehow have to manage two lives at once. The world isn't ready to learn about your monster hunting and even less about the monsters themselves. Think Batman or most characters from *Penny Dreadful*.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Create your city.
- Pick your obligations.
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Ponder your responsibilities, as you await the call.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Greater Good:** You find your secret monster hunting lives more important than your mundane social roles. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we choose the more important obligation?”
- The Only Ones:** You’re the only ones capable enough to protect those around you from supernatural threats. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we do something nobody else in our society could do?”
- An Ancient Tradition:** You’ve inherited your double role from family or mentors. At the end of each session, ask: “Have we done something that would make our predecessors proud?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

THE CITY

The city you all protect will be an important aspect of the story, more of a collective character of your mysteries than just a background element. Each player should choose one key aspect of the city from one of the following lists. Balance between good and bad things as fits the mood of your campaign.

Good things

- Cozy
- Affluent
- Good social care
- Proud of its past
- Lots of monuments
- Highly ecological
- Transparent politics
- Technological hub
- The nation's main transport hub
- Protected by benevolent magic
- Beloved by travel vloggers
- An extremely famous mayor
- A university with unique departments
- Other: _____

Bad things

- Alienating
- Poor
- Big social inequality
- Shameful past
- Nothing worth sightseeing
- Highly polluted
- Shady politics
- No prospects for the future
- Shady military bases
- Gangs that terrorize the entire region
- Believed to bring bad luck
- Struck by a powerful curse
- Other: _____

OBLIGATIONS

Your social status carries some obligations with it. At the beginning of a mystery, the Keeper holds 3. They can spend 1 hold to introduce one of the obligations. When it's introduced, at least half of you must attend, otherwise you can lose allies or tempt mundane people to investigate your lives.

Choose or create two obligations you have:

- Attending parties and balls.
- Attending important conferences.
- Ceremonially opening new buildings.
- Meeting children at schools.
- Tutoring promising students one on one.
- Appearing on TV.
- _____
- _____

ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Allmine, a greedy and capricious demon of desire.
- All the evil doppelgangers.
- Professor Trundil, an occult scientist trying to steal your powers and magic.
- Great Waghru, a primordial entity slumbering beneath the city, now stirring.
- Brave New World, an undercover company trying to replace humans in your city with robots.

TEAM ALLIES

Pick one team ally to start with:

- Shinzō, a retro-weaponsmith. Their creations look like fancy souvenirs but have various magical properties.
- FaceBog, a doppelganger. They'll impersonate you at various social events if you ask them nicely.
- Hedwig, a journalist. She believes in your public causes and is willing to cover up some things for you, but sometimes asks difficult questions.
- Monster Hunters Fan Club. They know your secret identities, but not your public ones.
- Spirits of the city's founders. They remember how the city once was and have clashed with occult forces that threaten it.
- Someone else: _____



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Big Reveal:** If most people around you don't know about your secret identities, the first action you take in that scene that reveals those identities gets +1 forward. Bystanders and minions present freeze in surprise for a moment, giving you an opportunity to act before they can react.
- Affluent:** You can get most gear easily. Specify what you need, assigning tags to the gear. If it's a weapon, treat each harm beyond 2-harm as a separate tag; if it's armour, treat each point of armour as a separate tag. Then roll +tags. On a miss, you get it easily. On a 7-9, you get it but raise some questions. On a 10+, either you don't get it or you do but someone gets a clear clue about your secret identity.
- Only When Necessary:** If you manage to stop or destroy a minion without using any abilities or gear of your secret identity (including monster hunting weapons), each hunter involved marks experience. If it was a monster, mark two.
- Shadow Selves:** When one of you wants to be in two places at the same time, summon your shadow self in another place. Only one shadow self can exist per hunter at one time. The shadow self has a trait that allows others to distinguish it from you if they observe closely. Roll +Weird. On a 10+, hold 3. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend holds to have your shadow self act as if it were you, but with -1 ongoing. When you spend the last hold, the shadow self dissolves in an obviously supernatural and unsettling way. On a miss, the shadow self appears for a moment and does something you really, really didn't want them to do...
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Hideaway:** A truck with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Individual Transport:** A fancy car or motorbike for every team member.
- Getaway:** A place where you rest from everything, with no monster hunting gear but extremely difficult to find by mundane and magical means.
- Headquarters:** A base people from neither your public nor your secret life will find easily. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Memorabilia:** A collection of important memorabilia connected to the city's past and two **big magic** rituals that need only them and up to two other requirements. Determine what the rituals do as a group.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Secure Phones:** A set of phones with advanced voice distortion and location concealment options. Tracking a call from these requires days of work.
- Funds:** Lots of money in bank accounts connected to untraceable credit cards.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

League of Double Lives slides a bit into the superhero genre, with all its emphasis on juggling your private and public lives. Feel free to play this aspect up, maybe even deciding the people around the hunters know someone's protecting them from something bad, just not from what exactly.

Or play it the other way and show how the mundane world around the hunters starts to tremble in panic at the first suggestion that something supernatural is happening. That way, the hunters will feel it's their duty to keep the two worlds as separate as possible.



FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A robot chameleon stalks the city, appearing during events where the hunters show their public faces. It can be a creation of their nemesis, the hook of an arc, or even an independent cyborg. The important thing is that it tempts the hunters to use their skills when they should not.

HOOK

You attend one of the social events you have to be present at when suddenly you see laser eyes at the end of a dark corridor.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The robot chameleon attacks security staff at the event.
Shadows	Events the hunters attend get additional surveillance, making it harder to hunt monsters discreetly.
Sunset	The robot chameleon kills backstage staff at another event.
Dusk	Events start luring more and more investigative journalists.
Nightfall	The robot chameleon publicly attacks the hunters at an event, firing laser beams at them while remaining invisible.
Midnight	The events stop taking place, cutting the hunters off from much of their influence.

THE ROBOT CHAMELEON

Monster: Trickster (motivation: to create chaos)

An 8-foot robotic reptile designed to infiltrate important events and wreak havoc there.

Powers: Camouflage; hacks simple devices; very strong; very fast; eye lasers.

Attacks: Claws: 4-harm intimate/close; Eye lasers: 3-harm far ignore-armor.

Harm capacity: 13

Weakness: Strong electrical currents, True Vision.

MERCENARIES

“Are we supposed to just save people from monsters out of the goodness of our hearts? Look, we all gotta live. You got a standard haunting, that’s gonna be two thousand bucks. Plus expenses, and our usual rider for when things are more... uh... complicated than you stated originally.”

This team playbook has the hunters working for hire. They save people and hunt monsters, sure, but they also want to get paid at the end of the day.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- See who's hiring today.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Secret Mission:** You are all devoted to a particular goal, using “mercenary monster hunter team” as your cover. What’s your objective? At the end of each session, ask: “Did we get closer to our goal?” If you achieve the objective, choose a new one or change to a new style. Your objective: _____.
- Goal-Oriented:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we fulfil the exact mission requested, without extra work?”
- Hearts of Gold:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we refuse to accept money from someone we saved?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team’s chief nemesis:

- Pethas, a dragon.
- All the werewolves.
- Ozahr, an immortal and megalomaniac wizard.
- The Fates.
- A conspiracy of political leaders secretly creating a global dictatorship.
- Something else: _____



TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Dumont, the fixer. Dumont can find leads on jobs, and sometimes scare up special gear.
- Chang, a government official. They can help you with legal entanglements. Sometimes.
- Dr Accorso. A medical doctor, ready to help with injuries or illness. No questions asked.
- The Irregulars, an ally team. They're a general group of support crew that help you out. Mechanics, technicians, and the like.
- The Crooked Hearts, another mercenary monster hunting crew. You've worked together on some big jobs.
- Someone else: _____



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Spending Money:** If you get paid at the end of a mystery, each hunter adds 1-hold. Spend this hold in a later mystery to narrate a flashback where you purchased the thing you need right now. It can be anything you could be carrying, something booked in advance (for example, a safe house or hotel room), or the use of a vehicle.
- The B-Team:** When you need to fortify a location or armour a vehicle, narrate a montage of your preparations. When you're done, the location or vehicle provides 2-armour to all within it.
- Combat Training:** When you **help out** another team member during combat, they may inflict +1 harm or suffer -1 harm in addition to the usual effects of your result.
- It's Our Job:** If a bystander has hired you, that counts as a reason when you **manipulate** them. This remains in effect in later mysteries. The Keeper may include other bystanders in the effect, if they're part of a group you're working for.
- The Good Ones:** When you refuse to accept payment for a job, the client becomes an ally.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A van, truck, or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
 - Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
 - The Grapevine:** A network of contacts who pass on job leads.
- Secure Homes:** Located somewhere you have a special relationship, you all have houses and bank accounts that provide a base when you're off the job.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
 - Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
 - Credentials:** Monster hunting licenses and visa waivers that allow you to do your job and travel legitimately.
 - High Tech Gadgets:** A supply of various monster scanners and detectors.
 - Armoury:** A cache of monster hunting weapons.
 - Custom:** _____



FOR THE KEEPER

This team is quite mission- and combat-oriented, so many of your mysteries can be quite straightforward: this person needs you to deal with this monster. However, there's an underlying theme here of building relationships with the people they help out. Lean in to that side of your mysteries as well.

If your hunters make light of the suffering of the people they save, be sure to give them more difficult situations. The hunters should not be mercenaries who don't care—they might pretend not to care, but the audience knows they will in the end. Make the situations of the victims they meet demand sympathy. You should also include plenty of folks who can't pay, or who technically could but will suffer serious hardship. Give the hunters every reason you can to want to refuse that payment. In order to keep them operating, you should also include some folks who can afford to pay (bonus points if they're rich assholes).

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

In this mystery, a poor rural village is threatened by a large werewolf pack. There are too many for the hunters to fight on their own, so they'll need to use a very cunning plan to win. This is inspired by *Seven Samurai*, so definitely try to get the villagers involved in the defence!

HOOK

The hunters are hired by a village, who have pooled their savings, to drive off a werewolf pack that has been terrorising the region.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The werewolves pick off a couple more villagers and lots more livestock.
Shadows	The werewolves pick off the village leaders to make the resistance weaker.
Sunset	The lead werewolf threatens the villagers directly. "Leave or die!" Some flee the town.
Dusk	The bravest surviving villagers team together to try to attack the werewolves, armed with any silver they can find. They are all killed, although they take a couple of werewolves with them.
Nightfall	The pack rampages through the village. It is devastated, with most villagers dead and only a handful escaping.
Midnight	The werewolf pack begins ranging and terrorising the wider region.

LEAD WEREWOLF

Monster: Queen (motivation: to possess and control)

This werewolf wants to break free of the need to hide in shadows, and become the ruler of their own little domain. Taking over this village will give the pack a base of operations that allows them to build their strength towards being free of the mob of humanity.

Use the classic werewolf stats from *Monster of the Week*, page 250 (hardcover page 262), but note we have a different type here.

New Power:

- **Blood Transformation:** If they taste fresh blood, they transform into wolf-form. They return to human-form at the next sunrise.

Moves:

- Rambling monologue about their plans.
- “Packmates! Kill them all!”
- Set up an ambush.
- Plan a brutal assault.
- Dream about ruling a nation of werewolves.

PACK WEREWOLVES

Minion: Brute (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

The pack are all sworn to the leader, and on board with this “werewolf nation” concept. There are far too many for the hunters to deal with: two or three werewolves per hunter.

Use the classic werewolf stats from *Monster of the Week*, but note the altered type and reduce their wolf-form harm capacity to 12.

New Power:

- **Blood Transformation:** If they taste fresh blood, they transform into wolf-form. They return to human-form at the next sunrise.

Moves:

- Do what they’re ordered.
- Enact a plan, making a few mistakes along the way.
- Attack a hunter.
- Brutally murder a villager.

THE VILLAGE

Location: Prison (motivation: to constrain and prevent exit)

The village is a small, poor, farming community. It's isolated and far from help—something the werewolf pack will quickly take advantage of, blocking the roads to the outside world.

Moves:

- This road is impassable.
- Howling from the woods.
- Power cut.
- Phones cut.
- No cell coverage.
- Some villagers panic.
- You can find a lot of useful stuff in the barns and sheds around here.

VILLAGE LEADER

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

This is the person who is the main point of contact with the hunters. They know that the village can't really pay for this help.

Moves:

- Assure the hunters they will get paid in full.
- Look worried.
- Do their best.
- Help the hunters if they want the villagers to follow a plan.

MYSTERY CLUB

“Let’s sneak in and find out what’s REALLY going on!”

This is a hunter team of investigators, with a focus on less horrific and more comedic mysteries. This particularly suits games with younger players, or younger hunters.

This team playbook strongly pushes the game towards silliness and jokes, so be sure you’re ready for that if you’re considering taking it.

I recommend the use of the non-lethal play module (page 21) with the Mystery Club (this is what it was created for).



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Next meeting is at the clubroom on Tuesday afternoon.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Wholesome:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we succeed by believing in each other and using our individual strengths?”
- Comical:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we do something really funny?”
- Cool:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we save the day with style?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team’s chief nemesis:

- Bradshaw, an evil property developer.
- The Ghost King.
- Dracula.
- Cryptids generally.
- A conspiracy of wizards who want to take over the world.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Leon/Lyn, an authority figure (parent, teacher, etc.). Helpful dealing with officials.
- Romain, a librarian. Good at finding out details.
- A very smart pet. Pick their species and give them a name: _____.
- Your friend group, an ally team. Great for distractions.
- Internet mystery circle, an ally team. Good for finding out weird facts and rumours.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Yikes!:** When a hunter is captured by a monster, minion, or phenomenon, they may ask one of the **investigate a mystery** or **read a bad situation** questions.
- Sensible Chuckle:** When a hunter makes a joke (good or bad) at the expense of a monster, minion, or phenomenon, they may give another hunter on the team +1 forward.
- Earnest Do-gooders:** When a hunter tells someone you are helping people and why, bystanders are more likely to do as you ask. The explanation always counts as a reason if you're **manipulating** them to protect them or get them to help you.
- Slapstick:** When a hunter takes harm, they may instead have an embarrassing pratfall or accident that dodges the danger. Ignore the harm as established, and simply take 1-harm (which can't be reduced or mitigated in any way). The hunter takes -1 forward.
- Disguises:** When a hunter disguises themselves, the disguise will not be questioned, until they do something to directly cast doubt on their appearance.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mystery Van:** A van with all your mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Individual Transport:** A skateboard, scooter, pair of skates, or bicycle for every team member.
- Gadgets:** Paranormal investigation gadgets.
- Clubhouse:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and make a snack.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Disguises:** A trunk full of disguises.
- Library:** Library of useful reference books.
- IDs:** Official junior deputy Suburban Watch Group volunteer badges.
- Custom:** _____



FOR THE KEEPER

It's okay to make silly mysteries with this team playbook. That's what it's for. Mysteries stakes can also be smaller and potentially nonsensical.

You should de-emphasise killing monsters, and instead make the mystery more about stopping them. This is especially true when you're using the non-lethal option. Likewise, the monsters are going to focus on scaring or trapping their victims rather than killing them. Giving the villain a big monologue to explain their plan is also fun.

To help build that sense that the mysteries are about stopping bad things from happening, give monsters and phenomena weaknesses that play to that.

For example:

- The hunters must listen to the evil plan before it can be defeated.
- It must be tied up and unable to move.
- Convince it that nobody will fall for its tricks any more.
- For a phenomenon: Turn off the escaping gas that is messing with people.



FIRST MYSTERY SEED

Ghost house! A haunting (real or fake to taste) that's really all about the treasure chest buried in the cellar.

If you want to go with a fake ghost, have the ghost be an unscrupulous treasure-hunter who is faking the haunting to get access to the treasure.

HOOK

A ghost is scaring the residents of a local house with spooky noises and strange accidents.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The ghost captures the residents in the cellar.
Shadows	The captives are forced to start digging up the treasure.
Sunset	Friends or relatives of the residents come to visit and are scared by spooky events.
Dusk	Police investigate and are scared off by the ghost.
Nightfall	The treasure is uncovered.
Midnight	The ghost gloats over its ill-gotten treasure. The captives are de facto released—the ghost doesn't care about them any more.

PIRATE GHOST

Monster: Collector (motivation: to get all the treasure!)

The ghost of a pirate who once buried his treasure on the site that now holds a regular house. It has returned from the grave to reclaim its rightful property. Well, the property that it feloniously stole in life anyhow.

Not a real ghost option: If you prefer, the pirate ghost is a fake. In this case, it's the descendant of the family who built the house. This person knows that the treasure (stolen by their pirate ancestor) is there and wants to get it back.

Powers: Poltergeist-style telekinesis; create trap; seal door; spooky noises.

Harm capacity: 7

Weakness: Put the treasure somewhere the ghost can't steal it (maybe a museum?)

HOUSE

Location: Deathtrap (motivation: to harm intruders)

The house provides lots of opportunities for the ghost to injure and mess with meddling hunters. Any time they are in the house, you may attack them with flying household objects, booby traps, and other poltergeist-style problems.

Moves:

- Flying Household Objects
- This Door Won't Open
- Trap

CELLAR

Location: Prison (motivation: to constrain and prevent exit)

The ghost has turned the cellar into a work-camp. Here it forces the captive residents to dig for treasure, while gloating. Escape attempts are dealt with via spooky and sometimes dangerous ghost powers.

THE NIGHT SHIFT

“Just another night stacking shelves, avoiding customers, and saving the universe.”

This team playbook has the hunters comprising the night shift at a workplace. A workplace that gets way more than its fair share of supernatural problems.

This is not a normal workplace. Strange stuff happens here. Odd customers come here. You hear things over the intercom. But you’re keeping a lid on it, for now.

This team concept is inspired in part by the glorious “Raiders of the Lost Mart” quickstart for *Unknown Armies Third Edition*, by Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Clock in and prepare for another night of drudgery.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Big Store:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we deal with any supernatural problems without management noticing?”
- Security Team:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we keep people safe?”
- Emergency Response:** At the end of each session, ask: “Did we solve anyone’s problems?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

ENEMIES

Choose your team’s chief nemesis:

- Your manager.
- The Queen of the Bug Monsters.
- The Monarch of Waste, a cosmic entity of disorder and ruin.
- A conspiracy within the company, using the workplace for a sinister occult plan.
- The thing in the basement. You don’t know what it is, but it’s evil.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Aminat Salek, a client or customer who has a knack for finding whatever is weirdest.
- Ahearn, a consultant. They can help you out with how things go on behind the scenes.
- De Luca, from human resources. They can cover for absences and sometimes tell you what management is planning.
- The day shift, an ally team. They can help out when you need to sleep.
- The gnomes. Your workplace has gnomes living in it. You've made friends with them.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Inventory Check:** If you go looking for something that just might be in stock, roll +Weird. On a 10 or more, it's there. On a 7-9, either you find it but there's a cost, or you find something close enough. On a miss, you find something bad.
- Corporate Database:** If you use the company information systems to help **investigate a mystery**, take +1 hold. The Keeper tells you something disturbing you learn in addition to what you were looking for.
- Handbook:** At the start of each mystery, each hunter may consult the employee handbook for advice. Roll a single die. On a 1, take -1 forward. On a 2, gain +1 forward to Charm. On a 3, gain +1 forward to Cool. On a 4, gain +1 forward to Sharp. On a 5, gain +1 forward to Tough. On a 6, gain +1 forward to Weird.
- Uniforms:** While you're wearing your uniforms, your actions won't be questioned unless you are indisputably out of place. For example, your burger restaurant uniforms won't help you infiltrate a military base, and vice versa. The uniforms may also count as a reason when you try to **manipulate someone**.
- Company Mascot:** Take your corporate mascot as an ally. Pick one: a fellow employee with useful skills in the suit, or a supernatural being trying to keep under the radar. Decide what the mascot looks like.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Backrooms:** You've set out a relatively secure space in the back rooms. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen. It's currently listed as "unused: permanent" so you should be left alone in there.
- Steam Tunnels:** Accessed from your workplace, these allow you to get in and out without being seen. They also connect to the wider city infrastructure.
- Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
- Security Access:** You can look at the security camera feeds and records. These cover the entire store floor, secure areas, and the outside of the building.
- Ritual Space:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move. Decide where in the workplace it is located.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- The Occult Section:** Your workplace has a stock of mystical supplies. Sometimes you can find specific monster hunting supplies or ritual requirements there.
- Warding Glyphs:** Mystical enchantments on the workplace prevent hostile magic from targeting it from the outside, and alert all team members if a supernatural being enters.
- Lost Property & Returns:** You can find all sorts of stuff in here, some of it useful.
- Custom:** _____



FOR THE KEEPER

This team concept combines workplace comedy with strangeness. Whatever the workplace is, it attracts odd things. Juxtapose the humdrum work problems of the hunters with bizarre occurrences.

Most mysteries should be based in the workplace, but let the problems overflow into the community around them as well. Otherwise, create your mysteries as normal.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

The night shift has to deal with a murderous demon possum loose in the workplace.

HOOK

A demon possum has entered the workplace. The hunters hear about it when a colleague, customer, or client reports a sighting of some kind of horrible creature making a mess.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The possum explores the workplace and finds a hidden lair.
Shadows	The possum attacks a colleague, customer, or client. They are injured (and poisoned).
Sunset	The attack victim dies.
Dusk	The possum drags the body to its lair and enacts a horrible ritual.
Nightfall	The possum gains even more strength and power.
Midnight	The possum prepares the next stage of its plan.



THE DEMON MURDER POSSUM

Monster: Sorcerer (motivation: to usurp unnatural power)

Just a regular demonic possum, building up its powers for its ultimate goal: to wreck the entire world.

It's bigger than a standard possum, with glowing red eyes, huge teeth and claws, and a much worse attitude. It can talk, but it prefers to scream or hiss.

Powers:

- **Rites of Power:** It knows an evil ritual that brings it greater power, but requires the sacrifice of a sapient creature. Humans are perfect. Each time it enacts the rites, add +1 harm capacity, a new magical power, or +1-harm to an attack.
- Unnatural strength.

Harm capacity: 4

Armour: None.

Attacks: Vicious bite: 1-harm intimate messy; Imbue poison: 2-harm hand magic poison. The poison makes the victim unstable.

Weakness: Being clean.

Moves:

- Terrifying noises.
- Sudden ambush.
- Sneak away fast.
- Lurk and plan.
- Glowing red eyes are watching you.
- Murder someone.
- Enact the Rites of Power to gain strength, size, and magical abilities.



THE LAIR

Location: Hub (motivation: to reveal information)

The corner that the possum has converted into a lair is most likely empty when the hunters check it out—the creature will be off looking for victims and plotting ambushes. Even if they attempt to catch it here, it will try to escape rather than be cornered.

In appearance, the den is a regular nasty animal den, with torn-up paper and fabric to make a nest, smelly leavings, and so on. Unusually, this one also has mystical runes scrawled using whatever substances were available.

Moves:

- “Oh, this is nasty!”
- Mystical glyphs reveal demonic influence.

COLLEAGUES, CLIENTS, OR CUSTOMERS

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

Just regular people who don’t think to prepare for demonic possum attacks.

Moves:

- Report an animal sighting.
- Wander off to investigate a noise.
- Say they will help but then mess it up somehow.
- Get murdered.

SUBURBAN WATCH GROUP

“I don’t think Mr Higgins’ prize-winning garden is entirely... natural. Also, have you noticed the number of missing pet notices along that street?”

This is a group of hunters who began as regular folks looking out for their local neighbourhood or town. It emphasises relationships outside of monster hunting and a focus on normal life as well as your adventures.

On the surface, the SWG is a normal neighbourhood watch group, but you came to realise that the real problems here are monsters and the supernatural, not regular criminals. Your hunters are the core members of the SWG who know what’s really going on.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Walk the streets. Keep an eye out for evildoers.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Thrown in the Deep End:** You started out knowing nothing about the supernatural, and you're still catching up. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we learn something new about the supernatural world?"
- Protectors:** It's all about looking after people. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we prevent harm in our community?"
- Cosy Coven:** You were never strangers to the supernatural, but nobody else suspects it. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we help with our supernatural powers, undetected?"
- Custom:** What's your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: "_____?"

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.



ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- The Pale Man, the powerful and malevolent ghost of a mass murderer who lived here a long time ago.
- All the ghouls. A big cemetery nearby attracts their attention.
- Bradshaw, a property developer who wants to rebuild the city—by any means necessary.
- Discord, goddess of chaos and disorder.
- A conspiracy of vampires trying to take over your community.
- Something else: _____.

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Asani, an old and knowledgeable witch.
- Petersen, a police officer. Community-minded, they know you help people out and they help you too.
- Red, cafe/bar/restaurant manager. You're always welcome in their place, and they hear a lot of gossip.
- The SWG, an ally team. These are newer members of the SWG. They can patrol, report events, and help people to safety. They're not ready to take on monsters directly.
- The sports club, an ally team. What sport do you all play? The other club members will do you a favour now and then. Useful for getting information from organisations you don't have direct access to.
- Someone else: _____.



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Earned Trust:** People in your community know you, and know you mean well. They'll generally believe what you tell them. If you ask them to do something for their own safety, they usually go along with it.
- Familiarity:** When you're checking out something in your community, you'll always recognise right away if something has changed in an out-of-the-ordinary way. You can pick up things like a house suddenly quiet, a new tree in the park, or a stranger working at the corner store.
- Domestic Wardings:** You know how to protect houses from evil supernatural influences. All your homes are warded, and you may ward others too. It's a **big magic** ritual requiring 24 hours, all the hunters, and a number of protective items that must be placed around the house. The wardings might be broken eventually by a concerted attack.
- Backyard Allies:** You've made friends with some feral or wild animals that are smarter than normal—perhaps modern nature spirits? In any case, they can scout and spy for you, and it's unlikely anyone will pay attention to them. They might ask you for favours too, now and then.
- Craft Circle:** Whenever you need a physical item as a magical requirement, you can craft a substitute together. All the hunters must take part, and you'll need a few hours. You can replace one requirement per spell this way.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Oracle Stone:** A mystical scrying gem. At the beginning of each mystery, you may consult it—ask any question. The Keeper will answer with something true and useful, but they may make the answer difficult to understand.
- Individual Transport:** A regular car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
- SWG Radio Network:** A set of devices that allow you to easily talk to the rest of the SWG (as well as the base stations at your homes/the SWG headquarters).
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen.
- Sacred Site:** A place outdoors that has a reservoir of magical power. The Keeper always considers this site when a magical ritual requires a particular place.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Infirmary:** You have access to a doctor's surgery or other suitable first aid office. You may use it for regular treatment of injuries, no questions asked.
- Innocent Front:** You have access to a regular business or institution. This means that your monster hunting hijinks can be concealed to an extent from your friends, family, and colleagues. For example: a cafe, a library, an antique store, etc.
- Regular Jobs:** You have access to a place of employment for any of the hunters who need it. You earn enough to cover regular day-to-day expenses, and there's time to fit in monster hunting around your hours.
- Custom:** _____



FOR THE KEEPER

Keep the focus on the community and the hunters' personal lives. Make sure you keep track of bystanders who live nearby, as well as the hunters' friends and family. Keep bringing these characters back into your mysteries so that you get a real feel of a community with its interconnected relationships and histories. I highly recommend creating a map of the area, too, with enough detail to record who lives where and mark where each mystery took place.

When you're creating mysteries, try to focus on those same issues: family, relationships, and the place the game is based. There's also a strong sense of community protection, so monsters and phenomena that come from outside and threaten the lives here are another good source of mysteries.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A new housing development has become corrupted, and the show home is capturing people.

If the team picked the Pale Man, Bradshaw, or the vampire conspiracy as their enemy, work their influence into this scenario.

HOOK

Someone who matters to a hunter mentions that they're going to check out the show home in the new development, and says they heard some things about it feeling creepy (although they don't mention the supernatural).

Another hunter hears that a couple who were in town to check out the house has disappeared: they were booked in all weekend at the place they were staying, but have gone without a word and left all their luggage.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The house captures the person who matters to a hunter.
Shadows	The house captures some builders who are working on the development.
Sunset	The house captures a family who are looking through it.
Dusk	The house devours the captured people in a dark ritual.
Nightfall	More houses begin appearing, as if they sprouted overnight.
Midnight	The malevolent housing development is now a permanent part of the community. People die there frequently, and soon they will send out spores.

HUNGRY SHOW HOME

Monster: Collector (motivation: to steal specific sorts of things—people who want a new home)

On the surface, a typical fancy show home filled with nice-looking but fake furniture and decor. Underneath, it's a devouring fungus-like creature. Now and again it will capture people by removing exits, leaving their only way down into its "gut" beneath the surface. When enough victims have been collected, it will kill them in a mystic rite that spawns more hungry houses.

Powers: Change its internal form (add/remove doors, hallways, rooms, etc.); spawning rite; seem nice and appealing; pay off minions.

Attacks: Spawning rite: 10-harm intimate magical area slow.

Harm capacity: 100. They can't really break it, unless they get a demolition company involved.

Armour: 1 (sort of like a building).

Weakness: Mercury, applied to the central "gut" area beneath the basement.

EVIL DEVELOPER

Minion: Thief (motivation: to steal and deliver to the monster)

This person has fully sold themselves out to the houses. They know they're betraying people to their deaths, but the houses provide so much money! The developer lives it up: fancy car, fancy clothes, and a fancy lifestyle. They might give themselves away somewhat by their distinct lack of interest in actually selling houses. After all, they've learned that all they need to do is get enough people to take a look. And soon, it will be time to take a seed to a new town, and start over.

If caught, their first impulse will be to run away, as they have no loyalty to the houses.

Powers: Lots of cash.

Attacks: Unarmed panic: 0-harm intimate/hand; Handgun: 2-harm close twitchy (the developer, not the weapon).

Harm capacity: 5

Weakness: Not applicable, just a regular person who made some bad choices.

A COUPLE FROM OUT OF TOWN

Bystanders: Victims (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

Just regular people looking for a nice new house in a new town. Now captured and terrified beneath the show home.

SOMEONE WHO MATTERS TO A HUNTER

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put themself in danger)

Pick a family member or friend of a hunter who might be looking for a new house (if there's none already, ask if any hunters have such a person in their life). They'll go check the place out and get captured, unless the hunters intervene.

TOURING BAND

“Another town, another soundcheck, another monster, another gig, another flight, another town...”

This team is a band, eternally on tour. Everywhere you have a gig booked, it seems like something bad is going down. Between sound check and putting on the show, you gotta deal with whatever is eating people in this town.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Come up with a band name: _____.
- Pick a starting team enemy, ally, move, and two asset selections.
- You have half an hour before we fly to the next city. Soundcheck at 7, you're on at 8.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles and the associated improvement question (or create your own with the Keeper's agreement):

- Rock:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we lay the smackdown on some evildoers?"
- Punk:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we fight for the downtrodden?"
- Pop:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we look awesome?"
- Metal:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we battle gloriously?"
- Hip-hop:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we improve things for the local community?"
- Folk:** At the end of each session, ask: "Did we learn about local history and folklore?"
- Country:** At the end of each session, ask: "Will that make a great story, later?"
- Custom:** _____.
At the end of each session, ask: "_____?"

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about your team enemy, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.



ENEMIES

Choose your team's chief nemesis:

- Alpha, an immortal werewolf.
- White Travellers, ghosts that feed on natural, joyous emotions of people and leave people content with a humdrum life.
- Ancient Purity, an occultist/fascist death metal band. They would be your enemies even without their abuse of mystical powers.
- The Man, a new god of authority, order, and following the rules.
- The Sanguine Circle, a conspiracy of vampires with cells in many cities and towns.
- Something else: _____

TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally from this list to start:

- Carlos, a roadie. They can do pretty much anything with reasonable competence.
- Charity, an occultist. She can tell you about mystical stuff you find and sometimes get you weird old items.
- Dr An Seulgi. She can help patch you up if you get hurt, and provide "special" prescriptions as long as you don't abuse them too badly.
- Eldritch Records, your label. You can hit them up for a little money, legal help, or contact details for folks in the music business.
- Your fan club, an ally team. They're keen to help, but they're mainly just a bunch of kids (possibly kids in their late teens or early twenties, but still).
- Someone else: _____



TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Hit It!:** If you all have your instruments ready, start playing one of your songs. Everyone and everything within earshot pauses for a moment.
- Sacred Songs of Power:** You may substitute “play a mystical song” for any one **use magic** or **big magic** requirement. For **use magic**, one person needs to perform the song. For **big magic**, it must be at least two of you.
- Famous:** You’re well known. Everywhere you go, you may call up your fans. They are a temporary ally group, type: backup (motivation: to stand with you). There will be a lot of them, but they’re just regular people—good at creating a distraction but not fighting monsters.
- In the Groove:** When you’re engaged in desperate physical action, and you describe how your move sets up another member of the band, they take +1 forward.
- Healing Vibe:** Whenever the band plays a gig (no matter how big or small—there just needs to be an audience), each band member and every member of the audience either unmarks unstable or heals 1-harm.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.

ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Tour Bus:** A truck or bus with bunks, your gear, and mystery investigation supplies on board.
 - Individual Transport:** A fancy car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
 - Home Venue:** You have a regular booking at a venue, and get on well with the owners. You're always welcome there, and can be sure to find fans or friends there whenever it's open.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep, practice, and cook.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
 - Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Private Jet:** You have a more-or-less fancy private jet (and crew) at your disposal.
 - Studio:** You have your own recording studio and record label. It's either a big house in the country or big slice of a building in the city. It's equipped with gear and staff. This is a good place for any other location-based assets to live.
 - Cameras and Recording Gear:** You have a big collection of cameras and other recording devices that you can use during your investigations. Your crew also includes people who can operate them for you.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

For this team playbook, they're going to be on the move a lot. Set each mystery in a new town, and include some details about their gig too.

Make sure they get to do some "band" stuff in between monster hunting: dealing with a hotel, or their record label, or getting the sound check done, or solving a problem with the venue or their gear. Don't have this overshadow the mystery, but use it to add a little spice whenever needed.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A White Traveller is targeting one of the band's fans, someone who follows the tour and comes to as many gigs as they can. If the group chose the White Travellers as their enemy, this mystery can either form the basis of that enmity, or be another case of the ghosts coming after them.

HOOK

There's a fan you recognise, they come to every gig. But the last few nights, they looked really sick, and in the press of the crowd you caught a glimpse of a pale aura, something bad, clinging to them.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The White Traveller kills the fan.
Shadows	The White Traveller starts following the band around and targeting the crowds.
Sunset	Another fan dies.
Dusk	More White Travellers start following the band.
Nightfall	Several people are killed in the midst of a great gig, as the White Travellers can't resist the heights of emotion generated.
Midnight	The band's career is in ruins after so many deaths at their shows.

WHITE TRAVELLER

Monster: Devourer (motivation: to consume people)

Ghostly pale figures that attach themselves to people experiencing heightened emotions. The White Travellers feed on those emotions, leaving the victims washed out and fatigued (sometimes dead).

Powers: Ghostly form; undead; sense powerful emotions; immune to mundane attacks.

Attacks: Drain emotions: 3-harm intimate/close life-drain magic requires-strong-emotion.

Harm capacity: 10

Weakness: Heart-of-Sun, a yellow flower that grows in faerie meadows.

THE SUPER FAN

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put themself in danger)

Come up with a name and look for the fan that fits the band's style. Ask them how well they know the fan: are they just a familiar face in the crowd, have they met the band at events, or have they developed a stronger relationship?

WHISTLEBLOWERS

“We’re the good guys and we work with other good guys to hunt down monsters. But now we’re not sure if the other good guys are really good and if we should, maybe, hunt them too?”

All the hunters in your team are members of a monster hunting organisation, and you start suspecting there’s something fishy about this group. This team playbook shares many elements of the Initiate and Professional playbooks because it essentially represents playing an entire team of Initiates and/or Professionals. You shouldn’t choose those playbooks when playing as the Whistleblowers—unless the Keeper agrees some characters belong to a different organisation as well, which might make the situation even more messy.

This team playbook doesn’t have a standard team enemy section. Their focus is, instead, on the organisation itself.



GETTING STARTED

- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team ally.
- Customize the organisation.
- Pick your starting team move and two asset selections.
- Snoo around the boss's office while they're in a meeting.

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Inquisition:** You believe your organisation isn't rotten to the core, it just has a few rotten apples. At the end of each session, ask: "Is the organisation better now?"
- Redemption:** You were once part of the organisation's shady dealings but are disgusted by them now. At the end of each session, ask: "Did we repay part of the harm we caused as organisation members?"
- Revolt:** You've recently understood the organisation is rotten to the core and should be terminated. At the end of each session, ask: "Are we closer to destroying the organisation?"
- Custom:** What's your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: " _____?"

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about the organisation or its bad apples, giving you a chance to interfere in their plans.

THE ORGANISATION

You create the details about your organisation, choosing options from the following lists. Things you suspect can pertain either to the organisation as a whole or to an influential group within it. At least two of the things you suspect are true; the Keeper decides which ones.

Official goals (choose one or two):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slay monsters | <input type="checkbox"/> Research paranatural phenomena |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contain monsters | <input type="checkbox"/> Keep monsters and magic secret |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Govern safe use of magic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research monsters | |

Goal you suspect (choose one):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training an army of monsters | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping all magic to themselves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creating new monsters | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking over the world |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing the monsters' powers | <input type="checkbox"/> Destroying the world |

Official resources (choose two):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ancient lore | <input type="checkbox"/> Rigorous training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modernised | <input type="checkbox"/> Offices all over the place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chapters everywhere | <input type="checkbox"/> Good intel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secular power | <input type="checkbox"/> Support teams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rich | |

Suspected resources (choose one or two):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonology | <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulated cultists |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Necromancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Bribed officials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deals with monsters | <input type="checkbox"/> Sacrificing members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulated minions | |

Obvious flaws (choose one):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tradition-bound | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paranoid and secretive | <input type="checkbox"/> Bureaucratic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closed hierarchy | <input type="checkbox"/> Hostile superiors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strict laws | <input type="checkbox"/> Take-no-prisoners policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mystical oaths | <input type="checkbox"/> Live capture policy |

Suspected flaws (choose one or two):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tradition-bound | <input type="checkbox"/> Tyrannical leaders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paranoid and secretive | <input type="checkbox"/> Hostile superiors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closed hierarchy | <input type="checkbox"/> Protects member criminals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mystical oaths | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Total obedience | |

TEAM ALLIES

Pick one team ally to start with:

- LOLweb, a hacker. They track the organisation's web activity and try to hinder it but don't believe in monsters.
- Faruq, an office worker in the organisation. He also feels there's something wrong but is too afraid to act openly about it.
- Grethel, a government official. She keeps track of various supernatural occurrences and organisations that deal with them.
- Organisation ex-members. Each of them has seen a bit of bad things that happen there and can help you piece together the bigger picture.
- Independent hunters. Far less experienced than you but sometimes can do things you can't due to being observed by the organisation.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Something Rotten:** When **investigating a mystery** and rolling a 7+, you can ask "How does this relate to the bad things I suspect about my organisation?" in addition to one of the usual questions.
- Organisation's Help:** When you ask for the organisation's help—gear, intel, or personnel—tell your superiors why you need it and roll +Charm. On a 10+, you get what you asked for. On a 7-9, you get it, but sooner or later the organisation will check up on you. On a miss, they don't give it to you and someone in the organisation learns of your true intentions if you didn't state them.
- Specialised:** Each of you can get +1 to a single rating (maximum +3) at the cost of -1 to a different rating (minimum -2).
- Coordinated:** Training in the organisation made you especially adept at helping each other. Your team holds 3 at the beginning at each mystery. Each of you can spend 1 to get +1 forward to **help out** and give the one you help +2 instead of +1 if your move is successful.
- Power Dynamics:** Add "Who's the boss here?" and "Who doesn't want to be a part of this?" to the list of your questions for **read a bad situation** and **investigate a mystery**.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A truck or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Individual Transport:** A fancy car, motorbike, or bicycle for every team member.
- Office Space:** Private offices in the organisation's headquarters.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's a room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen. The organisation knows about it but has no direct influence over it.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Fake IDs:** Fake government IDs.
- More Fake IDs:** Fake organisation IDs for other members or different jobs.
- Cameras and Recording Gear:** Miniature cameras and recording devices.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

The hunters decide how corrupted the organisation is when they choose their style. The goal they aim for might be purifying the organisation, destroying, it, or simply atoning for their own sins.

If they decide the organisation isn't bad as a whole but has some bad apples, make those bad apples powerful or invent something (corrupting influence? alien infiltration?) that creates new ones from time to time.

This team playbook can be easily used to weave unconnected stories like the ones from *Tome of Mysteries* into an arc and to complicate simple mysteries with the organisation's interference.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

The hunters are sent to deal with a ghost that turns out to be a dead member of the organisation. A higher-up who caused their death wants to cover this up, even at the cost of the hunters' lives.

HOOK

A ghost starts haunting a place important to the organisation or stalks the hunters directly.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The ghost attacks the hunters, cursing them for belonging to the organisation.
Shadows	An organisation higher-up learns about the hunters' meeting with the ghost.
Sunset	The higher-up tries to suspend the hunters in their duties with the help of an organisation bureaucrat.
Dusk	The bureaucrat fakes a hacking attempt by the investigators on the organisation's secrets.
Nightfall	The organisation dispatches a group under the leadership of the higher-up to contain the "rogue" hunters.
Midnight	The higher-up catches up with the hunters and orders the group to shoot to kill.

THE GHOST

Monster: Executioner (motivation: to punish the guilty)

A member of the organisation who died due to the higher-up's intrigues. Now they hate the entire organisation and want to punish its members, accidentally choosing the hunters as their first victims.

Attack: Chilling touch: 3-harm ignore-armour intimate; Telekinesis: 2-harm close.

Armour: 1 (incorporeal).

Harm capacity: 10

Weakness:

- **Forgiveness:** If they forgive someone from the organisation, they can pass on.
- **Vengeance:** If they know the higher-up is responsible for their death and is dead, they can pass on.

ORGANISATION HIGHER-UP

Monster: Sorcerer (motivation: to usurp unnatural power)

The higher-up respects the hunters, but has no emotional attachment to them—they consider the fact that the hunters have caught a trace of the ghost to be a terrible threat. Now the hunters are to be discreetly eliminated.

Attack: Pistol: 2-harm close; Organisation secret weapon: 4-harm hand or 3-harm far plus 2 tags of your choice.

Armour: 1 (bulletproof vest or monstrous traits).

Harm capacity: 9

Weakness: You need to find a clear proof of their conspiracy before killing them.

ORGANISATION BUREAUCRAT

Minion: Traitor (motivation: to betray people)

They see that the higher-up has some shady business, but isn't yet ready to betray the organisation. They'll help the higher-up obstruct the investigators' actions and lead them into a trap, but will also try to give the team subtle warnings the organisation won't notice. Their opinion of their own subtlety is far too high, however, and their "subtle" warnings will be obvious to everybody.

Bureaucracy: If they wish so, they can make getting anything from the organisation require endless paperwork, represented by **acting under pressure**.

Attack: Taser: 1-harm hand stun.

Harm capacity: 7

ORGANISATION ENFORCERS

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the monster)

No matter how deep the conspiracy within the organisation is, they aren't a part of it.

Attack: Hand weapon: 2-harm hand, or Ranged weapon: 3-harm close.

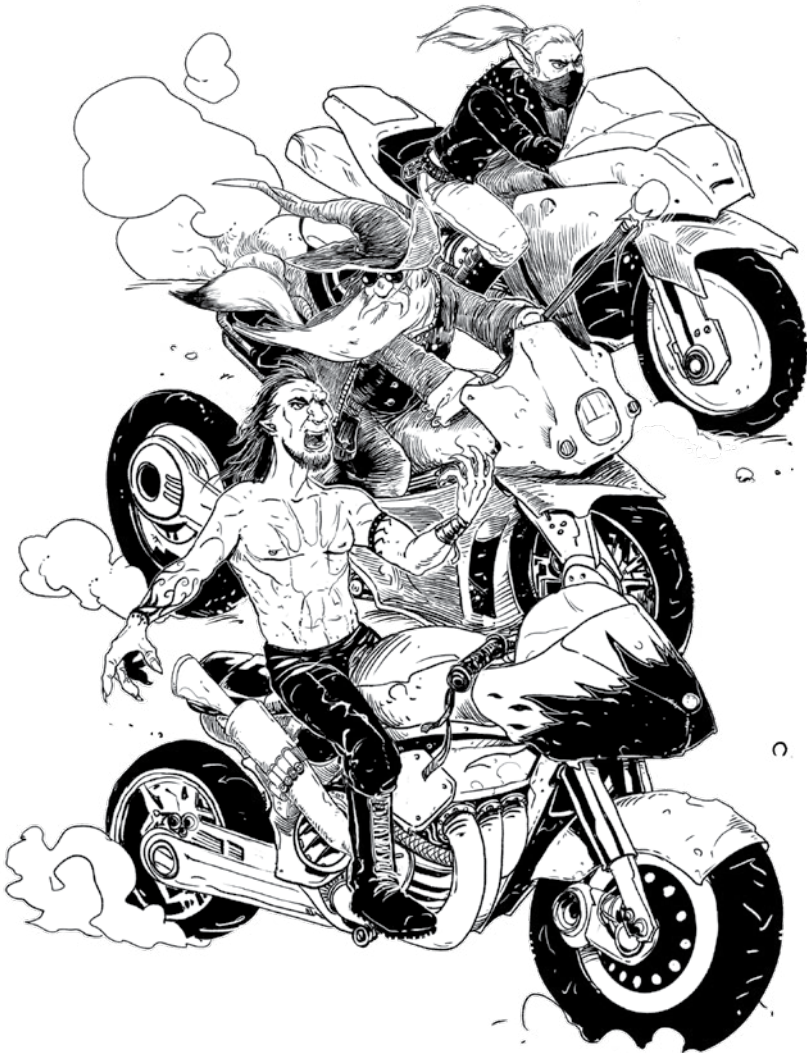
Harm capacity: 7

WILD HUNT FUGITIVES

“It was their biggest mistake to let us go. They’ve created the perfect enemies for themselves. One day, sooner rather than later, the Wild Hunt will be hunted.”

You joined or were abducted by the Wild Hunt. You gained some supernatural skills while riding with it, but then escaped it. Now you use your experience to hunt monsters, evade the Hunt, and—maybe—destroy it one day.

This team playbook doesn’t have a standard team enemy section. Instead, their focus is on the Wild Hunt itself.





GETTING STARTED

- Decide the history between you and the Wild Hunt.
- Pick your style (and associated improvement question).
- Pick a starting team ally, move, and two asset selections.
- Stay wary, that sounded like howls on the wind.

THE WILD HUNT

You were part of the Wild Hunt, a group of violent fey and spirits riding the world and striking fear into the hearts of people.

WHO RIDES WITH THE HUNT?

- Choose any from the following and maybe add your own: Elves, trolls, demons, wraiths, banshees, werewolves, _____
- The Wild Hunt has a leader, probably a king or a queen. Give them a name or a title: _____
- Choose or invent their impressive powers, at least two: grant immortality, grant lycanthropy, steal emotion, see destinies, set destinies, control weather, grant sentience to animals, grant sentience to weapons, _____

WHY WERE YOU A PART OF THE WILD HUNT?

Each player can choose a different answer:

- I was kidnapped by the Hunt.
- I sold my soul to the Hunt.
- I wanted to ride with the Hunt.
- I'm a supernatural creature who's a part of the Hunt.
- Something else: _____

Then all of you escaped, sick with the Hunt's atrocities or their treatment of you.



HOW DID YOU ESCAPE?

- With a clever plan.
- By sheer luck.
- With outside help.
- Thanks to a loophole in your fae contract.
- Something else: _____

THE WILD HUNT KEEPS LOOKING FOR YOU. HOW DO THEY DO IT?

Choose two ways:

- They give other monsters _____ in exchange for information.
- They track the internet, but they can't monitor one part of it: _____.
- They can see you when you're outside in one type of weather, namely _____.
- They sense you when you **use magic** unless you take a precaution, namely _____.
- Something else: _____

WHAT WILL THE WILD HUNT DO IF THEY FIND YOU?

- Kill you.
- Torment you.
- Make you join the Hunt again.
- Make you slaves.
- Something else: _____

STYLE AND IMPROVEMENT

Pick one of these styles (and the associated improvement question):

- Vengeance:** You want to become strong enough to destroy the Wild Hunt one day. At the end of each session, ask: “Did what we do bring us closer to destroying the Wild Hunt?”
- Compassion:** You don’t want others to suffer as you did. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we risk our freedom to protect someone else’s?”
- Homelessness:** You want to have normal lives one day. At the end of each session, ask: “Did we put some effort into making our lives more normal?”
- Custom:** What’s your story? _____.
At the end of each session, ask: “_____?”

At the end of each session, answer this question. If yes, gain one improvement mark. If yes and it came up a lot, gain two improvement marks.

Improvement marks:

When you fill in the last improvement box, clear the improvement track and choose one of these:

- Gain a new team move.
- Gain a new team ally.
- Gain two new asset selections.
- Make the next mystery about the Wild Hunt, giving you a chance to weaken or confuse them.



TEAM ALLIES

Choose one team ally to start with:

- Soyfly, a pixie. She knows a lot of recent gossip about the Wild Hunt.
- Althea, a private aviator. She believes the sky should be free for everyone, not just some creepy horsemen.
- Caragh, a banshee. She once rode with the Hunt and now helps other fugitives, but never reveals how she escaped.
- New Start, an NGO that helps refugees. They focus on political and war refugees, but allow you to use their facilities.
- The Savage Ride, the Wild Hunt's rivals. They'll do anything to hinder the Hunt, but are violent and fickle themselves.
- Someone else: _____

TEAM MOVES

Choose your team moves from this list. The first one is a good default choice:

- Always on the Run:** When you enter a new location, one of you can ask either “What’s the best way to hide here” or “What would be the best way to escape from here?” When you act on the answers, you get +1 ongoing, just as if it were a **read a bad situation** question.
- You Can’t Take Us:** Once per mystery, each of you can treat a **protect someone** roll as if you rolled a 12.
- Ride with the Thunder:** When you race against someone having a comparable speed, you always win. When you race against someone faster or against the Wild Hunt, you can **use magic** to win anyway.
- Sense of the Hunt:** When a monster hunts a mortal in the area where you are (up to about 2 miles), you sense it, but without any details. You can **read a bad situation** to get more info on this situation, but if you fail, you get –1 ongoing to helping the hunted mortals.
- Legend Amongst Monsters:** Each of you can **manipulate** monsters as if you had the **Dark Negotiator** move. If you fail an **investigate a mystery** move, the monster learns it’s investigated by those who escaped the Wild Hunt.
- Something Different:** Take a move from another team playbook.
- Change Team Style:** Pick a new team style. You now use that one instead of the one you first chose.



ASSETS

Choose from these available assets (if there are two boxes, you need to mark both to earn that asset). You start with two:

- Mobile Base:** A truck or bus with bunks and mystery investigation supplies on board.
- Fae Horses:** One for every team member. They fly, but if people start gossiping about flying horses, the Wild Hunt will surely hear of this.
- Map:** A map of the Wild Hunt's activities.
- Headquarters:** A relatively secure space to use as a base. There's room for all your monster hunting gear and books, maybe even space to sleep and a kitchen. The Wild Hunt won't learn about this base unless you stay there for a very long time.
- Mystical Workroom:** A space set aside for magical operations. It can stand in for one requirement of a **use magic** or **big magic** move.
- Workshop:** A big space for craft and repair projects, with plenty of tools and materials.
- Disguises:** A set of disguises.
- Diversions:** A box of smoke bombs and other distractions (0-harm close obscure vision).
- Fae Cosmetics and Makeup:** Better than anything humans can produce.
- Custom:** _____

FOR THE KEEPER

The hunters' cat-and-mouse with the Wild Hunt can be heroic, comedic, or paranoid—or a mixture of those! If you don't all agree on a particular mood beforehand, try out different approaches during the first few games and see what works.

Signs of the Hunt finding the hunters are perfect consequences of failed rolls. The Hunt appearing in full force should be a rare occurrence, however.

CUSTOM MOVE

The Hunt Approaches: When a failed roll causes a consequence related to the Wild Hunt, the Keeper holds 1. The holds are lost when a mystery ends. When they hold 3, the Wild Hunt appears where the hunters are, one step away from finding them.

FIRST MYSTERY SEED

A Wild Hunt scout takes interest in a teenager with the potential to join the Hunt.

HOOK

The hunters see creatures loyal to the Wild Hunt observe a teenager with an obvious magical aptitude.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The scout sends the teenager a gift—a magical sword.
Shadows	The scout's animal minions harass the neighbourhood.
Sunset	The teenager uses the sword to summon a storm and wanders into it.
Dusk	The teenager's family follows them into a storm and are attacked by animals.
Nightfall	The teenager meets the scout who explains their powers to them and invites them to join the Wild Hunt.
Midnight	The teenager joins the Wild Hunt.

THE WILD HUNT SCOUT

Monster: Thief (motivation: to steal specific sort of things)

A fey or demon always on the lookout for new potential members of the Wild Hunt.

Powers: Fast as the wind; can always summon its fae steed; charm humans; become invisible; sense magic by scent.

Attacks: Thorn stiletto: 2-harm intimate magical; Longbow: 2-harm far; Trample: 4-harm hand area messy.

Harm capacity: 11

Weakness: Cold iron.

THE SCOUT'S ANIMAL HELPERS

Minions: Scouts (motivation: to stalk, watch, and report)

Powers: Perfect memory; sneak anywhere unseen; form a swarm (four or more).

Attacks: Claw/beak: 1-harm intimate; Swarm: 3-harm intimate area.

Harm capacity: 4 (individual)
or 10 (swarm)

THE GIFTED TEENAGER

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put themself in danger)

Since getting the sword, they feel a hint of control over their “freakish” powers for the first time and are eager to test it.

Powers: Random magical powers—telekinesis, fire, wind, and whatever you want.

THE TEENAGER'S FAMILY

Bystanders: innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

The family knows and feels something is wrong with the teenager, but can't understand it fully because they haven't told them about their magical powers.







THE OTHER WORLDS

Now we begin with the *Codex's* new worlds. Several of these worlds make use of phenomena mysteries, first introduced in *Tome of Mysteries* (page 24) and subsequently included in the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week* (hardcover page 326).

We start close to a regular *Monster of the Week* style with *This Strange Old House*, which is more like a team playbook writ big than moving to a full new setting. Then we move further away from the present day and the world as we know it. Next is *Gothic Century*, which takes you into a supernatural-tinged version of that age of empire and industry. *Dreaming with the Gods* is adjacent to the Renaissance but set in a fictional land, and the uncovered knowledge is more dangerous. *Monster Marches* is a medieval fantasy world where monsters fight colonialists and everyday folks are caught in the middle. Finally, in *Bone Spear*, we go to a fantastic version of the Stone Age, where hunters defend their community from the monsters outside.

Time to step out of this familiar world!





THIS STRANGE OLD HOUSE

By Michael Sands

Inspiration: *Locke & Key*, *Betrayal at the House on the Hill*, *House of Leaves*, the real-world Winchester house, and all stories about inheriting a mysterious house.

The House provides a reason for the hunters to form a new team (if needed), a base they can come back to, and things going on in the background.

If you're using this setting, it can be there right from the start of the game, or you can introduce it to an ongoing series.

It's recommended you do not use this setting with a hunter team playbook. The things the hunters discover as they explore the House are effectively their team playbook.



FOR A NEW SERIES

Go through the House creation before you make hunters, so the story behind the House enriches hunter creation. The House adds some extra history options for the team. Have a look at those and use them as extra options with your playbook history (page 154).

Answering some of these questions before creating a hunter may seem difficult, but look at it as a way to build the setting's depth, which means your hunters will fit in better once you know everything. It's also okay to go back and forth between these steps, revising a decision that you change your minds about.

FOR AN ONGOING SERIES

When you introduce it to an ongoing game, the inheritance can come out of nowhere. It can come from a distant relative or a close one, or a hunter organisation (a Professional's Agency, an Initiate's Sect, etc.).

Each player will need to decide: Did my hunter have any background with the House, or is it new to me? If they had a background, was it forgotten? Or secret? Or just hasn't come up before?

AGENDAS

The hunter agenda is updated for *This Strange Old House*, adding this:

- Figure out the secrets of the House.

The rest of the hunter agenda from the main *Monster of the Week* rules still apply.

The Keeper agenda is unchanged.

WHAT DID WE JUST INHERIT?

Answer the following questions to figure out the nature of the House.

WHO DOES THE HOUSE BELONG TO?

Answer as a group. All hunters are tied to the House, regardless of who officially owns it.

- All the hunters own it in common.
- One of you is the owner. Who? What prevents the rest of you from leaving?
- Some of the hunters own it together (perhaps members of a family or secret organisation). Which of you are part of this lineage/group?
- An organisation (perhaps a Professional's Agency or Initiate's Sect) owns the House and has put you all in charge of it. How did the organisation come to own it?
- Something else: _____

HOW DID THE HOUSE COME TO YOU?

Answer as a group.

- Bequeathed by an ancestor who died recently.
- Bequeathed by an ancestor who died a long time ago. (Has the house been abandoned? Rented out? What?)
- Bequeathed by a mysterious stranger. The news is delivered by a lawyer who never met their client.
- The current owner has gone missing.
- Gifted by a living relative who can't look after the House any longer. (Are they retiring to a nicer climate? Burnt out? In some kind of trouble?)
- You have been given the House, with a duty to deal with the secrets that it hides. Who gave it to you?
- You bought it. Why?
- Something else: _____

WHY MUST YOU LIVE THERE?

Answer for each hunter individually, but discuss with the group. Consider your hunter concept.

- I just lost everything, I have no choice.
- I was trapped in a bad situation, and this is a way to escape.
- I always wanted to uncover the House's secrets.
- It's my duty to protect the world from the things in the House.
- I don't really know. I just have this compulsion.
- I don't fit into the world outside, but I belong in the House.
- I promised I would never return, but now I realise I could never truly get away.
- My own reason: _____

WHAT'S THE HOUSE LIKE?

Pick two to four. Picking things that seem contradictory is fine, but you must decide how that works.

- Run-down.
- Grand, with light and airy galleries.
- Sprawling.
- Isolated.
- Surrounded by primeval woods.
- A mixture of ages and styles.
- Ancient.
- Lots of tiny, cramped rooms and twisty corridors.
- Packed with old books and artefacts.
- Set in an enormous, overgrown garden.
- Overlooking the sea.
- Kept by loyal servants.
- Near a prehistoric monument.
- Absolutely haunted.
- Townhouse in a city centre.
- Built a few decades ago.
- There are rooms that don't quite seem to fit, when you look from certain angles.
- Something else: _____

WHERE IS IT?

Answer each question as a group.

- Where in the world is it?
- How does it fit into the communities nearby? Consider what you picked for "What the House is like" when you answer.
- What are the nearby neighbours and towns like?

WHAT SECRET DOES IT HAVE?

Answer as a group. It's your choice whether or not the hunters know this secret when the game begins.

- An evil being is imprisoned here.
- An evil being was released by something that happened here.
- The House provides access to a magical otherworld that contains horrors (and perhaps also wonders).
- The owners of the House gain power, but in some it becomes twisted and corrupt.
- Something in the House calls evil to it.
- The House is an evil entity.
- Something else: _____

WHAT SORTS OF MONSTERS DOES THE HOUSE ATTRACT?

Answer as a group. Pick one, two, or three.

- Ghosts and the dead.
- Ancient god(s) and their servants and worshippers.
- Demons and infernal creatures.
- Things from Beyond.
- Spirits of nature and/or the elements.
- Shapeshifters.
- Creatures of myth and legend.
- Entities of pure magic.
- Transformed people.
- Sorcerers and others seeking power.
- Refugees from other worlds or mystical places.
- Something else: _____

WHAT IS THE HOUSE CALLED?

Answer as a group.

- Does it have a name, and what is it? Think about where you decided the House is and what sorts of names might be given to such a place. Name examples: Bleakmoor, Ecalpon, the Cliff House, the Old Khan Place, Maldom.
- Do your hunters have a nickname for it (perhaps a description)? Nickname examples: The Portal House, Castle Lost, Grandma's, the Bad House.

EXPLORING THE HOUSE

At the start of the game, the hunters have access to all the regular living spaces in the House and have uncovered one secret room.

The secret rooms are listed on the House map, and you must uncover them in order.

When you complete a mystery relating to the House and its secrets, the hunters may mark a corridor or secret room connected to places you have already marked. When you mark a room, you uncover it. You'll need to complete two mysteries to uncover each new room: the first one allows you to mark the corridor, the second allows you to mark the room.

Uncovering a secret room is a big deal. When you do it, set a scene with the hunters taking their final steps and exploring the room for the first time. Let everyone look at what they're interested in. If the room has an effect between mysteries, you may use it immediately.

Then the Keeper decides what the new room means about the house. The next mystery is about what the hunters found there. This could be something the hunters learned, a creature or force released from the room, a creature interested in the room's contents, or a step on a related arc countdown.

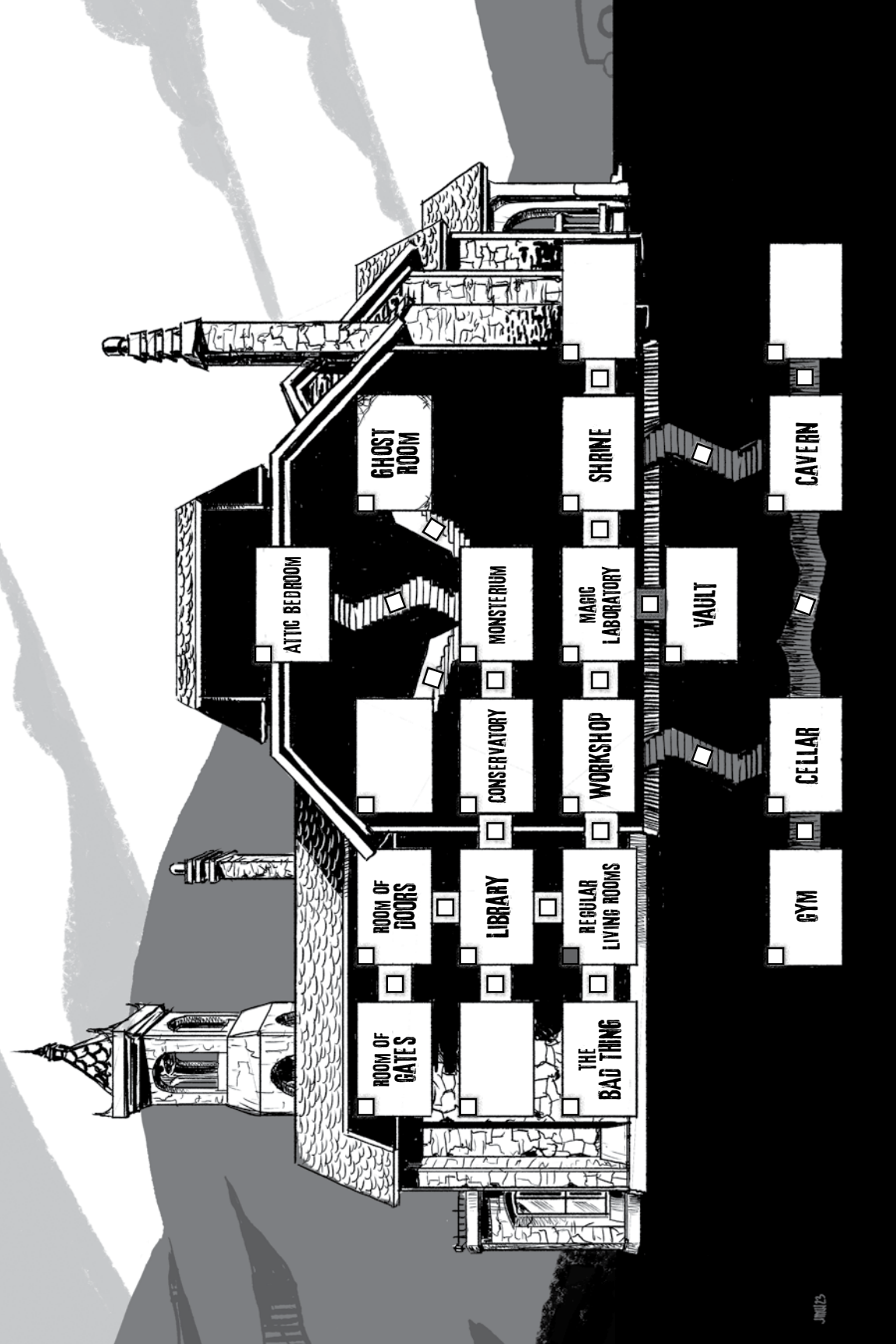
Unlocking a secret room is significant. It also immediately provides a step toward the next secret room, as the following mystery must be about the House.

There can be other ways to uncover rooms (for example, there's a hunter history option that allows you to check a room right away). The hunters can potentially find them by other means too (for example, by using **big magic** or as the consequences of a mystery).

DOWNTIME ROOM ACTIVITIES

Many of the rooms allow hunters to do something between mysteries, and then provide an advantage during the next mystery.

Each hunter may only take advantage of one of these activities in each downtime. If you spend time studying in the library, you can't also spend all that time working out in the gym! The attic bedroom does allow another activity (because the bedroom only requires that you sleep there, not requiring extra time).



GHOST ROOM

ATTIC BEDROOM

SHRINE

CAVERN

MONSTERIUM

MAGIC LABORATORY

VAULT

CONSERVATORY

WORKSHOP

CELLAR

ROOM OF DOORS

LIBRARY

REGULAR LIVING ROOMS

GYM

ROOM OF GATES

THE BAD THING

SECRET ROOMS IN THE HOUSE

THE BAD THING: This is where the House's dark secret resides. When you open this room, you enable the possibility of dealing with the secret for good. It might also give the secret access to you... be careful!

The Room of Doors: This room has many doors (some concealed) that lead to passages all through the House. After this room is discovered, the hunters may move quickly from any place within the House to any other via secret passages. Outsiders don't know about these and can't use them.

The Cellar: Filled with old junk, some of it still useful. If you need something old and specific, rummage through the cellar and roll +nothing. On a 10+, you find it (well, close enough). On a 7-9, you find something that's useful for another purpose. On a 6 or less, you find something very dangerous.

The Library: Between mysteries, one hunter may research any topic here. Ask the Keeper a question about it, and they will tell you what you discovered (and how reliable the source was).

The Workshop: Between mysteries, one hunter may build or modify a piece of gear. If you modify something, you may add, change, or remove a gear tag. To build something, say what you want and the Keeper will give you its starting ratings and tags. Keeper: give it at least one tag like "unfinished" or "unreliable" that needs to be modified away before it's fully completed (add more tags for more powerful devices).

The Vault: Contains one magic item for each hunter. Each player tells the Keeper what they want for their hunter. The Keeper then creates something inspired by the request. Each item has a useful magic power but also a curse, cost, or drawback in accord with its power.

The Attic Bedroom: One hunter may use this as their bedroom. They enjoy a pleasant view out the gable windows and find it a restful sanctuary. Twice per mystery, when that hunter helps out, instead of providing a +1 bonus, the original roll is improved by a level (a 6 or less becomes a 7-9 result, a 7-9 becomes a 10+, a 10+ becomes a 12+).

The Cavern: A mystical force flows through this crystal-studded cave. Any magical move is stronger here, and things normally impossible can be attempted. Magical move effects are much stronger, but requirements are unchanged.

The Ghost Room: This room only appears when moonlight shines where the doorway should be. Inside resides the ghost of an old steward of the House (possibly one of your ancestors). You may ask them about the nature of the House. They know a great deal, but their answers are disjointed and confusing.

The Magic Laboratory: Between mysteries, one hunter may make mystical preparations here. The next mystery, they may ignore one requirement for **use magic** or **big magic**.

The Conservatory: There is a fountain here, amongst all the plants. Between mysteries, one hunter may either gather herbs or gaze into the fountain. If they gather herbs, they may take two bundles of healing herbs in their gear (Healing herbs: mystic, heal 1-harm). If they gaze into the fountain, the Keeper will describe a vision of something that may happen to the hunter during the next mystery.

The Monsterium: This room contains trophies, samples, records of monsters, and journals of monster hunters. Between mysteries, one hunter may either study the records or add a trophy or journal to the collection. Studying the records gives you 2-hold, which may be added to the hold you gain from an **investigate a mystery** or **read a bad situation** roll in a future mystery. Adding to the collection allows that hunter to mark experience (make a note of what they added).

The Shrine: A peaceful place, always calming to visit. Between mysteries, one hunter may meditate here. Once during the next mystery, they may set their dice to a result of 9 instead of rolling (other modifiers, including your rating, are then applied normally).

The Room of Gates: There are many doors here. Some lead beyond the House, perhaps allowing travel to other places (elsewhere in the world or other worlds entirely). If the House's secret is a portal to a bad place or similar, this room doesn't allow you to go there (you need to open up the Bad Thing for that).

The Gym: Between mysteries, one hunter may work out here. They gain one extra (but temporary) harm box during the next mystery.

“Empty” Rooms: These are for you to design for your group. If the hunters find the way to an empty room, ask them what they think they'll find. The Keeper comes up with a room description (not necessarily what they asked for) that fits into your series so far. The room also provides a custom move for the hunters—something that helps them, but may have a cost or disadvantage associated with it as well.

HISTORY QUESTIONS

Hunters may choose these history options in addition to those available from their playbook.

The first two give a history between the entire hunter team, which can provide an extra reason for everyone to be in this together.

- (All hunters) We're all family. Siblings, cousins, parents and children, aunts and uncles, unknown distant relations. Note your relationship to each of the others.
- (All hunters) We are all complicit in a tragic incident. We never talk about it, but we also never forget our guilt about what happened. Did anyone lose their life? Was it actually your fault?
- (Between two hunters) The two of us were chosen to be the stewards of important knowledge about the House. What secret are we keeping? (Decide the secret between the two of you. Let the group know what it is too, especially the Keeper.)
- (Between two hunters) The two of us discovered one of the secret rooms in the House when we were younger. Pick one of the secret rooms from the House map, and decide what happened to the two of you there. Mark that room: you remember where it is (and can explore the corridors from there as well as from the starting rooms). One of you marks a Luck point as spent.
- (Between two hunters) The two of us lived here as children. We had to run away. What was so terrible the family had to leave?

PREPARATION FOR THE KEEPER

Based on the answers during House and hunter creation, decide how you plan to approach the secret of the House.

Pick a location threat type for the House generally. Certain rooms or areas with their own specific character should be given their own location threat type.

Decide on the truth behind the secret the group picked. This doesn't need to be fully detailed yet, but decide if the Bad Thing is a monster or a phenomenon and pick a type for it.

Create an arc for the House. What is the Bad Thing trying to do? Fill in the countdown as much as you can for now. It's fine to leave some as just possibilities, or blank, and fill them in once you have played enough mysteries to have a more solid idea.

Decide if there are any other monsters, minions, locations, or bystanders who are involved in the secrets of the house and if so, create them. Consider the answers about the nature of the House, where it is located, and the sorts of monsters it draws.

When you prepare a mystery, first decide if it will be related to the House. Aim to have around half your mysteries related to the House, so the hunters can discover rooms at a reasonable rate. You also want to have some unrelated mysteries too, otherwise the game can become too insular.

In general, the series won't run much differently for you as a Keeper. You'll have the things the group decided about the House and your overall arc right from the beginning. Then prepare and run mysteries as usual.

THE FIRST MYSTERY

Make your first mystery about the House. Take a look at the answers to what monsters the house attracts, and pick your favourite. Build a simple mystery about one of those monsters. It could be trying to get access to the House, it might be lurking in the House, or it could be attracted by the House and causing trouble nearby.

It doesn't need to be a complex mystery, but it should help develop the personality of your House, and the things that happen in play will help you decide how the series should go on.

Aside from including those elements, mystery creation follows the usual rules.

SUBSEQUENT MYSTERIES

Building your later mysteries works in the same way as usual, with the following extra things to keep in mind.

Use the House as a primary source of ideas. Use the answers from your initial setup, what has been found in the secret rooms, the aftermath of previous mysteries, and the machinations of the Bad Thing. All those elements can keep the story about the House and the hunters' relationship with it.

Make some mysteries standalone, too. If everything is about the House, it's going to be less exciting than if it's just some of the time.

As the game goes on, continue to develop your ideas about what the Bad Thing (and the House) are doing, and keep those elements building up.



THE BAD THING

When the hunters choose to open the way to the Bad Thing, that signals that they are ready to move into the final stage of the House's story. Opening this room means the hunters can finally resolve everything, but also gives the Bad Thing more freedom to act and stop them.

Step up the Bad Thing's plans from the countdown, and provide more mysteries that are driven by its attempts to stop the hunters.

When the hunters decide to take down the Bad Thing, make the mystery a big and epic one. They've worked hard to get here, so provide them a big stage for the showdown.

If they fail, leave them with a cliff-hanger: the secret has escaped for now, and is plotting bigger and worse evils. That can be your second season.

If they succeed and stop the Bad Thing, what next?

- You can end the series. That was the big finale, we're done now.
- You can continue playing, with the hunters having access to the secret rooms of the House but without the same Bad Thing. Perhaps a new huge threat will learn about the House and want to use its powers for itself?
- As an in-between option, call a season end. Take a break. You can come back to the hunters and their House later with ideas for a new arc. Think of it as creating a new Bad Thing to deal with, based on what you learned in the first season.



DEFAULT ARC

You can use this as the default series arc, if nothing suggests itself to you. This setup works best when customised with the group's answers about the House. Your own ideas should also be thrown in (as long as they don't contradict what is already established).

THE BAD THING AWAKENS

This arc begins with the hunters taking possession of the House. The Bad Thing knows that the new stewards are aware of a few secrets, and is working to break itself free/control the power of the House/something else. Then it will rampage unchecked in the mortal world!

Day	The House entices monsters to distract and weaken the hunters.
Shadows	A monster and minions access the House to enact a key ritual/step.
Sunset	Monsters start picking off the hunters and their loved ones, whenever they're alone and vulnerable.
Dusk	The Bad Thing enacts a second key ritual/step and grows in power.
Nightfall	A monster and minions, supported by the Bad Thing, seizes the House and kills all the surviving hunters.
Midnight	The Bad Thing is now free and has immense power.

QUICKSTART: APHASIA ABBEY

If you want to drop straight into play, use this ready-to-use House.

The questions are answered for you, and there is a mystery you can use as your first one with a bunch of local threats included. There's also an arc countdown that you can use or adjust to fit.

THE DEAL

The hunters have all inherited equal shares in Aphasisia Abbey. The hunters know of the house: it's reputed to be haunted and contain arcane secrets. The hunters investigated a mystery there in the past.

The previous owner was a stranger named Stefan Null, unknown to all the hunters (and indeed to the lawyers). It has been empty for a few years (no reason is provided). When Null called the hunters in to deal with that previous mystery, they never met him. Was it a test?

Each hunter should answer "Why they must return?" themselves.

The House is near an ancient stone monument, sprawling, and sits in primeval woods.

Place it wherever your series is to be based. By default, it's near where you live, at a borderland of some sort—legal, cultural, historical, or ecological.

The secret is that the Abbey contains a way to reach dangerous and wonderful otherworlds. Unfortunately, this access goes both ways. This is the Bad Thing.

Aphasisia Abbey calls to ancient gods and their servants, and to spirits of nature and wild places.

FIRST MYSTERY: WELCOME TO APHASIA

This is a mystery to use first. The hook is that the hunters have just inherited Aphasisia Abbey and are taking possession of it. As they arrive, a monstrous beast from an otherworld breaks out, and needs to be stopped before it rampages through the local villages and towns.

Have the creature emerge either as they are first exploring the Abbey, or just before they arrive. It will first look for somewhere it can hide, either a room inside, or the woods outside. There's going to be a mess of damage as it rampages through human-sized rooms.

Character names here were picked for a British site, so change them to fit if you place the abbey somewhere else.

Day	The Beast leaves its first hiding place and explores the area around. A local catches a glimpse of it and chats about it in the village.
Shadows	The Beast kills a pair of walkers in the woods.
Sunset	The Beast attacks an isolated farm, kills a few more people (and livestock), and smashes some buildings.
Dusk	The Beast returns to the abbey to find the portal again.
Nightfall	The Beast calls more of its kin through into the abbey.
Midnight	A swarm of Beasts kills all who live nearby, driving people away from the Abbey and nearby settlements.

THE OTHERWORLD BEAST

Monster: Beast (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing)

This is a massive creature from another world. It has aspects of boar and deer. It stands about 2 metres tall, with a powerful frame and some kind of antler-horns growing from the top of its head. It has three bright green eyes on each side of its face and long, tusk-filled jaws.

It's somewhat confused, as Earth is rather different to the universe it came from. It's exploring and investigating, but reacts to the unexpected with violence.

Powers: Disappear into dense foliage; move silently through the woods; powerful bellow (hunters who are close need to **act under pressure** to avoid stopping for a moment, stunned).

Attacks: Charge: (3-harm close knock-down; Bite: 5-harm intimate/hand messy; Savage: 4-harm hand throw-victim).

Armour: 2 (extremely tough).

Harm capacity: 20

Weakness: Mint. This herb is unknown in its home world and poisonous to the Beast. Optionally, substitute or include other safe terrestrial substances.

Moves:

- Suddenly appear and bellow.
- Attack, knocking people to the ground, and run off.
- Stalk a target with stealth and patience.
- React violently to something surprising or incomprehensible (to it).

THE WOODS AROUND THE ABBEY

Location: Wilds (motivation: to contain hidden things)

The woods are filled with winding game trails, holloways, caves, dense groves, sudden clearings, and steep hills and valleys. The plants grow lush and thickly, and the animals are thriving (although they're shy of people, so are heard more than seen).

The forest is mostly old growth, primeval and ancient. Here and there are areas of newer planting, either reforestation from agricultural use or where timber felling previously happened.

Here and there are areas set aside for recreational use, such as walking or cycling tracks, but these are infrequent.

Moves:

- An unexpected encounter or terrain.
- Someone gets turned around.
- A hidden secret: an ancient construction, an animal lair, a strange beast, an unusual plant.

THE SUN DOG, A PUB

Location: Crossroads (motivation: bring people, and things, together)

An old-fashioned pub that serves as the central meeting place and social spot of the town.

Moves:

- Who's that at the corner table?
- Someone new to town is here.
- A bunch of locals are having a good chat.
- It's pub quiz night, or darts tournament night, karaoke night, etc. Every night has some event.

BUCHANAN, A PUBLICAN

Bystander: Gossip (motivation: to pass on rumours)

Buchanan is a town institution, although actually a fairly recent arrival. They took over the pub around ten years ago but fit in so well you would imagine they've lived in town since birth. Businesslike but always ready to chat (at least until someone calls them).

Moves:

- Tell you something that happened yesterday.
- Tell you something that happened last year.
- Tell you something that happened last century.

WISHART, A FORESTER

Bystander: Witness (motivation: to reveal information)

Wishart looks after a substantial amount of the woods near Aphasia Abbey. They are employed by a local authority or landowner.

They have lived here, and walked the woods, for a few decades. That's plenty of time to notice all the weird things that happen around here and pick up a fair amount of rumours and stories about the area.

Wishart almost always wears practical outdoor work clothes. They will tell a story at any opportunity, although many of them may be tedious and/or irrelevant.

Moves:

- Tell a story about the woods.
- Report something odd they saw.
- Tell you how things are around here.

SCAITHE

Bystander: Skeptic (motivation: to deny supernatural explanations)

Scaithe works at the local library/museum in the town. It's small and old-fashioned, but Scaithe is young and a bit of a hipster.

They don't believe in the supernatural, and like to look for the "real" stories behind local legends and folklore. Obviously, in this town, many of these legends really do have a basis in the supernatural. Scaithe, however, is knowledgeable and an excellent researcher. If the hunters get on well, this can be a source of lots of useful information.

Scaithe may also be found in the community hall two nights a week as a core member of the town's folk music club. The club is a mix of fans and musicians of various skill levels.

Moves:

- Look something up.
- Find an old artifact.
- Perform a folk song.

DAVIS

Bystander: Helper (motivation: to join in the hunt)

Davis is a witch, and regards herself as the protector of the town. They pay attention to anything that might be a mystical threat to the people who live here and will try to stop anything bad happening.

Davis doesn't have any real magical powers as the mystery begins, but has found some interesting records about an old magical tradition in the town. This may lead to some spells that work in the future.

Davis works as a waiter at the Sun Dog pub, but is a playwright too. So far the playwriting has not been successful.

Moves:

- Observe strange goings-on.
- Conduct a ritual to protect the town.

CULT OF THE HUNTING MOON

Minions: Traitors (motivation: to betray people)

These minions are provided in case you wish to throw some extra confusion into the mix, and as an idea for later mysteries.

They worship the Hunting Moon, a goddess of death and creatures that stalk people in the night. They want access to the house because they are searching for their goddess, who was trapped in one of the otherworlds. Aphasia Abbey provides a way to reach those worlds. When she is free, she will send her night-stalkers to kill and devour the people who live near the abbey.

Introduce Hunting Moon cultists as regular folk. They'll try to make friends with the hunters and act as if they are bystanders. They'll pass on information about the Beast if they can. The one thing they have in common is having moved to the town in the last few years.

At the moment, they just want to get in with the hunters in preparation for making a move in the future.

Powers: Hunting moon magic (includes spells of night, shadow, tracking, stalking, and sacrifice).

Attacks: They might use curved sacrificial blades (1-harm hand), or any common weapon.

Armour: None.

Harm capacity: 7

Weakness: Not applicable, they are normal humans.

Moves:

- Make friends.
- Be helpful.
- Conspire in secret.

APHASIA ABBEY SUGGESTED ARC

This arc assumes you will run a few mysteries in the regular style before you settle upon the main threat (which could be the Otherworld Beast, the Hunting Moon, or a similar creature of your own). Once you have determined the ultimate foe of the series, you can begin moving its plan along the steps here.

Day	Powerful spirits and gods take notice that Aphasis Abbey is under new ownership and make moves to take control from the hunters.
Shadows	A particular powerful spirit or ancient god (“the entity”) gains access to the otherworld portals and either leaves or enters our world.
Sunset	The entity gathers great power in their new surroundings.
Dusk	A creature of alien and horrifying powers comes through the portal and attempts to destroy Aphasis Abbey and all within it.
Nightfall	The entity moves in to defeat the creature and take control of the portals.
Midnight	The entity expands control out from Aphasis Abbey throughout the world (and to other worlds too).

THE OTHERWORLDS

What happens when the hunters start exploring the otherworlds from Aphasis Abbey? Here’s some ideas for what they might find:

- **Earth-like Worlds:** What people live here—humans or something else? How does the technology and style of life compare? How powerful is magic and what forms does it take?
- **Spirit Worlds:** Changeable and representing entities of magical power. Are the inhabitant spirits forces of nature, intellect, magic, elements, emotions, or something else?
- **Monster Worlds:** What monsters live here? Is it where they come from? Are there regular people struggling to survive too?
- **Elemental Worlds:** These are the manifestation of a single thing—fire, water, rock, magic, air, water, electricity, cold, heat, time, etc. How does the world appear to visitors? What creatures of that element live here?
- **Cosmic Zones:** These are worlds that reflect a special place or truth of the universe. For example: an eternal library that holds every book, a place where lost things end up, Heaven and Hell, the nine worlds of Yggdrasil, a place that’s outside of time and space.
- **Bizarre Worlds:** This encompasses things like alternate worlds, evil twin worlds, or dimensions with strange physical laws, perhaps even a portal to the real world where the hunters may encounter their players!





GOthic CENTURY

By Marek Golonka

Gothic reimaginings of the nineteenth century are a staple of horror and monster hunting fiction, with popular media like the *Penny Dreadful* series, the *Van Helsing* movie, or *The Incredible Adventures of Van Helsing* video game series. Running typical *Monster of the Week* monster hunts in this era requires only minor tweaks. *Gothic Century* offers advice on such tweaks, as well as bringing more Gothic style to your game.

The nineteenth century was an era that shaped our world and fears. It was a century of modernisation and progress in technology and medicine, but also of rampant colonialism and painful inequality. The old aristocracy of birth mingled with the new aristocracy of money, creating a system that still shapes life today. *Gothic Century* expands themes of classic Gothic fiction into something with a more social bent, focusing not so much on monsters but instead the world itself.

This series framework is divided into five parts:

- **Playbook Modification:** This section shows how the basic playbooks are altered for *Gothic Century*. Each playbook has suggestions for origins appropriate to this era, and most contain alternative gear options and moves.
- **Dark Pasts:** These are optional narrative elements for hunters, to make them more haunted. Each dark past describes a tragic event, occult or mundane, from the hunter's past, and its current repercussions.
- **Gothic Cities:** This describes ways of inventing or researching settings for *Gothic Century* games. Historical horror can benefit a lot from real-world inspirations, but game versions of real cities are always fictionalised, and this section embraces that.
- **Gothic Haunts:** This presents a new type of threat for the Keepers to use. Haunts are locations that emanate dark influences into the cities around them and drag innocent people to their doom. A *Gothic Century* series can be based entirely around researching and destroying such haunts.
- **Gothic Villains:** This looks at classic villains from Gothic fiction reimagined for *Gothic Century* games. Each villain is described with numerous minions to show their social influence and place in the world. A confrontation with one of these villains can serve as a climax or a change of pace in a *Gothic Century* campaign.

FOCUSED TALES

The nineteenth century was a time of rampant sexism, racism, and other forms of inequality. When crafting tales set in this time period, it's tempting to use various forms of inequality and suffering endemic to this age as "background colour," mentioning lots of them in passing just to remind the players that their characters live in awful, awful times.

It's better, however, to focus your mysteries on a few selected problems of this era. Mentioning tragic social problems like slavery or domestic violence in passing robs them of their significance and can be very triggering to players, especially if they're presented in a form that doesn't allow their hunters to react against them. By presenting only a few awful aspects of those awful times and making them the central problem hunters have to deal with, you make your mysteries more engaging and also safer for your players' emotions.

Check in with your players on what they're willing to encounter in the game, and adjust accordingly. And don't forget to have your safety tools (page 11) at the ready!

PLAYBOOK MODIFICATION

Gothic Century uses the standard hunter playbooks, with a few changes. Here you'll find rules on how to fit the playbooks into nineteenth-century Gothic horror, including Victorian and steampunk gear. Playbook elements not mentioned stay the same. For example, the Initiate has a different choice of weapons, but the same armour, so armour isn't mentioned at all in their entry.

GEAR

Gear available in *Gothic Century* differs a bit from weapons available in modern-day games. Some gear options aren't available for playbooks, but there are lots of new ones. You'll see who gets what in the playbook alterations—the new gear is in *italics*. The first list describes real nineteenth-century weapons; the second list describes fancy steampunk and pulp gadgets. Have a conversation about what access, if any, bystanders and minions have to such weapons in your *Gothic Century* series.

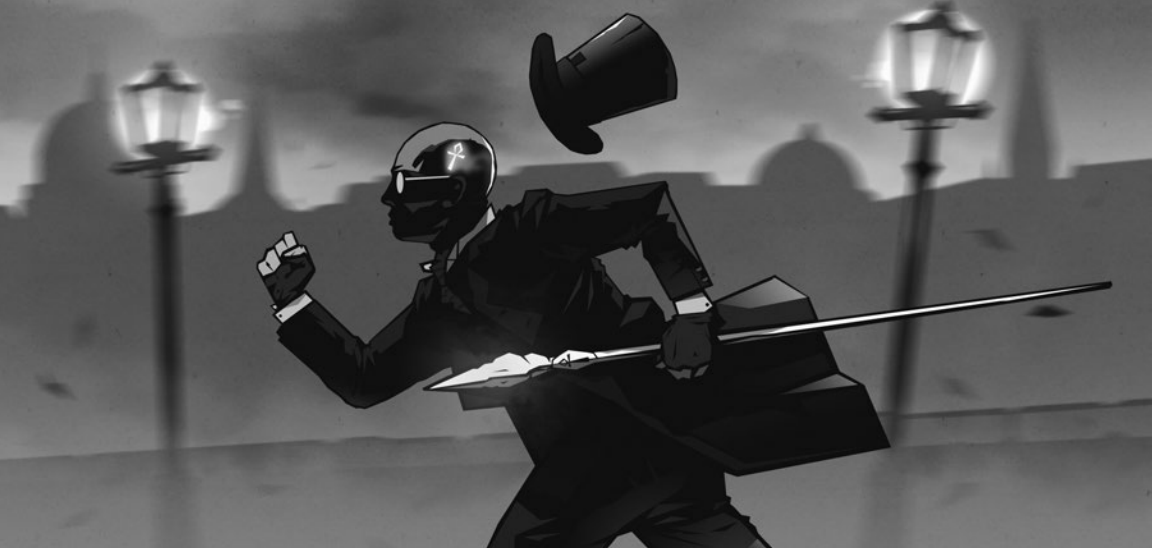
Historical weapons:

- Musket (3-harm close reload slow inaccurate)
- Rifle (3-harm close/far reload slow)
- Lever rifle (3-harm close/far reload)
- Small revolver (1-harm hand/close reload concealable)
- Revolver (2-harm hand/close reload)
- Sword cane (2-harm hand concealable)
- Family heirloom sword (2-harm hand precious)
- Wrench (2-harm hand inconspicuous)

Pulp and steampunk gadgets:

- Portable steamcannon (3-harm close/far reload loud messy)
- Prototype flamethrower (3-harm close area volatile)
- Steam pressure rifle (3-harm close reload)
- Whipblade (2-harm hand/close messy)
- Vampire hunting kit (4-harm hand or 2-harm close restraining against vampires, 1-harm hand against everybody else)

Don't worry about being accurate about what was invented when. We're playing in the period of Gothic horror—the feel is more important than correct historical detail.



THE CHOSEN

In Gothic Century: Anointed by a religious figure, folk or urban hero, inherited a dark power and a quest to use it for a noble goal.

GEAR

No changes needed.

THE CROOKED

In Gothic Century: A criminal who met a monster in the underworld, a broker of occult goods, a revolutionary who uses any means they deem necessary.

The Crooked can choose any of the default backgrounds or the following:

- **Revolutionary:** Constantly seeking to improve the world by radical means, you can **read a bad situation** in any social situation.

GEAR

- **Effective weapons (pick three):** big knife, *lever rifle*, *revolver*, *shotgun*, *small revolver*, *steam pressure rifle*, *sword cane*, *wrench*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Driver:** This move applies to riding beasts and driving carriages as well.
- **Friends on the Force:** Police were less coordinated and professionalised in the nineteenth century than they are now, so your friends are local—but they're high-ranking and can pull some strings if you contact them in time.

THE DIVINE

In Gothic Century: An angel from Christian Heaven, a messenger or member of a polytheistic pantheon, a natural spirit, a fey creature from Romantic fiction, a messenger of an unknown Beyond.

GEAR

Add *whipblade* (3-harm hand/close messy) to the list of divine weapons.

THE EXPERT

In Gothic Century: An occultist, a rich hobbyist, an early scientist, an investigative journalist.

GEAR

- **Monster-slaying weapons (pick three):** mallet & wooden stakes, *whipblade*, cold iron sword, *swordcane*, blessed knife, juju bag, *musket*, magical dagger, silver sword, shotgun, *prototype flame-thrower*, *revolver*.

THE FLAKE

In Gothic Century: A revolutionary, a gossip columnist, an eccentric professor, a visionary artist, an eccentric rentier.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick one):** *revolver*, *rifle*, hunting rifle, shotgun, *wrench*, big knife, *steam pressure rifle*.
- **Hidden weapons (pick two):** throwing knives, *swordcane*, garrote, weighted gloves/brass knuckles, folding knife.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Net Friends** become **Correspondence Society:** Your net friends are a literal net of spies, informants, and eccentrics that constantly correspond with each other, all over the world, via mail and coded messages in newspapers.



THE GUMSHOE

In Gothic Century: A policeman ready to go against his superiors' orders to help others, a consulting detective, a pioneering criminologist.

GEAR

You get a flask of wine, brandy, ale, or vodka; a notebook; two espionage tools; and one handy weapon.

- **Espionage tools (pick two):** climbing claws, dictionary of thieves' codes, access to local fingerprint recordings, durable rope, false police seal, false royal seal, false travel documents, invisible ink, well-crafted disguise (can be chosen multiple times if you want multiple disguises).
- **Handy weapons (pick one):** brass knuckles, *revolver*, *small revolver*, shotgun, *swordcane*, switchblade, *whiplade*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Hacker with a Dragon Tattoo** becomes **Archive Rat** and works with libraries and archives.
- **The Naked City:** Adjust types as required for the nineteenth century. For example, film and TV could mean theatre.

THE HEX

- **In Gothic Century:** A practitioner of a solitary occult tradition, a village witch moving to a big city, the last in a long line of warlocks.

GEAR

- **Wizardly weapons (pick two):** *revolver*, shotgun, athame, crossbow, *sword cane*, *family heirloom sword*, shillelagh, staff.

THE INITIATE

In Gothic Century: A member or servant of the government's secret occult branch, trained by a secret society, a member of a militant religious order.

GEAR

- **Old-fashioned weapons (pick either two or three):** *family heirloom sword*, sword, axe, big sword, big axe, crossbow, fighting sticks, mace, silver knife, spear, *vampire-hunting kit*.
- **Modern weapons (pick either one or two):** *revolver*, shotgun, *prototype flamethrower*, *swordcane*, *wrench*, *steam pressure rifle*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Sect:** *Nifty Gadgets* becomes **Scientifical Gadgets**.

THE MONSTROUS

In Gothic Century: Assaulted and transformed by a werewolf or a vampire, altered by a curse, resurrected with side effects, created by mad science.

GEAR

- **Handy weapons (pick one if you want):** *revolver*, shotgun, big knife, brass knuckles, *steam pressure rifle*, huge sword, sword, *whiplade*.

THE MUNDANE

In Gothic Century: A friend or family member who's just discovered what others do, recently saved from monsters, noticed the sins of the nineteenth century are a source of supernatural evil.

GEAR

- **Mundane weapons (pick two):** golf club, pocket knife, small handgun, hunting rifle, sledge-hammer, nunchuks, *wrench*.
- **Means of transport (pick one):** a fast horse, an average horse and a carriage, a boat, friends who can procure railway tickets, friends who can procure ship tickets.

THE PARAROMANTIC

In Gothic Century: Secretly adored by the Frankenstein creature, Dorian Gray's latest crush, desired by Carmilla, beloved of Doctor Jekyll and/or Mister Hyde, Erzsébet Bathory wants to be young for them, something wants to reach them through Helena Blavatsky.

GEAR

- **Choose two of these normal things:** golf club, pocket knife, small handgun, *swordcane*, a horse, a mule-drawn carriage, a boat.
- Gifts stay the same, but a strange or antique weapon can be a family heirloom sword or a whipblade in addition to standard options.

THE PROFESSIONAL

In Gothic Century: A professional monster hunter, Van Helsing's student, a member of the secret occult police.

GEAR

- You get either a heavy cloak (1-armour hidden) or medieval armour (2-armour heavy) for protection.
- **Serious weapons (pick one):** *portable steamcannon*, *prototype flamethrower*, *rifle*, *lever rifle*, *grenades*.
- **Normal weapons (pick two):** *revolver*, *hunting rifle*, *steam pressure rifle*, *shotgun*, *big knife*, *whipblade*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Agency:** **Weird Tech Gadgets** becomes **Steampunk Gadgets**.
- **Mobility** gives you a carriage or a train compartment built for monster hunting.



THE SEARCHER

In Gothic Century: Bitten by a vampire, barely escaped from a haunted house, lived near a haunt, was targeted by a curse.

GEAR

You get a horse and a carriage or a small ship, a looking-glass, a notebook, three sets of investigator tools, and one self-defence weapon.

- **Investigator tools (pick three):** chemical analysis set, prototype forensic tools, ghost hunting tools, scientific measuring tools, cryptid hunting gear, historical documents and witness reports of strange events, disguise set, garlic, a small mirror, holy symbols of various religions.
- **Self-defence weapon (pick one):** martial arts training, small handgun, small knife, *small revolver*, walking stick, *swordcane*.

THE SNOOP

In Gothic Century: A newspaper journalist, parapsychology pamphlets author, realist novel writer.

GEAR

- **Recording devices (pick three):** notebook & pen; sketchbook, watercolours, and pencils; personal secretary; camera (heavy fragile) and photographic flash apparatus (heavy loud volatile); phonograph (heavy fragile).
- **Detectors (pick two):** electrical lantern (fragile); dowsing rods; ouija board; chemistry test kit; compass, pendulum, tarot cards; electrical fluid detector; sample case & jars; dissection kit; thermometer; stopwatch; prisms, lenses, & crystals; radio-wave receiver (heavy fragile).
- **Subtle weapons:** replace stun gun with chloroform (0-harm intimate stun)

ALTERED MOVES

- **“What Does That Feel Like?”** doesn’t need a camera/microphone, it works when you frantically note in a notebook in front of the move’s target.
- **We’ll Fix It In Post** becomes **Everything’s Documented** and is based on your notes and photos instead of on a laptop.

THE SPELL-SLINGER

In Gothic Century: A magic-wielding war veteran, an occult library owner, a very aggressive exorcist.

GEAR

- **Backup weapons (pick one):** old revolver, heirloom sword, *sword-cane*, ritual knife.

THE SPOOKTAGULAR

In Gothic Century: An itinerant magician, seemingly phony spiritualist, a phantom of an opera.

GEAR

- **Vehicle (pick one):** house-wagon & horses, cart & mules, stout boots, mule, camel, canal-boat, or schooner.

THE SPOOKY

In Gothic Century: A medium, a spiritualist, in mental contact with a vampire that has bitten them, channels energies of haunts, possessed by their own ancestors, deals with demons.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick two):** hunting rifle, *revolver*, *steam pressure rifle*, shotgun, *whiplade*, big knife.



THE WRONGED

In Gothic Century: The sole survivor from Dracula's domain, their family was consumed by a haunt, lost friends due to a social scheme, a desperate revolutionary hurt by monsters in colonial administration.

Suggested prey types: vampires, werewolves, ghosts, occultists, demons.

GEAR

- If you want, you may take a trusted horse, a horse- or mule-drawn carriage, a fast boat, or a small ship.
- **Signature weapons (pick one):** sawn-off shotgun, *whiplade*, *lever rifle*, hand cannon, fighting knife, huge sword or huge axe, specialist weapons for destroying your foes, enchanted dagger, *portable steamcannon*, *prototype flamethrower*.
- **Practical weapons (pick two):** hunting rifle, shotgun, *steam pressure rifle*, *revolver*, big knife, brass knuckles, *wrench*.

LOOK

Many look options fit *Gothic Century* just as well as modern *Monster of the Week*. If an aspect of your look has no options that fit your vision of this playbook in *Gothic Century*, replace options from this aspect with any of the following options or some equivalent of your choice:

Top hat, monocle, flat cap, a provocatively revealed corset, duel scar, an impeccable frock, a gorgeous evening dress, a modest morning dress, well-kept but patched dress, a stained shirt.

DARK PASTS

In Gothic stories, the protagonists often have pasts just as dark as the monsters. Their heroism comes from experiencing but not succumbing to the evils of the world. **DARK PASTS** provide a way to give your hunters such backgrounds. They work like mystery letters, but the choices hunters make in them influence the entire campaign. Each hunter chooses a dark past and fills in the details.

Trigger warning: The **Back from the Dead** dark past mentions suicide. **Outcast** will almost certainly introduce the theme of inequality and intolerance into the game, but the exact subject matter will be decided upon by the player. **Touched by Tragedy** mentions losing family members and loved ones.



BACK FROM THE DEAD

You're alive, but you have been dead. Choose what killed you and what brought you back:

I died...

- Killed by an enemy
- Killed by a friend or lover
- In an industrial accident
- Sacrificing myself for a greater good
- Killed by a haunt, monster, or phenomenon
- As a result of a terrible crime I committed
- By my own hand, to end my misery
- Something else: _____

I returned...

- Thanks to a magical ritual
- Thanks to a religious ceremony
- Thanks to a scientific experiment
- Due to the whim of a god or force of nature
- Because my or others' emotions keep me anchored to this world
- Because the thing that killed me works this way
- But have no idea how and why
- Something else: _____

Think about how death changed you. Choose one of the following options:

- I cling to life desperately. I gain one extra harm box. If I'm unstable, I become fearful and get -1 ongoing to **act under pressure**.
- I'm indifferent to death. I can treat misses when **acting under pressure** as rolling 7-9 if only my life is at stake. If harm is going to kill me, I can't use Luck to negate it.
- I sense death. When someone dear to me dies, or a stranger dies nearby, I feel it. If it's nearby, I sense the exact location of this death. In any case, I get -1 forward because sensing death is a shaking experience.
- I feed on death. When I kill somebody, I get +1 forward or heal 1-harm. It looks unsettling, people seeing it happen will think I'm a monster.
- I see the dead. I am aware of ghosts, and they notice me too. I can talk to and **manipulate** spirits of the dead as if they were normal bystanders. I have a somewhat ghostly look myself.

If you want to be a clearly undead character, choose the Monstrous playbook.

OUTCAST

You became an outcast of the judgmental and close-minded nineteenth-century society. Choose what made you an outcast and how it changed your life:

I became an outcast...

- Because of a mésalliance
- Because I lost all my fortune
- Because I moved to a different society
- Because I challenged the values of my society
- Because my family member did something unacceptable
- Because I perform work unsuited to my social standing
- Because I committed a crime (either legal or moral)
- Something else: _____

The main change it caused in my life was...

- Being shunned by my family
- Being shunned by my friends
- Having problems with the law
- Being able to live however I please
- Finding new friends, my fellow outcasts
- Being praised for my bravery and defiance
- Having to move to a new neighbourhood or city
- Something else: _____

Think about your outcast status and hunting monsters. Choose one of the following options:

- You thirst for belonging. At the beginning of each mystery, hold 2. Spend your hold to get +1 to any roll when you're working with the other hunters. When you're on your own, you get -1 ongoing to **act under pressure**.
- You feel confident on your own. You get +1 ongoing to **act under pressure** when you're on your own, but other hunters get -1 ongoing to **help you out** and **protect** you.
- You understand the importance of social conventions. You get +1 to **manipulate someone** when you use social conventions, but -1 if you ask for something that defies them.
- You lead by example in defying social norms. If the fact that an action breaks social norms would work as a reason to do it when **manipulating someone**, you sense it. If you fail the roll, however, you get -1 ongoing to manipulating that person.

TOUCHED BY TRAGEDY

Your life was deeply affected by a tragic event. People with tragic biographies often have it hard in nineteenth-century society, as people feel compassion for them but also expect them to live in mourning and not complain too much. Choose a tragedy or invent your own:

Type of tragedy:

- Death of a parent.
- Death of a partner or spouse.
- Destruction of your house or residence.
- Being a victim of a crime or assault.
- Having your life turned upside down by a war.
- Loss of family fortune.

Main change in your life:

- Long and painful mourning.
- Having to be officially in mourning without feeling like it.
- Loss of affluence or financial stability.
- Gaining affluence or stability via inheritance.
- Gaining new troubles or enemies via inheritance.
- Becoming somebody's caretaker.
- Having a loving and supporting caretaker.
- Having a troublesome, maybe unwilling caretaker.
- Becoming emotionally distant or frigid.
- Becoming extremely understanding and compassionate.
- Becoming ready for anything else you might face in life.

Think about how the tragedy you've experienced influences the way you hunt monsters. Choose one of the following:

- You're indifferent to tragedies. You treat misses on **act under pressure** as 7-9 when the circumstances are really dire, but you get -1 ongoing to **protect someone** and **help out** in such circumstances.
- You want no further tragedies. You treat misses on **protecting someone** as 7-9 when the protected person would become unstable or die, but you get -1 ongoing to **act under pressure** in such circumstances.
- You want no further risks in your life. At the beginning of each mystery, hold 2. Spend a hold when making a move that requires a roll. The roll's results change: 2-5 is a miss, 6-11 is a partial success, and 12+ is a complete success.
- You're able to risk a lot. At the beginning of each mystery, hold 2. Spend a hold when making a move that requires a roll. The roll's results change: 2-8 is a miss, 9-11 is a complete success, and 12+ is an advanced success even if it's not an advanced move for you. If it is, 9+ is an advanced success.

BEARING A CURSE

You bear a supernatural curse that has affected your life. Choose one of the following curses, or invent your own:

- You're weaker in daylight. At the beginning of each mystery, the Keeper holds 3. They can spend those holds to give you -1 forward to a move made in broad daylight.
- You've got bad luck that complicates your triumphs. At the beginning of each mystery, the Keeper holds 2. They can spend this hold to change your 10+ result to a 7-9 result.
- Your luck is another's misfortune. When you spend a Luck point, the Keeper holds 1 and can spend this hold to give another hunter -2 forward and make them mark experience. Consult the other players if introducing this effect is okay for them before choosing it.
- Your magic is capricious. At the beginning of each mystery, the Keeper holds 3. They can spend those holds to make you choose an extra glitch on a **use magic** roll, no matter the roll result.
- Your reflection in the mirror does its best to unnerve you. When in the presence of mirrors, you get -1 ongoing to **investigate a mystery** and **act under pressure**.
- You are haunted by a hostile spirit: either an ancestor who hates what your family has become, or an ancient family foe. It will berate you for your failings, and it can cause small accidents to vex you.
- Your shadow is possessed. Sometimes it will leave you and run off to cause trouble (fortunately limited to shadow-play and obscuring things). It is not good when people notice your shadow has left.
- Something else, giving you a penalty to your stats and/or a narrative problem: _____

Choose the reason of your curse:

- You were cursed by a powerful occultist.
- Your entire family, organisation, or place of living is cursed.
- You broke a vow or an arcane law.
- You awoke so much hate in an ordinary person that their thoughts brought you a curse.
- You almost changed into a supernatural creature, and now you retain some of its traits.
- Something else: _____

Your curse gave you some knowledge or resilience. Choose one effect:

- You have researched the arcane arts extensively. When you roll a 7+ on **investigate a mystery**, you can ask “What kind of magic was active here?” in addition to your normal pool of questions.
- You’ve built a bond with another person bearing the same curse. You gain an ally.
- Other forms of magic can’t harm you easily. You take 1 less harm from magical attacks.
- You’re used to hardships and misfortunes. At the beginning of each mystery, hold 2. Spend this hold to get an automatic 10+ result to **act under pressure**.

Finally, add “I find a clear, but maybe difficult, way to break my curse” to your improvement options and “I break my curse” to your advanced improvement options.



GOTHIC CITIES

Gothic Century assumes the hunters are based in and protecting a single city. This enables building ties to specific people and locations, showing society in greater depth than a globetrotting series. Setting the series in one city makes it more about society, relations, and obligations.

Main threats in the cities of *Gothic Century* are Gothic haunts—focuses of dark deeds and powers that drag innocents in and corrupt the world around them.

First, however, we need to decide where your series takes place. There are three approaches we can take:

- A fictional or highly fictionalised city
- Research on a real city
- One of the example cities provided here

More about each of these options follows.



FICTIONAL OR FICTIONALISED CITY

Roleplaying games don't need to be historical re-enactment, and your aim is creating a moving and exciting Gothic story. You can invent a city specially for your series, or create a highly fictionalised version of an existing one. Both options work the same: the groups discuss their expectations about a Gothic horror city, and you write them down together.

If you settle on a fictionalised version of a real city, introduce a few of its landmark places and cultural phenomena, but other than that, invent anything you need, the way you need it.

For example: if you decide to create a fictionalised version of London, you might want to use the London mist, Big Ben, Jack the Ripper, and other famous staples of the Victorian London of popular imagination. You're free to establish details of the geography and power structure of the city as you see fit, with no need to consult sources on historical London.

Note down the following:

- **Main Themes:** Topics and motifs central for the city. Things like inequality, pride, danger, scandals, inheritance, death, slavery, liberation, and other big themes of the nineteenth century and Gothic fiction. Be aware that things proposed as themes by one player might be unacceptable to others, so everyone should take care with what they suggest. I suggest each player propose one theme, but accept it only if all players agree.
- **Main Bystanders and Locations:** People and places the players want to interact with. Each player should propose two—a bystander and a location, two locations, or two bystanders.



RESEARCH ON A REAL CITY

In roleplaying games, fun is far more important than historical accuracy. But researching history can be fun—especially for fans of investigative games like *Monster of the Week*!

A well-researched historical city in a roleplaying game is still a fictionalised version of a city, but it draws more inspiration from its real-life roots. Some players find such inspiration constraining, others feel it gives more depth to the story and gives them better ideas for characters and locations.

If most of your group is in the latter camp, do some research about the city you want to play in. First, choose what city that is—it's probably best to make this agreement in advance. Then, give each other a few days to read about this city and its history. Share links and book recommendations with each other to be on the same page and show what hypes you about it. Then, meet and describe the city cooperatively, just as if you were creating a fictional one. The process is the same, but the input data is based on your research. Include as many cool details you've found out as possible, trying to weave a compelling setting out of the stories and biographies you've found as well as out of the general tenets of Gothic fiction.

When a real city is described that way, this version of that city is the canonical one for your games. Only details included in your common version are true. Other facts about the city don't need to be—although any player can introduce additional facts at any time with the Keeper's agreement.



EXAMPLE CITIES

If you prefer to skip cooperative worldbuilding and jump right to action, use one of the following example cities.

They suggest main themes, bystanders, and locations. Haunts or villains are not provided because they can and should be discussed between all players (and I wanted to avoid spoilers about potential mysteries).

LONDON

There's no place like London—but that's not necessarily a good thing. In the capital of the British Empire, you can plainly see the violent aspects of the process that has shaped the world into what it is today. Much of this progress is funded via the exploitation of Great Britain's numerous colonies. London is a sprawling city of immense palaces and immense slums. The rich are richer than ever, and the poor may be a bit better-off than before, but are also crammed in often miserable conditions. The situation within the city is unjust and unfair, and it rests on raw materials and exotic goods imported from exploited colonies. The city's power, wealth, trade, and industry wouldn't be so opulent without the suffering and deaths the Empire has caused. When this suffering erupts into haunts, they punish Londoners both with their own misery and with that of the huge proportion of the world under British rule.

THEMES

Globalisation, power, colonialism, urbanisation, inequalities

LOCATIONS

- **The City** (fortress): Where the big financial and political decisions are made, and nations' fates are sealed.
- **West End** (crossroads): The fashionable part of the city where the rich and privileged conduct their businesses and show off their status.
- **East End** (wilds): A poor and overcrowded area outside the old city walls, including many ethnic neighbourhoods.
- **Tower of London** (hellgate): Once the seat of kings, now a mint, an armoury, and a barracks, where old dreams of wars and dominance want to be dreamt.
- **The British Museum** (lab): Filled with artifacts stolen from indigenous and ancient cultures, some of them really magical.
- **The Thames** (den): The infamously polluted and stinky river of London. God knows what can spawn in its waters and what the drowned can turn into.

BYSTANDERS

- **Queen Victoria** (busybody): In perpetual mourning for her late husband Albert, keeping watch over the public morals.
- **William Stanford** (monster: queen): An aristocrat demonologist who would love to take command of spirits and gods of various colonised peoples.
- **Ann Durrick** (innocent): A simple laundry maid who coordinates help for people in the poor districts and is always looking for allies and resources.
- **John Gerwing** (innocent): A Black actor from the US finding a more accepting audience in London and fighting for main roles in big productions.
- **Arpita Gupta** (victim): A Bengali woman who works as a servant and finds it harder and harder to find new jobs as she vehemently opposes the way her employers treat her and other non-Europeans.
- **Edward Cleary** (helper): A Scotland Yard detective hailing from Ireland and distrusted by many of his co-workers.
- **Adam Doppel** (helper): A Romani immigrant pretending to be Count Dracula's agent to catch people willing to cooperate with vampires.
- **Diana and Malcolm Feathersbury** (officials): Noble siblings doing their best to help those in need, but sometimes blinded by their biases against foreigners and immigrants.
- **Jin Sun** (detective): An affluent Chinese man sent here by his family to learn more about Europe and a budding amateur detective.

WARSAW

One of the biggest cities in tsarist Russia, once a capital of Poland (a state partitioned in the late eighteenth century between Russia, Prussia, and Austria). A perfect place to make big deals for goods from immense and varied Russian lands and strike it rich, but also a point of covert activity of Poles trying to reclaim independence.

Most citizens still consider themselves Polish, but Russian officials try to make the city as Russian as possible. Warsaw has already seen two major uprisings as well as many smaller conspiracies, and its streets have been soaked with blood of conspirators, some among which might demand justice—or vengeance—even after death. The tsarist regime is cruel, but many of the conspirators were ruthless as well.

THEMES

Economic potential, new wealth, conquest, censorship, conspiracies, vengeance

LOCATIONS

- **The Citadel** (prison): A fort and a prison built close to the city centre at the tsar's orders to be able to bombard the city should another uprising begin.
- **The Viceregal Palace** (hellgate): Home to the Tsar's namiestnik (equivalent of a viceroy) and his highest officials.
- **The Vistula River** (wilds): The main river of Polish lands, with a destitute poor district on its western bank.
- **Vienna Station** (crossroads): The railway station from where goods go to the borders of the Russian Empire, and then usually to Austria or Germany.
- **Powązki** (lab): A collection of cemeteries of various religions—numerous Christian denominations, Jews, and Tatar Muslims.

BYSTANDERS

- **Count Feliks Połoniecki** (innocent): An occultist and anarchist ready to teach destructive magic to anybody willing to fight for freedom.
- **Countess Eleonora Połoniecka** (victim): A socialite hosting anti-tsar meetings in the guise of charity and reading clubs.
- **Grigor Sokolov** (official): A Tsarist spy who really likes the city and its inhabitants, but doesn't get why they don't want to be Russians.
- **Andrzej and Marta Kowal** (helpers): A working-class family recently moved from the countryside, caring for their own fortune but not for Poland. Have had experience with monsters.
- **Alina Lubacka** (innocent): A minor noble with a big heart, doing her best to steer clear of the independence movement to focus on her charity work.
- **Hans Rintzke** (skeptic): A German merchant trying to organise the local aristocracy into a company for trade with Russia.
- **Marianna Szymkiewicz** (busybody): A prison carriage driver making courses to, and sometimes from, the Warsaw Citadel.
- **Jacob Goldstein** (gossip): A Jewish traveller wandering around Russia and Scandinavia, sympathetic to the causes of Polish independence, but distrusted by the Poles.

SPARTA

A modern city recently built next to the ruins of the fabled ancient one. The Greeks rebuilt Sparta soon after their war of independence from Turkey in the early nineteenth century, and many take pride in living in a city with such a glorious past. However, old Spartan spirits of cruelty and dominance mix with nineteenth-century nationalism and expansionism, making Sparta a hotbed of murderous ghosts and people willing to prove their worth at any cost.

Built for 100,000 people, Sparta houses far less, making it perfect for a hunter team that wishes for a more intimate and less metropolitan city to watch over.

THEMES

Domination, nationalism, violence, quaintness, parochialism

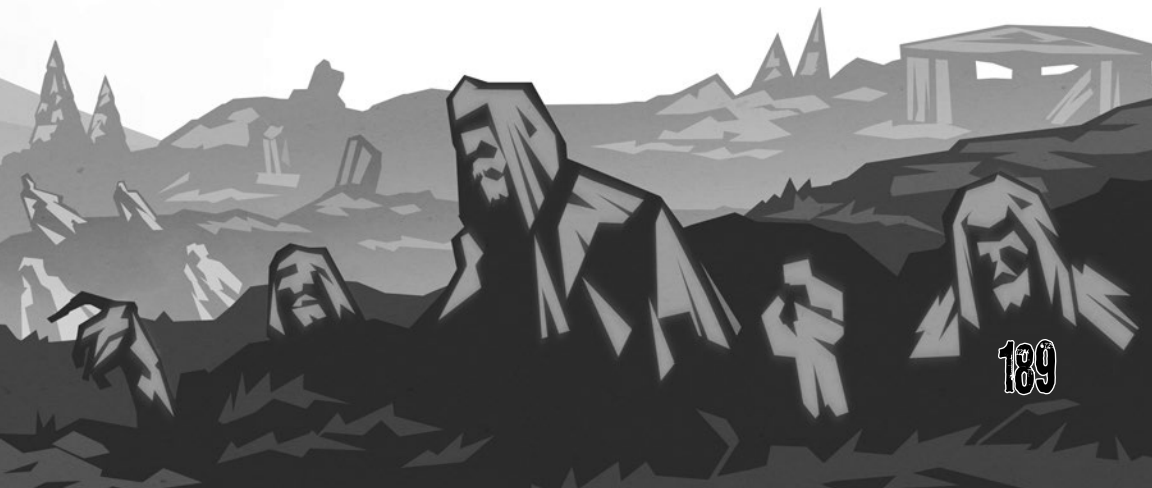
LOCATIONS

- **Ruined Acropolis of old Sparta** (den): Researched by archeologists, trespassed on by curious tourists, sometimes releases wrathful ghosts.
- **The Main Railway Station** (crossroads): Always brimming with rich tourists.
- **The Archaeological Museum** (hub): Filled with objects that might be cursed or a monster's weakness.
- **Main streets** (maze): Modelled after breathtakingly wide avenues of Paris, liberating or depressing in their emptiness.



BYSTANDERS

- **Stefanos Raptis** (busybody): A Greek nationalist trying to bring ancient Spartan traditions back.
- **Ioannis Mikakos** (skeptic): The manager of the Archeological Museum, a collector of arcane artifacts and a staunch disbeliever in the arcane.
- **Anathema Logos** (gossip): An informal guide to the Archeological Museum who seems to remember tales about the artifacts as if she had been there.
- **Pierre Blanchett** (victim): A Swiss archeologist, or rather a fence of artifacts.
- **Rita Onassis** (witness): A spiritualist just returning from a successful tour across Europe and promising to contact ancient Spartan ghosts.
- **Julie Thornwards** (innocent): An English poet trying to be the female Lord Byron.
- **Zoe Karaou** (witness): Ioannis Mikakos's servant who believes in the supernatural and experiments with the Archeological Museum's artifacts to heal and help people.
- **Lysander** (minion: Renfield): A ghost from ancient Sparta torn between bringing its customs back and doing his best to keep them buried.
- **Clio, the Muse of History** (witness): A strange being who wants ancient Sparta to be remembered, but not necessarily resurrected.
- **Çelik Dogan** (busybody): A Turkish spy posing as Julie's Thornwards's servant whose job would be easier if Sparta erupted into chaos.
- **Arianna Strataki** (innocent): A rich artist in love with architecture, wanting to design new buildings that will bring old and new Sparta together.



GOTHIC HAUNTS

Gothic Century focuses not only on classic Gothic dark powers but also on their social and political meanings. The hunters aren't facing isolated Gothic threats, but live in a Gothic world. That's why the main threat type in this framework is a **GOTHIC HAUNT**—a larger version of a phenomenon that turns a part of a city into a hotbed of terrors and corrupts surrounding areas. Gothic haunts symbolize deep scars left in nineteenth-century cities. They are created by misdeeds inspired by old privilege and new money—especially those that include attempts to treat people as minions or commodities.

Each haunt is described in three parts. First is the description of the phenomenon itself, giving its background, powers, and weaknesses. It's followed by the other threats associated with the haunt—the locations where it's active, its minions, and sometimes the bystanders under its influence. Last is a countdown presenting a sample crisis related to the haunt.

A haunt is basically a mystery you can insert into your Gothic city. They usually can be destroyed during a single game, but their stories might get longer, especially if mixed with personal themes and dealing with dark pasts.

Main human minions and bystanders connected to haunts have five sample names. The first three are English, Polish, and Greek—corresponding to the example Gothic Cities. The remaining two come from various cultures around the world.

DESTROYING A HAUNT

Gothic haunts are more resilient than most phenomena. They have weaknesses, like all phenomena and monsters do, but they also have a tenacity track—usually 2–5 boxes. This track represents how strongly the haunt is ingrained in the world. Mark one box on a tenacity track when the hunters destroy or neutralize one of the threats associated with a haunt. Use common sense when the moment the threat is destroyed is not fully obvious: you decide, for example, when you consider a group of minions neutralised enough to mark a box. You can only use a haunt's weakness to destroy it for good after its tenacity track is filled.

THE PEOPLE FACTORY

A group of cruel industrialists acquired a recently abandoned factory. The building was enormous and clearly dangerous, but they saw it as a chance to produce goods cheap and en masse. It is after all easy to find new workers when the terrible conditions claimed a life. What they didn't suspect is that something evil has been listening to their conspiracy and has taken hold in their minds.

The People Factory started as planned (cheap metalware from its initial days can still be found in rundown parts of the city). However, as workers began suffering accidents, often fatal, the evil force lurking in the factory gained more and more power. Recently, it seeded a devious thought in the minds of the factory owners: why not repair broken workers with the steel they produce and sell?

The owners used dark magic to forge servants—part human and part machine—from the corpses of accident victims. Living workers either fled after seeing the husks manning the machines, or were killed and remade. The lack of living workers means the Factory must find other ways to find new “materials.” Plagues and crime offer ample corpses for the factory to rework, and if they aren't enough, the workers can search the city for victims.

Day	Husks kidnap an exceptionally large number of people.
Shadows	The owners strike deals with many clients for entire groups of perfect servants.
Sunset	It turns out the demand is bigger than the supply, owners falsely announce recruitment for a new factory to lure more victims into the neighbourhood.
Dusk	The new workers are transformed into husks.
Nightfall	The factory feels it doesn't need the owners anymore, the husks march out of it, taking more and more people captive to turn them into more husks.
Midnight	The entire city is transformed into an enormous People Factory that begins to spread across the nation.

THE PEOPLE FACTORY

Phenomenon: Teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters)

Scope: The People Factory's powers can be used in the factory building, in the mansions of its owners, and in the presence of its wares. Many lower-class households bought its metalware, and certain rich estates secretly use the husks as servants.

Tenacity: 4

Powers:

- **Accident:** The People Factory can cause malfunctions and accidents. Accidents can destroy any object (unless it is protected by magic) and can cause people up to 3-harm.
- **Awaken Greed:** When you see something of great value to you in places corrupted by the People Factory, roll +Cool. On a 10+, nothing happens. On a 7-9, you must try to get it or prove it's not all that important to you. On a miss, you must try to get it. You don't have to use ways to get it that contradict your fundamental morals, but if you do, take +1 forward and mark experience.
- **Blind Obedience:** In places corrupted by the People Factory, the fact that something's an order from a superior is always a reason to comply when bystanders and minions are **manipulated**. If there's a formal hierarchy in the hunters' team, it applies to lower-rank hunters as well.

Weakness:

- **People are People:** The People Factory is destroyed for good when, once its tenacity track is filled, someone takes a major, selfless risk to save another person in the Factory's sphere of influence.
- **Disown Greed:** The second way to destroy the Factory once its tenacity track is filled is consensually rejecting something extremely precious or valuable when within its sphere of influence.



THE FACTORY BUILDING

Location: Hellgate (motivation: to create evil)

An enormous factory hall in the most rundown part of the city's industrial districts. Back when people worked here, it was considered the worst working place in the city, so the workers haven't mentioned that they work here, and now only a few people know where the factory is. Nowadays, it's an occult industrial nightmare. The factory contains:

- An immense production hall, the floor littered by corpses and steel.
- The foundry, manned by husks that absent-mindedly throw the corpses in and form the fluid metal that clings to them into limbs, armour, or tools.
- A devastated office, where the current owners meet when they need to discuss something.
- Storage space where new husks wait to be led out of the factory and sold.
- A leaky roof that can be reached from other factory roofs nearby and allows you to spy on the production hall.

Processions of new husks to be sold elsewhere march out of the factory by night, accompanied by the owners.

Powers:

- **Centre of the Web:** When in the factory building, the People Factory can deal up to 4-harm with its Accident power, and all moves to oppose the Factory's powers get -1 ongoing.
- **Steel and Flesh:** If a hunter gets thrown into the foundry, they might have one limb replaced with a metal appendage that causes them to lose 1 point of a rating but works either as a weapon (up to 3-harm, intimate or hand) or a tool (allowing to perform some actions so fast that it would normally require **acting under pressure**). Places where hunters with replacement limbs are count as the Factory's area of influence.

THE HUSKS

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the monster) or thieves (motivation: to steal and deliver to the monster)

Half-undead, half-mechanized. The owners might reassure themselves by pretending the factory's husks are a marvel of science, but in fact they're animated by the dark powers behind the People Factory. Most toil mindlessly in the factory building, but a select few—the strongest and most agile ones—leave by night to seek new corpses. They aren't fussy about how the corpse is found, including if it is currently alive.

Attacks: Iron fists: 2-harm hand.

Armour: 1 (metal parts).

Harm capacity: 7

THE OWNERS

Minions: Traitors (motivation: to betray people)

Pragmatic nobles and ambitious bourgeois who think themselves in charge but are in fact puppets of dark forces. They arrange secret deals to supply various people with husks and delight in the profit it brings them.

When people become more cautious and therefore finding new husks gets harder, they'll be more than willing to use their influence to help in a hunt for new "material."

Example Owners:

- A self-deluding aristocrat who considers any form of business to be beneath him but needs money badly: Archibald Earlingstoke/Ksawery Łukomski/Kostas Papandreou/Asim Hassan/Hans Svensen
- A vain industrialist who loves the fact that the conspiracy around the People Factory brings him closer to nobles: Thomas Burnes/Ernest Miechun/Jani Demetis/Musa Badawi/Alfred Harju
- An aging lady who's lost her social standing due to an affair and became embittered, ready for anything to change her fortune: Victoria Bennet/Anastazja Sapieha/Zoe Karezi/Jamila Nasr/Astrid Dahl

THE CLIENTS

Minions: Renfields (motivation: to push the victims towards the monster)

Husks are sold during secret meetings and usually work in hidden, underground parts of manors or other factories. Because the owners usually talk about them in their residences, already corrupted by the People Factory, their clients fall under its charm as well. They are enthusiastic about a cheap and obedient workforce, noticing the strangeness and horror of what they buy only in nightmares or brief glimpses of lucidity. The price for each husk is high, so the clients are found amongst those as well-off as the owners.

It's up to you to decide the scope of the People Factory's "business model." It might be a local affair so far, selling its husks to a few local buyers only, or it might smuggle its "products" all around the world. Maybe a government or two are involved, buying the husks with their sights on creating perfect soldiers?



THE CLOSED MANOR

The noble family that once resided in the Closed Manor pretended the world outside the manor gates doesn't exist. They weren't interested in guests and news, and only servants that agreed to live in the manor stayed in employment. This was due to the family considering the outside world unimportant, while they gloried in abuse and cruelty dealt to their servants and each other.

On the day the family's almost hundred-year-old matriarch died, her spirit remained. She won't let anybody out. If somebody new ventures in, however, it is her pleasure to show them the family legacy.

Once the hunters enter the Closed Manor, they probably won't get out until the haunt is destroyed. They can learn about it from gossip or by investigating a disappearance. The manor's powers make sure people don't remember it, but the hunters can discover unsettling evidence of people disappearing and becoming seemingly unremembered. The Manor's power to blur memories can also serve as a hook—suddenly, the hunters find it difficult to remember an old friend who's wandered there.

Day	A charity worker known to the hunters suddenly disappears from their work and others' memories. They have wandered into the manor grounds to investigate it.
Shadows	The charity worker, led by the Garden's mazes, enters the Manor itself.
Sunset	Other people engaged in the same charity enterprise start circling around the Manor, considering buying it and turning it into an orphanage.
Dusk	The manor gate opens on its own and the charity group goes in. The Manor makes the rest of the city forget about them.
Nightfall	The progeny ghosts start attacking them, envious of their lives.
Midnight	The entire charity group barricades itself in the trophy room and is attacked by the ghosts there.

THE CLOSED MANOR

Phenomenon: Bubble (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside)

Suggested family name: Earlingstoke/Połomski/Mercouris/Abe/Barasa

Scope: The Closed Manor is powerless outside its garden walls. Unless specifically noted in the power's description, people not on the property are free of the house's influence. Once the hunters arrive at the manor grounds, they almost certainly won't be able to leave unless they destroy the haunt.

Tenacity track: 3

Powers:

- **No Escape:** Leaving the Closed Manor requires that the matriarch lets you go (this is so far unheard of), **big magic** (with at least four requirements related to freedom or the outside world), or defeating the phenomenon. The Manor keeps you inside by twisting the garden into a maze, locking doors, or raising direction-twisting mists around the garden walls.
- **Be Our Guest:** The Closed Manor cares for the base needs of guests and inhabitants, conjuring food and drink for them. It can even create small objects and pieces of furniture. These conjured items decay or evaporate if taken out of the manor grounds.
- **Blur Memories:** The Closed Manor is able to make bystanders forget about itself, the family that lived here, and any person that wanders into its grounds. It can even erase such information from written records in the surrounding city. Hunters can resist this, but they feel the information becomes foggy and hard to remember.
- **Poltergeist:** The Manor can throw objects that are a part of its regular equipment, causing up to 3-harm.

Weakness:

- **Evaded:** When someone escapes the Closed Manor via **big magic** once its tenacity track is filled, the Manor is destroyed. Depending on the events leading to the escape, it can turn to dust or become an ordinary residence.
- **Fire:** When a fire utterly consumes either the Manor or the Garden around it and the tenacity track is filled, the entire phenomenon is dispelled for good. If the track isn't filled, the building rebuilds itself and the garden regrows within hours.

THE MANOR

Location: Prison (motivation: to constrain and prevent exit)

A once grand but now creepy and decrepit estate. Its corridors are twisted and adorned with web-covered paintings and sculptures. Its rooms are filled with exquisite but mouldy furniture and tarnished silver and porcelain. It doesn't follow any sensible geometry, instead leading deeper and deeper into an infinite series of darker and darker rooms.

Powers:

- **Hide Secrets:** The Manor can promise a guest to hide anything they do inside. Remembering things hidden by this power is impossible for bystanders and minions and requires **acting under pressure** or using **big magic** for the hunters. The Manor usually gives this promise only when it sees somebody about to do something nasty or scandalous.
- **Lock:** Regardless of the Closed Manor as a whole's power, the Manor itself can also shut people in, either by not allowing them to open doors or by endlessly duplicating new rooms and corridors in front of them.



THE GARDEN

Location: Maze (motivation: to confuse and separate)

Few open spaces are as oppressive as the Closed Manor's garden. It's badly overgrown, with its trees and bushes forming a veritable maze. The statues of family members are tarnished or outright broken, and those that still have arms seem to be grasping for you in the corner of your eye.

Powers:

- **Overgrowth:** The Garden doesn't have the Manor's extradimensional geometry, but it can make its plants grow unnaturally or wither within minutes, easily cutting off or creating new paths.
- **Entangle:** Poltergeist attacks by the Closed Manor in the Garden get the "restraining" tag.

THE PROGENY'S GHOSTS

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

The family members' statues really do grasp towards the newcomers, for they are haunted by the ghosts of the family members. They usually satiate their envy towards the living by playing tricks on and intimidating them, but sometimes they attack, hungry for life or afraid a guest is trying to run away. Ironically, in such cases they're punished by the Closed Manor, who wants its guests terrified and imprisoned but in one piece until it gets bored with them.

The Matriarch is not among those ghosts, her ghost is a haunt—the Closed Manor as a whole.

Attacks: Envious touch: 2-harm hand life drain.

Armour: 2 against non-magical harm (incorporeal).

Harm capacity: 7

THE FAVOURITE GRANDDAUGHTER

Minion: Cultist (motivation: to save their own skin at any cost)

The Matriarch's favourite granddaughter is frozen in time as the teenager she once was. She's able to freely wander the manor and the garden. She was the Matriarch's favourite because she never expressed any desire to leave the Manor. She was willing to do anything to appease the Matriarch, including hurting the servants and less-favoured family members.

What the Matriarch never noticed is that all of this was out of fear. The Favourite Granddaughter would like nothing better than escaping the Matriarch's influence forever. If she sees an opportunity, she'll seize it with little regard for others' safety. On the other hand, she's willing to do anything and harm anyone to hide this intent from the Matriarch.

The Favourite Granddaughter looks like a teenage girl and always wears an elaborate, obviously expensive dress that was fashionable a few decades ago.

Suggested names: Daphne Earlingstoke/Zuzanna Połomska/Angela Mercuri/Hana Abe/Eidi Barasa

Powers:

- **Grandmother's Love:** When attacked, the Favourite Granddaughter is protected by the Matriarch's poltergeist powers.
- **Shortcuts:** She knows the Closed Manor and its warped magic well enough to be able to appear in any place within the manor grounds almost instantly.

Weakness:

- **Homesick:** The Favourite Granddaughter is cursed by the Matriarch. If she ever leaves the Closed Manor, her age catches up to her, bringing her to her fifties or sixties. Additionally, she starts suffering 2-harm per day that can't be healed outside the Manor. If the Closed Manor is destroyed, the curse continues, but can be dispelled with **big magic**.

Attacks: Dagger: 1-harm hand concealable; Poltergeist powers 3-harm hand/close forceful (in self-defence)

Armour: 1 (the Matriarch's favour).

Harm capacity: 7



THE TROPHY ROOM

Location: Lab (motivation: to create weirdness)

The centre of the manor is a filthy rich chamber containing trophies and memorabilia from the family's glorious past. It includes crests, hunting trophies, portraits of ancestors, and old-fashioned weapons. All of this would make dangerous weapons for the Manor's poltergeist powers, but the Matriarch loves those souvenirs too much and only uses them as a last resort.

Other family members are less thoughtful than her, however. They sometimes stalk unwelcome guests here only to attack them with the weapons on display.

Hunters need to deal 12-harm to memorabilia in this room to consider it destroyed. Once they start destroying it, the Matriarch will start using her poltergeist powers here.

Powers:

- **Arms and Armour:** The Manor's poltergeist attacks can deal +2 harm more in this room. The progeny's ghosts can possess arms and armour displayed here, becoming able to deal 3-harm (choose fitting tags) but losing their incorporeality. All attacks by weapons in this room have the "cursed" tag.
- **Cursed:** Hunters taking harm from a cursed attack take -1 forward. If they take harm again before applying this -1, it changes to -1 ongoing as long as they are in the Closed Manor.
- **Proud Display:** Hunters **investigating a mystery** in this room can ask any questions about the Matriarch's psychology and motivation in lieu of the usual ones.

THE PLAGUE CEMETERY

A cemetery built a century ago to bury the victims of a sudden plague of supernatural origin, remembered in the city due to its apocalyptic proportions. For generations, no one lived near it, but now wild industrialisation and rising prices tempt factory owners to build cheap tenements here.

Feeling new victims around it, the force that caused the plague in the first place stirs.

Day	More and more people from the tenement houses become ill.
Shadows	The Doctor ignores a tenement where almost everybody is infected to see how the infection spreads.
Sunset	The people from the neighbourhood bring the disease to the districts where they work.
Dusk	Most people in the infested tenement die.
Nightfall	The Doctor starts being called to disease outbreaks in richer districts and the Plague Cemetery makes him a disease carrier.
Midnight	The plague spreads, putting the entire city under the Plague Cemetery's influence.



THE PLAGUE CEMETERY

Phenomenon: Biohazard (motivation: to infect, harm, and spread)

Scope: The Plague Cemetery can use its powers on the cemetery grounds and anywhere the plague strikes. Therefore, places conquered with germs and infections become fair game for its supernatural effects as well.

Tenacity track: 2

Powers:

- **Bestow Disease:** The Plague Cemetery can bestow diseases upon those in its influence. Those diseases can be merely unpleasant (no mechanical effect), weakening (–1 ongoing to all rolls), or lethal (1-harm per day—when unstable, 1 per hour). For curing diseases, refer to the following section. A hunter can spend Luck to combat a disease.

Weakness:

- **Containment:** After its tenacity track is filled, the Plague Cemetery is destroyed for good once it fails to infect any new person for three days.

CUSTOM MOVE

Curing Diseases: When you try to cure a disease, prepare adequate medicine or therapy and roll +Sharp. On a 10+, the patient holds 1. On a 7-9, the patient holds 1 but takes –1 ongoing for this day. On a miss, choose one: you make it worse, or you contact it yourself. You can try once a day. When the patient has holds equal to the Plague Cemetery's current unmarked tenacity boxes, they're cured.

If the disease is magical, curing it will require rare occult components—ask the Keeper if you can prepare them with **use magic** or need to find them somewhere.

Diseases not related to the Cemetery require 1–3 holds to heal.



THE CEMETERY

Location: Hellgate (motivation: to create evil)

An unkempt place that's been falling apart for ages. Cheap gravestones are crumbling or crumbled, mass graves for the poor are badly overgrown.

Although the plague happened centuries ago, there is malaise and malevolence in the air, as if some kind of miasma was trying to actively invade your lungs.

Powers:

- **Protection from Below:** The dark forces that originally sent the plague are still watching over the cemetery. If someone tries to sanitize or destroy it, they will send their representatives to protect it. Depending on the series mythology, those can be ghouls, ghosts, demons, homunculi swarms, or something altogether different. Usually, treat these as minions, even if you use an example monster from the rulebook.

TENEMENT NEIGHBOURHOOD

Location: Deathtrap (motivation: to harm intruders)

Built fast and cheap, it would be quite dangerous to live in, even without the neighbouring cemetery. The inhabitants do their best to remain neighbourly and kind to each other, but sometimes they feel each has to take care of their own problems.

The neighbourhood needs to be rebuilt, put under good medical care, extensively renovated, or something of that magnitude to stop counting as a threat in this haunt.

THE DOCTOR

Minion: Traitor (motivation: to betray people)

A well-educated and rich medic. He genuinely wants to help, but unfortunately not these particular people. Actually, he's happy a new epidemic strikes here, where nobody worthwhile lives. He visits the diseased to experiment with curing the plague—sometimes giving proven medicine, sometimes experimental medicine, sometimes nothing at all to see how the illness develops. He hopes to use this knowledge to treat wealthier patients, who in his worldview have the double virtue of paying more and being more worth saving.

Suggested names: Richard Gale/Ernest Solin/Dimitri Zolotas/Lev Orlov/Ronit Laghari

CREATING NEW HAUNTS

When creating new haunts, keep a few things in mind:

They are phenomena: Mysteries centred around haunts are phenomena mysteries, as described in *Tome of Mysteries* and the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week*. When designing them, choose a phenomenon type for each of them and create a few powers fitting the way phenomena operate. The only difference is that you give them a tenacity track as well.

They are central: A haunt is a phenomenon as central to a mystery as monsters usually are. Make them versatile and dangerous, give them a few powers that can harm the hunters directly and influence the world around them in nefarious ways.

Their threats are varied: Some threats within a haunt, especially its central location, can simply enhance powers already possessed by the main phenomenon, but in general each threat described in a haunt should have a separate personality and unique modes of action. They can even be in a slight conflict with each other.

There are various ways to destroy them: A haunt's tenacity track should be 1 or 2 boxes shorter than the list of its constituent threats. The hunters don't need to eliminate every single threat connected to a haunt. Also, it's better if they have more than one weakness, allowing them to be destroyed in various ways.

They represent human ignorance or malice: Haunts are places of supernatural evil, but this evil is born or spreads because of humans. At the root of every haunt, there's a human desire or decision that didn't take others into account, treated them like toys or property, or just downright wanted to harm somebody.



GOTHIC VILLAINS

There is pleasure in repetition, especially repetition tailor-made for the needs and tastes of those experiencing it. That's why it's absolutely okay to introduce a classical **GOTHIC VILLAIN** into a *Gothic Century* game. Remember, however, that this setting is about the world and not just the villain—the mysteries centred around Dracula, Jekyll, or Carmilla shouldn't be solitary monster hunts but rather a confrontation with the insidious influence those villains have on the world around them.

You usually shouldn't start a campaign by introducing a villain. First, let the hunters get to know their city better, tackle a few haunts, and create meaningful relationships with some bystanders. Then a Gothic villain can enter the stage that's already been prepared to fully showcase their malignant influence.

Gothic Century has a punk bent, it stresses how often Gothic monstrosities and dangers represent elements of the establishment, power structure, and patriarchy. That's why each of those villains has both arcane powers and political or social significance—hunters opposing them will find that some ordinary humans will side with monsters to protect their power and privilege.



DRACULA

Themes: Old privilege, feudalism, predation

A living—or rather undead—piece of medieval feudalism in the nineteenth century. His power and influence is a testament to how little has changed since the times of serfs and fiefdom.

In life, Vlad Tepes Dracula, the voivod (ruler) of Wallachia, was a bloodied anti-hero: protecting his lands from both Turkish and Hungarian conquest, fighting crime and injustice, but doing all of this in an extremely ruthless, brutal manner. Cutting hands for the slightest theft, impaling his enemies and greedy merchants alike, Dracula managed to create order based on terror. After death, his drive didn't allow him to leave this world—he returned as a vampire, preying on the blood of his subjects to sustain his rule. In his view, he was and still is a just ruler, as it's the subject's duty to provide for their lord, even giving their lives for them, in exchange for protection from outside threats.

Dracula's Wallachian domain today is just a few villages around his castle of Poenari, inhabited by people living in constant fear and shunned by the world outside. The old aristocrats of Europe, however, remember tales of the perfect tyrant and some know the occult formulas needed to contact him. If an old family feels they're losing their power, they might well promise Dracula the blood of their servants or even the bodies of their heirs to make him join them and fight for their status with soul-crushing terror.

Introducing Dracula:

- If the hunters are investigating a haunt connected to an aristocratic family, the family might call upon Dracula's help just before the haunt is destroyed. The count arrives, changes the family heirs into his spawn, and tries to take control over the city.
- If the hunters' actions cause a power vacuum in a promising city, Dracula might move in there by tricking any bystander—or, worse yet, the hunters!—into inviting him.
- If the hunters are known to oppose the social order, Dracula might actively start hunting them, coordinating the hunt between his many allies before stepping in himself.

DRACULA, THE VAMPIRE TYRANT

Monster: Queen (motivation: to possess and control)

Dracula is an incarnation of the past that doesn't want to let go. He wears sumptuous, heavy fur coats Victorians hunters might know only from Renaissance paintings and museums. His chest is adorned with medals of various military and religious honours, given to him by rulers from all over Europe over the course of his unlife. He looks at people with disdain and superiority, save for the rare cases when he considers somebody his equal. This dubious honour is usually reserved for royalty and top-rank nobility, but sometimes Dracula looks like that at somebody who really impresses him—and if he's impressed by somebody he considers beneath him, he'll do his best to destroy such a person or turn them into his vampire spawn.

Powers and statistics like the vampire in *Monster of the Week* (page 245, hardcover page 257), but harm capacity increased to 15.

DRACULA'S SPAWN

Minions: Cultists (motivation: to save their own skin at any cost)

Vampires created by Dracula aren't numerous, for two reasons. One is pragmatic: his spawn usually travel with him, and they all have to feed. The other is a prejudice: to Dracula, turning somebody into a vampire is like knighting them, and he doesn't want to bestow this honour on the unworthy. If he takes a commoner as his spawn, he treats them terribly, forcing them to act on his every whim, but also conform to the antiquated code of Renaissance etiquette Dracula himself was raised in.

Many among Dracula's spawn detest him and would like nothing better than to break free of his domination. They can't do this themselves, but the hunters could use **big magic** ritual to do it. Some minions might then become typical vampire antiheroes of modern fiction if freed (perhaps even a new monstrous hunter for the team), others might become undead tyrants in their own right.

Powers and statistics like the vampire in *Monster of the Week*, but as long as Dracula controls them, he controls the vampires they create as well.



DRACULA'S BRIDES

Minions: Traitors (motivation: to betray people)

Dracula's three most famous spawn are, of course, his trophy wives: Violetta from Italy, Zsuzsanna from Hungary, and Grażina from Lithuania. Dracula chose them not only for their beauty and noble lineage, but also because he felt that they'll be fully dependent on him because of their families' dwindling wealth and influence. In each of their cases, he wasn't exactly right.

- **Violetta** has lots of contacts among Italian merchants and artists. She uses those contacts to support her decadent lifestyle and to warn Dracula's enemies when she wants to disrupt his plans.
- **Zsuzsanna** is interested in spiritism and has many friends among Dracula's dead victims. Those ghosts try to convince her to rise openly against their oppressor, but she's not ready for this—yet.
- **Grażina** has no such allies, but has learned to manipulate Dracula's complexes and prejudices quite well.

All three are conflicted—they alternate between struggling against their role and revelling in the affluence it gives them. They see no escape from Dracula's grasp and find it hard to cooperate because each of them fears the others are more broken and would betray any conspiracy to the count. If they notice his weakness, however, they might become valuable if uneasy allies of the hunters.

Powers and statistics like the vampire in *Monster of the Week*, but they can turn somebody into a vampire only on Dracula's orders and he controls their spawn.

HUMAN SERVANTS

Minions: Renfields (motivation: to push victims towards the monster)

If Dracula repeatedly breaks somebody's will with his hypnosis, this person becomes his slave in life. Those people have forgotten how it feels to be free or to feel hope. Instead, they feel they are marionettes fulfilling Dracula's wishes willingly because it's less painful than him invading their minds again.

It's hard, but not impossible, to show them they can have a life again.

Powers:

- **Broken Mind:** Unless shielded by the hunters' magic, human servants can't resist Dracula's hypnosis, and the hypnosis takes the effect of total enthrallment rather than individual commands. This can be healed by **big magic** or responsible psychological care (difficult to come by in the nineteenth century!).
- **Careless:** They've stopped believing their lives mean anything, and are desperate and dangerous. They deal +1 harm with any weapon they wield, but hunters get +1 when **kicking their asses**.
- **Blood Is Life:** If the servant consumes a living creature (such as an insect, rodent, or bird), they heal 1-harm. Most like to do this all the time, even if unhurt.

Attacks: Fists: 1-harm hand; Bite: 1-harm intimate messy; Big knives: 3-harm hand; Sometimes revolvers: 3-harm close.

Harm capacity: 7

HUMAN ALLIES

Minions: Scouts (motivation: to stalk, watch, and report)

Because Dracula cares only for those he considers nobles, there are few people of humble origins among his allies. The oft-repeated claim that Romani people are his ardent supporters is an ugly deception created to throw the hunters off scent. A typical human ally of Dracula is a noble of an ancient lineage and great connections, but not always much fortune left. They keep the count informed about the modern world and look out for situations in which he might intervene to guard the old order.

DORIAN GRAY

Themes: Narcissism, egoism, wastefulness

Dorian's origins are lost in history. He might be 25, 50, or 500 years old, some even say his name alludes to him being an ancient Greek. One thing is sure: he's not getting older. Or, for that matter, tired, ill, or intoxicated. Dorian seems to be the avatar of narcissism and indulgence. Many people who meet him want to be just like him, and he preys on that—if someone gets too close to Dorian, he can make this person a copy of himself, a blemished picture that accumulates age, injury, and effects of debauchery instead of Mr Gray.

Dorian loves leading people down the dark path he himself follows. He encourages narcissism, wastefulness, exploitation of others—all the ways of celebrating one's ego instead of one's connections. *Gothic Century*, full of nobles wanting to prove their waning influence and bourgeoisie showing their new power, is a perfect hunting ground for him.

Introducing Dorian:

- An upper-class friend of the hunters met Dorian at a charity ball and was manipulated by him into stealing from the charity coffers, becoming a Picture of Dorian Gray. Dorian took the most precious stolen offerings.
- Dorian hears about the hunters and decides it'll be a great thrill to make one of them his Picture as well as his lover or at least a supporter.
- A Caricature of Dorian Gray makes their lair in a haunt the hunters have recently destroyed and starts attacking people to protect their privacy.



DORIAN GRAY, THE IMMORTAL IMMORALIST

Monster: Tempter (motivation: to tempt people into evil deeds)

Powers:

- **Create a Picture:** When Dorian Gray tempts you to indulge at the expense of others, mark experience if you do. Once Dorian leaves, roll +Cool. On a 10+, this encounter left no impact on you. On a 7-9, you're charmed by Dorian and take -1 ongoing to all rolls against him until he hurts or deceives you in an obvious way. On a miss, you become a Picture of Dorian Gray. Over the course of a week, your features change slightly to resemble Gray's. You may choose to change or add look options to reflect this.
- **Safe behind Pictures:** When Dorian has at least one Picture, he doesn't age—instead the Pictures age faster. Harm and any unwanted physical effects also transfer to them, no matter the distance. Aging is split evenly among the Pictures, harm and other effects are sent to one chosen by Dorian. That way, as long as there always is at least one Picture, Dorian is immortal and immune to aging.
- **Survival Instinct:** Dorian is used to the thought he'll live forever and defends himself fiercely when he's in risk of dying. When he has no Pictures, he deals +2 harm more and has 2-armour.

Weakness:

- **Exposed:** When Dorian has no Pictures, he can be killed like any human.

Attacks: Small revolver: 1-harm hand/close reload concealable; Sword cane: 2-harm hand concealable.

Harm capacity: 7



DORIAN'S FOLLOWERS

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the monster)

Whenever Dorian goes, he usually quickly becomes surrounded by a crowd of rich and pretentious people. He impresses them with his beauty, elegance, wit, and decadence, leading them in experiments with their darker sides.

PICTURES OF DORIAN GRAY

Bystanders: Victims (motivation: to put themselves in danger)

Those who become Pictures of Dorian Gray sometimes don't always understand the situation they're in and Dorian may or may not explain it, as he fancies. They rapidly grow old, feeble, and ruined. Some try in vain to cure it, perhaps trying to absolve for their sins or going deeper and deeper into excesses and addictions to forget the curse that's upon them.

Powers:

- **Moths to the Flame:** Fate seems to conspire to bring the Pictures as close to Dorian as possible. They're never far off from him. Even if he moves to a different continent, all his Pictures end up in the same general area in a few weeks at most. If a hunter becomes a Picture, fate can work the other way round and Dorian can be forced to stay near them instead.

CARICATURES OF DORIAN GRAY

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

Most Pictures live sad but relatively mundane lives. Sometimes, however, Gray indulges so intensely that all the exhaustion, intoxication, and sometimes even wounds break his Picture's body and soul. In such a case, a Caricature of Dorian Gray is formed, a misshapen, shambling human form. Most of them can't get past their rage and envy, attacking people in blind fury. Some might try to enslave others and force them to serve a Caricature, pretending not to see its corruption.

Powers:

- **Durable:** Once a Picture gets warped into a Caricature, it's hard to break them even further. All damage transferred to them by Dorian is reduced by their armour. No amount of illness or exhaustion transferred to them can really kill them, although it can put them in great pain.
- **Moths to the Flame:** As the Pictures' power.

Attacks: Malformed flesh: 3-harm intimate messy.

Armour: 2 (warped anatomy).

Harm capacity: 7





CREATING NEW VILLAINS

Well, “new” might not be the best word—the best candidates for further Gothic villains are the classics of nineteenth-century Gothic literature. You can think about writing up, for example:

- Victor Frankenstein and his creature
- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde
- Carmilla
- Countess Elizabeth Bathory, the possible source of Dracula’s legend
- Jack the Ripper
- Varney the Vampire

You can also take one of those classic villains as an inspiration and develop a brand new one that’s based on them or mixes inspirations from two or more among them.

However, remember about the style of *Gothic Century*—always think about the place of those villains in society and invent not just their monstrous minions and haunted locations, but also seemingly ordinary people and places corrupted by their influence.

For example, in *Gothic Century*, Dr Jekyll could work for a cabal of people willing to separate evil from good to lose all qualms about their immoral actions. As Hyde, he covers the tracks of his experiments on people, while his minions include the first clients who dared try his “therapy” themselves and those that haven’t tried it yet but are supplying him with money, equipment, and maybe even test subjects.



DREAMING WITH THE GODS

By Marek Golonka

Dreaming with the Gods is a Renaissance fantasy horror series framework. It invites you to tell the story of the heroes of Helos, a country just leaving a Fallen Age thanks to Dream Alchemy but also ravaged by monsters from ancient myths. It has a feel and aesthetics similar to *Bloodborne*, H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands, *Changeling* games (both *The Dreaming* and *The Lost*), and swashbuckling fiction like *The Three Musketeers* or *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Depending on the players' choices, it can also have some elements of magic-based industrial revolution reminiscent of the *Eberron* setting in *Dungeons & Dragons*.

This series framework is divided into two sections—*Preparing Dreaming with the Gods* and *Running Dreaming with the Gods*. The first section is intended for both hunters and the Keeper. It presents guidelines for cooperative worldbuilding that should happen before each campaign of *Dreaming* and for creating a hunter team. The second section is intended for the Keeper only and contains ideas for mysteries, monsters, and arcs, as well as a suggested metaplot of the framework—shortly speaking, terrible spoilers!

PREPARING DREAMING WITH THE GODS

As *Monster of the Week* has an emphasis on cooperative worldbuilding, *Dreaming with the Gods* offers you a general premise and invites you to expand it by reading aloud and choosing options in the Prologue. It also has a general metaplot the Keeper can use to surprise you and plan arcs, but even this metaplot will change according to your choices. Only a few base facts about the setting are established:

The game happens in a fictional world, in a country called Helos, which is a cross between sixteenth-century France, Spain, and Italy. It's built from swashbuckling novels and gunpowder fantasy tropes more than from history.

The technical and civilisational level of Helos is similar to Europe in sixteenth-century but with various clockwork and magical wonders. What those wonders are will be decided by you in the Prologue.

The force that elevated Helos from the Fallen Age to the Renaissance were Dream Alchemists, a group of occult sages who discovered how to dive into dreams of the lost Ancient Ones and found traces of the wisdom and magic they possessed. What exactly the Ancient Ones were capable of and what has already been retrieved will be decided in the Prologue. Think of the Ancient Ones as magic-using ancient Romans if Rome were between ancient Greece and Egypt and intercepted the culture of both countries equally instead of mostly Greek. It's up to the Keeper to decide if it happened due to colonialism or peaceful cultural exchange.



Sometime after the Dream Alchemists started working their wonders, monsters started appearing in Helos. They are the animal-human hybrids remembered from the myths of the Ancient Ones. They are terribly aggressive and dangerous.

Depending on what wonders of the Ancient Ones you choose, the Dream Alchemists might be more or less capable of protecting parts of Helos from the monsters. They surely can't protect everybody, and **common people stand no chance against those beasts—that's why Helos needs hunters.**

The capital of Helos is Hermessia, "The Soaring City." It's ruled by Queen Helena I, the Radiant. Following the Queen's example, many nobles and Dream Alchemists have taken on new names taken from myths and epics about the Ancient Ones. Before she became Helena, the Queen was Margarita, and it's a punishable offence to mention her under her previous name.

SETTING UP THE GAME

The main part of setting up a game of *Dreaming with the Gods* is reading the Prologue together. It's a description of the world you'll be playing in and the role of hunters therein. You can either ask one of you to read it out loud during the first session or read it on your own before. The important thing is that you should make the decisions the Prologue asks for when you're together. The Keeper can ask further questions about the choices players make to establish more details about the world—it's the first *Monster of the Week* session for a new team of hunters, so it's the Keeper's duty to ask as many questions as possible!

The Prologue follows in the next section. After it, you'll find details on character creation that don't fit the Prologue itself.



PROLOGUE

The world has exited a long period of fear and misery so abhorrent that right after it ended, it was immediately called the Fallen Age.

WHY WAS THIS AGE SO TERRIBLE?

Each player—including the Keeper—chooses one of the following problems:

- Mass hunger.
- Tyrannical religious leaders.
- Tyrannical secular leaders.
- Incurable diseases.
- Lots of bloody wars.
- Extreme cruelty between people.
- Superstitions and fear of the unknown.
- Lost contact between cities and countries.

The Fallen Age ended when the Dream Alchemists found out a way to dive into the Ancient Ones' dreams and extract precious knowledge from them. The Ancient Ones were people from before the Fallen Age, from the time known as the Golden Age.



WHAT WAS SO GOLDEN ABOUT THE GOLDEN AGE?

What among those things was already retrieved by Dream Alchemists? First, each player—including the Keeper—chooses two of the following boons as things associated with the Ancient Ones. Then make another round in which each player chooses one thing that was already retrieved. “Retrieved” can but needn’t mean “widely used”—it only means the secret of repeating this feat is known to some people, maybe only Dream Alchemists so far. The Keeper decides how widespread a given boon already is but they can consult other players about it.

- Arches and other architectural lore needed to create great buildings.
- Great poetry and dramas about fate, passion, and ambition, able to move any heart.
- Blood-based medicines that make terrible wounds heal in a few hours.
- Herb-based medicines that purge the body of illness and disease.
- Alchemical processes that make solid substances lighter than air.
- Herbs allowing human minds to touch dreams of the Ancient Ones without the great preparations the Dream Alchemists usually undergo.
- Extremely volatile mixtures burning great spreads of land in a moment.
- Insidious mixtures that make solid substances frail and breakable.
- A powder that makes water breathable—a small dose is enough to transmute an entire lake.
- Ways to reforge iron so that it becomes hard as diamonds.
- A language that allows one to command animals and maybe understand them.
- True Astrology: An ability to divine the future from the movements of stars.
- Worldflow: Meditation techniques allowing one to slightly alter the physical world around them.
- Dreamdance: A ritual that grants its participants the power of lucid dreaming.

Because the current era is gradually regaining the Golden Age’s splendour thanks to the Dream Alchemists, it is widely called the Renaissance—a fancy term for a rebirth in the current form of the Ancient Ones’ language. Helos, the country Dream Alchemists reside in, became the most prosperous country in the world. Its capital Hermessia became the Soaring City—an extravaganza of tall towers and opulent palaces that begins to rival the mythical splendours of the Golden Age. Raised to the sky by Dream Alchemy and protected by the Queen’s fiercely loyal and chivalric Musketeers, the Renaissance seemed the best era in the history of mankind.



And yet, it suddenly became a dangerous time as people heard the rumours of monsters roaming the countryside and even lurking in dark alleys of great cities. Most of them are what we remember from ancient myths—harpies, minotaurs, sirens, lamias, and various other human-animal hybrids. Rarer and more dangerous are strange hybrids of various animals—chimaeras, sphinxes, griffins, hydras, and the like. All of them are consumed by rage and extremely violent.

You are among the few people ready and willing to take those beasts on and protect ordinary people from them. Why? Choose one of the following options—one for the entire party or one for each of the hunters. Some choices fit some playbooks better than others but none of them forces a player to take a particular playbook. You are:

- **The Queen's Musketeers:** Loyal and bound by oaths of chivalry, brave, well-trained, often tasked with surveillance and protection of the Queen's subjects.
- **Dream Alchemists:** Well-educated, respected but feared, with great access to magic and gadgets, their leaders want to contain and understand the monster plague.
- **The Lone Wolves:** Exceptional individuals from outside the two preceding organisations who decided to take on the monsters themselves.
- **The Condottieri:** An elite group of mercenaries hired by those who aren't protected from monsters by either the Queen or the Dream Alchemists.

Depending on mysteries prepared by the Keeper, you might decide how long after the appearance of monsters do you start, or the Keeper might choose for themselves. Options include:

- You hear rumours and are sent to investigate them.
- You became monster hunters years after the monster attacks began.
- You have already been hunting monsters for some time. The beginning of the campaign is simply the moment you stumble upon some bigger story.



CREATING YOUR HUNTERS

When you make all the decisions in the Prologue, you have an outline of the setting and a team concept. Now it's time to create your hunters! *Dreaming with the Gods* uses standard hunter playbooks but because they're designed for play on Earth in the modern times, a few changes need to be made. Here you'll find advice on how to fit the playbooks into Helos and suggestions of those changes, including brand-new Helos gear. If an element of the playbook isn't mentioned it just stays the same—for example, the Initiate has a different choice of weapons but the same armour, so armour isn't mentioned at all in their entry.

GEAR

You will need to substitute gear in the style of Helos when running *Monster of the Week* in this setting. Boons of the Golden Age can mimic most modern technology in function but not looks. You'll see who gets what in the playbook alternations—the new gear is in *italics*. Your hunters will also be able to craft this and similar gear when in a well-equipped alchemical workshop.

- Clockwork rifle (3-harm close reload)
- Dreamsteel rapier (2-harm hand balanced)
- Repeating crossbow (2-harm close quick)
- Ancient stiletto (1-harm intimate/hand small valuable)
- Whipblade (2-harm hand/close messy)
- Hunting clockhawk (2-harm close ignore-armour)
- Ancient gladius (2-harm hand valuable)
- Flintlock pistol (2-harm close reload loud)
- Alchemical vials (2-harm close magic many volatile)
- Handcannon (3-harm close/far reload loud messy)

THE CHOSEN

In Helos: Feels they have a destiny related to dreams, is led by their dreams into crises and conflicts.

GEAR

No changes needed.

THE CROOKED

In Helos: A member of Hermessia's underworld, a broker of illegal alchemy.

GEAR

- **Effective weapons (pick three):** *alchemical vials, ancient stiletto, big knife, clockwork rifle, flintlock pistol, repeating crossbow.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Deal with the Devil** becomes **A Dream Came True**. It works the same but you're not sure who (or what) the creature that struck a deal with you was.
- **Driver** becomes **Equestrian**. You have +1 ongoing while riding a horse and similar creatures, plus you can tame any such creature. You also own two riding animals for various purposes (like a beautiful racing horse and a sturdy travelling one).
- **Friends on the Force:** You have friends among the Queen's Musketeers and town guards of all Helos towns.
- **Heat:** The first option is a Queen's Musketeer instead of a police detective.

THE DIVINE

In Helos: Came into Helos from dreams but doesn't remember them, has a mission but doesn't remember who gave it to them.

GEAR

- Add *alchemical vials* to the list of divine weapons.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Boss from Beyond:** The orders come in dreams and you're not sure who gives them.
- **Cast out Evil:** It applies to all creatures corrupted by dreams—including you. On a 7-9 and a 10+, it works as usual. On a miss, you banish yourself instead of discovering that something keeps other creatures here.

THE EXPERT

In Helos: A librarian from Hermessia, a Musketeer or Alchemist chronicler.

GEAR

- **Monster-slaying weapons (pick three):** *alchemical vials, ancient stiletto, cold iron sword, dreamsteel rapier, flamethrower, flintlock pistol, magical dagger, silver sword.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Haven:** The **Workshop** option is an alchemical workshop.

THE FLAKE

In Helos: Tries to find out a greater conspiracy behind the Alchemists, the Musketeers, or just behind anything.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick one):** *big knife, flintlock pistol, ancient gladius, clockwork rifle.*
- **Hidden weapons (pick two):** *ancient stiletto, alchemical vials, throwing knives, garrote, weighted gloves/brass knuckles, folding knives.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Net Friends:** Your net friends are a literal net of spies, informants, and eccentrics that leave secret messages and exchange news in strange codes all around Helos.





THE GUMSHOE

In Helos: A retro-noir investigator in a heavy dark cloak, a “private Musketeer” fighting for honour and justice outside of the official hierarchy.

GEAR

You get a flask of wine or rum, three espionage tools, and one handy weapon.

- **Espionage tools (pick three):** climbing claws, dictionary of thieves’ codes, durable rope, false Dream Alchemists’ seal, false Queen’s seal, invisible ink, perfect map of Hermessia, well-crafted disguise (can be chosen multiple times if you want multiple disguises).
- **Handy weapons (pick one):** brass knuckles, *dreamsteel rapier*, *flintlock pistol*, *repeating crossbow*, switchblade, *whipblade*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Hacker with a Dragon Tattoo** becomes **Archive Rat** and works with libraries and archives.
- **The Naked City:** Add courtiers, Dream Alchemists, Musketeers, and merchants to the available contact types. Some other types might require a short conversation about their meaning in Helos. For example police (local) probably means town guards.
- **Out of the Past:** A Musketeer buddy or a town guard buddy (choose one).

THE HEX

In Helos: An Alchemist deep into the occult, a practitioner of alchemy-unrelated ways to manipulate dreams.

GEAR

- **Wizardly weapons (pick two):** *alchemical vials*, *ancient stiletto*, athame, crossbow, *hunting clockhawk*, shillelagh, staff.

THE INITIATE

In Helos: A Dream Alchemist, a Musketeer from a secret occult subgroup, a disciple of a secret dream-related occult tradition.

Important: If a hunter chooses the Initiate with Dream Alchemists as their Sect, the Keeper should adjust the Alchemists' structure and motives according to Traditions chosen by the hunter.

GEAR

- **Old-fashioned weapons (pick either two or three):** *ancient gladius, ancient stiletto, axe, big sword, big axe, crossbow, fighting sticks, mace, silver knife, spear.*
- **Modern weapons (pick either one or two):** *alchemical vials, clockwork rifle, dreamsteel rapier, flintlock pistol, hunting clockhawk, repeating crossbow.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Sect:** The **Nifty Gadgets** option becomes **State-of-the-art** Alchemy.

THE MONSTROUS

In Helos: A human physically changed by something experienced in a dream, an Alchemist's or someone else's failed experiment, a clockwork golem.

MONSTROUS BREED SUGGESTIONS

- **Minotaur:** *Curse:* pure drive (anger). *Natural attacks:* Base: teeth (or horns), add ignore-armor to base. *Moves:* Unholy Strength, Claws of the Beast, or Unquenchable Vitality.
- **Siren:** *Curse:* Feed (breath), *Natural attacks:* Base: life-drain; add +1 harm to base. *Moves:* Mental Dominion, Unnatural Appeal, or Dark Negotiator.
- **Harpy:** *Curse:* Dark Master (Entropy speaks to you in dreams). *Natural attacks:* Base: claws; add close range to base. *Moves:* Flight, Preternatural Speed.

GEAR

- **Handy weapons (pick one if you want):** *big knife, brass knuckles, clockwork rifle, flintlock pistol, huge sword, sword, whipblade.*

THE MUNDANE

In Helos: Isn't a monster hunter but has skills or knowledge useful in the monster hunter's life, travels with the hunters because of personal or professional reasons, recently became a hunter.

GEAR

- **Mundane weapons (pick two):** *clockwork rifle, flintlock pistol, pocket knife, repeating crossbow, sledge-hammer.*
- **Means of transport (pick one):** a fast horse, an average horse and a carriage, a boat, a small ship in terrible condition.

THE PARAROMANTIC

In Helos: Fell in love with a human transformed by dreams, meets their beloved in dreams, the Monstrous's beloved.

GEAR

- **Choose two of these normal things:** *ancient stiletto, flintlock pistol, pocket knife, a horse, a mule-drawn carriage, a boat*
- Gifts stay the same but a strange or antique weapon can be an *ancient gladius, ancient stiletto, dreamsteel rapier, or hunting clockhawk* in addition to standard options.

THE PROFESSIONAL

In Helos: A Musketeer, a Dream Alchemist's spy or bodyguard.

Important: If a hunter chooses the Professional with the Queen's Musketeers as their organisation, the Keeper should adjust the Musketeers' structure and motives according to Traditions chosen by the hunter.

GEAR

- You get a reinforced vest (1-armour hidden) or alchemical armour (2-armour heavy) for protection.
- **Serious weapons (pick one):** *alchemical vials, clockwork rifle, handcannon.*
- **Normal weapons (pick two):** *big knife, dreamsteel rapier, flintlock pistol, hunting clockhawk, repeating crossbow, whipblade.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Agency:** The **Weird Tech Gadgets** option becomes **Alchemical Gadgets**.
- **Mobility** gives you a carriage or a ship built for monster hunting.

THE SEARCHER

In Helos: Has profoundly experienced how dreams change reality, discovered something terrifying about the monsters.

GEAR

You get a horse or a small ship, three sets of investigator tools, and one self-defence weapon.

- **Investigator tools (pick three):** alchemical analysis set; ancient bestiary; dream-catcher; dream diary; historical documents and witness reports of strange events; maps, blueprints, and building reports for significant places; spyglass.
- **Self-defence weapon (pick one):** *ancient stiletto*, *flintlock pistol*, martial arts training, small knife, walking stick.

THE SNOOP

The Snoop playbook isn't available in this framework.

THE SPELL-SLINGER

In Helos: A Dream Alchemist focused on aggressive magic and concoctions, a Musketeer learning to use alchemy in their line of work.

GEAR

- **Backup weapons (pick one):** *ancient stiletto*, *dreamsteel rapier*, *flintlock pistol*, heirloom sword, ritual knife.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Arcane Reputation:** Consult with the Keeper if your campaign will include at least three different supernatural organisations or groups.

THE SPOOKTACULAR

In Helos: Wandering illusionist, entertainment district regular, self-taught alchemist.

GEAR

- **Vehicle (pick one):** house-wagon & horses, cart & mules, stout boots, mule, camel, or canal-boat.
- Additionally, rename mystical item names without changing the way they work: Returning 100 becomes Returning Aureus, Ghost Shades become Ghost-Smoke Spectacles, and Really Big Plush Dog (animated) becomes Living Dog Puppet.

THE SPOOKY

In Helos: Has vivid dreams that promise power but ask to do awful things, something came with them back to reality from their dreams.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick two):** big knife, *clockwork rifle*, *flintlock pistol*, *repeating crossbow*.

THE WRONGED

In Helos: An avenger with a personal history, one of the first people harmed by monsters.

Suggested prey types: Harpies, gorgons, sirens, sphinxes.

GEAR

If you want, you may take a trusted horse, a horse- or mule-drawn carriage, a fast boat or a small ship.

- **Signature Weapons (pick one):** *alchemical vials*, *ancient gladius*, enchanted dagger, hand cannon, *hunting clockhawk*, *whiplade*.
- **Practical weapons (pick two):** *ancient stiletto*, big knife, brass knuckles, *clockwork rifle*, *flintlock pistol*, *repeating crossbow*.

NAMES

Dreaming with the Gods, with its base in early modern Europe, swash-buckling inspirations, and a prominent role of antiquity, uses a mix of names from Roman and Hellenic languages. Commoners use French, Italian, or Spanish names, while aristocracy increasingly adopts names drawn from Roman and Greek mythologies and epics. Those who become Agamemnon or Athena usually don't want anyone to remind them that they were just Arturo or Agnes before.

Common male names: Fernando, Giovanni, Paolo, Pierre, Xavier

Common female names: Christina, Emilia, Fantine, Julie, Samuela

Common gender-neutral names: Coeur, Leone, Maria, Simone, Valentin

Mythological male names: Heracles, Odiseus, Romulus, Aeneas, Neptune

Mythological female names: Daphne, Selene, Juno, Artemis, Minerva

The mythological names are always gendered, but the people and beings they refer to are shining examples for all citizens of Helos, so it's not uncommon to take a name referencing a person's mythological fascinations, not their gender.

LOOK

Many look options fit *Dreaming with the Gods* just as well as modern *Monster of the Week* scenarios. Clothes clearly referencing modern times shouldn't be chosen. If an aspect of your look has no options that fit your vision of this playbook in *Dreaming with the Gods*, replace options from this aspect with any of the following options: An impeccable tunic, tricorne with a feather, an eyepatch, duel scar, dreamy eyes, leather vest, gown with a hood, cloak with a coat of arms.

Ethnically, the country of Helos is as diverse as the most vibrant and cosmopolitan Mediterranean cities in Earth's Renaissance. The most common skin tone is light brown, but people of all colours and builds can be found in this country.

WEIRD BASIC MOVES

Depending on the boons you choose in the Prologue (page 221), there might be various magical traditions and possibilities in Helos. However, no matter what you choose, every hunter is entitled to a Weird basic move.

If you play by the base rules and **use magic** is the only Weird basic move in your game, using it can represent any of the following actions. If you use alternative Weird moves from *Tome of Mysteries* or the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week* you can choose one of the following actions as the weird stuff your hunter does and treat it as the Weird move given in brackets:

- Manifesting a strange, innate connection to dreams and their power to shape the world (**empath** or **sensitive** or **telekinesis**)
- Using magical formulas researched by Dream Alchemists or discovered independently by yourself (basic **use magic**)
- Quickly creating an appropriate alchemical concoction (**weird science**)
- Commuting with your past selves or great ancestors in dreams (**past lives**)
- Being a witty and alert swashbuckling hero who always knows best (**trust your gut**)
- Using Worldflow, if you chose this boon as retrieved (basic **use magic**)

DIVING INTO DREAMS

An important addition to the core *Monster of the Week* rules in *Dreaming with the Gods* is the **dive into dreams** move.

The only sure way to dive into dreams is to inhale the holy mist coming from a shaft on the isle of Icareum, the main stronghold of Dream Alchemists. Depending on the boons you chose, it might be possible to dive into them from other places as well. Additionally, the hunters can always dive into dreams with an appropriate **big magic** ritual. If a hunter dives into dreams using alchemical vapours, they enter a trance—their body relaxes and their eyes seem to be looking at invisible vistas, but you can see glimpses of what they see in dreams in their eyes if you look close enough.

When you dive into dreams, first specify the **DEPTH** of your dive: shallow (0), medium (1), or deep (2). Then roll +Weird and add Depth to the result.

- **On a 7-9**, you find the answer to a single question about the Golden Age.
- **On a 10+**, you find the answer and additionally, the Keeper gives you a valuable glimpse of another secret related to the Ancient Ones.
- **On a miss**, you get overwhelmed by the dreams and are unable to see the waking world clearly—once you return, you get -2 forward to your next **read a bad situation** or **act under pressure** roll.





Diving into dreams has its dangers, represented by a **DEPTH ROLL**. **When you return from a dream**, roll –Depth of your dive:

- **On a 10+**, you return without trouble.
- **On a 7-9**, you encounter a brief obstacle that might take some action against you, but you return no matter how this encounter resolves.
- **On a miss**, you encounter an obstacle that imprisons you in dreams until you overcome it.

For the purpose of overcoming those obstacles, you have the same stats in dreams as when awake and your dream form has all your gear on them.

Having a question about the Golden Age answered can have various benefits depending on what the question was about:

- +2 forward to a move dealing with a specific Ancient Ones-related challenge.
- +1 ongoing to moves dealing with a specific field of Ancient Ones-related challenges.
- Ability to create new sorts of gear, on a similar power level to sample starting gear, in a workshop designed for work with Ancient Ones' designs (like those in Dream Alchemists' enclaves).
- +2 forward to use the hunter's basic Weird move.
- Other effects agreed upon by the hunter and the Keeper.

A valuable glimpse into the Golden Age has the same possible benefits but in this case the Keeper chooses. They have to choose something useful in the current situation or in line with the hunter's long-term goals, plans, or abilities.

RUNNING DREAMING WITH THE GODS

This section is for the Keeper's eyes only!

In this section, you'll find key information needed to run *Dreaming with the Gods*—an explanation of the setting's metaplot, its main elements written up as threats with custom moves, a bestiary of monsters and minions, two introductory mysteries, and an arc allowing the hunters to discover the secret behind the monsters' appearance.

A key thing to remember when reading this section is that the Dreamscape is also a threat and its threat type is phenomenon: teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters). It's a constantly active, subversive force that affects both hunters and other people around them. It wants to turn hunters into monsters, and a huge part of playing *Dreaming with the Gods* will be their struggle to remain human (or controllably inhuman in the case of some playbooks).



SECRETS OF HELOS

This is the story I envisioned as the reason behind the current state of affairs in Helos. It will answer some questions you probably have after reading the Prologue and give you an immense background conspiracy to gradually weave into your mysteries. Remember that a secret is no good if it remains a secret forever. By learning those facts, the hunters will be able to explain the past and influence the future of their world—and in a campaign of *Dreaming with the Gods*, they should learn them sooner or later!

THE DREAMING ONES

When today's people talk about the Ancient Ones, they actually give a single name to two groups—the people who lived in the Golden Age and the beings they worshipped as gods. Those beings were called the Dreaming Ones and they resided—and still reside—in the Dreamscape, an everchanging alternate dimension where people's souls go when they sleep.



The Dreaming Ones aren't evil but they are amoral because borders, either physical or moral, don't exist for them. They revel in the endless possibilities of the Dreamscape and treat it as their playground. Think of them as something between sidhe or fae lords and Lovecraft's Great Old Ones.

The Dreaming Ones first learned about humans when our species began dreaming. At first, they merely observed or toyed with their dreams but gradually they discovered that those strange, limited creatures came into the Dreamscape from a saddeningly stable and immutable realm. They were fascinated and infuriated upon discovering that they can't cross the border between the Dreamscape and, as they called it, the Waking World—for the first time, they discovered a law that defied their transgressive nature.

THE GOLDEN AGE

The only way the Dreaming Ones could influence the Waking World was by touching the dreams of humans. Human minds usually perceive them as animal-human hybrids or strange beings composed of various animals. By establishing this contact, the Dreaming Ones not only contacted denizens of the Waking World, but could also actually “smuggle” a bit of the Dreamscape's mutable nature beyond it, allowing humans touched by them to alter the Waking World in various ways. More and more became possible, more and more human dreams—both valiant and vile—came true. The Golden Age began.

The Dreaming Ones led humans towards blurring the line between the worlds more and more. In all their passion, however, they are honest beings. They know little of deception and didn't notice the deception their pupils planned. When the most talented among their human disciples—the original Dream Alchemists—gained enough knowledge to open a door between the worlds, they used it not to invite the Dreamscape into the Waking World but to enter the Dreamscape and become Dreaming Ones themselves—an act called the Transgression.

Outraged at their betrayal, the Dreaming Ones started a great war in the Dreamscape, but their once-human disciples were now just as powerful as their ex-masters. The Dream War began in the Dreamscape and the Fallen Age began in the Waking World.

How this war in the Dreamscape went will actually be decided by your group in the Prologue. The echoes of that war reached the waking world and were responsible for most of the Fallen Age's atrocities, so the problems they chose describe the nature of the Dream War as well. The tradition of Dream Alchemists survived in their students and writings, although many who studied it swore never to repeat the Transgression or simply didn't stumble upon any hints of this event.

THE RENAISSANCE

The longer the war raged, the more isolated the Dreamscape became from the Waking World. The Fallen Age ended when its influence on the waking world became so weak that people were able to shrug off its maddening influence and start building something anew. Dream Alchemists' experiments that led to the Renaissance were possible not because the dreams became closer but the other way around—because they became distant enough to study various arts, including the art of safely exploring dreams, in peace.

The main point of contact between the Waking World and the Dreamscape is now a shaft below Icareum, the Dream Alchemists' main base of operations—an imposing tower built on an island west of Hermessia. This shaft is a remnant of the portal opened during the Transgression, and sleeping among the vapours floating from the shaft allows people to enter a lucid dream and control their visit to the Dreamscape.

As you probably already guessed, Dream Alchemists are in fact the main threat to Helos right now. The monsters roaming the country are their doing. Many of these monsters are people who took part in their experiments and became Dreamtouched—their very nature was warped by the Dream War. Others are simply poor souls touched by the Dreamscape's warping energies in their dreams, a tragedy more and more common as the Dream Alchemists are inviting dreamy energies into the world once more.

What's more, leaders of the Alchemists, Grand Dreamers Athena and Agamemnon, have learned about the Transgression and intend to repeat this folly. Why? They are obsessively in love with each other and want to become a single being—a feat impossible for humans but utterly possible for the Dreaming Ones whose power in the Dreamscape knows no borders. Many of their followers simply lust for power, however. There are also some Dream Alchemists who don't know about the whole conspiracy and genuinely want to help the world but are used as pawns by the others. If the hunters are Alchemists themselves, they count among those pawns and will probably realize sooner or later that their leaders are up to no good.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE SETTING

Here you'll find main elements of *Dreaming with the Gods*. As always in *Monster of the Week*, every element is a threat because every one of them can be dangerous to the hunters. This section is divided between describing general elements of the setting and a Bestiary that presents threats perfect for use as monsters and minions in your mysteries.

THE DREAMSCAPE

Phenomenon: Teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters)

The key fact about *Dreaming with the Gods* is that the Dreamscape is a threat. It's not sentient, it's not evil, but it's an active force that imposes its nature upon the Waking World. And ever since the Transgression, its nature has been full of war and suffering.

If the hunters somehow manage to stop the Dream War, the Dreamscape will still touch the Waking World but in less malevolent ways—it will change from a teratogen to a mutagen (motivation: to transform creatures and people).

The Dreamscape can use any phenomenon moves (*Tome of Mysteries*, page 26; *Monster of the Week*, hardcover page 328), rephrased here to fit the Dreamscape's nature better:

- Hint that dreams affect the world.
- Show directly and undeniably that dreams affect the world.
- Break the world's laws.
- Become more intense, touching more dreams and causing more dramatic changes.
- Create some new monster or dream-warped item or place.
- Crush the spirit or warp the body of a human.
- Do something seemingly contrary to its or its minions' goals.
- Overcome attempts to limit its influence.
- Trap someone in dreams.
- Grant monstrous abilities or insights into dreams.
- Make any place into a maze or a mire.

The normal phenomena moves are expanded and partially replaced by the Dreamscape's custom moves:

- **Contact Dreams:** The Dreamscape can sometimes touch normal dreams, especially of people who have dived into dreams or met Dreamtouched creatures before. It usually sends alarming and threatening visions, but something useful can be made of them by **investigating the mystery**.
- **Take the Plunge:** The Dreamscape can influence the minds of people whose dreams it can contact, making them prone to repeating the atrocities that made the Fallen Age so horrible—the problems chosen by the players in the Prologue. Hunters can resist this impulse by **acting under pressure**.
- **Send Creatures:** When humans enter the Dreamscape—either physically, in their normal sleep if touched by **contact dreams** before, or by **diving into dreams**—it can send any minion from the Bestiary of this chapter to confront them.
- **Turn into a Dreamtouched:** If such a minion harms someone's sleeping self, after waking they risk transforming into another such being. They heal all harm done by the minion and roll –harm healed. On a 10+, nothing happens. On a 7-9, the wounds appear on their physical body as scars similar to the skin or hide of what harmed them. On a miss, they start transforming into what harmed them. Every week they lose a point in one rating and gain one Monstrous move. After three weeks they change their playbook to the Monstrous as per the advanced improvement. They're still in the player's control. Bystanders and minions afflicted this way might change faster and won't control their new, wild nature.

Remember that when a hunter **dives into dreams**, they can meet an obstacle if they roll less than 10 on the Depth roll. On a 7-9, the obstacle can't trap them, meaning it can perform a move against them but they wake afterwards no matter how this move turned out. On a miss, it can trap them.

If a dream-diving hunter rolled an 8 on their Depth roll, you can describe a siren approaching them in a dream and trying to catch them. Once this situation is resolved in any way, the hunter wakes—though if the siren harmed them, they risk turning into a Dreamtouched. Had they rolled a 5, you could describe the dream turning into a dead-end underwater cave and the same siren blocking the only way out. The hunter wouldn't wake until they escaped.

ATHENA AND AGAMEMNON, THE GRAND DREAMERS

Monsters: Sorcerers (motivation: to usurp unnatural power)

The marriage that leads the Dream Alchemists might well be the most driven humans in all of Helos. What's more, they're so extremely driven by two interconnected but separate drives—scientific curiosity and all-consuming love for each other. Athena and Agamemnon are willing to do anything to learn about and control the Dreamscape, but their ultimate goal is to use the Dreamscape's mutable nature to become a single entity—they desire each other so deeply that no amount of physical or emotional intimacy is enough for them, they want to be one for real and forever.

They organised a group of power-hungry Alchemists ready to experiment on monsters—the Conspiracy. The Conspiracy members don't know their leaders' ultimate goal, and the Grand Dreamers treat them as useful tools, feeling contempt for those fools who just want power and can't fully grasp their romantic obsession.



Powers:

- **Dreamwraiths:** Their power over the Dreamscape is so great that if killed, they'll rise as Dreamwraiths, ethereal creatures existing between the Waking World and the Dreamscape. Their memories and abilities will remain unchanged but they'll lose the chance to ever become Dreaming Ones and merge. They'll be surprised by this change themselves.
- **Masterful Alchemy:** Their Dream Alchemy attack can be any combination of magic and strange concoctions the Keeper finds appropriate. Each time they use it, they can add any two tags to it. They also can influence the world as hunters do with **use magic** and know lots of **big magic** rituals.
- **Power of Love:** When the hunters confront them together, they take -1 ongoing to all rolls against them—it's hard to oppose a couple so coordinated and caring for each other. When the other one is near, Athena and Agamemnon cause +1 harm more with their attacks.
- **Speaking through Monsters:** If they took part in the creation of a Dreamtouched, they can sense where it is and speak through it. This speech is extremely unsettling but understandable no matter the vocal cords of a given creature.

Weakness:

- **Gnawing Loneliness:** As Dreamwraiths, they can be killed if both are destroyed almost simultaneously. Otherwise the destroyed one reforms next to the remaining one in a few minutes.

Harm capacity:

Athena	10	□□□□□	□□□□□
Agamemnon	10	□□□□□	□□□□□

Armour: 2-armour magic (alchemically enhanced robes as humans, ethereal bodies as Dreamwraiths).

Attacks: Dream Alchemy: 4-harm hand/close area magic masterful (+2 tags).

THE CONSPIRACY

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the monster)

Power-hungry Dream Alchemists are told by the Grand Dreamers about the Transgression and looking for ways to repeat it. They believe their leaders just want to conquer the Dreamscape like they do and have no idea about their obsessive romantic plot.

Activities:

- **Dreamtouched Experiments:** Using alchemical and meditational lures to tempt monsters into attacking selected dreamers and monitoring how they become monsters.
- **Dreamtouched Census:** Spying around Helos to gather information on natural occurrences of Dreamtouched and their behaviour.
- **Tearing the Veil:** Diving into dreams, looking for information about how to loosen the boundary between the Dreamscape and the Waking World.

Notable Members:

- **Francois**, chief of Dreamtouch experiments, currently working for Queen Helena, monster of the *Dream of Flying* introductory mystery.
- **Esmeralda**, chief of the Dreamtouched Census, probably the hunters' boss if they are Dream Alchemists.
- **Pedro**, the Dream Alchemists' most talented dream-diver, chief of Tearing the Veil experiments, has doubts about the Conspiracy.
- **Juan Felipe**, the main Dream Alchemists' ambassador to Helos, secretly in love with Queen Helena, surrounded by Alchemists from outside of the Conspiracy and increasingly paranoid.

Powers:

- **Dream Experts:** Take +1 forward to **diving into dreams** when you do so with their honest assistance. Take -1 forward to **diving into dreams** if they gave you false advice on how to do so.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Armour: None, they're regular humans.

Attacks: Daggers or knives: 1-harm hand; Acids and poisons: 2-harm close volatile.

DREAM ALCHEMISTS

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

Other members of Dream Alchemists who have no idea of the Conspiracy or Athena and Agamemnon's true goals. They genuinely want to help the people of Helos by regaining as much useful knowledge of the Ancient Ones as possible. Some of them have seen something suspicious or creepy in Icareum but are too loyal to share such secrets easily.

Sample Dream Alchemists:

- **Monique**, mistress of supplies of the Alchemists' embassy in Helos. Open, warm, well-meaning.
- **Arturo**, a young member of the organisation wanting to achieve greatness. Helpful, clever, boastful.

Powers:

- **Dream Experts:** Take +1 forward to **diving into dreams** when you do so with their assistance.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Armour: None, they're regular humans.

Attacks: Daggers or knives: 1-harm hand; Vials of strange liquids: 2-harm close volatile.

ICAREUM

Location: Lab (motivation: to create weirdness)

An imposing tower on an island west of Hermessia. It hosts the Dream Alchemists' quarters and laboratories.

CUSTOM MOVE

Impenetrable Fortress: If you appear at Icareum already noticed by the Alchemists, you get -2 ongoing to **investigate a mystery** and **read a bad situation** until you buy yourself some time or create a distraction.

WATERS AROUND ICAREUM

Location: Den (motivation: to harbour monsters)

Due to the Alchemists' numerous experiments, the waters around Icareum became suffused with their dreams and desires, creating an arcane protection that will greatly help the Alchemists if their headquarters are ever besieged or infiltrated.

CUSTOM MOVE

Sea of Dreams: When you navigate the waters around Icareum without the Dream Alchemists' permission, roll +Weird. On a 10+, you do fine. On a 7-9, you get where you want to go but choose one:

- The Alchemists of Icareum notice you.
- Dreams rolling around Icareum overwhelm you, giving you -1 forward.
- You mistake the sky for water and the world doesn't notice your mistake—you start to navigate in the air but also grab the attention of Dream Alchemists and monsters from dreams.
- You see your dreams in the water and jump into them. You don't get where you want to go, it works like a miss but you **dive into dreams** at Depth 0 as if you rolled 12. You still have to make a Depth roll.

On a miss, the Alchemists notice you, the waters overwhelm you, and you fall into water—and **dive into dreams** at Depth 2. When you leave the Dreamscape, you're still in water.

HELOS

Location: Wilderness (motivation: to contain hidden things)

A relatively safe and prosperous country that has shunned the miseries of the Fallen Age. Its countryside is filled with small towns and villages trading mostly in food, wood, and other natural resources. As monsters become more and more numerous, however, the subjects of Queen Helena realize how powerless they are against them.

HERMESSIA

Location: Crossroads (motivation: to bring people, and things, together)

The Soaring City, the proud capital of an ever more prosperous country. Filled with high towers, many-storied buildings, and lively, excitable inhabitants.

CUSTOM MOVE

City of Gossip: When you **investigate a mystery** in Hermessia, on a 7+, you can additionally ask “What’s the buzz in Hermessia about this stuff?” On a miss, you or your investigation become the buzz in Hermessia.

QUEEN HELENA I, THE RADIANT

Bystander: Busybody (motivation: to interfere in other people’s plans)

The Queen wants what’s best for her country and believes that she IS the country. She wants her subjects happy and safe but she also believes that she’s always right about what will make them happy—and currently, she believes the path to happiness lies in the Dream Alchemists’ inventions. She courts the organisation with gifts and privileges, believing that making them more and more connected to the crown will ensure that Helos benefits from their research quicker. At the same time she believes the Alchemists really want to help her subjects and will be furious—and afraid!—if she discovers they plan anything that could hurt Helos or her.

CUSTOM MOVE

Audience: When you have an audience with Queen Helena, the Keeper chooses one:

- She knows about something you did in Helos you didn’t expect her to know about.
- She is bored, and you need to do something captivating or she’ll dismiss you too soon.
- She rewards you for something you did for Helos with gifts or favours.
- She wants to focus the conversation on the Dream Alchemists’ newest gift for her.



THE QUEEN'S MUSKETEERS

Bystanders: Helpers (motivation: to join the hunt)

The Queen's Musketeers are loyal to the country and the crown and do their best to be as protective, courageous, and chivalric as possible. Many of them do so because of a genuine belief that it's their role in society. Others believe that if they sully the honour of their group in any way, the Musketeers will be seen as irrelevant and replaced with a more modern, less knightly form of law enforcement.

The Musketeers' main task is to protect the key elements of Helos—as the Queen understands them. Most of them live in Hermessia, where they watch over the Queen's palace, main city squares, and other representative locations. In other cities, they protect the centres of power and most affluent areas. Many among them feel obliged to check on poorer districts as well, but it isn't officially required from them and some more elitist Musketeer captains even try to stop their subordinates from doing so.

The Musketeer code of conduct is centred around their obligations to others and situations in which they can use violence. Its core tenets include:

- Be loyal to the Queen or King of Helos.
- Always protect those who can't protect themselves.
- Use violence only in self-defence or in defence of others.
- Warn somebody before using a weapon against them if they are unarmed, even if you do so in self-defence.

If a Musketeer breaks this code, they're suspended in their duties and privileges, meaning that they should also leave their weapons with a local Musketeer captain. This suspension usually lasts from two weeks to three months. If it repeats, the Musketeer can be expelled permanently from this role or even put on trial. The Queen or King of Helos has the right to pardon any transgression a Musketeer has performed. However, rulers of the past were known to use this right towards Musketeers they favoured or those who transgressed their code upon the ruler's secret orders.



Generally speaking, they don't like Dream Alchemists. They are proud men and women, many of them of noble birth, and while they appreciate the inventions of the Alchemists, they feel that the Queen gives those suspicious newcomers too much credit and has too little control over them. An especially strong (but unspoken) point of contention is the fact that the Musketeers aren't allowed into Icareum (officially for safety reasons).

The Musketeers are also the only bystanders in this setting that regularly engage in hunting monsters. They are far less effective and versatile than hunters, so they either seek safety in numbers or suffer heavy losses during each hunt.

Sample Musketeers:

- **Captain Henriette**, their leader and representative. Energetic, sincere, and tired. Secretly in love with Queen Helena.
- **Gervaise**, an older soldier and mentor. Observant, protective, and distrustful.
- **Eve**, a tomboy intrigued by Dream Alchemy. Curious, talkative, and impatient.
- **Carlos**, a lad from a village razed by monsters. Fierce, heroic, and brooding.

CUSTOM MOVE

All for One and One for All!: When some Musketeers help the hunters in a fight, roll +Musketeers (up to +3). On a 10+, the party holds 3. On a 7-9, the party holds 2 and one Musketeer becomes wounded, no longer counting for purposes of rolling +Musketeers until their wounds are treated. On a miss, one Musketeer becomes wounded if it's a fight against humans or dies if it's against anything stronger than a human. Holds can be spent to get +1 forward to **kick some ass** or **protect someone**.



DREAMTOUCHED MUSKETEERS

Minions: Traitors (motivation: to betray people)

Most Musketeers have exceptionally strong bodies and minds, so they can withstand the effects of the Dreamscape more easily than most humans. Sometimes they can endure becoming a Dreamtouched while maintaining a reasonable degree of self-control. They remain rather human, but might be even more dangerous than Dreamtouched monsters. They become egocentric and amoral similarly to the Dreaming Ones, pursuing their needs with the relentless passion of a dreamer but with a deceptively human face. Some travel in search of thrills, some build decadent networks of lovers and subordinates around them, and some remain in the service of the Queen and country where their driven, decadent nature shows in ways both noble and vile. None can be trusted—even by themselves, as they don't know where the dreams will lead them next.

Powers:

- **Charming:** Their words resound with promises and ecstasies of the Dreamscape. Bystanders usually listen to them. Hunters get +1 forward if they accept their suggestions.
- **Dreamspeed:** They run faster, jump higher, and fence more fiercely than most humans. -1 ongoing to **kick their ass** and to **protect someone** from them unless you find a way to slow them down.

Harm capacity: 9

Armour: 1 (leather armour).

Attacks: Dreamforged rapier: 3-harm hand magic.



ISLAND OF SWORDS

Location: Den (motivation: to harbour monsters)

Dreamtouched Musketeers are fiercely individualistic but some of them have recognised each other and created a small island state off the coast of Helos. It's a love/hate affair for them, often literally—they create great plans and pursue great passions, fall in love and lust with each other, betray and avenge their betrayals. What keeps them together is the loathing they feel towards normal people, the thrill of fighting against the whole world with fellow outcasts on your side, and sometimes the orders and charisma of Hernandez Tordega.

CUSTOM MOVE:

Conflicting Passions: Agreements and alliances are always fragile on the Island of Swords. You get +1 forward to **manipulating** a Dream Musketeer from this island if you try to set them against other Dreamtouched Musketeers from this island (including Hernandez Tordega) or when you promise them instant gratification of their desires or ambitions (be it pride, greed, lust, or anything else). If you fail this roll, the Musketeer you tried to manipulate gains power over you: you get -1 forward when you don't accept their suggestions.

HERNANDEZ TORDEGA, THE SWORD PRINCE

Monster: Executioner (motivation: to punish the guilty)

Dreamtouched Musketeers would be dangerous individually but they are even more so on the Island of Swords, where they're led by a villain who thinks himself a hero.

Hernandez was the Musketeers' captain before Henriette, right at the end of the Fallen Age. He was appalled by the misery and violence of this time and he wanted to replace it with an absolutistic, extremely organised state. He didn't notice that the methods he was proposing would bring no less misery than the chaos the world was in. What's worse, he failed to notice what was clear to everyone around him: he was madly and possessively in love with newly crowned Queen Helena, over a decade younger than him and just a teenager by then.

Henriette, a novice Musketeer, and a group of other courtiers managed to persuade the Queen to ignore his advice and banish him.

He has wandered the country for years, seeking in vain a chance for revenge, and recently he was touched by the Dreamscape. Thanks to his experience, prowess, and self-control, he became a bit of a leader of the Island of Swords, even calling himself the Sword Prince. He is less hedonistic and more driven than his "subordinates," not engaging in any romances with them and trying to organise them into a pirate state able to threaten Helos.

Powers:

- **Charming, Dreamspeed:** Like a regular Dreamtouched Musketeer.
- **Master Fencer:** Any weapon he wields deals +2 harm and gains the "area" tag because he can fence with multiple enemies at once. When he's aware of an incoming attack, he gains +1 extra armour against it for a total of 2.

Harm capacity: 12

Armour: 1 or 2 (leather armour, master fencer).

Attacks: Dreamforged rapier: 4-harm hand area magic.

BESTIARY

A lesser version of any of the following monsters can appear in the Dreamscape as a minion of the Dreamscape. Such a specimen has 2-harm capacity less, deals -1 less harm with each attack, and can be killed without using its weakness.

Note: If a monster doesn't have an individual weakness, then it has this:

- **Dreamtouched:** Creatures transformed from humans in the Dreamscape don't die for good when killed. They need to be destroyed in the Dreamscape, otherwise their energy will sooner or later find a new victim and turn them into a Dreamtouched.



GORGON

Monster: Collector (motivation: to steal specific sorts of things)

So far every gorgon on Helos has mutated from a Dream Alchemist. Those creatures look like humans with greenish skin and snakes protruding from their body—sometimes instead of hair, the serpents wing- or tail-like. They retain a relatively human mind but they're insatiably hungry for the thing that connects humans to the Dreamscape—you might call it "soul" or maybe simply "life." The gaze of their serpent limbs can suck this trait out of a human, leaving them stone-like.

If a gorgon drains too much of this delicious substance, the mutability of the Dreamscape completely overwhelms their humanity. They then become a hydra—a many-headed, reptilian creature that channels the fury of the Ancient Ones into the Waking World.

Powers:

- **Drain Life:** Hunters who make moves when meeting a gorgon's serpent gaze get a cumulative -1 ongoing. When it increases to -3 , they have to **act under pressure** or become lifeless and stonelike until someone heals them with magic or alchemy.
- **Play Human:** With a suitable guise, a gorgon can pretend to be a human—even from a close distance if most of their skin is concealed. They're unable to interact with humans normally, however.
- **Shed Humanity:** If a gorgon has recently fed by completely draining life from at least one hunter or bystander, the Keeper can decide at any point that they become a hydra, keeping the Harm done to them but changing their stats.

Weakness:

- **Hungry Eyes:** As long as anyone meets the gorgon's serpent gaze, they derive sustenance from this contact and can't be killed for good, only weakened or stunned. When without this connection, they can be killed normally.

Harm capacity: 8

Armour: 1 (hard, slightly scaly skin).

Attacks: Snake bite: 2-harm hand poisonous (+1 harm if the target is unstable).

HYDRA

Monster: Beast (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing)

A cyclopean creature with a reptilian body and many snake-like heads, a hydra is essentially a sentient portal channelling the fury of the Dream War into the Waking World. This creature can burst out of a gorgon who has consumed too much life, be a result of the Conspiracy's newest experiment, or mutate directly from a bystander or minion used in a powerful **big magic** ritual. It's hungry, destructive, and almost unstoppable. And even if somehow defeated, its spirit will lurk in the Dreamscape, waiting for a chance to poison new dreamers with its essence.

Powers:

- **Hateful Poison:** The poison of a hydra is filled with the Dream War's malice as well. If anyone tries to heal a poisoned wound and fails, they take 2-harm ignore-armour.
- **Many-Headed:** Terribly hard to surprise or sneak past.

Harm capacity: 14

Armour: 2 (sturdy, scaly skin).

Attacks: Flurry of fangs: 5-harm hand close area restraining poisonous (+1 harm if the target is unstable).



CHIMAERA

Monster: Beast (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing)

A quadruped creature made up of various animals, with three heads and a tail or a sting. A chimaera is born either by merging a few Dream-touched or by making a single human's connection to the Dreamscape strong enough to make their body morphable. It sometimes shows hints of anguished human personality.

Chimaeras don't roam Helos at the beginning of the campaign but can be created by Athena and Agamemnon's experiments during *The Great Merge* arc or appear as results of other events in your game.

Powers:

- **Flying:** -1 ongoing on moves to reach or outrun it when being airborne can be its advantage.
- **Morph:** Its three heads change between various animals. Thanks to this, each time it bites, its bite can have an additional tag (including range tags except for "far").
- **Once Human:** Its original human head can sometimes appear. Sometimes it just wails in anguish, forcing hunters to **act under pressure** or stop for a moment, sometimes it warns them against its own actions, giving them +1 forward.

Harm capacity: 12

Armour: 2 (extremely hard skin).

Attacks: Sting or tail: 3-harm hand; Bite: 4-harm intimate +1 tag.





SIREN

Monster: Breeder (to give birth to, bring forth, or create evil)

Boundless and fluid waters are a perfect conduit for the Dreamland's energies—and so are sirens, Dreamtouched resembling various sea creatures. Some of them are humans with fish tails instead of legs, others humanoids with fishy features all over their bodies, others fish with human legs or arms—the combinations are endless and each siren is unique. What unites them is their desire to lure people into waters and dreams at once: their call makes hapless victims fall into water, but as they drown their minds are drawn into the Dreamscape, where they sometimes become Dreamtouched themselves, mutating into new sirens instead of drowning.

If you and your players don't mind elements of erotic horror in your games, the sirens can also spread the Dreamscape's influence by sexually crossbreeding with humans, leading to a *Shadow over Innsmouth*-like mystery.

Powers:

- **Call of Dreams:** When a siren sings or calls from the water, everyone around it has to roll +Cool. On a 10+, they're fine. On a 7-9, they take -1 forward as the siren's song drags them into sleep. On a miss, they try to reach the water and when they do they enter the Dreamscape as if they chose Depth 1 when **diving into dreams**.

Harm capacity: 10

Armour: 0 or 1 (human skin or thick scales).

Attacks: Bite: 3-harm intimate; Slam: 2-harm hand.

If you want to introduce a group of sirens in your mystery, you can give the preceding stats to their leader and treat others as minions (thieves or Renfields). Such minions have a harm capacity of 8 and no armour.



HARPY

Monster: Trickster (motivation: to create chaos)

Air is also an element attuned to the Dreamscape, and dreams of flying can change a dreamer into a conduit of everything that's transient, fleeting, and entropic about the Dreamscape. Such conduits—harpies, winged humans with various bird traits—don't have great occult powers but they're quick, fierce, and mischievous. They love bringing chaos into people's lives by destroying their homes and possessions, chasing them, and kidnapping them to leave them in places no wingless creature can safely exit.

Over time, a harpy's connection to the Dreamscape can grow, making it seep dream energies into the Waking World. Francois from the *Conspiracy* becomes such a harpy in the *Dream of Flying* mystery (page 264).

Powers:

- **Flying:** -1 ongoing on moves to reach or outrun them when being airborne can be their advantage.

Weakness:

- **Spirit of Air:** They can be killed for good only when they touch the ground.

Harm capacity: 10

Armour: 1 (sturdy skin).

Attacks: Claws: 3-harm hand.

SPHINX

Monster: Torturer (motivation: to hurt and terrify)

While most Dreamtouched monsters descend into bestiality, a sphinx is a human who has been changed by the Dreamscape but thanks to their iron will or insight started ascending into a state similar to the Dreaming Ones. A sphinx—basically a winged lion with a human head—exists to subvert and disrupt the Waking World’s immutability and loves to unsettle humans with glimpses of the Dreamscape’s impossible nature. Upon experiencing such a “riddle,” a human can gain new understanding of the Dreamscape, but if it fails, a sphinx can curse them. The sphinx can be a vicious predator but it usually prefers to toy with humans instead of eating them outright.

Powers:

- **Riddle:** When you hear a sphinx talking about the Dreamscape, roll +Sharp. On a 10+, you gain an understanding of what the sphinx is talking about—take +1 forward against this sphinx and +1 forward to **dive into dreams**. On a 7-9, you understand it partially and that gives you insight into dreams—take +1 forward to **dive into dreams**. On a miss, you gain -1 ongoing to a move chosen by this sphinx until you **dive into dreams** to see first-hand the thing it was talking about.
- **Flying:** -1 ongoing on moves to reach or outrun it when being airborne can be its advantage.

Harm capacity: 12

Armour: 1 (sturdy skin).

Attacks: Bite: 4-harm intimate; Claws: 3-harm hand.

Optionally, you can treat the riddle as a challenge to the players, not hunters. It’s rare in *Monster of the Week* but fits a sphinx’s traditional role as a riddle-giver perfectly. You can play this out in two ways:

- The sphinx says a riddle and if a player knows the answer, it counts as if their hunter rolled a 10+; if not, it counts as a miss.
- The sphinx describes something absurd and if a player draws it, it counts as if their hunter rolled a 10+; if not, it counts as a miss. Be generous when deciding if the sphinx’s words were well-drawn. It’s a fun mini-game and not a drawing contest!

CREATING NEW MONSTERS

If you want to create your own monster, start with a mythological creature. By default *Dreaming with the Gods* uses creatures from Greco-Roman myths with some Egyptian influences, but the setting doesn't state precisely what creatures are possible. Feel free to use any human-animal mythological hybrids for the Dreamtouched and any other creatures for more mutated beings (like the hydra).

After you choose a creature, think about its possible connections to the Dreamscape. You can start with one or more of these questions:

- Under what conditions did the Dreamscape create this being, and how does it show in its nature and powers?
- What dreams-related powers does this creature possess?
- How does this creature spread the Dreamscape's influence in the waking world?

The Keeper starts with the current popular image of a gorgon and then decides that it's a mutated Dream Alchemist that turns others to "stone" by draining the thing that allows people to dream. When it's well-fed, it becomes a hydra: a giant incarnation of the Dreamscape's fury.



INTRODUCTORY MYSTERY: THE HEIRESS

This is a small-scale mystery that shows an eventful but relatively typical monster hunt in the Helos countryside. It gives the hunters a solid challenge and shows the players the flavour of *Dreaming with the Gods* without dragging them into the metaplot. Notice that this mystery uses a standard monster from the Bestiary, while the more metaplot-oriented *Dream of Flying* alters one of them to convey its background better.

CONCEPT

A gorgon has wandered into a deserted country estate and started draining life from the inhabitants of a neighbouring village.

HOOK

People of villages around the decrepit Rovannon estate start finding lifeless, petrified corpses in forests and fields. This terrifying gossip travels fast through Helos. The hunters might take an interest themselves or, if they belong to the Musketeers or Alchemists, they might be asked to investigate by Captain Henriette or Esmeralda.

OVERVIEW

It's a straightforward mystery where the hunters first gather clues and maybe allies, and then confront the monster. Their enemy is simply the gorgon. Bandits from the fallen Rovannon family might work as secondary antagonists or reluctant allies. The gorgon's presence shows the new dangers of the Renaissance. The bandits and their feud with the villagers dramatizes the recent history of the Fallen Age.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Rovannon family was deeply corrupt. They abused their people and personified many of the Fallen Age's atrocities. It's one of many such stories in Helos but one of the few in which the people rose against their oppressors and burned their estate down. Now the villagers are free and relatively happy, living under no ruler and capable of caring for themselves.

This changes, however, as a gorgon sneaks into the charred estate. She's a Dream Alchemist who dove into dreams too deeply and began changing into a monster. She wasn't a part of the Conspiracy, so she had no idea that it could happen. When she began noticing her changes, she fled in panic from Icareum and wandered Helos until her transformation was complete and her human mind was taken over by a monstrous hunger for others' dreams and lives.

If you want to start *The Great Merge* arc fast, you might allow the hunters to discover the gorgon's Alchemist background. For example, by hooking them with gossip of a reclusive, seemingly inhuman woman who recently travelled the countryside and allowing them to investigate her trail—either before or after they defeat her.

COUNTDOWN

Day	Two drained villagers—Alonzo and Giulia, a young couple—are found on the outskirts of the Rovannon estate.
Shadows	Auguste, a local hunter, returns from the forest via estate grounds and is drained as well.
Sunset	The Rovannon bandits learn about the victims and use the villagers' moment of weakness to attack them.
Dusk	Many villagers seek shelter on estate grounds, ten of them fall prey to the gorgon.
Nightfall	Fed with her victims' lives, the gorgon becomes incurably hungry for more, entering the village and feeding on bandits and villagers alike.
Midnight	The gorgon transforms into a hydra, completely destroys the Rovannon estate and village, and begins a murderous trek toward the big cities of Helos and finally Hermessia.

THE GORGON

Monster: Collector (motivation: to steal specific sorts of things)

The gorgon lays low in the ruined estate, ambushing people who approach it or pass through it. From the Shadows step in the countdown onward, she has sucked enough life to burst into a hydra if cornered in battle.

Remember that the victims of a gorgon's gaze are drained of life energy but aren't dead for good—they are motionless and pale, almost stone-like, but a proper use of magic or alchemy within a few days will allow them to return to life. They die for good only from starvation or dehydration. More information about gorgons and hydras is on pages 252 and 253, respectively.

THE ROVANNON BANDITS

Minions: Plague (motivation: to swarm and destroy)

Today, two generations after the clash with their subjects, Rovannons are reduced to bandits roaming the nearby countryside, but they're still furious that the estate isn't theirs anymore. They may attack anyone cooperating with the villagers or poking around there, but the hunters might also talk them into allying against the gorgon. Their bandit group consists of:

- **Eugene Rovannon**, the leader, bitter and calculating.
- **Fionne Rovannon**, his daughter, playful but violent.
- **Theodore, Mia, and Rosa**, three loyal and bloodthirsty servants.

The exact nature of the conflict between Rovannons and their subjects should be connected to Fallen Age problems established in the Prologue but the nobles, not their subjects, should be to blame.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Armour: 0 (servants) or 1 (Rovannons—sturdy leather vests).

Attacks: Daggers: 1-harm intimate hand; Rapiers: 2-harm hand (Rovannons only); Horse trample: 3-harm close area risky (they fall from a horse if they get any harm while trampling); Flintlock pistols: 3-harm close reload (Rovannons only).

THE ROVANNON ESTATE

Location: Den (motivation: to harbour monsters)

Once a proud rural palace, half-wooden and half-stone, now a charred ruin. The estate grounds contain ponds filled with fish and are the shortest way from the village to the woods, so people still frequent it, becoming easy prey for the gorgon lurking in the estate.

The estate interior is now a three-level maze of corridors and rooms full of holes and unstable walls. It can be used to their advantage both by the hunters and their prey, hence the following move.

CUSTOM MOVE

The Charred Maze: When you **read a bad situation** in the Rovannon estate, on a 7+, you get a free question: “How can I use this maze of an estate to my advantage?” On a miss, you fail to notice something that will hurt you for 2-harm or cause –1 ongoing to a specific activity chosen by the Keeper for the duration of your stay in the estate.

THE NAMELESS VILLAGE

Location: Crossroads (to bring people, and things, together)

It was the Rovannon village once but after overthrowing their rulers, the villagers chose no new name for it, wanting its namelessness to be a testimony to their independence. It's a modest but well-kept village living mostly on corn farming and woodwork. It needs the fish from the estate ponds to fully sustain itself, however, and most of the wood used in its woodwork industry comes from the forest that's easiest to reach via the estate grounds.

SANDRO FRESCHI, THE VILLAGE MAYOR

Bystander: Helper (motivation: to do the right thing)

Sandro is the best mayor the village could wish for—brave and clever but also friendly and compassionate. He keeps the victims of monster attacks in his house, rightly believing they aren't really dead but not knowing how to wake them up.



THE VILLAGERS

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to get themselves in trouble)

The inhabitants of the nameless village are a proud folk. The story of how their ancestors chased the Rovannons away gives them a clear identity and courage to act and think for themselves. They're a bit distrustful of people connected to the higher-ups of Helos, including both the Queen's Musketeers and the Dream Alchemists, but they always give newcomers a chance to prove themselves before they judge them based on the group they belong to. A few sample villagers:

- **Marcia**, a curious young girl. She will find Alonzo and Giulia.
- **Auguste**, a silent and watchful hunter.
- **Susanne**, the innkeeper, protective towards her visitors, always hungry for news about Dream Alchemy but then always dismissing it as idle gossip.

THE DREAMSCAPE

Phenomenon: Teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters)

The Dreamscape's power shouldn't be the main focus of this mystery but can influence it in subtle ways. It can send the hunters or villagers unsettling dreams about the gorgon, maybe luring new victims toward the estate. It can warp the Rovannons' or Sandro Freschi's motivation when the bandits clash with the villagers, making the conflict more heated and more reminiscent of the Fallen Age's cruelties. In general, it can make the mystery a bit stranger and the people a bit more obsessive. More information about the Dreamscape on page 238.

AFTERMATH

If the hunters hunt the gorgon successfully, they gain everlasting friendship of the village inhabitants. They will always welcome them, providing food and shelter and even hiding them from the Musketeers or Dream Alchemists if necessary.

A nice detail to end this mystery: Sandro Freschi might suggest naming the nameless village at least, choosing a name in honour of the hunters or the events of their hunt.

INTRODUCTORY MYSTERY: DREAM OF FLYING

Contrary to *The Heiress*, this introductory mystery throws the hunters straight into the metaplot and can alter the situation in Helos a lot. You can run it either instead of *The Heiress* or after it.

CONCEPT

A show of Queen Helena's airborne ships is interrupted by an attack of harpies that turn out to be the very Dream Alchemists who created the ships.

HOOK

The hunters hear about a great show of Dream Alchemists' art announced by Queen Helena. Some of them might have dreams or visions suggesting it will go terribly wrong.

OVERVIEW

The mystery starts when an airship launches near Hermessia and is suddenly attacked by harpies. A dramatic fight will surely ensue.

Afterwards, it turns out that some people have sighted more harpies at the docks and that the Dream Alchemists who helped create the airships either disappeared or locked themselves in their wing of the Queen's palace. In the meantime, Francois, the Dream Alchemist who was leading the experiments, turns into a conduit to the Dreamscape in the harpies' den...

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Francois was the leader of the Dreamtouched experiments, but the Grand Dreamers sent him to work on airships for Queen Helena because they plan to intensify their work and want the Queen placated and on their side. He discovered that the Queen's design for airborne ships required creating substances much lighter than air, and that he and his Alchemists needed to dive really deep into the Dreamscape to find a way to transform solid bodies this way.

They succeeded but were attacked by a flight of harpies and heavily wounded. After they returned to the Waking World, they finished the airship design but soon thereafter started changing into harpies themselves. Most of them fled to an island near Hermessia, some stayed barricaded in their guest chambers in the palace.



Due to his experiments with the Dreamtouched, Francois was on the edge of becoming one himself for a long time. Now he won't stay a regular harpy for long—instead, he gradually transforms into a living conduit to the Dreamscape.

COUNTDOWN

Day	The harpies attack an airship with Musketeers onboard just as it soars into the sky.
Shadows	Emboldened harpies start attacking the docks of Hermessia.
Sunset	The Dream Alchemists barricaded in the palace transform completely into harpies, wreaking havoc in the palace and then joining the rest.
Dusk	The Queen orders her Musketeers to send two unfinished airships against the harpies. They float in the sky toward the coastline, unsteady and vulnerable.
Nightfall	The line between the Dreamscape and the Waking World around Francois blurs completely. The harpies' island hideout starts levitating.
Midnight	The harpies destroy both airships using their flying fortress and escape in it, creating a great new threat for all of Helos.



TRANSFORMED FRANCOIS

Monster: Sorcerer (motivation: to usurp unnatural power)

Long past being human, Francois acts now as if he were a very frustrated Dreaming One—he feels deeply connected to the fluid possibilities of the Dreamscape but he knows he is confined by the Waking World's immutability. He commands his harpies to wreak havoc as he focuses on deeper and deeper recesses of the Dreamscape, hoping to pour more of its essence into the world around him.

Powers

- **Awe:** He's far less human than a typical harpy—he has four sets of wings, six arms that end in claws, and his eyes reflect the Dreamscape, shining and gazing through his body in all directions at once. Until someone harms him, all moves against him take –1 ongoing.
- **Dreamsong:** When he sings, hunters around him have to roll +Cool. On a 10+, they're fine. On a 7-9, they take –1 forward as his song drags them into sleep. On a miss, they enter the Dreamscape as if they chose Depth 1 when **diving into dreams**. Bystanders fall asleep and might be drawn into the Dreamscape, but those with strong will may resist.

Weakness

- **Spirit of Air:** He can be killed for good only when he touches the ground. Note that the cave he hides in is big enough for him to float in it, touching neither ground nor ceiling.

Harm capacity: 11

Armour: 1 (sturdy skin).

Attacks: Powerful wind: 3-harm close forceful area; Beak: 4-harm hand.

TRANSFORMED ALCHEMISTS

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

Harpies created from other Dream Alchemists. Totally lost in their rage, obedient only to Francois and their destructive impulses. They take special joy in destroying the airships they created.

Powers

- **Flying:** -1 ongoing on moves to reach or outrun them when being airborne can be their advantage.

Harm capacity: 7

Armour: 1 (sturdy skin).

Attacks: Claws: 2-harm hand.

TRISSA ISLAND

Location: Den (motivation: to harbour monsters)

A small rock penetrated by a few winding caves, less than a mile away from the docks of Hermessia. A perfect rallying point for harpies wanting to harass the city and destroy the Queen's airships.

If the countdown reaches Midnight, the island will soar into the air as the harpies' mobile fortress, becoming a potent threat for future mysteries.

THE QUEEN'S PALACE

Location: Fortress (motivation: to deny entry)

Queen Helena's palace is a sprawling, glittering maze of towers, wings, and gardens, protected from all sides by numerous guards composed of her Musketeers and well-paid, loyal soldiers. Only the highest-ranking country officials are allowed free entry. Others have to explain their case to Captain Henriette, leader of the Musketeers, and wait hours or days for the Queen's decision.

TRANSFORMING ALCHEMISTS

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

A few of the Alchemists working under Francois weren't part of the Conspiracy. They had no idea what was happening to them when they started transforming into harpies, so they barricaded themselves in their chambers instead of escaping alongside Francois. They are getting more and more monstrous, sporting feathers, thick hides, beak-like mouths, and vestigial wings. They try their best to understand what's happening and stop it, but in their condition they can't really think clearly. The hunters have a chance of getting valuable advice from them or even stopping their transformation with **big magic**.

CUSTOM MOVE

Tense Talks: When you fail a roll to **manipulate** a transforming Alchemist, they transform into a harpy—their threat type changes to Minion: Brute and they gain a Transformed Alchemist's stats.

QUEEN HELENA I, THE RADIANT

This mystery might be a turning point in Helena's reign. She is shocked by the sudden disappearance of the Alchemists and will be even more shocked by the harpies' attack. She will try to deny any connection, not wanting to see her dream of modernising Helos, thanks to the Alchemists, turn into a nightmare. The hunters might have big problems with a queen who wants to solve a crisis but not acknowledge its source—but if she does acknowledge it, the power balance in her kingdom will change for good. More information about Queen Helena is on page 245.

THE QUEEN'S MUSKETEERS

The Musketeers—Captain Henriette in particular—feel uneasy about the airship idea but aren't oppose the Queen's plans. Their order is to protect the airships at all costs, but they want to protect Hermessia much more. Some of them have recognised the Dream Alchemists' faces in the harpies that attacked them. More information about the Musketeers on page 246.

QUEEN'S AIRSHIPS

Locations: Fortresses (motivation: to deny entry)

The airships, while impressive and mobile, are even more fragile than their seaborne counterparts. The Musketeers do their best to defend them from the harpies but trying to protect such a huge and fragile construction from agile airborne fiends is a fool's errand.

- **Airship Guns:** 4-harm far reload shaky (–2 harm if no one is at the helm).

THE DREAMSCAPE

Phenomenon: Teratogen (motivation: to turn creatures and people into monsters)

The transformation of Francois and his team is a clear sign of the Dreamscape's influence. If you want to make it even more noticeable—raising the stakes and alerting the hunters to how global the threat to Helos is—you can have it corrupt Queen Helena's motivation, making her react to the crisis like a Fallen Age despot, send strange and alarming visions to hunters as they look for harpies, and introduce other details that show how Helos gradually becomes corrupted. More information about the Dreamscape on page 238.

AFTERMATH

This mystery has a chance of turning the Queen against the Dream Alchemists and starting a civil war in Helos. If the hunters are Alchemists themselves, it might be their moment of awakening when they discover their organisation isn't as crystal-clear as they believed.

This mystery can count as the Day step of *The Great Merge* arc countdown if you plan to run this arc. If you decide to use it so, you might want to follow up with a mystery where the Dream Alchemists send a diplomatic envoy to Queen Helena as new monsters roam the land around Hermessia—that way, you'll keep the Queen's role in the plot ambivalent and ambiguous for a bit longer.

DREAMS OF OLD HERMESSIA: MINI MYSTERIES

Dreams of Old Hermessia differs a bit from a typical *Monster of the Week* mystery. They allow the hunters to take part in reclaiming the Ancient Ones' knowledge and technology. They change the pace of your campaign because they're not related to any immediate crisis—think of them more as side research done by the hunters to equip themselves for future hunts or to gain favour within the organisations in Helos.

Exploring each Dream of Old Hermessia should end in retrieving a boon chosen in the Prologue as used by the Ancient Ones but not rediscovered yet. What those boons can be depends on your choices in the Prologue, but each Dream contains a few suggestions of boons particularly suited to it.

How to fit exploring those Dreams into a campaign:

- Organise a shorter session devoted to exploring a single Dream.
- Organise a normal-length or even longer session in which you explore Dream after Dream until you've had enough.
- Make exploring a Dream a side-topic of a session focused on something else.
- Use the hunters' rivals who also want to explore a given Dream to extend it into a longer and more complex plot.

How to find Dreams of Old Hermessia:

- The Keeper is free to introduce a passage to any of the Dreams at any time during the campaign. If the hunters are around Hermessia they can simply see it. If not, they can hear rumours about it.
- Hunters can find a clue about a Dream when investigating the Dream Alchemists' quarters or other places of learning.
- Hunters can meet a person who has experienced a given Dream before and can tell them where to look for it.
- Hunters who know about Dreams of Old Hermessia can ask for clues on how to reach them with the **investigate a mystery** move and even reach them directly with **big magic**.
- Some Dreams, like *The Flying Merchant*, intrude rather bluntly into modern-day Hermessia; when they do, it's banally easy to find them.



ALCHEMIST ALLEY

Phenomenon: Mutagen (motivation: to transform creatures and people)

Suitable boons:

- Blood-based medicines that make terrible wounds heal in a few hours.
- Herb-based medicines that purge the body of illness and disease.
- Herbs allowing human minds to touch dreams of the Ancient Ones without the great preparations that Dream Alchemists usually undergo.
- Extremely volatile mixtures burning great spreads of land in a moment.
- Insidious mixtures that make solid substances frail and breakable.

The main hotspot of trading in alchemy in Old Hermessia, now a Dream that sometimes connects to back alleys of the modern city. Its informal leader was Iasonis Midasos, an alchemist who boasted he could transform anything into anything. Dream Alchemists learn from his writings to this day.

Iasonis still exists today and rules over the Alchemist Alley with an oozy yet iron hand. The alley hosts about a dozen alchemists beyond him, he experiments on them and forces them to experiment on each other. When someone from the modern day arrives, Iasonis' subjects try to experiment on them. Some alchemists try to invite the newcomers to an "experiment," others simply attack them with their alchemy. If they succeed in inducing a new exciting change, they will be rewarded by Iasonis. If they hide a newcomer from him without arriving at any exciting discovery, he'll punish them.

The Keeper can decide that this Dream contains two boons—one known to all Alchemists, one only to Iasonis.

IASONIS MIDASOS, THE GREAT MUTATOR

Monster: Trickster (motivation: to create chaos)

In life, he was fond of testing his alchemical concoctions on others. Now, he's an evil spirit haunting the Alley. After thousands of years in dreams, he became one with his elixirs, turning into a vaguely humanoid creature whose rich, gold-adorned tunic conceals a multi-coloured, oozing body.

Midasos's touch can change anything and anyone. Those changes might appear random at first, but his alchemy is intimately connected to the Dreamscape's desires and the effects he causes reflect this. He is aware that outsiders are a more interesting test subject than denizens of the Alley, but he won't hesitate to change a denizen if he wants to impress someone or has no better option.

Powers

- **Master Alchemist:** Consulting any Dream Alchemy-related issue with him gives +2 forward to **investigate a mystery** about this issue. Consulting a **big magic** alchemical ritual with him allows you to switch at least one requirement to something he has—but he won't necessarily share, especially for free.
- **Mutating Touch:** Anyone touched by him is exposed to his mutating powers, described in a separate move.

Weakness

- **Alchemy:** Attacks based on alchemy and alchemy-infused weapons can destabilize and ultimately destroy him.

Harm capacity: 9

Armour: 2 (oozy body without vital parts).

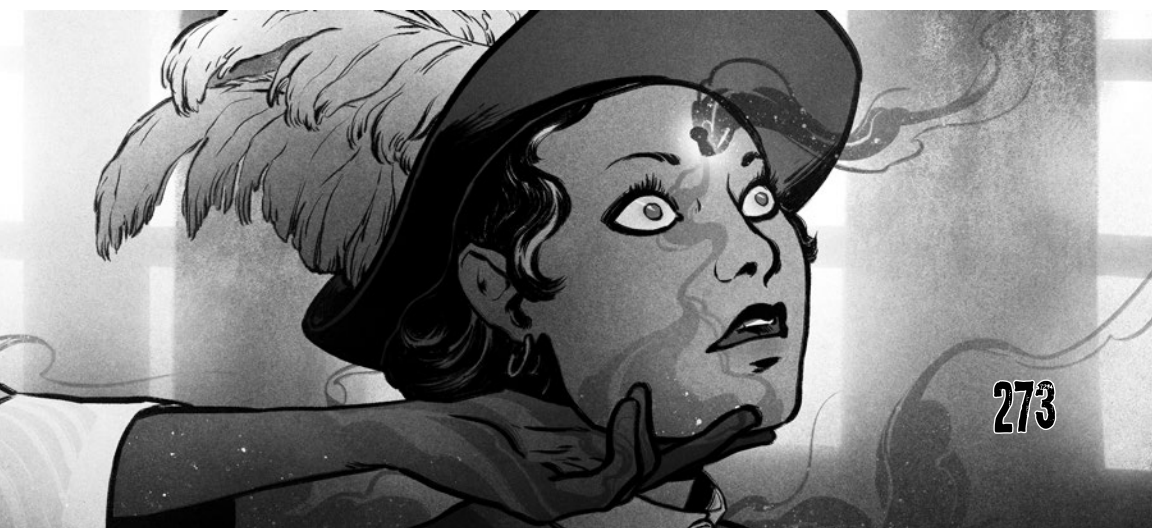
Attacks: Touch: 1-harm hand mutating; Engulf: 3-harm intimate restraining ignore-armour.



CUSTOM MOVE

Midasos's Touch: When Iasonis Midasos touches you, roll +Cool. On a 10+, nothing happens. On a 7-9, choose one from the following list. On a miss, you choose one from the list and the Keeper chooses one for your hunter as well.

- You take 2-harm ignore armour.
- You take 4-harm ignore armour and you choose the second option instead of the Keeper.
- You undergo a physical change that represents something about you that you'd prefer to keep hidden.
- A piece of your gear becomes a part of your body, still functional but probably hindering actions not related to it, removable only by a painful operation (5-harm) or **big magic**.
- A part of your body becomes an animal-like creature. Usually, it lies dormant and functions properly, but on a miss in any roll the Keeper can decide it awakens for one scene, becoming unusable as a body part.
- An important memory becomes represented as a tattoo on your body, but you forget what happened.
- A keyhole appears on your body. The key forms in a pocket in Midasos' garments. The one who opens the keyhole can lower one of your ratings and raise another by one. Midasos will try to do it.
- Your senses go wild, sometimes more accurate, sometimes dulled. You hold 2, the Keeper holds 2. You spend holds to ask an extra question when successfully using **investigate a mystery** or **read a bad situation**. The Keeper spends holds to give you -2 forward to those moves.
- Midasos can assume the shape of the touched investigator, forevermore from now on.



CUNNING ALCHEMISTS

Minion: Traitor (motivation: to betray people)

Those who prefer to trick the newcomers into cooperation rather than to attack them.

Powers

- **It's an Experiment:** A hunter who willingly agrees to try one of their concoctions rolls +Cool. On a 10+, they get +1 forward to any roll in Alchemist Alley. On a 7-9, nothing happens. On a miss, the Keeper chooses one from the **Midasos's Touch** list.

Attacks: Alchemical vials: 2-harm close magic many volatile.

Harm capacity: 7

BRUTAL ALCHEMISTS

Minion: Brute (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

Those who attack at once.

Attacks: Alchemical vials: 2-harm close magic many volatile; Ancient gladius: 2-harm hand valuable.

Harm capacity: 7



THE FLYING MERCHANT

Phenomenon: Biohazard (motivation: to infect, harm and spread)

Suitable boons:

- Alchemical processes allowing you to make solid substances lighter than air.
- A powder that makes water breathable—a small dose is enough to transmute an entire lake.
- Ways to reforge iron so that it becomes hard as diamonds.

The ship that changed owners many times during its service, bringing great fortune and great risk to anyone who possessed it. The Flying Merchant is now literally flying, able to sail in mid-air. It appears in the streets of Hermessia or the meadows around the city at erratic intervals, and also sometimes appears in other parts of Helos or maybe even in other countries—the only Dream to do so.

The Flying Merchant is self-aware and believes in trade and commerce in a grotesque way—it wants to leave something and take something or someone in every place it appears. Its crew looks like ordinary humans but after aeons of sailing through dreams, they're extensions of the ship's will.

When the ship appears in an uninhabited place, it takes something and leaves something—this can create a fun side-story when an important object or monument disappears or when a pile of gold or someone's private diary appears in the middle of nowhere. When it appears among people, things get more complicated—its crew announces the goods it offers in boisterous, enthusiastic voices. If someone's brave enough to trade with those strange newcomers, they look at them and demand something random in return.

This situation is represented by two moves: **the offer** and **the barter**.

THE OFFER

When you encounter the Flying Merchant, roll with no modifiers. On a 10+, it offers three sorts of things from the following list. On a 7-9, it offers one thing. On a miss, it offers something the hunters don't need, but they know someone else shouldn't get.

- A piece of lore needed to regain one of the Ancient Ones' boons.
- A hunter's acquaintance or someone with precious knowledge taken as a slave.
- A piece of Helos-specific gear.
- A map leading to a different Dream of Old Hermessia.
- An unfinished experiment of Dream Alchemists.

THE BARTER

When you want to buy something offered by the Flying Merchant, roll +Charm. On a 10+, the crew demands something minor in return. On a 7-9, they demand something adequate to the worth of the thing you're after. On a miss, they want something very precious—in general or to you. If you don't agree to the crew's price, they try to kidnap you no matter how you rolled. If they kidnap you, they'll leave the thing you asked for where they took you, considering you as payment for it.

When attempting to kidnap a character, the Flying Merchant acts like a monster with its crew as a single collective minion.

THE FLYING MERCHANT

Monster: Collector (motivation: to steal specific sorts of things)

Powers

- **Endless Crew:** If the Crew minion is defeated, the Flying Merchant can call new ones from within its hull, but it takes an hour.

Weakness

- **Fire:** Thought transformed by dreams, the Flying Merchant is still a ship and fire can destroy it for good.

Harm capacity: 17

Armour: 1 (reinforced hull).

Attacks: Ballista: 4-harm far; Anchor: 5-harm close restraining.

THE CREW

Minion: Brute (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

Attacks: Single ones attack with fists (1-harm hand). As a group, they surround and beat people (4-harm hand/intimate area) or try to kidnap them (2-harm intimate restraining).

Harm capacity: 9

- Disperses the group: Each point of harm incapacitates or kills one individual.

OSINNE, THE SIREN VILLAGE

Phenomenon: Bubble (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside)

Suitable boons:

- Great poetry and dramas about fate, passion, and ambition, able to move any heart.
- Herb-based medicines that purge the body of illness and disease.
- A language that allows you to command animals and maybe understand them.
- True Astrology: An ability to divine future from the movements of stars.
- Worldflow: Meditation techniques allowing you to slightly alter the physical world around you.
- Dreamdance: A ritual that grants its participants the power of lucid dreaming.



One of those Dreams that don't want to be discovered, Osinne was a small fishing village near Old Hermessia during the Golden Age. It developed a peculiar but harmless local cult focused around communion with the dreams through water. After the Transgression, it was hurled into a Dream and some of its inhabitants were transformed into sirens. Now most of Osinne's inhabitants are human-siren hybrids. They still know a great deal about exploring dreams but want to be left in peace and keep this knowledge to themselves. The Dream Alchemists and Queen Helena want to learn their secrets.

Hunters can engage with Osinne by trying to learn its secrets, protect it from Alchemists or Musketeers, or protect Hermessia from a counterattack by Osinne's inhabitants if the conflict between Osinne and Hermessia escalates.

The main problem is getting there. Portals into this village appear on waters and coasts around Hermessia from time to time, especially during storms, but the village itself doesn't want to be penetrated.

CUSTOM MOVE

Into Osinne: When you want to find Osinne, roll +Sharp. If you don't have any clue about how to reach Osinne, subtract 2 from this roll. On a 10+, you find a portal to the village and can go through it together with any characters who accompany you. On a 7-9, you find a portal but the Keeper chooses one of the following problems. On a miss, choose one: you don't find a portal and get -1 ongoing to further attempts to finding it, or you find it but the Keeper chooses three of the following problems.

- You're immediately noticed by Osinne inhabitants, probably hostile ones.
- Dream Alchemists or Queen's Musketeers follow you through the portal.
- You hear and succumb to a siren song (page 255) as soon as you traverse the portal.
- Your passage through the portal causes terrible storms around Hermessia and in Osinne.

BEFRIENDING OSINNE

Gaining the trust of Osinne's people is difficult but not impossible. If the hunters manage to do so, the Keeper can decide that Osinne becomes a Haven for them, just like the Expert's feature, with three options.

Hunters can learn the boon you chose for Osinne from almost any hybrid or siren once they gain their trust.

OSINNE HYBRID

Bystander: Official (motivation: to be suspicious)

About a quarter of Osinne's population is composed of sirens. The rest are hybrids: ordinary people of Osinne who just want to stay in their dream, worship the sea as the holy conduct between the Waking World and the Dreamscape, and hear nothing about the outside world. Their hybrid legacy usually manifests in scaly skin and fish-like eyes, some of them have gills and can breathe both water and air. Some example hybrids:

- **Paciencia Paludo**, the village's spiritual leader, mother of many.
- **Marcus Paludo**, Paciencia's son, an accomplished poet.
- **Livia Inne**, the village's chief scout, always on the lookout for portals to the outside world.
- **Octavian Flavio**, shunned because he would like to explore the Waking World.

OSINNE HYBRID

Attacks: Claws: 2-harm intimate/hand.

Armour: 1 (hard, scaly skin).

Harm capacity: 7

CUSTOM MOVE

The Curse of Osinne: When you harm the people of Osinne and then leave Osinne, Roll +Cool. On a 10+, nothing happens. On a 7-9, the Keeper holds 1. On a miss, they hold 3. They can spend holds to do one of the following:

- Make water suddenly fill the room you're in, drowning you (3-harm ignore-armour) if you don't **act under pressure** or create a way for the water to flow out.
- Make you grow gills and become only able to breathe water for an hour.
- Make all sea creatures around you want to attack you for an hour.
- Make you hear the siren call (page 255) from any body of water.
- Make patches of fish scales grow over your face. They're harmless but hard to conceal and fall away after a week.

ARC: MUSKETEER TRAITORS

This arc adds more swashbuckling intrigue to *Dreaming with the Gods*, focusing on an island kingdom of Dreamtouched Musketeers trying to conquer Helos.

Starting Point: A ship crewed by Dreamtouched Musketeers attacks a sleepy port, burning many buildings and striking terror into the hearts of other seaside settlements.

THREATS

- **Dreamtouched Musketeers:** The main monsters of this arc. Those living on the Island of Swords are behind the attacks. Many among those roaming Helos will pledge their loyalty to Hernandez Tordega once he announces himself as the Prince of Swords and try to win his favour by conquering small parts of Helos and annexing them to Tordega's realm.
- **Island of Swords:** The safe haven for Dreamtouched Musketeers and a place the hunters will probably have to assault to vanquish their threat for good.
- **Hernandez Tordega:** He starts as a villain because he's the one who coordinates the Dreamtouched Musketeers' assaults on Helos and becomes a really vile villain as he tries to force Queen Helena to marry him.
- **Dreamtouched Monsters:** As Helos breaks down because of the Dreamtouched Musketeers' attacks, the monsters have more opportunities to roam the country and hunt people, possibly creating difficult dilemmas for the hunters—who do you confront first?
- **Queen Helena I, the Radiant:** Genuinely wishes for the best for her country but has never confronted such a crisis before, so she might complicate matters further by being indecisive, overly cautious, or self-sacrificing.
- **The Queen's Musketeers:** Will do their best to save the Queen and country, but will probably need saving when the Dreamtouched Musketeers turn out to have superhuman abilities.
- **Captain Henriette:** The Musketeers' leader is secretly in love with the Queen and she'll do lots of noble and stupid things when she learns that the Queen is in danger, especially in danger of marrying someone else against her will.
- **The Dreamscape:** It uses this crisis to seep more and more into the Waking World. It focuses its altering influence on the Queen's Musketeers, trying to turn as many of them as possible into Dreamtouched Musketeers.



COUNTDOWN

Day	A ship crewed by Dreamtouched Musketeers attacks a sleepy port, burning many buildings and striking terror into the hearts of other seaside settlements.
Shadows	The Island of Swords, a Musketeer pirate country, declares its existence and demands tribute from all sea travel around Helos.
Sunset	The Queen's Musketeers attack the Island of Swords and fail abysmally because of their opponents' dream-based powers.
Dusk	Hernandez Tordega, the leader of the Dreamtouched Musketeers, demands Queen Helena's hand in marriage.
Nightfall	The Dreamtouched Musketeers besiege Hermessia.
Midnight	Queen Helena agrees to marry Hernandez.

ARC: THE GREAT MERGE

This arc describes Athena and Agamemnon's attempts to recreate the Transgression and become new Dreaming Ones. Any of the two introductory mysteries we just presented fit the Day step in the countdown and can be used to start this arc.

Starting point: Monster attacks on Helos intensify.

THREATS

- **Athena and Agamemnon:** The further down this story goes, the more obsessed they become with destroying borders between the Dreamscape and the Waking World and merging with each other.
- **Dream Alchemists:** Both the Conspiracy and ordinary Alchemists are threats here—the Conspiracy wants to cover Alchemists' experiments and does it so well that Alchemists from outside the Conspiracy know nothing about them and believe protecting their organisation is the right thing to do.
- **Queen Helena I, the Radiant:** The Queen needs the Alchemists' favour to modernise and expand her kingdom. Only when confronted with undeniable proof that they are plotting against her kingdom will she become their enemy.
- **Dreamtouched monsters:** The more advanced Athena and Agamemnon's experiments are, the more vicious the Dreamscape becomes and more people are drawn into it and turned into monsters.
- **The Dreamscape:** As in any *Dreaming with the Gods* game, the Dreamscape is a constant and active presence and the taint from the war that happens there seeps into the Waking World more and more.
- **The Queen's Musketeers:** Torn between protecting the Queen and worrying more and more about her dealings with Dream Alchemists.



COUNTDOWN

Day	The Alchemists' experiments weaken borders between the Dreamscape and the Waking World, making people transform into monsters and repeat the atrocities of the Fallen Age more often.
Shadows	Athena and Agamemnon discover a way of merging sleeping creatures using the Dreamscape's mutating effect but it only works on monsters because their bodies are already Dreamtouched. Some of the monsters they experimented on escape.
Sunset	Because of Athena and Agamemnon's new experiments, the line between the worlds blurs even further. Dreamtouched people—especially those merged in Icareum—start mutating not into hybrid monsters but into totally inhuman abominations mixing the worst traits of various monsters, like chimaeras and hydras.
Dusk	Athena and Agamemnon discover a way to repeat the Transgression, but the ritual requires the presence of a thousand Dreamtouched. Dream Alchemists start hunting for them all around Helos, maybe with help from the Queen.
Nightfall	Dream Alchemists (and probably the Queen's Musketeers who are hunting the monsters and bringing them to Icareum) are changing into monsters themselves. The monster hunt in Helos changes into a monster rampage.
Midnight	Athena and Agamemnon perform the ritual without the required Dreamtouched. They ascend and merge but lose their sanity in the process, becoming a Dreaming One of pure chaos whose very existence bends minds and matter in the Waking World.



CREATING NEW MYSTERIES

Creating your own mysteries for *Dreaming with the Gods* doesn't differ much from creating them for other *Monster of the Week* campaigns. The only additional steps are thinking about a few ways in which your mystery can connect to the greater plots and themes of the setting:

- Take a look at the arcs and consider if your mystery can be a part of one of them.
- Browse the main threats of Helos and consider if some of them can appear in your mystery.
- Think about how the Dreamscape can influence the setup of this mystery and if it should remain active throughout the countdown.
- Consider if this mystery can connect the hunters' personal themes and backgrounds to the larger themes of the setting.

The Keeper chooses sirens as the monster. They decide this mystery shouldn't be related to the arcs because they want a casual investigation independent of the metaplot. They decide, however, that they'd like the Musketeers—one of Helos's main threats—to appear. Why? Because the hunters are Musketeers themselves and the Keeper wants them to develop a bond with their organisation. In particular, they want to see if two hunters—the Chosen and the Spooky—will reveal their supernatural connections to the Musketeers. The Dreamscape caused people to change into sirens and infused the lake they live in with dream energies, surrounding it with tempting and misleading illusions. Voila! The mystery fits perfectly into the setting!

APPENDIX:

DETAILS FROM HELOS

Fantasy worlds should be full of excitement and wonder, but sometimes it's difficult to improvise elements matching those expectations, especially when a world has some unusual assumptions. That's why I provide you with a list of details that can help you flesh out the realm of Helos better. You can either keep it to yourself and use it to help your narration or share it with players, allowing each person at the table to use any of those details in their narration and thus make your Helos a more lively place together.

PLACES

1. An absurdly thin and tall tower built in Hermessia or to emulate Hermessian style.
2. A marble altar where anyone can bless their dreams by describing them on a piece of paper and then burning the paper at the altar.
3. A beautifully decorated sculpture of an Ancient One, represented as a flawless and scantily clad or even naked human.
4. A tidy inn at a crossroads, well-protected from bandits but fearing monsters.
5. An abandoned farm, seemingly destroyed from inside by something inhuman.
6. A shipyard built far away from water in hope of making ships that sail through land.

OBJECTS

1. Stylized sun motifs that repeat themselves dozens of times on a single building.
2. A rapier hung on the wall as a reminder of someone's past as a Musketeer.
3. Gunpowder-based fireworks waiting for a cause to celebrate.
4. A cheap brooch with faces of Athena and Agamemnon, sold as a charm ensuring constancy in marriage.
5. A diary of someone's sleeplessness.
6. A brass compass pointing to something other than north.

PEOPLE

1. Someone bragging about a scar they got from a duel with a Queen's Musketeer.
2. A street poet who earns a living by praising you for a coin.
3. A herbalist in an awfully obvious and poorly played guise of a Dream Alchemist.
4. A beggar with a small, cute hybrid of various animals as a pet.
5. A broken person who keeps reminiscing about the misery of the Fallen Age.
6. A woman whose random recurring nightmare has begun bleeding into real life.

PHENOMENA

1. Clouds gathering over a place where many humans sleep and briefly forming vistas from their dreams.
2. Wolves howling at night, maybe for no apparent reason, maybe not...
3. A gust of wind that blows the smell of sea and adventure far inland.
4. A dream in which you perceive night as day and vice versa.
5. A monster's paw imprinted into a building's wall.
6. A place that seems familiar even though you're sure you haven't been here before.





MONSTER MARCHES

By Marek Golonka

Monster Marches is a series framework that uses classical medieval fantasy tropes but casts the hunters as outsiders and gives monsters a solid reason to be monsters. The role of hunters in this world is similar to the witchers in Andrzej Sapkowski's popular *Witcher* setting, and adds an environmentalist bent reminiscent of *Princess Mononoke* and other fantasy movies by Hayao Miyazaki.

Once, the Iron Principality and the Monster Marches were one nation, but they split when the Principality chose to abandon its old customs to pursue large-scale industry. Recently, the Marches became the Crown Princess Marches after the Crown Princess of the Iron Principality persuaded local villagers to reunify with her nation.

The locals were long envious of how prosperous and safe the people of the Principality were compared to them. After the reunification, however, the Princess decreed old customs and old alliances with forces of the wild must be abandoned. The Princess sent her people to intensely exploit the realm's natural resources, and many people of the Marches feel cheated.

The forces of the Wild, after seeing how the Crown Princess treats the land as her personal treasury, turned against both their old cohabitants and new colonizers. Animals became beasts, spirits became demons, and natural phenomena became cursed traps for greedy humans. The land feels betrayed by its previous inhabitants, and many of its forces see no distinction between them and the colonizers. There are pockets where people and the Wild still live in harmony, but they are under constant threat from both the Iron Principality and radical Marches spirits and inhabitants.

This revolt of the land has deeply changed the hunters as well—each of them has some connection to the magic of the Wild, and when the land rebelled, it changed them as well. Each hunter in *Monster Marches* has a physical mark or a strange aura around them that betrays them as a Spirit-Touched, a person deeply connected with the land. In contrast to more magical creatures, however, the hunters retain enough sense to see that the rage of the Wild will only lead to more disasters and a confrontation the Wild probably can't win. They can save some people endangered by raging nature, they might save parts of the Marches endangered by humans, but it would take a great change to stop this pointless conflict altogether.

What will the hunters do?

AN INESCAPABLE CLASH?

Nature versus civilisation is an old fantasy trope and one especially relevant now in the times of climate crisis. When telling such tales, it's important to remember their real-world roots. The Western civilisation's dominant narrative has long been an imperial one, that nature is inherently opposed to civilisation and has to be conquered for people to prosper. Now, however, we all see where this is leading—melting glaciers, global warming, and mass extinction of animal species (maybe including our own in the near future). What's worse, this narrative of civilisation versus nature has also been used to justify colonization, with indigenous people considered less “civilised” and thus in need of taming just like animals, forests, and rivers.

In *Monster Marches*, the Iron Princess and many of her subjects see their conquest of the Marches as just such a civilising mission. They see the need to suppress the Marches as inescapable, but it's their perception only. When playing *Monster Marches*, please remember that alternatives are possible, and there are people and spirits in the series that see them. In fact, most hunters will probably count among those people.

CREATING HUNTERS

Monster Marches uses standard hunter playbooks, but requires a few alterations to fit its setting and the trappings of medieval fantasy. Here you'll find playbook modifications, suggestions on looks of the hunters, as well as guidelines for choosing the marks the Marches have branded them with and their place in the world.



GEAR

Your hunters will have to use gear that exists in the Marches—there are no modern guns here. Playbooks using modern gear may pick from the following list instead. You'll see who gets what in the following playbook alterations—the new gear is in *italics*.

- Sword (2-harm hand)
- Big sword (3-harm hand messy)
- Axe (2-harm hand messy)
- Spear (2-harm hand/close)
- Shortbow (2-harm close concealable)
- Longbow (2-harm far)
- Halberd (3-harm hand/close messy slow)
- Crossbow (2-harm close quick reload)
- Dagger (1-harm hand/close hidden)
- Repeating crossbow (2-harm close quick reload unreliable)
- Prototype rifle (3-harm far reload ignore-armour volatile loud)
- Prototype pistol (3-harm close reload ignore-armour volatile loud)

Because of their connection to the Marches, every hunter can pick up to two of their weapons to be made from a special material from the following list. Each material adds new tags or other special rules to the weapon's attack. Materials marked with an asterisk* are considered relics or precious gifts by people and spirits of the Marches, and using them against the spirits causes their great wrath. Creating prototype firearms using *any* of those materials will earn the spirits' great wrath as well.

- **Nimbleoak:** Removes “slow” and “reload” tags from a weapon.
- **Princely steel:** Adds “ignore-armour” to a hand weapon.
- **Cold iron:** Adds “+1 harm to spirits” to an iron weapon.
- **Riverstone:** Adds “magic” to a weapon.
- **Earthbone*:** Adds +1 harm to a hand or intimate weapon.
- **Bilewood*:** Adds “first attack against a creature deals +2 harm” to a wooden weapon.
- **Snakewood*:** Adds “close” to a hand weapon or “far” to a close weapon.
- **Blood rock*:** Adds “life-drain” to a weapon dealing 2 or less harm.
- **Lifeshield*:** Adds “+1 ongoing to **protect someone** when you wield the weapon” to a hand or intimate weapon.
- **Valorheart*:** Adds “+1 forward to **act under pressure** when you draw the weapon” to a weapon.



THE CHOSEN

In the Marches: Anointed by the spirits before the crisis, tutored by the few calm spirits during the crisis, marked by destiny, foretold in a dragon's prophecy.

GEAR

- No changes needed.

THE CROOKED

In the Marches: Smuggles goods between the Marches and the Principality, a highwayman, a very corrupted but good-at-heart Principality soldier.

The Crooked doesn't need to choose how they learned about the occult underworld because monsters are common knowledge in *Monster Marches*.

GEAR

- **Effective weapons (pick three):** big knife, *prototype pistol*, *repeating crossbow*, *sword*, *spear*, *shortbow*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Deal with the Devil** becomes **A Wild Pact**. It works the same, but once the deal is finished, you become a tool of the Wild.
- **Driver** becomes **Equestrian**. You have +1 ongoing while riding a horse and similar creatures, plus you can tame any such creature. You also own two riding animals for various purposes (like a beautiful racing horse and a sturdy travelling one).
- **Friends on the Force:** You have friends among the Marches Guard and royal administrators.
- **Heat:** The first option is a high-ranking royal administrator instead of a police detective.

THE DIVINE

In the Marches: Formed by an incorporeal spirit, the child of a human and a spirit, sent from beyond the Wild to end or fan the conflict.

GEAR

- Add *halberd* to the list of divine weapons.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Cast out Evil** becomes **Cast out Spirits**. It works only on spirits, both corporeal and incorporeal. On a 10+, it forces the corporeal ones to flee and makes the incorporeal ones unable to use any powers as long as you're near them and don't hurt them directly. On a 7-9, it takes a while before this effect starts. On a miss, they're really furious at you for using the Wild's magic against them. You take -1 ongoing to moves against the spirits you tried to banish.

THE EXPERT

In the Marches: A herbalist, a bard, learned in local legends, a spirit's apprentice.

GEAR

- **Monster-slaying weapons (pick three):** *crossbow, prototype pistol, juju bag, magical dagger, prototype rifle, spear, sword*. All of them can be made from a special material, you can even have two copies of the same weapon, but from different materials.

THE FLAKE

In the Marches: Suspected Principality from the start, tries to predict how the spirits will react to the crisis, believes the spirits' actions are just a cover for a deeper conspiracy.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick one):** big knife, *crossbow, prototype pistol, sword*.
- **Hidden weapons (pick two):** *dagger, throwing knives, garrote, shortbow, weighted gloves/brass knuckles, folding knife*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Net Friends:** Your net friends are a group of spies and rangers who observe the Iron Principality forces and nature spirits alike.

THE GUMSHOE

In the Marches: Defender of one of the Marches' towns, monster slayer for hire, a Principality official who left their service because of their moral code.

GEAR

You get a flask of wine or vodka, three espionage tools, and one handy weapon.

- **Espionage tools (pick three):** a crude map of the entire Marches, a detailed map of key spirits' domains, **big magic** ritual useful for gaining info, climbing claws, durable rope, false Queen's seal, invisible ink, well-crafted disguise (can be chosen multiple times if you want multiple disguises).
- **Handy weapons (pick one):** brass knuckles, *dagger*, *prototype pistol*, *repeating crossbow*, switchblade, *shortbow*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Hacker with a Dragon Tattoo** becomes **Tune in to Gossip** and works with taverns, inns, and public gatherings.
- **The Naked City:** The available contacts list includes Scholars, Scribes, Artists, Bartenders, Builders, Healers, Magistrates, Wild cultists, Secret agents, Criminals, Engineers, Lawyers, Marches Guard, and Carters.
- **Out of the Past:** Your buddy is a Marches Guard member or a royal administrator.





THE HEX

In the Marches: Taught by mean spirits, disciple of older magic traditions, holy avenger working via curses.

GEAR

- **Wizardsly weapons (pick two):** *athame, crossbow, dagger, shillelagh, spear, staff.*

THE INITIATE

In the Marches: A cultist of a powerful spirit or dragon, a member of an ancient Spirit-Touched family, part of a secret nature cult from the Principality, from an order dedicated to taming the Wild.

GEAR

- **Old-fashioned weapons (pick either two or three):** *axe, big sword, big axe, crossbow, fighting sticks, halberd, mace, silver knife, spear.*
- **Modern weapons (pick either one or two):** *prototype pistol, prototype rifle, repeating crossbow.*

ALTERED MOVES

- **Sect:** The **Nifty Gadgets** option becomes **Industrial Marvels**.

THE MONSTROUS

In the Marches: A Spirit-Touched deeply changed by their mark, permanently possessed by a spirit, a relatively reasonable corporeal spirit, fed with mutagens, a wyvern.

MONSTROUS BREED SUGGESTIONS

- **Changed:** *Curse:* pure drive (anger). *Natural attacks:* Base: fists (works like claws), add +1 harm to base. *Moves:* Something Borrowed, Dark Negotiator.
- **Permanently Possessed:** *Curse:* dark master (other spirits). *Natural attacks:* Base: claws, add ignore-armor to base. *Moves:* Unnatural Appeal, Shapeshifter.
- **Corporeal Spirit:** *Curse:* pure drive (hate). *Natural attacks:* Base: claws, add +1 harm to base. *Moves:* Immortal, Mental Dominion.
- **Fed with Mutagens:** *Curse:* vulnerability (cold iron). *Natural attacks:* Base: magical force, add far to the base. *Moves:* Unholy Strength, Unquenchable Vitality.
- **Wyvern:** *Curse:* Dark Master (incorporeal spirits). *Natural attacks:* Base: teeth, add ignore-armor to base. *Moves:* Flight, Preternatural Speed. The wyvern can't take human form, but will be accepted or even revered in some Marches settlements.

GEAR

- **Handy weapons (pick one if you want):** big knife, brass knuckles, crossbow, halberd, huge sword, sword.

THE MUNDANE

In the Marches: A Marches villager who didn't know of their magical talent before, a colonist who wants to help hunters and the Marches.

Normal Person: If you wish, your Mundane doesn't need to be a Spirit-Touched. However, if they're not, they don't choose special materials for their weapons.

GEAR

- **Mundane weapons (pick two):** *axe, dagger, crossbow, pocket knife, sledge-hammer, spear.*
- **Means of transport (pick one):** a fast horse, an average horse and a carriage, right to stay in inns for free, add "What useful shortcut do I know?" to **investigate a mystery** questions.

THE PARAROMANTIC

In the Marches: The lover of a dark spirit, beloved by a once sensible spirit, a mad spirit fell into mad love with them after the Wild rebelled.

GEAR

- Choose two: *shortbow*, *spear*, pocket knife, a horse, a mule-drawn carriage, a boat.

THE PROFESSIONAL

In the Marches: A member of a monster hunting group, a member of a human-hunting group, works for a secret society formed in the Principality to end the conflict against the Wild.

GEAR

- You get either thin leather armour (1-armour hidden) or heavy chainmail (2-armour heavy) for protection.
- **Serious weapons (pick one):** *big sword*, *halberd*, *longbow*, *prototype rifle*, *repeating crossbow*.
- **Normal weapons (pick two):** *axe*, big knife, *shortbow*, *spear*, *sword*, *prototype pistol*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Agency:** **Weird Tech Gadgets** becomes **Industrial Prototypes**.
- **Mobility** gives you a carriage built for monster hunting.

THE SEARCHER

In the Marches: Saw an ancient dragon, rode with the Wild Hunt, has long suspected the spirits can rebel against humans.

GEAR

- You get a horse or a small ship, three sets of research tools, and one self-defence weapon.
- **Research tools (pick three):** a book of spirits, spiritbane herbs, list of the Principality's army symbols and banners, a forged recommendation from a Principality official, a trap for catching (1-harm hand restraining if sprung), a trap for hurting (3-harm close messy if sprung), a crude map of the entire Marches, a detailed map of key spirits' domains, spyglass.
- **Self-defence weapon (pick one):** *crossbow*, martial arts training, small knife, *spear*, walking stick.

THE SNOOP

The Snoop playbook isn't available in this framework.

THE SPELL-SLINGER

In the Marches: Speaks with elements, has honed their magical abilities to protect the Marches, channels the Wild's fury.

GEAR

- **Backup weapons (pick one):** *crossbow*, heirloom sword, ritual knife, *shortbow*, *spear*.

ALTERED MOVES

- **Arcane Reputation:** Consult with the Keeper if your campaign will include at least three different supernatural organisations or groups.

THE SPOOKTACULAR

In the Marches: Con-person from the Principality, local storyteller, face of an outcast group.

GEAR

- **Vehicle (pick one):** house-wagon & horses, cart & mules, stout boots, mule, camel, wild mount, or river-boat.
- Additionally, rename mystical item names without changing the way they work: Returning 100 becomes Returning Ducat, Ghost Shades become Transparent Veil, and Really Big Plush Dog (animated) becomes Living Dog Puppet.

THE SPOOKY

In the Marches: Directly connected to a very angry spirit, ghosts of dead Marches people and spirits drive them to dark deeds, a curse gives them powers and bad ideas.

GEAR

- **Normal weapons (pick two):** *axe*, big knife, *crossbow*, *shortbow*, *spear*, *sword*.

THE WRONGED

In the Marches: Lost their loved ones to the Wild's fury, prosecuted by the Iron Principality, had and lost friends on both sides of the conflict.

Suggested prey types: Spirits, wyverns and dragons, Spirit-Touched, soldiers, partisans.

GEAR

- If you want, you may take a trusted horse or a horse- or mule-drawn carriage.
- **Signature Weapons (pick one):** enchanted dagger, fighting knife, *halberd*, huge sword or huge axe, *longbow*, *prototype rifle*, *repeating crossbow*, specialist weapons for destroying your foes, *sword made from two special materials at once*.
- **Practical weapons (pick two):** *axe*, big knife, brass knuckles, *crossbow*, *prototype pistol*, *shortbow*, *spear*, *sword*.



LOOK AND MARKS

Many look options fit in *Monster Marches* just as well as in modern *Monster of the Week*. If an aspect of your look has no options that fit your vision of their playbook in *Monster Marches*, replace options from this aspect with any of the following options, or some equivalent of your choice:

- **Hair:** Braided hair, braided beard, shaved head, ribbons in hair, flowing long hair
- **Clothes:** Linen tunic, muddy traveller clothes, pilgrim's hooded robe, green cloak, punctured armour that doesn't protect anymore, hide of a beast
- **Items:** A sack of common herbs, animal mask, a lute, a silver or copper amulet

SPIRIT-TOUCHED

Each hunter has a clear mark of their connection to the land. It's this mark that makes people instantly recognize them as Spirit-Touched, potentially helpful, but also potentially dangerous, and creates their strange outcast hero status. The marks are connected to the nature of a hunter's connection to the land but are always easy to notice or sense and difficult to conceal. Sample marks include:

- **Auras and Impressions:** Warm aura, cold aura, always audible slight wind, echoes of birdsongs, someone else's anger, moss growing on nearby surfaces
- **Hair and Face:** Gem-like hair colour, unnaturally white hair, withered branches in hair, feathers in hair, one cat-like eye, one milky eye, a burn scar on the face, scales on cheeks
- **Body:** Slightly furry hands and claw-like fingers, one arm noticeably more muscular than the other, serpent-like movements, bark-like skin, greenish veins, hunched under the Marches' suffering

All hunters have such marks because all are connected to the land, as evidenced by them having a Weird stat. Hunters in *Monster Marches* can have any Weird basic move from *Tome of Mysteries* or the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week*.

Because their powers are based on a connection to the Marches, hunters need to have a bit of soil or a plant from the Marches with them when outside the region, otherwise they have a -1 ongoing penalty to their base Weird move.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

The final thing the players should decide together is if their hunters have a place to call home, and if so, what is it. The hunters in this series framework are outcast heroes wanting to do some good and bring some peace into a world of deepening conflict. Most people will distrust them based on their appearance alone, with a rare few understanding and supporting their struggle. It means belonging and feeling at home are difficult for them but also very important.

If you want your hunters to have a base, the most obvious options are:

- If the group contains hunters who have a base of operations—like the Expert’s Haven or the Professional’s Agency base—it’s probably the home for the team. However, the other hunters might be barely welcome guests or need to conceal their true nature.
- The group has a hideout somewhere in the wildness of the Marches. If they have done their best to respect the Marches so far or personally saved a realm spirit, this spirit can guard the hideout. If in the future, the hunters cause the Marches great harm, the spirit will probably leave the hideout unguarded or even looted.
- There are people who see hunters as heroes and host them. They can be native inhabitants, settlers, or maybe other Spirit-Touched running a common base together with the hunters change to period

If the hunters have a permanent residence, each time they leave it, they hold 2 and can spend the hold for a +1 forward to any roll.

If they don’t, add “Are we closer to have something we call home?” to the list of end-of-mystery questions. If the party answers “yes” to all five questions, award them 3 experience points at the end of the mystery.

KEEPERS OF THE MARCHES

Monster Marches is presented as a situation in conflict, without any specific goal the hunters are working towards. Some key characters’ motivations are hidden, and the hunters don’t know all about the situation at the start, but they know its basic shape. The Iron Principality is aggressive and totalitarian, the Wild rebelled against the humans, and now both humans of the Marches and the Marches itself must be protected as the conflict escalates—that’s pretty much it. The challenge of this framework isn’t to get to a deeper truth; it’s to explore what the hunters do in a situation filled with resentment and conflicting interests.

The hunters' position in this conflict, strongly inspired by the place witchers occupy in the world of their titular saga, is precarious and rife with problems. They could be intermediaries in the conflict, but are easily treated with distrust by both sides. Humans consider them devious spirits, while spirits think they're too human and don't see the full scope of the harm done to the realm by the Iron Principality. When portraying the world around the hunters, it's important to remember the conflict isn't black and white. It's clear the Iron Principality is reckless, and its politics cause more harm than good, but the spirits of *Monster Marches* aren't angels either. They're interested in natural balance before human well-being, and before the conflict, some of them were helping the human population, but others were preying on them. What might be worse, a society centred around maintaining harmony with the spirits offered little in terms of growth and progress, making the Marches' inhabitants' envy of the Principality's prosperity and development understandable—even if it's because the Crown Princess is good at hiding the cost of progress in her land.

The conflict isn't black and white and it's not unavoidable either. The Crown Princess sees the Marches as a place to exploit, but also as a danger to her rule, so she'll do all she can to keep the conflict escalating. It's basically in nobody's interest, however, and hunters will meet people suffering because of the confrontation on both sides.

It's likely the hunters will have to kill some spirits or humans during their adventures, and it's quite possible those kills will make a local situation better, but only for a while and at the cost of intensifying the overall conflict. The entire series framework is basically an atonement mystery (page 15). As long as the realm spirits feel threatened, there will be new monsters and new victims. It'll be the players' choice if they decide to act as killers or as intermediaries, probably some situations will require one approach and others a different one. However, if you plan a longer series, sooner or later the hunters might get tired of risky interventions that don't change the bigger picture and try to solve the conflict for good. The framework contains various potential ways of doing so, such as assassinating the Iron Princess and using the Part the Earth ritual, but also working to reconcile the people of the Principality with those of the Marches. It's also certain the hunters will have their own ideas on how to finish the conflict. There is no single canonical ending to the *Monster Marches* crisis, but we hope your hunters manage to find one as permanent and as humane as possible. Play to see if it happens!



NEW THREAT TYPE: VILLAIN

Monsters are scary, but humans can be sometimes, too. *Monster Marches* often pits the hunters against humans who possess no (or very little) supernatural powers but are dangerous due to their malice, skills, and influence. They're represented by a new threat type: the villain.

Villain types

- **Schemer** (motivation: to increase their influence)
- **Sadist** (motivation: to make others suffer)
- **Narcissist** (motivation: to prove their superiority)
- **Fanatic** (motivation: to do wrong things for right purposes)
- **Tyrant** (motivation: to have subordinates and boss them around)
- **Taker** (motivation: to take what's not theirs)

Villain moves

- Oppose the hunters openly with words or force.
- Plot against the hunters.
- Prey on the hunters.
- Treat other people as tools.
- Express mistrust or prejudice.
- Use their social standing against the hunters.
- Pretend to be working for the general good.
- Send goons to make trouble.
- Destroy the Wild.
- Be helpless against powers of magic and the Wild.



WRITING VILLAINS

Villains are mostly non-magical humans, so you write their stats the same as human minions. If you expect the villain to get into a fight, note their harm capacity (usually 7), attacks, and armour. In the villains' case, it typically means weapons and worn armour, but some of them can wield some magic, be generally tough, or have a special technique listed as a weapon. Like, for example, "powerful grip 2-harm intimate restraining."

Villains don't need powers and weaknesses and, under normal circumstances, they die when their harm reaches their harm capacity. If you feel they could use something special, you can give them powers that represent their drive, cunning, or knowledge. Such powers should be similar in scope to hunters' moves. The Iron Princess, for example, has a power that makes her deal 1-harm more and take 1-harm less from creatures that have already harmed her. It's not a magical ability, she simply keeps a close eye on those who've hurt her and does her best to make them dead. It's also quite similar in scope to the Wronged's bonuses regarding their chosen prey, so it makes sense for a human to have such a power in *Monster of the Week*.

Feel free to use villains in other series as well. A human with malicious intent who isn't a minion of any monster or phenomenon can be represented by this threat type.

THREATS: THE MONSTER MARCHES

RAGING ANIMALS

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

Normal animals overflowing with the Wild's fury. Normal people don't know how to calm them, and when they meet them, one side often ends up dead. If hunters ask how to calm them, suggest **big magic**, **use magic** with some extra components, containing them and treating them well, or **manipulating** them with something an animal can understand.

Attacks: Physical attacks: 1, 2, or 3-harm intimate/hand.

Armour: None or 1 (various forms of thick skin).

Harm capacity: 3–15 depending on size.

Example animals: cat (claws 1-harm intimate, no armour, harm capacity 3), wolf (bite 2-harm hand restraining, no armour, harm capacity 8), huge bear (claws 3-harm hand forceful, 1-armour, harm capacity 15)

CORPOREAL SPIRITS

Monsters: Tricksters (motivation: to create chaos)

These spirits of the Marches walk the land as magical creatures. They vary wildly in shape and size, but have similar motives and abilities. A corporeal spirit is especially closely connected to one thematic aspect of the Marches (not a single location). There are spirits of fertility, of fire, water, earth, and air, and also of death and the hunt. Left on their own, they created a delicate balance and respected each other as well as humans, who learned to deal with each spirit, for better or worse.

Now they all feel the pain of the realm, but less than their incorporeal cousins. They choose varied responses to this great crisis. Many became fierce defenders of the land, attacking and sabotaging human endeavours. Others use what empathy they have left to act as intermediaries between the humans and spirits, which usually means simply doing their best for the both not to meet each other.

Shape (choose up to three):

- Snake body
- Bear body
- Stone body
- Wooden body
- Feathered wings
- Bat wings
- Human arms
- Human head
- Wolf head
- Another animal feature:

- Another elemental feature:

- Another human feature:

Powers (choose up to two):

- **Camouflage:** Blend into any natural surroundings.
- **Maze-maker:** Create and close paths in any natural surroundings.
- **Shape-shifter:** Assume human shape and communicate with people.
- **Shadow-weaver:** Create illusions of animals and natural phenomena.
- **Allies:** Summon other corporeal spirits and wyverns to their aid.
- **Spirit-speaker:** Instigate emotions in incorporeal spirits, calming or agitating them.
- **Sandman:** Send visions and nightmares to sleeping people and other spirits.
- **Fear-feeder:** Collect fears from human nightmares and feed them to creatures connected to the Marches, healing up to 3-harm or giving +1 ongoing for one night, but instilling a desire to terrorize humans (**act under pressure** to resist).
- **Custom:** _____

Weakness:

- **Foreign weapons:** Corporeal spirits can be killed for good using weapons forged outside the Marches.
- **Hierarchy of spirits:** Corporeal spirits can be killed by anyone who's been ordered to do so by an incorporeal spirit or a dragon.

Attacks: Physical attacks: 3-harm hand, choose one: forceful, ignore-armour, or messy; Magical attacks: 2-harm close, choose one: area, loud, or restraining.

Armour: 1 or 2 (various forms of thick skin).

Harm capacity: 6–25 depending on size.

INCORPOREAL SPIRITS

Phenomena: Bubbles (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside)

Incorporeal spirits are souls of places of great natural power within the Marches. Nowadays, most of them are filled to the brim with fury, trying to protect the domains they inhabit or actively harm people around them.

Some of them grant boons to people and corporeal spirits, but mostly only if they know the person in question as a stalwart protector of the Marches.

Incorporeal spirits are phenomena, but when hunters are in their domains, feel free to use location moves as well.

Example spirit domains:

- Crystal-clear pond.
- Glade with an old tree in the middle.
- Cave with gem-adorned walls.
- Hot spring, always smelling of herbs and sulphur.
- A lone, barren peak, maybe topped with an eagle's nest.

Powers (choose up to three):

- **Poltergeist:** Attack trespassers with natural elements, dealing up to 3-harm.
- **Maze-maker:** Open and close any paths within its domain.
- **Shadow-weaver:** Create illusions of humans and corporeal spirits within its domain.
- **Provider:** Provide food, either by growing fruit and corn or by luring game animals.
- **Plague-bringer:** Send illnesses upon creatures visiting their domain (–1 ongoing or permanently unstable until cured).
- **Allies:** Summon corporeal spirits or wyverns to its aid.
- **Children:** Create minions to protect itself, beings with up to 8-harm, 2-harm attacks and one suitable power that are destroyed if they venture outside the spirit's domain for more than 24 hours.
- **Corrupter:** Change a human into a Child of Greed if the human stays within its domain for 24 hours.
- **Oath-master:** Enforce promises with a geas, forcing hunters to **act under pressure** to break them.
- **Guide:** Strengthen the Spirit-Touched's connections to the land, giving them +2 forward to use Weird moves or teaching them **big magic** rituals.
- **Custom:** _____



CALMING THE SPIRITS

The spirits are supernatural, larger-than-life beings, and their emotions can be extreme—not because they're reckless or cruel, but because the overall situation in the Marches reflects on their psyche. Their suffering isn't that of an individual, but of an entire land. That's why it's generally hard to calm them just with words. As usual with monsters, hunters can't influence them directly by **manipulating someone**. However, the following methods can calm an angry spirit, but only for as long as the ones calming it down don't present a threat to the Marches:

- Offering a spirit a gift from a part of the Marches untouched by civilisation, like the Sanctuary (page 312).
- Showing clear proof that somebody—human, animal, or spirit—was killed or badly hurt by the Marches despite doing nothing to harm the land.
- Performing a **big magic** ritual that requires three Spirit-Touched and paint made of their blood and forest fruit, marking the Spirit-Touched as emissaries whom spirits shouldn't attack unless in self-defence.

If the hunters' backstories suggest they worked closely with spirits before, they can know about at least one of those methods from the start; if not, they can learn about them by **investigating the mystery**.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MARCHES

Phenomenon: Zone (motivation: to harm all that venture within)

Some believe there is a single incorporeal spirit of the Marches, but it's not true—yet. If the anger of the spirits becomes stronger than their separate identities, they can meld into a single entity, hellbent on chasing the humans away from the land. If that happens, the entire Marches become this spirit's area of influence, it has all the powers of both corporeal and incorporeal spirits, and all attempts to stop it or resist its powers have –1 ongoing. Additionally, the Wild Hunt forms permanently, inviting all Broken Spirit-Touched, Children of Greed, and hunters to join them.

WILD CULTISTS

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the monster) or

Villains: Fanatics (motivation: to do wrong things for right purposes)

People who see no fault in the spirits' attacks and are willing to help and protect them at any cost. Most of them are Marches locals who belonged to spirit cults before, but a few come from the Principality and desperately want to atone for their land's sins.

Powers

- **Contact Spirits:** In every group of spirit cultists, there is at least one member who knows a **big magic** ritual to contact nearby spirits. Such rituals always require one of the following: an hour and three participants, spilling the caster's blood, spilling an enemy's blood.
- **Life for the Marches:** If a spirit or other magical creature of the Marches is harmed within a cultist's reach, they can take the hit upon themselves.

Attacks: Bow or spear: 2-harm close/far.

Armour: None.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

BROKEN SPIRIT-TOUCHED

Minions: Guardians (motivation: to bar a way or protect something) or

Villains: Sadists (motivation: to make others suffer)

People who were connected to the Marches' spirits can become precious guardians of the slipping balance like the hunters, but not all of them can handle the mental toll of this role. Some became broken the moment the realm's fury touched them, others slipped into this sorry state gradually. Such people wander the Marches looking for trouble or ally themselves with the incorporeal spirits, protecting their domains.

Powers

- **Spirit-Touched:** Choose either **use magic** or one of the alternate Weird basic moves from *Tome of Mysteries*. They can invoke any effect of successfully using that move.

Attacks: Sword or axe: 2-harm hand; Bow or spear: 2-harm close/far.

Armour: 0 or 1 (leather armour).

Harm capacity: 7



CHILDREN OF GREED

Monsters: Destroyers (motivation: to bring about the end of the world)

The most dangerous beasts prowling the Marches are the Children of Greed—pioneers from the Principality kidnapped by nature spirits and transformed into cunning predators. They're filled with the Wild's fury, but they retain their human memories, making them perfect avengers of the Marches. They stalk the realm's towns, trying to sabotage them as severely as possible. Sometimes they cause petty sabotage, sometimes they cause great disasters, but their ultimate goal is to chase people—all people—from the Marches.

The Children are able to keep a facade of being a normal human most of the time. However, when greatly stressed, they turn into incarnations of the land's fury. They ramble in a voice that becomes an inhuman chorus, shouting about wrongs done to earth, stone, and water.

Powers

- Inhumanly strong and agile.
- Able to control plants and animals, even making plants grow when there were none before.
- Looking perfectly human and able to pass for humans under most circumstances.

Weakness

- **One with the Land:** The Marches supply them with strength and vigour. When outside them or in human settlements, they can be killed normally.
- **Pass on the Fury:** When a hunter deals a Child of Greed their last harm, they feel they can take the realm's power from the Child. If they agree, the child becomes a normal human (and dies unless healed fast) and the hunter becomes a Child of Greed, changing their playbook to Monstrous, Summoned, or Spooky.

Attacks: Powerful strikes: 4-harm hand forceful; Awaken plants: 3-harm close area restraining.

Armour: 1 (resilient).

Harm capacity: 10

THE WILD HUNT

Phenomenon: Panic (motivation: to make people act irrationally)

Children of Greed are usually subtle, insidious saboteurs, but the will of the land sometimes presses upon them to strike with a much more violent force. When a great disaster strikes the Marches, spirits of wind and thunder reach out to the Children, dragging them into the air and making them form a Wild Hunt. This violent group rides the wind or flying spirits and wyverns, striking terror into humans and assaulting their settlements.

Hunters can be invited to join the Wild Hunt as well. Wyverns and corporeal spirits can land right next to them, inviting them to sit on their backs. They might explain what's going on, but they might not, with the hunters learning the purpose of the Hunt from the Children of Greed when already mid-air. The Prince Consort might be invited to join the Hunt as well.

If you want to use team concepts for a *Monster Marches* campaign, you can combine this information with the Wild Hunt Fugitives team concept to create a permanent Wild Hunt, with hunters as runaways from it.

Powers

- **Flight:** Although the Hunt frequently includes flying steeds, even without them all its members can fly.
- **Ferocity:** All creatures riding with the Hunt deal +1 harm with all their attacks. When a creature riding with the Hunt becomes unstable, they deal further +1 harm with all their attacks as long as they are unstable, for a total of +2.

Weakness

- **Oneness:** When members of the Wild Hunt raise arms against one another, its power dissipates.

THE SANCTUARY

Location: Fortress (motivation: to deny entry)

A settlement located in a series of caverns deep within the mountains overlooking the Palisade. It's always been one of the main places of communication between humans and spirits and, fortunately, the spirits dwelling there are still friendly towards Marches-born humans.

However, the balance in the Sanctuary is frail. Its old inhabitants live in peace and relative prosperity, taking as much as they need from their carefully cultivated fields and orchards, but they're extremely reluctant to let new people in. They're afraid of Principality spies, but also of Marches agitators trying to drag the Sanctuary into the war against the Principality. Angry corporeal spirits visit the Sanctuary regularly and are politely but firmly rebuked. The distance separating this place from the conflict is short and long at the same time, best exemplified in the fact that you can go to the Sanctuary from the Palisade in less than two hours if you know the correct shortcuts, but without knowing them, you can wander the mountains for days and not find the hidden settlement.

The Sanctuary can be a safe place for the hunters if they meet somebody ready to point them to this place. They might even be invited to rest here if they gain a reputation as people genuinely trying to end the conflict. The Sanctuary is, of course, a potential place to call home (page 300).

ELANA, SPEAKER OF THE SANCTUARY

Bystander: Official (motivation: to be suspicious)

The Sanctuary has no official leader, but it usually has an informal Speaker—a mediator within the community and an ambassador to the outside. Elana is a compassionate and cheerful woman who's held this informal position for over a decade now. She's appalled by what is happening in the Marches now and also personally hurt, as she's been a good friend of Gerwyn, the Prince Consort, and advised him against unifying with the Marches.

Right now, Elana believes her duties within the Sanctuary are more important than contact with the outside world. She keeps the morale within the community high and stops any potential infighting, but she practically stopped allowing new people and spirits into the Sanctuary.

Unbeknownst to her community, Elana has another important role—each night she, alongside three wise and powerful spirits, performs a ritual that makes Gerwyn forget the location of the Sanctuary. If she was ever unable to perform it, the Prince Consort would remember where the hidden place is and direct Principality soldiers there.

ULISSA, EXILE FROM THE SANCTUARY

Bystander: Innocent (motivation: to do the right thing)

Ulissa is a healer who's long honed her craft caring for inhabitants of the Sanctuary. When the conflict started, however, she decided her help would be needed outside the hidden settlement, and she ventured outside. Elana asked her to undergo a ritual making her forget about the Sanctuary's location, and Ulissa accepted it.

She travels the Marches, looking for people who need help. She tries to stay on the path of compassion and help everyone who needs it, but grows more and more disgusted with the Principality's violence. She can be a useful ally of the hunters, especially as she knows how to soothe spirits. At the same time, her anger and disgust can develop over time, making her advocate for a more violent solution as the story goes on—unless the hunters convince her there's a different way.

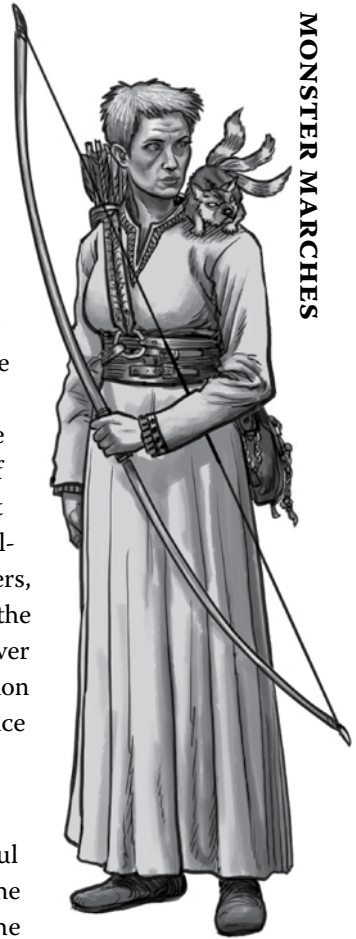
Powers

- **Soothe:** Ulissa's words can soothe powerful negative emotions in humans and spirits. She knows techniques described in *Calming the Spirits* (page 307) as well.
- **Healer:** When Ulissa tends to somebody's wounds, they heal 2-harm after a few minutes and then 2-harm per day of further care.

ULISSA'S FOLLOWERS

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

A movement of non-partisan help and non-violent resistance slowly grows around Ulissa as she travels the Marches and her actions gain attention. These people try to help other people, as well as spirits, without antagonizing the Principality openly. Some of them are already in prison for their peaceful but open critique of Marches Guard's actions. At some point in the story, they could carry the legacy Ulissa herself is unwilling to continue, still trying to be helpful and non-violent when their mentor becomes too bitter to continue doing so.



WYVERNS

Monsters: Beasts (motivation: to run wild, destroying and killing) or

Bystanders: Busybodies (motivation: to interfere in other people's plans)

The juvenile form of a dragon. The land spirits give each wyvern a riddle or a task at birth, and if they do enough to solve the riddle or fulfil the task, they can grow into full-fledged dragons—bigger, wiser, and more connected to the land.

In peaceful times, wyverns are a joy to behold—muscular, scaly creatures as big as horses, with a youthful glint in their eyes, keen if naive minds, and a great appetite for life. When the realm went wild, however, the spirits did something unthinkable—changed the task given to all wyverns to “protect the Marches!” This task isn’t just a goal, it’s inscribed into the wyvern’s very existence. Changing it has unhinged many of them, leading most wyverns to attack the human settlements. The rare few who were able to retain some sense retreated to places of great worth or natural beauty, chasing away humans who would try to grab those riches.

The introductory mystery *Nature's Revenge* is centred around Cinder-scales, the first wyvern who managed to become a full-fledged dragon by following her new task.

Powers

- Fly faster than horses run.
- Stronger than any human.

Weakness

- **Task-bound:** If a wyvern abandons their task or acts against it, they can be killed.

Attacks: Claws and fangs: 4-harm hand; Gust of wind: 2-harm area forceful.

Armour: 1 (scales).

Harm capacity: 12

THE LAND-SHATTERER

Bystander: Innocent (motivation: to do the right thing)

An enormous dragon whose wings were broken beyond healing the last time the land had to oppose humans. Now she lives in caves beneath the Marches, feeding on animals unwary enough to wander into her domain, and feels and observes the recent events with dread. The Land-Shatterer's perspective is longer than that of other nature spirits, and truly dreadful things would need to happen for her to decide it's time to use her powers on purpose. Sometimes, however, she can't help express the grief and suffering she feels, causing local earthquakes above her tunnels or in places where humans harm nature the most. When she decides it's time to intervene—or goes insane from the land's pain—the Marches can literally split in half.

Powers

- The strongest and most resilient creature in the world.
- Causes slight earthquakes anywhere around the Marches and severe ones above the place she is now.
- Blends into rock or earth like a chameleon.
- She can teach lots of **big magic** rituals connected to earth and the Marches. She herself doesn't need to use them.

Attacks: Rending claws: 5-harm hand; Breathe explosive gas: 7-harm close area.

Armour: 2 (scales like diamonds).

Harm capacity: 30



BIG MAGIC: PART THE EARTH

The Land-Shatterer doesn't use magic herself, but she knows a ritual that could direct her power in a more controlled and less destructive way if needed. This ritual creates a deep gorge, enough to separate the Marches from the Iron Principality for good, and requires the following components:

- Five participants, each connected to the Marches' magic and instructed by the Land-Shatterer, at least one spirit among them.
- A full moon's night filled with ritual chanting and gestures.
- Earth or rock from the points where the gorge should begin and end.
- Three creatures sacrificing their lives or their ability to wield magic powers.

THREATS: THE IRON PRINCIPALITY

IOLANTHE, THE IRON PRINCESS

Villain: Fanatic (motivation: to do wrong things for right purposes)

The Iron Princess is a ruthless politician, but she ultimately has the interest of her people at heart. She's a control freak who needs to be the only queen on the board to feel safe.

She believes her people will be really safe only if she makes her—and her dynasty's—rule absolute. She wants to break the Monster Marches because she sees the spirits as opposed to progress. Their concern for balance will never allow her principality to succeed.

The Princess is well aware that progress and industrialisation have taken a heavy toll on her own people. In fact, she wants to mold the Marches in the Principality's image as fast as possible, not just to profit from this land, but also because she's afraid the alternate mode of living presented by the Marches could make her subject to questioning if the changes the Principality undergoes are really for their good.

The Princess knows she has angered forces greater than herself and is ready for an assassination attempt.

Powers

- **Calculated Vengeance:** When somebody deals her harm, she watches this person closely. She deals +1 harm to them in the future and takes -1 harm from their attacks if she knows they're coming.

Attacks: Fierce fencing: 3-harm hand finesse; Hidden crossbow: 2-harm close reload hidden.

Armour: 1 (battlefield awareness).

Harm capacity: 7



GERWYN, THE PRINCE CONSORT

Villain: Fanatic (motivation: to do wrong things for right purposes)

During the annexation of the Marches, the Princess met a handsome and cunning leader of the community now known as the Palisade. They were to each other's liking, and it seemed like a great opportunity to seal the pact with a marriage, and thus Gerwyn became the Prince Consort of the Iron Principality.

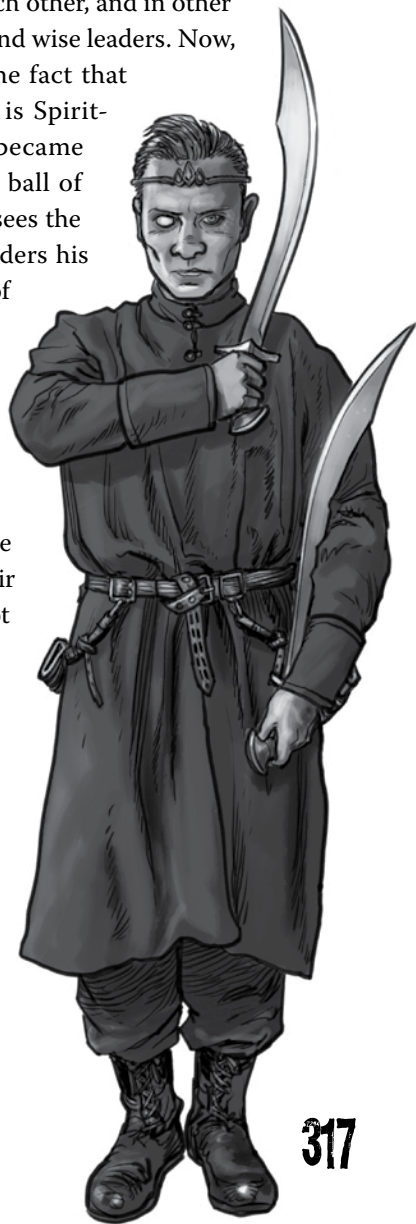
He and the Princess are really made for each other, and in other circumstances they could be a happy couple and wise leaders. Now, however, their relationship is strained by the fact that Gerwyn, like many local Marches leaders, is Spirit-Touched. When the Marches rebelled, he became marked. Now his right eye is an unsettling ball of perfect white and instead of normal sight, it sees the places where the land suffers. Gerwyn considers his mutation to be the final proof that the powers of the realm are too fickle and should be tamed. He's under great strain from this, however, and the courtiers and Princess are uneasy around him.

The Prince Consort pushes hard for quick and total subjugation of the Monster Marches, hoping that once its powers die, they will leave him in peace. The Princess and he both do their best to remain a harmonious couple, but it's not easy with the stress they're both under. The rest of the court fears the scarred Prince Consort and, to appease him, they try to fulfil his orders regarding the Marches as fast as possible.

Attacks: Two scimitars: 3-harm hand area; Composite bow: 3-harm far armour-piercing.

Armour: 1 (precognition).

Harm capacity: 7



IRON FORTRESS, THE PRINCIPALITY'S CAPITAL

Location: Hub (motivation: to reveal information)

When the Principality and the Marches first split centuries ago, the old capital remained the Principality's seat of power. It's very close to the border with the Marches and now is extremely heavily fortified. It's located around two hills, with one serving as the Princess's palace and the other as the main industrial complex—the Ironworks. The smoke from the Ironworks descends upon the districts of workers, merchants, and soldiers alike, sometimes making them wonder if this production is really for their good.

Locations of special interest to the hunters include:

- The Fertile Valley, an inn run by a couple from the Marches and named after an old legend, welcoming for their compatriots but often searched by the Princess' people.
- The Royal Prison, where hunters or their allies can end up.
- The Black Oak, a tree moved here from the Marches. Dying, but still able to channel the Marches' power.
- Iron Daggers, a thieves' guild willing to sell arms to anyone and usually too conflicted with the Princess to inform on anybody to her officials.
- The Royal Palace, situated at the top of the steep side of a hill and constantly patrolled by well-trained soldiers and hounds.



RUNAWAY SPIRITS

Monsters: Executioners (motivation: to punish the guilty) or

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

The Monster Marches are industrialised and exploited much quicker than the Principality, because the Princess wants to break the Wild quickly. It creates a paradoxical situation where some nature spirits feel less anguished in remote parts of the Principality than in the Marches. Many among such runaway spirits just want to rest and recuperate from the trauma they suffered in the Marches. In that case, they'll stick to themselves, avoid humans, and appear in mysteries mostly when the Principality's guards discover them or the hunters wander into their territory. Others, however, want to do something as soon as they are safe. This "something" can include becoming friends with the Princess's subjects and showing them that the Princess drags them into a pointless conflict, but also taking revenge on the country that's making the Marches and the Wild suffer.

When it comes to statistics and powers, they're no different from corporeal spirits (page 304).

THE FERTILE VALLEY

Location: Wilds (motivation: to contain hidden things)

Deep in the Principality lie remains of a community that looked much like the Marches. Its inhabitants didn't push for progress and industrialisation, instead living off the nature's bounty and seeking advice from kind spirits. They were forced to flee towards the Marches by Principality soldiers, and there they assimilated, making the Fertile Valley no more than a legend.

Their homes and tools remain there, however. There's a guard regiment stationed nearby, officially patrolling a trade road, but in fact tasked with making sure nobody discovers the abandoned valley. If it gets discovered, it could help bridge a gap between the Principality and the Marches as well as show the Princess's subjects that her dynasty has long been afraid of them discovering that the Marches' way of life can work.

PALISADE, THE MARCHES' CAPITAL

Location: Fortress (motivation: to deny entry)

The new Marches capital once had a name, but now everybody just calls it the Palisade because it's constantly assaulted and the worst threat—wyverns—are kept at bay with long, sharpened wooden poles stuck around the settlement and on its main buildings.

The Palisade is mostly a fort, partially a storage, and only a bit of a town. People who live here either are in the Marches Guard, work for them, or work on shipping goods from the Marches to the Principality. There are a few inns and two small neighbourhoods of regular houses, but many Marches people believe that despite all the precautions, the Palisade is one of the least safe places in the Marches to live in.

Locations of special interest:

- The Horseshoe Inn, relatively expensive, but ready to house anybody, no questions asked.
- The Spirit Inn, gathering people opposed to the Principality, not under royal surveillance yet.
- The Iron Barracks, where most soldiers are stationed and where the administrators feel most safe.
- The Palisade Wall, destroyed and rebuilt so many times it's easy to hide in the debris.

ROYAL ADMINISTRATORS

Bystanders: Busybodies (motivation: to interfere with other people's plans) or

Villains: Schemers (motivation: to increase their influence)

People sent into the Marches to administer them are varied, but most see the Marches as malevolent and want to make them obey the Iron Princess.

There are a range of objectives amongst this group. Some are idealists, here to build a better and more prosperous society. Others are ruthless opportunists wanting to profit from the land's plunder for themselves.

THE MARCHES GUARD

Bystanders: Officials (motivation: to be suspicious)

All forces of the Marches Guard fear or hate the Marches. Leaders constantly plan new assaults against known dens of spirits or wyvern nests. A few would very much prefer to stay in the Principality and, maybe correctly, treat their duty in the Marches as a form of banishment. Guard units mistrust anybody who seems connected to the Marches' magic and arrest or eliminate them at the first opportunity.

Attacks: Swords: 2-harm hand; Spears: 2-harm close

Armour: 1 (heavy leather armour or chainmail).

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Moves

- Ask for permits and documents.
- Arrest someone just in case.
- Call for reinforcements.
- Accuse of sorcery.
- Make a threat.
- Bar access.

A TYPICAL MARCHES ENTERPRISE

Location: Fortress (motivation: to deny entry)

Lumber camps, iron or coal mines, hunting lodges, and the like. They're usually near settlements for protection and ease of transport. The biggest among them often become the core of a new settlement as they grow.

These are the places where hunters are most needed and most loathed. The operators are in constant danger and the people who understand the land are their best allies, but some who are touched by the Marches have acted as saboteurs and infiltrators.

Moves

- Display the wounded land.
- Foreshadow consequences of exploiting the land.
- Meet someone.
- A ruckus occurs.
- Someone refuses to deal with hunters.



A TYPICAL MARCHES SETTLEMENT

Location: Wilds (motivation: to contain hidden things)

Not all Marches settlements take part in exploitation of the region. Some of them simply house people, containing no enterprises and usually no soldiers. Marches spirits rarely attack such settlements, although they can in a moment of fury. On the other hand, the Marches Guard rarely actively checks on such places, only defending them if they happen to be nearby during an attack. People in such settlements sometimes strike deals with the spirits, misleading the Principality's emissaries or even helping strike against them.

Hunters entering such settlements can hope for a warm welcome despite the marks the Marches have left on them. They can never be sure, however, where the loyalties of a settlement's inhabitants lie and how much they're willing to do for outsiders like them.

INTRODUCTORY MYSTERY: A CRUEL TASKMASTER

The forest the hunters live near, need to travel through, or are exploring is being cut down by the colonizers and fights back.

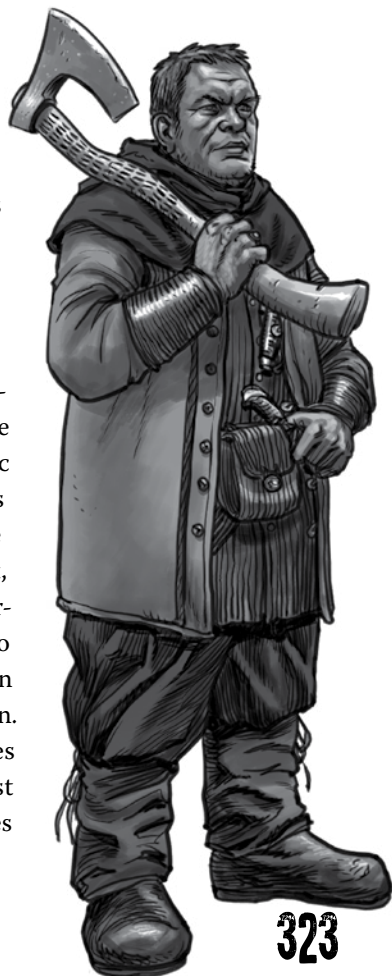
HOOK

The hunters need to travel through the Marble Woods, called so because of its fabled white oaks, blessed with beautiful and sturdy bark. Choose a reason for them to visit this area based on the team's composition or goals:

- White oak bark can alleviate the symptoms of one or more hunters' marks, or even allow to hide them for some time.
- Their ally or friend ventured into the Marble Woods and wasn't heard from since.
- The hunters already have a personal grudge against Rudgar Thrigg, the cruel taskmaster who oversees the deforestation.
- The hunters suspect a conflict will break out here soon after the deforestation starts and want to try to stop it.
- They live near the woods.

OVERVIEW

Rudgar Thrigg is a typical Iron Principality overseer—excited about the prospect of exploiting the Marches' riches and utterly disdainful of its magic and spirits. He was tasked with cutting down as much of Marble Woods as possible. The entire Woods is the domain of a powerful nature spirit, who will react with great fury as soon as deforestation starts. Not only Rudgar's people, but also others who've been living around the Woods in relative peace so far will be in terrible danger soon. Marble Woods strikes back, animating its trees as guardians, and as the confrontation against Rudgar continues, they stop discerning enemies from allies.



COUNTDOWN

Day	A few trees awaken as guardians and attack the woodcutters.
Shadows	Rudgar Thrigg leads his people deep into the woods to cut old white oaks.
Sunset	Locals friendly with the woods start preparing ambushes against anyone they don't recognize, probably including the hunters.
Dusk	Guardian trees smash Rudgar's camp down. They attack the locals they meet as well.
Nightfall	The woodcutters barricade themselves in the Marble Tavern and take locals as hostages.
Midnight	The guardian trees destroy the Marble Tavern, killing the woodcutters and locals alike.

RUDGAR THRIGG

Villain: Taker (motivation: to take what's not his)

A ruthless and greedy taskmaster who sees both the Marches and his people as a great chance for great profits. He was the only one who volunteered to lead a woodcutting enterprise at Marble Woods despite its reputation as a place of great mystical power. He knows many of his subordinates will die while trying to "tame" the woods, but he doesn't care, and believes he has enough people to win in the end.

Powers

- **Living Shields:** If he has his minions at hand range, when hit he can split the harm received between him and one of them.
- **Exploit Weakness:** Each time he deals harm to unstable hunters or characters with less harm capacity than himself, he deals 1 more harm.

Attacks: Solid axe: 3-harm hand messy; Concealed knives: 1-harm close hidden.

Armour: 2 (sturdy leather armour and general resilience).

Harm capacity: 7

RUDGAR'S WOODCUTTERS

Minions: Right hands (motivation: to back up the villain)

People serving under Rudgar are manipulated by his confidence and promises of gold and glory. They expect an easy profit, but they will soon notice they're outmatched. They still fear Rudgar more than any nature spirits, so they don't have the courage to deflect or oppose him on their own.

Attacks: Hand axes: 2-harm hand messy.

Harm capacity: 6

THE MARBLE WOODS

Phenomenon: Bubble (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside)

Not very vast, but known throughout all Marches due to their rare beauty. As a spirit, the Marble Woods are vain but generous if somebody just wants to admire them, and violent when they need to defend themselves. When Rudgar's people keep cutting them down after the initial attack, the Marble Woods become so furious that their minions start attacking the local people as well, despite those people venerating the forest and protecting it.

The Marble Woods are an incorporeal spirit (page 306) with the Children, Guide, and Maze-maker powers.

GUARDIAN TREES

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack)

The animated trees are extensions of the Marble Woods' will. They uproot themselves and use their branches like fists, but they remain faceless and expressionless—uncanny bringers of nature's wrath.

Attacks: Branches: 2, 3, or 4-harm hand area forceful.

Armour: 1 or 2 (hard bark).

Harm capacity: 8–20

- Decide the exact values from those ranges based on how big the particular trees are. A strike force of guardian trees usually consists of relatively small trees (2-harm attacks, harm capacity 8) led by a huge one (4-harm attack, harm capacity 15).

THE LOCALS

Bystanders: Innocents (motivation: to do the right thing)

People living around the Marble Woods before Rudgar's people arrived are farmers and hunters. They appreciate the forest's beauty, organising their feast and festivals there, never harming the trees. When they realize Rudgar is a real threat to the forest, they organise a resistance movement to hunt the woodcutters down. They will probably hunt down the hunters as well, not sure who they are. But if hunters make an effort to ally with them, they can propose a common front against Rudgar.

About half of the locals are able enough to engage directly in the resistance with the following stats:

Powers

- **Ambush:** When attacking people unaware of them, they either add +2 harm or may catch their target in a net or snare.
- **Traps:** They can build traps that, if triggered, deal 3-harm restraining to the victim.

Attacks: Spears: 2-harm hand/close; Crude bows: 1-harm far.

Harm capacity: 6

MARBLE TAVERN

Location: Crossroads (motivation: to bring people, and things, together)

A tavern for the locals and travellers run by Elada Cuag, a hunter past her prime. Elada hates what happens to the Marches, but tries to remain neutral, believing her tavern should be a meeting place for all people. Tensions arise here when the locals and the woodcutters go out for a drink at the same time, and as the mystery progresses, Rudgar might take over the tavern to make his last stand against the Marble Woods here.

AFTERMATH

If the hunters stop Rudgar without antagonizing the folk who live here, they become local heroes. They can count on these villages for food and shelter and maybe even concealing them from the Marches Guard.

If any of Rudgar's people escape, their tale will be heard in the Palisade and reported to the Iron Princess. This might have long-reaching and violent consequences for the Marble Woods region, its inhabitants, and the hunters.

The Marble Woods will calm down after they feel they're safe, but how soon this will happen depends on how much harm the woodcutters did. If the hunters prevented serious woodcutting, they can count on the forest's friendship and its Guide power. If the Marble Woods are scarred and need time to heal, they will remain furious and maybe even send further tree guardians against any humans they can find for weeks.

If the hunters helped Elada Cuag or showed they care about the Marches and the people living here, the Marble Tavern might become their place to call home.



INTRODUCTORY MYSTERY: NATURE'S WRATH

The hunters arrive in the middle of a conflict between the Palisade and a newly matured dragon!

HOOK

The hunters get a last-minute warning that a wyvern is going to attack the Palisade. It can come from a spirit, a ranger, their own observations, or even in a prophetic vision. As they approach the settlement, the wyvern Cinderscales is assaulting it with such fury that it fulfils her task of defending the Marches and allows her to change into a dragon. Already formidable, she explodes mid-air like a living fireball, grows as big as the city hall, and incinerates the southern neighbourhood with her newly acquired flame breath. Once this happens, ask the hunters what they do.

OVERVIEW

Cinderscales could destroy the city utterly, but she retreats to the nearby mountains to plan future moves. The fire she started is the extremely hot, tenacious dragon flame, so the citizens won't be able to extinguish the flames anytime soon. The fire may consume a large portion of the city.

Such a brutal attack makes the citizens even more afraid of anything related to the Marches, hunters included, and the Marches Guard decides to attack the dragon. At the same time, Shadow and Moon—two opportunistic spirits—use the chaos to torment people. Ultimately, Cinderscales will destroy the city.

COUNTDOWN

Day	People run away from the burning neighbourhood, but the fires claim many lives.
Shadows	People recuperating after the attack start having nightmares sent by Shadow.
Sunset	The fire claims most of the neighbourhood.
Dusk	Moon feeds Cinderscales the nightmares induced by Shadow. Cinderscales starts circling around the Palisade.
Nightfall	The Marches Guard launch an attack against Cinderscales and are decimated.
Midnight	Cinderscales burns the Palisade down.



CINDERSCALES, A NEW DRAGON

Monster: Destroyer (motivation: to bring about the end of the world)

Cinderscales the wyvern was among the fiercest defenders of the Marches. Her zeal transformed her into a dragon while she attacked the Palisade.

In her first attack, she burned down as much of the town as she could, but with her awareness suddenly expanded, she decided she needed to think on what plan was best (to remove the people from the land). She retreated into the mountains to ponder her further actions. There, Shadow and Moon urge her to destroy the Palisade, and soon she will go along with them.

Powers

- **Primal Fire:** The fire of her breath can be put out only with **big magic** or entire lakes of water. Fires started by her count as phenomena (zones or biohazards).
- **Blood of Cinder:** Anybody within hand or intimate range suffers 2-harm ignore-armour from extreme heat every minute or so.

Weakness

- **Heart:** She may be killed if her heart is pierced. Hand attacks to her heart will suffer double the normal harm from the Blood of Cinder power.
- **Consumed:** If her breath creates three massive fires at once, she'll be consumed to ash by her own fire and power.

Attacks: Rending claws: 4-harm hand; Breathe fire: 6-harm close area.

Armour: 2 (scales like diamonds).

Harm capacity: 16

SHADOW AND MOON, OPPORTUNISTIC SPIRITS

Minions: thieves (to steal and deliver to the monster)

Two corporeal spirits in the shape of winged serpents. They're furious at humans but they hate to dirty their own hands (or rather fangs), so Cinderscale's transformation is a perfect opportunity for them to strike. Shadow (it) can send nightmares upon people, while Moon (they/them) can harvest them and feed other Marches creatures with them. They'll use this combination of powers to harvest lots of fear and feed it to Cinderscales—seemingly to help her recuperate after the fight, in reality to fill her with the need to strike again.

Stats: Corporeal spirits (page 304). Both have Camouflage power, additionally Shadow has Sandman and Moon has Fear-feeder. Both have a harm capacity of 9. □□□□□ □□□□□

THE FIRE

Phenomenon: Biohazard (motivation: to infect, harm, and spread)

The fire started by Cinderscales spreads slowly but surely. It burns brightly, cracks loudly, and seems to eat up everything it burns more like a swarm of locusts than normal fire. It has consumed about half of the southern neighbourhood of the Palisade, along with about twenty people who didn't manage to run away in time. The Marches Guard has organised an impromptu firefighting force around it, but the water they pour merely makes the fire spread slower without stopping it.

If the hunters arrive at the fire just as the mystery starts, there'll be a few bystanders (victims) within in need of rescue.

Powers

- **Spread:** The fire can suddenly spread to an adjacent, relatively dry area. Treat it as a 5-harm hand area ignore-armour fire attack, with the harm always having to be split between at least two targets.
- **Consume:** Anything and anyone within the fire can be dealt 3-harm ignore-armour fire.
- **Punish the Traitor:** When a hunter uses their base Weird move or other power granted by the Marches to fight the fire, the fire starts considering them a traitor. Each time it deals harm to a traitor, it deals +1 harm more and seems to hiss about treachery and revenge.

Weakness

- Can be put down with **big magic** or the equivalent of an entire lake of water.

THE PALISADE

Location: Fortress (motivation: to deny entry)

Refer to description on page 320.

THE MARCHES GUARD

Bystanders: Officials (motivation: to be suspicious)

Refer to description on page 321.

AFTERMATH

If the hunters manage to save the Palisade, they'll gain the admiration of its common inhabitants and a grudging respect of the Marches Guard—maybe enough respect for the guards to turn a blind eye on the hunters' marks and powers. It can help them in the future, but it also means various Principality officials or even the Prince Consort himself might try to recruit them as Principality collaborators.

If they manage to stop Cinderscales from attacking the Palisade, in addition to the preceding outcome, they gain the enmity of Shadow and Moon but perhaps the friendship of a dragon. Cinderscales might teach them more about the powers of the Marches (allowing each hunter to take a free Weird-based move from any playbook), or act as an intermediary between them and the incorporeal spirits or even Earth-Shatterer if she appears in the game.







BONE SPEAR

By Michael Sands

This is a series setup for *Monster of the Week*, setting the game back in the Stone Age instead of modern day. There are Stone Age hunter playbooks, new rules, the chance to build up your community, and mystery creation advice to make your adventures feel more prehistoric.

The framework doesn't assume any particular time or place for your game, beyond sometime in the Mesolithic or Neolithic eras. You'll need to pick whether you're going for a Stone Age fantasy (where anachronism or realism are not very important) or if you prefer to select a time and place for your game (and ensure everything fits). The examples in this section cover anything within the former, so if you have a specific setting in mind, adjust them to locally and historically reasonable alternatives.



SUMMARY OF CHANGES

When moving to the deep past, a lot changes from contemporary *Monster of the Week*. The key ones are:

- Tracking your community, which develops based on the hunters' actions.
- The hunters share membership in the monster hunting group that deals with supernatural threats.
- The playbooks have been re-themed to fit the setting. Some have only a few changes, some are completely different.
- There are some different basic moves.
- Gear works differently. You'll need to track how worn each item is and repair them when they need it. You can also craft new gear.
- Luck is now Ancestral Favour. Spending it works the same, but some aspects of use are changed.
- Healing harm is completely different.
- You can always talk to monsters (and animals, plants, anything really). See the following section, *People and Nature*.
- You no longer look for a weakness to defeat the monster or phenomenon behind each mystery. Instead, it comes from a wrongdoing that someone committed. To deal with the mystery, you need to discover what caused it and then work out how to make things right. These wrongdoings can be of many types, such as annoying a spirit, failing to correctly propitiate a spirit, breaking a cultural taboo, or doing something morally wrong.



PEOPLE AND NATURE

The world of *Bone Spear* is an imaginative, fantasy version of our ancient ancestors. I've let my imagination run, although I'm inspired by what I know of the current state of knowledge about life in those times. Don't worry about anachronism; use folklore and fiction to inspire your mysteries as usual.

There are a few assumptions built into the world that come through in the rules changes. I'm stating them here, too, so you can be sure where they are coming from.

- The world is an animistic one, where everything has a soul. You can talk to anything in theory (it might require a bit of work such as **using magic**). This applies to people, monsters, trees, animals, and even rocks or the weather.
- Some spirits are bigger or more powerful, but there are no gods of the world set above everything else.
- Things don't just happen. Everything happens as a result of someone's previous action (and that someone could be anything). If an action is positive and generous, it's more likely to have good effects. If an action is selfish, callous, or cruel, it's more likely to have bad effects.

As you go through the rules specific to *Bone Spear*, you'll see how these assumptions are the foundation for the game.

SETUP

As part of the game setup, you create a map of the area where your community lives and fill in some important places there.

COMMUNITY

In this setting, the hunters' home community plays a big role. We'll define a lot about it during the series setup. As the hunters play through mysteries, you'll develop the community, adding new characters and capacities that the hunters can gain help from.

STARTING A SERIES

When you first make your hunters, each player (and that includes the Keeper) should add a person to the community.

At this stage, you only need to decide:

- A name.
- Which hunter they have a connection to, and the nature of the relationship (such as family, friends, mentor/student, rival). After you note their details, mark one of the boxes in their hunter support track.

You can add more details if you're inspired, but you can also leave those to develop in play.

NON-HUMAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members may be spirits or animals as well as humans.

Community spirits might be ancestors, spirits of the land, or allies of the community. For example: a revered shaman of many generations ago, the spirit of the river you live next to, a fire spirit that lives in community hearths.

Animal community members may be pets, hunting companions, or animals with powerful spirits. For example: a beloved raven raised by a hunter, a tough painted dog, an owl that lives with an elder sharing stories with her, an aurochs that lives near your settlement, a jaguar that helps your hunters (and expects a share).

ADDING PEOPLE

Anyone may add new community members whenever they wish until you have everyone in the group detailed. This works the same as the starting details: name, relationship, any other details.

In particular, the Keeper will need a person affected for the hook of every mystery, so many new community members may come into play in that manner (although these may also be already-defined characters).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In response to the hunters' work to protect the community, members will become more appreciative of their work and help them out more. We measure this via each community member's support track. These tracks look like this:

Hunter support: | |

At the end of each mystery, the hunters may choose one person who was directly helped by what they did (by default, use the person who initially contacted them). This person gains one support mark.

The effects of this help depend on the number of support marks and something that individual is especially good at. After the first mark, the hunters select that person's specialty and may call on a benefit. Once there are three support marks, that person offers an improved benefit to the hunters. Finally, when they have filled the entire track, there will be a special benefit.

COMMUNITY LIFE

These benefits are, of course, not one-way. The hunters are expected to help other members of the community too. That includes their role as monster hunters, but they're also expected to contribute in other ways.

If the Keeper feels that any of the hunters are evading their responsibilities, other members of the community will tell them off and ask them to put things right (which could take the form of ridicule, organised sanctions, or being told off by the elders). If the hunters continue evading their responsibilities, the Keeper may erase support track marks from community members who have to pick up the slack.

COMMUNITY MEMBER SKILLS AND BENEFITS

Here are some examples of people's potential specialties and the associated benefits.

You should also create your own custom specialties, as the group comes up with people in the community and/or needs for particular help. Keep the benefits in line with these—it should be something limited but useful, the improved benefit might be a more effective version, and the special benefit may be something quite unusual but is also specific or only useful in limited circumstances. Some of the very powerful magical special benefits have additional costs attached to using them.

RESOURCE COLLECTOR	
Benefit	Provides a common material for a single hunter's crafting needs between mysteries.
Improved Benefit	Provides a common or uncommon material. Enough for two hunters' crafting needs between mysteries.
Special Benefit	Additionally provides one rare or special material (ivory, jade, obsidian, ebony, etc.). Pick the material when you gain this benefit.

CRAFTERS	
Benefit	Once per mystery, provide a new item, or repair an item to its maximum wear.
Improved Benefit	Twice per mystery, provide an item, or repair an item to its maximum wear.
Special Benefit	One per mystery for each hunter, provide an item, or repair an item to its maximum wear.

HEALER OR HERBALIST	
Benefit	Once per mystery, treat a hunter: stabilise their injury, or else recover 1-harm.
Improved Benefit	Twice per mystery, treat a hunter: stabilise their injury, or else recover 1-harm.
Special Benefit	Additionally provides nursing for one harmed hunter: their endure harm rolls count as one result level better.

FOOD GATHERERS AND HUNTERS

Benefit One hunter starts each mystery with a temporary harm box. This acts like an extra harm box in the first section until the end of the mystery.

Improved Benefit An additional hunter starts each mystery with a temporary harm box. This acts like an extra harm box in the first section until the end of the mystery.

Special Benefit Additionally, once per mystery, one hunter may avoid a single instance of harm.

LORE-KEEPERS

Benefit Once per mystery, a hunter may use **investigate a mystery** without rolling, as if they got 10+.

Improved Benefit Once per mystery, an additional hunter may use **investigate a mystery** without rolling, as if they got 10+.

Special Benefit Additionally, once per mystery, the hunters may ask one specific question of the Keeper. Define it when you gain this benefit. For example: "Did any of our ancestors encounter this?"

ANCIENT SPIRITS

Benefit Once per mystery, a hunter may treat any roll as a 12 without rolling, as if they spent Ancestral Favour. When you do this, erase one support mark from an ancestral spirit's support track (not necessarily this one).

Improved Benefit Once per mystery, an additional hunter may treat any roll as a 12 without rolling, as if they spent Ancestral Favour. When you do this, erase one support mark from an ancestral spirit's support track (not necessarily this one).

Special Benefit Two hunters each erase one used Ancestral Favour. Clear this spirit's support track. You must refill the track to access this benefit again.

WILD SPIRITS

Benefit Pick a **use magic** effect or a unique effect of the same power appropriate to the spirit. Once per mystery, a hunter may use that effect.

Improved Benefit Use the effect twice per mystery instead.

Special Benefit When you gain this benefit, pick a specific magic effect appropriate to the spirit. The hunters may use this once, but then clear the spirit's support track. You must refill the track to access this power again.

ANIMALS

Benefit Twice per mystery, a hunter may take +1 forward on any move roll if the animal provides help.

Improved Benefit Twice per mystery, a hunter may take +2 forward on any move roll if the animal provides help.

Special Benefit Additionally, pick a special move for the animal. It may use this as appropriate. For example, a bird might gain the move **Scout from Above**: The hunters may get an idea of the situation as seen from the air.



MAPPING THE COMMUNITY

You may also want to create a map of the community's layout. How many houses are there? Who lives in which ones? What's the local region like? If it's a nomadic or semi-nomadic community, how much does the layout change when you move to a new base?

Keep track of the location type associated with particular places, too. That's not something that's set in stone (each location might have a different role in a different mystery), but it's worth remembering things like:

- This part of the forest is very dense and easy to get lost in. (*Type: maze*)
- This swamp is filled with dangerous alligators. (*Type: den*)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Each community should select the common crafting resources available. To manage this, the available materials (in broad categories) for each community are tracked. Whenever a hunter needs a regular amount of these for crafting or a ritual, the community has enough available.

All communities get these starting materials: clay, wood, bone, stone, leather, plant fiber.

Then pick two of these uncommon materials: antler, copper, flint, ivory, crystals, a coloured stone (lapis lazuli, jade, opal, etc.), gems, bamboo, hardwood, obsidian, flax, cotton, something else: _____.

If desired, you may take an extra rare material, but this comes at the cost of a common one. Remove one of the starting materials.

In play, you may add new resources for the community by building support with resource gatherers. Events in play might also create new resource opportunities for the community.



COMMUNITY STARTERS

If you'd prefer to build your community from a framework, rather than start from nothing, you can use one of these.

They each have a few basic details about the place, and some community members are ready to use. Each hunter should have a relationship with one of these community members and mark one box on their support track. Any player is welcome to add more details or characters to what is here—these are just to get you started quicker.

THE MAMMOTH HUNTERS

This community has settled beside a lake with extensive wetlands. More importantly, this is near the path of the mammoth migrations each year, and the community hunts them when they pass.

They live in houses built with mammoth tusks as beams (there isn't much timber on this steppe).

After each mammoth hunt is a time of feasting, and there are often invitations to (and from) other nearby communities to come and share. There's a certain amount of showing off in the feasting (of the quality and quantity of food provided, as well as gifting).

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- **Zephyr**, one of the oldest and most experienced mammoth hunters (specialty: crafter). He's always coming up with new ideas for traps and weapons. Hunter support: | | .
- **Cheery**, who likes finding fruits and berries (specialty: food gatherer). Hunter support: | | .
- **Grandma Daisy**, the oldest person here (specialty: lore-keeper). Hunter support: | | .
- **Hiding in Reeds**, a wild spirit. The spirit of the lake next to the community, it takes an interest in what happens to them. It provides a gift of healing, so hunters may heal 1-harm when it supports them. Hunter support: | | .
- **Slow Fox** (specialty: healer). She is best at healing injuries rather than diseases. Hunter support: | | .
- **Oldest Uncle**, an ancestral spirit. Who is Uncle's descendant? Hunter support: | | .



THE GREAT RIVER VILLAGES

This community lives alongside an enormous river, which has a big seasonal fishery (for example, spawning salmon). That's the busiest time of year, with the fishing followed by drying and preserving the catch to last, and associated festivals and rituals.

They have a number of large villages along the river, with plenty of visiting and trade between them. There's also relationships with other communities that are further away.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- **Solid** (specialty: resource collector).
Hunter support: | | .
- **Lucky** (specialty: food gatherer). First stop for the freshest catch.
Hunter support: | | .
- **Far-walker** (specialty: lore-keeper). An explorer, trader, and traveller. They know a lot about distant places and people.
Hunter support: | | .
- **The Great River**, a wild spirit. Great River is the giver of life and food for your people. As a support gift, the river can prevent a mishap on the water. Hunter support: | | .
- **Pike** (specialty: crafter). Master of shaping log canoes.
Hunter support: | | .
- **Friendly**, a wolf. Orphaned and raised by the community, Friendly now likes to accompany expeditions.
Hunter support: | | .

THE DEER PEOPLE

This community hunts deer throughout the year, supplemented by smaller game, nuts, and berries. They live in small villages across the range of the deer, by a river or lake.

In summer, when food is plentiful, the villages meet for big communal festivals. Fighting is banned for the period, and trade and storytelling are favoured activities.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- **Happy** (specialty: food gatherer).
Hunter support: | | .
- **Petrichor**, an elder (specialty: lore-keeper). Has the best memory for the old stories. Hunter support: | | .
- **Hazel**, who has a garden of tasty and useful herbs (specialty: healer). Hunter support: | | .
- **Eight Toes**, an expert leatherworker (specialty: crafter). Her work is prized by nearby communities in the summer trade time. Hunter support: | | .
- **The Deer Mother**, a wild spirit. The Deer Mother has a long relationship with the Deer People. She helps ensure they thrive, but they must also follow her rules (of prescribed rites and hunting laws). Hunter support: | | .
- **Leopard**, a leopard. It joined a hunting party one day and never left. Hunter support: | | .



AGENDAS

The hunter agenda is updated for *Bone Spear*:

- Act like you're the hero in this story (because you are).
- Find the problems that cause supernatural danger and fix them.
- Protect and engage with your community.
- Play your hunter like they're a real person.

The Keeper agenda is unchanged.

PLAYBOOKS

For the *Bone Spear* setting, use one of these Stone Age playbooks for your hunter. Some of these are just updates to the existing playbooks, others are new or extensively reworked. All have updated looks and gear options.

The following text covers the changed elements of each playbook. The *Bone Spear* reference sheets include the full text for each playbook.

A quick summary of the changes is:

- The Chosen, Mundane, Pararomantic, Spooky, and Wronged have slight changes.
- The Crooked is replaced by the Loner, an exile or outlaw.
- The Divine is replaced by the Spirit-Touched, a person imbued with supernatural force.
- The Expert is renamed the Lore-holder. They're largely the same.
- The Initiate is reworked as an officer of a community monster hunting Sect.
- The Other-folk playbook replaces the Monstrous. It's basically unchanged, with some more setting-appropriate options.
- The Flake, Gumshoe, Hex, Professional, Searcher, Snoop, Spell-slinger, and Spooktacular are not available.

If you're using any other playbooks, you'll need to adjust their moves and gear to fit the Stone Age setting. You can use what's changed in these playbooks as your guide.

EVERYDAY GEAR

Many of the playbooks allow you to pick some items from the everyday gear list. This is found on page 374.

THE CHOSEN

The Chosen is mostly unchanged.

LOOK

Instead of the clothes/wear line, pick one from each of these:

- Chosen one's amulet, Chosen one's bonnet, Chosen one's tattoos, Chosen one's birthmark, Chosen one's arm-ring, Chosen one's body piercing, Chosen one's _____.
- Fancy clothes, practical clothes, regular clothes, neat clothes, fashionable clothes, _____.

ALTERED MOVES

To take account of the different healing rules in this setting, use this version of **Resilience**:

- Resilience:** You heal faster than normal people. You always recover +1-harm when you make the daily endure harm move. Additionally, your wounds count as 1-harm less for the purpose of the Keeper's harm moves.

YOUR SPECIAL WEAPON

- Your special weapon has unlimited wear.
- The "chain" form is changed to "cord." For the business end, "edge" replaces "blade."
- For the material, add these to your suggested options: antler, fangs, flint, ivory, jade, talon, beak, ebony, oak, thorn, holly, ash, whalebone, ironwood.
- A metal weapon is still allowed here, but only as a specifically unusual and unique option—most likely copper or meteoric iron.

GEAR

Pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

HISTORY

Use this option for "just friends":

- Just friends, from working together, being taught together, or being neighbours. Figure out together what it was.

Add this new one:

- Members of a community club or mystery cult—they were your mentor and helped with your initiation. What didn't you know about the group before then?

THE INITIATE

Your Sect might be one of the community societies, in which case you're a member with special responsibilities.

SECT

You are part of an ancient order that slays monsters. Is it a community society, or a widespread order? How old are they? What are your ritual responsibilities? How do they recruit?

You also need to pick the Sect's traditions (the Keeper uses these to determine the Sect's methods and actions):

Good Traditions (pick two):

- Knowledgeable
- Ancient lore
- Magical lore
- Fighting arts
- Chapters everywhere
- Respected
- Flexible tactics
- Open hierarchy
- Integrated in society
- Rich
- Nifty gear
- Magical items

Bad Traditions (pick one):

- Dubious motives
- Tradition-bound
- Short-sighted
- Paranoid and secretive
- Closed hierarchy
- Factionalised
- Strict laws
- Mystical oaths
- Total obedience
- Tyrannical leaders
- Poor

ALTERED MOVES

Use this version of **Ancient Fighting Arts**:

- Ancient Fighting Arts:** When you fight without weapons, you inflict +1 harm and get +1 ongoing to **protect someone**.

GEAR

Disregard the Sect traits for how much gear you get. Pick a Sect weapon and ritual item.

Sect weapons (pick one):

- Sword studded with flints or teeth (4-wear 2-harm hand messy)
- Stone machete (4-wear 2-harm hand useful)
- Jade knife (6-wear 1-harm hand)
- Bone-headed spear (3-wear 2-harm hand/close)
- Bow (3-wear 2-harm close/far) and several arrows (page 374).

Sect ritual item (pick one):

- Stone bead jewellery (3-wear)
- Bone vest (4-wear 1-armour)
- Ritual finery (2-wear)
- Drum (3-wear)

Then pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

THE LONER (THE CROOKED)

This is a reworked version of the Crooked, someone no longer welcome in the community proper due to their background. The community hasn't completely cast them out, but they're viewed with suspicion.

"I made mistakes in the past, yes. But now it's time to repay my debt to the community."

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Crooked looks, instead pick one of these:

- Ragged clothes, travel-stained clothes, fancy but ill-fitting clothes, practical clothes, old clothes, _____ clothes.

BACKGROUNDS

You are set apart from the community for a reason. Pick one of these backgrounds:

- Blasphemer:** If you spend Ancestral Favour while defying a spirit or the natural order, you regain one spent Ancestral Favour after the mystery is over. If you spend multiple Ancestral Favour in this manner, you still only recover one.
- Bully:** When you **intimidate** someone, on a mixed success or failure, you may opt for "hostile words exchanged" instead of inflicting harm or getting into a fight. The situation stays hostile either way, it just doesn't go straight to blows.
- Grave Looter:** Gain +1 ongoing against hostile undead creatures. The undead are generally hostile towards you. Take three extra gear picks, from the rare list.
- Killer:** When someone has insulted or wronged you, add +1 harm the next time you inflict harm on them.
- Sly:** When you're about to **persuade** someone, you may ask the Keeper "What would convince this person to do what I want?" The Keeper will answer honestly but not always completely.
- Soothsayer:** When you foretell someone's future, ask the Keeper "What are they hoping for right now?" The Keeper will answer honestly. If you now try to **persuade** them, you count as having a reason for them to do what you want (until their circumstances change).
- Thief:** When you steal something, roll +Cool. On a 10+, you get it without being noticed. On a 7-9, you choose one: get noticed, grab the wrong thing, or decide against it at the last moment.
- Trickster:** When you create a distracting spectacle, roll +Cool. On any 7+, people pay attention to you instead of something else you specify. On a 7-9, some of them either figure out what you're doing or spot what's really going on (Keeper's choice).



ENEMIES

Instead of Heat, you have enemies. These are people who consider that you have wronged them and will work against you when they get a chance.

There's no Underworld for the Loner, skip that step. Pick two or more enemies and give each a name. The Keeper will use them as threats (usually a bystander).

- A warrior in the community. What do they accuse you of?
- A partner in one of your schemes, who feels you betrayed them. Did you?
 - A community elder. Which member of their family did you wrong?
 - The leader of one of a community group. What did you take from them?
- A monster. How did you get in their way?
- A sorcerer. What did they ask of you? Why did you fail to do it?
- A spirit. How did you corrupt their home?

MOVES

You get two Loner moves.

- Artifact:** You have acquired a magical artifact with a handy power. Pick one:
 - Glowstone:** If you hold it high in one hand, it glows with a gentle light (like a steady lamp).
 - Spirit Stone:** A weak malevolent spirit is bound to serve the stone's holder. You must summon the spirit with **use magic**.
 - Protective Amulet:** 1-armor magic recharge.
 - Spirit Gift:** If you ask the spirit for help, gain +1 forward. The spirit may draw unwanted attention or ask you to do something in return.
- Crew:** You have a regular crew, a team of three or four people who will help you out with pretty much anything. They count as an ally team.
- Merry Outlaws:** You're a member of a loosely cooperating group of exiles and outcasts. You can call on them for help, and you'll get it, but they will expect the same of you when they need your skills. Name and describe at least three of them.
- Friendly Society:** You are a member of, and have good friends in, one of the community clubs or mystery cults. Decide which one. They'll provide basic aid when you're in a fix. If you need an unusual level of help, you may **persuade** them to do it.
- Notorious:** You have a scary reputation. Treat any miss when you **intimidate** as if you rolled a 7-9.
- Spirit Bound:** You pledged yourself to the service of a powerful spirit, monster, or sorcerer. You must obey their orders when they make a request, or they will revoke your gift. Pick one gift you received:
 - Wealth:** Take 20-wear worth of gear, including any rare or fancy materials you wish.
 - Skill:** Add +1 to a rating.
 - Youth:** Your body doesn't age.
 - Health:** You heal fast, take +1 ongoing to all rolled moves to recover from harm or disease.
 - Pleasure:** You have a loving partner or two, and can enjoy feasting, drinking, and other intoxicants without side effects.
- Wild Ally:** You have an animal ally. Give them a name and describe what sort of animal they are.

LONER SPECIAL

Whenever you spend Ancestral Favour, one of your enemies appears to get in your way or a favour you owe comes due.

GEAR

Pick three:

- Fancy clothing (2-wear fancy)
- Gemstone bead jewellery (5-wear)
- Heavy leather vest (3-wear 1- armour)
- Jade knife (6-wear 1-harm hand)
- Obsidian axe (4-wear 2-harm hand messy)
- Rain cloak (3-wear rainproof)
- Snares and traps (2-wear 0-harm entangle)
- Snowshoes (3-wear useful)
- Stone bead jewellery (3-wear)
- Fancy hat (3-wear fancy)
- Sword studded with flint or teeth (4-wear 2-harm hand messy)
- Warm clothes (3-wear warm)

Then pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

HISTORY

Go around the group again. When it's your turn, pick one for each of the other hunters:

- This hunter was there when you broke a sacred or community law. Tell them what they saw you do.
- This hunter was there when you decided to hunt monsters. Work out together what happened.
- This hunter is your younger sibling or child (possibly adopted). You look out for them.
- This hunter is a cousin or more distant relative.
- This hunter saved your life when a monster had the drop on you. Now you owe them one.
- This hunter helped you out with a dubious scheme. What was it?
- This hunter is your moral compass. When you talk over things with them, their advice helps keep you on course.
- You're powerfully attracted to this hunter. Maybe someday you'll deserve them.
- Your choice: _____.

IMPROVEMENTS

These are mainly unchanged, except this one takes the place of the "Recover a stash of money" improvement:

- Recover a stash of valuables. Take 15-wear worth of fancy items (mostly jewellery).

THE LORE-HOLDER (THE EXPERT)

The Lore-holder is the Stone Age version of the Expert. A lot of the playbook remains the same—anything that isn't mentioned here is unchanged.

LOOKS

In the clothing line of looks, substitute “Well-made clothing” for “Tailored clothing.”



MOVES

You get all the basic moves, plus pick two Lore-holder moves:

- I've Heard about This Sort of Thing:** Roll +Sharp instead of +Cool when you **act under pressure**.
- Often Right:** When a hunter comes to you for advice about a problem, give them your honest opinion and advice. If they take your advice, they get +1 ongoing while following it, and you mark experience.
- Preparedness:** When you need something unusual or rare, roll +Sharp. On a 10+, you have it, ready to use. On a 7-9, you have it, but not here: it will take some time to get it. On a miss, you know where it is, but it's somewhere real bad. The item will have 1 wear left (although if made of tough materials, you can still repair it back to its maximum wear).
- It Wasn't as Bad as It Looked:** Once per mystery, you may attempt to keep going despite your injuries. Roll +Cool. On a 10+, heal 2-harm and stabilize your wounds. On a 7-9, you may either stabilize or heal 1-harm. On a miss, it was worse than it looked: the Keeper may inflict a harm move on you or make your wounds unstable.
- The Exact Thing:** When you use an item you have specifically prepared for the current situation, gain +1 ongoing.
- The Woman (or Man) With the Plan:** At the beginning of each mystery, roll +Sharp. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Spend the hold to be where you need to be, prepared and ready, if it's at all possible you could make it. On a miss, the Keeper holds 1 they can spend to have you be in the worst place, unprepared and unready.
- Dark Past:** You dabbled in the worst sort of mystical arts before you returned to the community. If you trawl through your memories for something relevant to the mystery at hand, roll +Weird. On a 10+, ask the Keeper two questions from the following list. On a 7-9, ask one. On a miss, you can ask a question anyway but that will mean you were personally complicit in creating the situation you're now dealing with.
 - When I dealt with this creature (or one of its kind), what did I learn?
 - What evil magic do I know that could help here?
 - Do I know anyone who might be behind this?
 - Who do I know who can help us right now?

HAVEN

You have set up a haven, a safe place to work. Pick three of the following options for your haven:

- Armoury:** You have a stockpile of mystical and rare monster-killing weapons and items. If you need a special weapon, roll +Weird. On a 10+, you have it (and plenty if that matters). On a 7-9, you have it, but only the minimum. On a miss, you've got the wrong thing.
- Selection of Amulets:** A collection of useful ritual items. If you use them in mystical preparation, take +1 forward to **use magic**.
- Herb Garden:** You have a garden that contains plenty of medicinal and mystically useful herbs. These may be used for magic requirements, healing moves, or crafting.
- Hideout:** You have a place prepared with essential supplies and a variety of mundane and mystical protections. You can hide out there for a few days, safe from pretty much anything.
- Infirmary:** You can heal people, and have the space for one or two to recuperate. The Keeper will tell you how long any patient's recovery is likely to take, and if you need extra supplies or help.
- Ritual Space:** You have an area of mystical power, with all kinds of weird ingredients and tools useful for casting spells (like the **use magic** move, **big magic**, and any other magical moves). You also have contacts with the shamans and lore-keepers who can help with rituals. This can be used to meet certain magical requirements.
- Oubliette:** You have a place prepared, isolated from every kind of monster, spirit, or magic that you know about. Anything you stash in there can't be found, can't do any magic, and can't get out.
- Protection Spells:** Your haven is safe from monsters—they can't enter. Monsters might be able to do something special to evade the wards, but not easily.
- Workshop:** You have a space for building and repairing gear. When you craft in your workshop, your creation has +1 maximum wear. If you want to do something more elaborate, work out with the Keeper how long it will take and if you need extra supplies or help.

GEAR

Pick four of these monster hunting items:

- Hammer & ash stakes (2-wear 3-harm intimate slow wooden)
- Hammered sky-iron dagger (5-wear 1-harm hand messy iron)
- Blessed flint knife (3-wear 1-harm hand sacred)
- Magical obsidian dagger (3-wear 1-harm hand magic)
- Curse bag (2-wear 1-harm far magic)
- Demon mask (2-wear magic disguise)
- Enchanted drum (4-wear 1-harm magic loud)
- Bag of seeds (2-wear distracting)

Then pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

OTHER-FOLK (THE MONSTROUS)

This replaces the Monstrous playbook and has a variety of options to add a Stone Age feel.

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Monstrous looks, instead pick one of these:

- Unclothed, old clothes, fancy clothes, practical clothes, stylish clothes, ragged clothes, _____ clothes.

CURSE

Add this new curse option:

- Duty:** You have an onerous ongoing responsibility, such as: protect something, craft certain things, patrol an area, or preserve specific knowledge. You must do this for a few hours each day.



BREED

Here are some alternative monster breed ideas:

- **Animal-kin:** *Curse:* vulnerability (a specific plant). *Natural attacks:* Teeth, claws. *Moves:* Shapeshifter.
- **Big Folk:** *Curse:* pure drive or feed. *Natural attacks:* claws, +1 harm. *Moves:* Claws of the Beast, Unholy Strength.
- **Ghost:** *Curse:* Duty (protect your family). *Natural attacks:* Magic, add hand range. *Moves:* Incorporeal.
- **Predator:** *Curse:* feed. *Natural attacks:* life-drain or teeth, +1 harm. *Moves:* Unquenchable Vitality.
- **Small Folk:** *Curse:* pure drive (playing tricks). *Natural attacks:* teeth, ignore armour. *Moves:* Unnatural Appeal or Preternatural Speed.
- **Walking Dead:** *Curse:* duty (protect your family). *Natural attacks:* Teeth, add harm. *Moves:* Immortal.
- **Wilderness Spirit:** *Curse:* duty (guard your home). *Natural attacks:* Magic attack, add far range. *Moves:* Wild Language.
- **Night Folk:** *Curse:* duty (walk under the sky every night). *Natural attacks:* Claws, +1 harm. *Moves:* Shadowsight.

ALTERED MOVES

Most of the Monstrous moves remain the same.

- Remove **Dark Negotiator**.
- **Unnatural Appeal** works with **persuade** basic move instead of **manipulate someone**.
- **Preternatural Speed** explicitly works with the **pursuit** basic move.
- A note for **Shapeshifter**: taking a new shape often requires an object to transform, usually a hide of the creature whose form you assume.

Add these new options:

- Wild Language:** You may speak to the animating spirits within all beings, objects, and places (people, animals, plants, rocks, the air, fires, etc.) without needing to awaken them first with **use magic**.
- Shadowsight:** You can see in darkness as if it were daylight.

GEAR

Pick up to three things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes (if any).

THE MUNDANE

The Mundane has some changes to the looks line for clothing, a new move, and new gear choices.

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Mundane looks, but instead pick one of these:

- Plain clothes, new clothes, fancy clothes, practical clothes, work clothes, _____ clothes.

ALTERED MOVES

Add this new move to the list:

- Handy:** When you craft, your repairs restore +1 wear and your new items start with +1 maximum wear. This is in addition to any extras from your roll.

GEAR

Pick one of these:

- A mysterious amulet (4-wear fancy magic). You don't know what it does.
- Gemstone bead jewellery (5-wear). It's a family heirloom.
- Ritual mask (2-wear fancy holy)
- Bone whistle (3-wear)
- Shell trumpet (3-wear)
- Really nice flint knife (4-wear 1-harm hand fancy useful)

Then pick up to five things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.



THE SPIRIT-TOUCHED (THE DIVINE)

This is a reworking of the Divine. In this setting, the Spirit-Touched is a person who has been imbued with great power by a spirit. You may have sought this out, or it may have been imposed on you. Either way, you have made a deal that you can't get out of now.

"I've been gifted with power, at some cost."



PATRON SPIRIT

Decide what spirit imbued you with power. A spirit might include more than one aspect from this list:

- A spirit of a particular location.
- A spirit of a natural force (weather, fire, sea, etc.).
- An ancestor.
- An animal.
- Something else: _____.

Give the spirit a name _____ and add some more details

What did you offer the spirit in return for your powers? Describe the details.

- Must you follow specific rules in your life?
- Must you provide it with frequent valuable gifts and sacrifices?
- Must you act as its emissary with your community and other people?
- Must you live with it?
- Something else: _____

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Divine looks, but instead pick one of these:

- Perfect clothes, rumpled clothes, sacred ritual clothes, practical clothes, new clothes, _____ clothes.

MOVES

You get these two:

- **Unbreakable Bargain:** You made a deal with the spirit to gain your powers. At the beginning of each mystery, the spirit will let you know what it wants you to do. Ask the Keeper for a task (which may be more or less at odds with the mystery). When you make significant progress, take +1 forward. At the end of the mystery, if the task is complete, mark experience.
- **Marks of Corruption:** The spirit's magic can corrupt you. When you roll 6 or less on an action using a spirit power, the Keeper may require you become corrupted. This may take the form of a physical change to your body, a personality quirk or flaw, or a change in behaviour. When you must take a mark, you decide what it is.

Then pick two of these:

- Spirit Paths:** You can visit the spirit world. You may bring others with you. Roll +Cool. On a 10+, you travel there safely. On a 7-9, you pick: you take longer than you intended, or you pass through a dangerous area. On a miss, you are lost in the spirit world. In the spirit world, you may commune with spirits to gain insights not available in the waking world.
- Passage Transformation:** You may travel in an animal form to get to another place quickly, or move where a human could not. Pick the form you take and your destination, then roll +Weird. On a 10+, you get there safely. On a 7-9, pick one: you get pursued by a predator, you get lost, or you retain an aspect of that animal a little while. On any result, when you finish your journey, you return to your normal shape.
- What I Need, When I Need It:** You may transform objects you own, so that they are small and innocuous (pebbles, beads, sticks, etc.). Whenever you wish, you may return them to their normal form.
- Soothe:** When you talk to someone for a few seconds in a quiet voice, you can calm them down, blocking any panic, anger, or other negative emotions they have. This works even if the thing that freaked them out is still present, as long as your voice can be heard.
- Lay on Hands:** Your touch can heal injury and disease. When you lay your hands on someone hurt, roll +Cool. On a 10+, heal 2-harm or an illness, plus they're stabilised. On a 7-9, you can heal the harm or illness as on a 10+, but you take it into yourself. On a miss, your aura causes them extra harm. You can't use this on yourself.
- Sacred Warding:** If you take some time, you may prepare a place against evil influences. Specify what you're guarding against (a specific sort of monster or magical spell). It can't cross the warding or influence those on the other side. The Keeper will inform you how long it takes, based on the size of the place. The warding lasts until the next sunrise. You can't use this on people or objects, just locations.
- Smite:** Your unarmed attacks do 2-harm intimate/hand imbued messy. If you attack with a weapon, you inflict +1 harm.
- A Little Friend:** You have a minor spirit or animal ally. They are an associate of your patron spirit. Give them a name, pick an ally type, and describe their form.

SPIRIT-TOUCHED SPECIAL

Whenever you spend Ancestral Favour, either your patron spirit has an urgent and dangerous job for you, or one of its enemies comes after you.

GEAR

Pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

HISTORY

Go around the group again. When it's your turn, pick one for each of the other hunters:

- If you're protecting another hunter for your patron spirit, tell them this: You have a crucial role in what is to come. I am here to guide and defend you.
- A prophecy indicated this hunter was going to play a major part in upcoming events, but not exactly how or why. You are keeping an eye on them.
- This hunter was there when you made your deal with your patron spirit. Why were you selected instead of them?
- This hunter called upon your patron spirit for help with a problem, and that led to you gaining your powers. How did you solve that original problem?
- You're beginning to develop romantic feelings for this hunter. Ask them if that's something they return.
- They saved your life when your duty got you into trouble. What were you involved in that almost killed you?
- You've lived away from society for many years. This hunter is the one you trust for advice on how things work now.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Change the "lesser divine being" option to "Gain a lesser spirit being as an ally."
- The advanced improvement to change your mission becomes "Change the nature of your obligation. Select a new obligation from the normal options or (with the Keeper's agreement) a new obligation of your own creation."



THE SPOOKY

The Spooky is largely the same, with just a few clarifications (and an addition to **The Sight** to take account of the much more present spirit world of *Bone Spear*).

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Spooky looks, but instead pick one of these:

- Ratty clothes, neat clothes, fancy clothes, practical clothes, stylish clothes, creepy clothes, _____ clothes.

ALTERED MOVES

There are two changes to the existing moves. Everything else stays the same.

- For **Telepathy**, its use for **manipulate someone** can apply to both **intimidate** and **persuade**.
- For **The Sight**, additionally—each session—you get +1 forward when interacting with spirits or the spirit world.

GEAR

Pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

IMPROVEMENTS

Instead of a mystical library from the Expert's Haven options, you can take a ritual space from the Lore-holder's Haven options (page 354).

THE WRONGED

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Wronged looks, but instead pick one of these:

- Plain clothes, travel-stained clothes, ragged clothes, hunting clothes, practical clothes, warrior clothes, _____ clothes.

WHAT DID IT

As an option, instead of picking a monster breed as your prey, you may select a single individual nemesis. If you do, you will mostly encounter its minions rather than the nemesis itself: any move advantages for your prey also apply to the minions and plots of the nemesis.

ALTERED MOVES

- The rating switch for **Fervor** applies to the **persuade** basic move (but not **intimidate**).
- If you take **Safety First**, add +1 armour to any one piece of gear.

Add this new move to the list:

- Make Do:** When you use the **crafting** basic move, you may substitute one inferior material for a requirement of the item.

GEAR

Pick your signature weapon:

- Massive sword studded with monster teeth (6-wear 4-harm hand messy heavy)
- Jade dagger (8-wear 2-harm intimate/hand messy ignore-armour)
- Obsidian axe (7-wear 3-harm hand messy)
- Mighty bow (5-wear 3-harm close/far fast) and a selection of arrows
- Ivory spear and thrower (5-wear 4-harm hand/close/far)
- Ancient ebony club (6-wear 3-harm hand stun)
- Spirit rope (8-wear 2-harm hand/close magic entangle)
- Flint pick (7-wear 4-harm hand messy heavy slow)
- Enchanted antler dagger (6-wear 2-harm intimate/hand magic)

Then pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.

IMPROVEMENTS

If you take any Haven options, pick them from the Lore-holder's list rather than the Expert's.



THE PARAROMANTIC

The Pararomantic has some changes to clothing, moves, and their gear choices.

LOOK

Don't use the listed clothing/wear line from the Pararomantic looks, but instead pick one of these:

- Normal clothes, casual clothes, amulet-adorned clothes, practical clothes, travel clothes, _____ clothes.

ALTERED MOVES

Replace the **Dark Desires** move with this one:

- Dark Desires:** When you **persuade** a non-human using emotional ties, take +1 forward.

GEAR

Select one gift from your Guide. Whatever gift you choose, it must be periodically recharged by interactions with your Guide. The gifts are:

- Part of their body, such as a vial of blood, lock of hair, tears in a phial, fairy dust. It either helps you heal or counts as a weakness against a specific sort of monster.
- An amulet, from the rare gear list. It provides 1-armor magic.
- An amulet, from the rare gear list. It protects you from the powers of a specific sort of monster.
- A memento of the time when they were human, such as a portrait, favourite hat, doll, or tool. Provides +1 on bond abuse rolls.
- A rare weapon, from the rare gear list. Add either a “magic” or “imbued” tag to the weapon.

Then pick up to four things from the everyday gear list (page 374), plus your clothes.



BASIC MOVES

Several of the basic moves are changed from regular *Monster of the Week*.

Moves that remain the same:

- **Act under pressure**
- **Kick some ass**
- **Protect someone**
- **Read a bad situation**
- **Big magic** (although the Keeper may want to use the changes to **use magic** as inspiration for the style of requirements).
- If you use the alternative Weird moves (from *Tome of Mysteries* and the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week*), avoid **Telekinesis** and **Weird Science**. If a hunter wants to take **Illuminated**, re-theme it to fit the Stone Age setting (the secret masters could be spirits, ancestors, or enlightened magicians). The others work as they are.

Moves that are changed or new:

- **Manipulate someone** is not used, but **persuade** and **intimidate** take its place. See also *Talking to Monsters and Other Things* because the rules about communicating with monsters are different here.
- **Use magic** is changed.
- **Investigate a mystery** has some new options.
- **Ambush** is a new move.
- **Crafting** is a new move.
- **Healing** is a new move. It has specific moves for recovery from injury, enduring harm, and curing disease.
- **Help out** now uses Charm instead of Cool.
- **Pursuit** is a new move.
- **Spirit friend** is a new alternative Weird move (if you're using them).

BASIC MOVES (NEW AND CHANGED)

AMBUSH

When you launch a surprise attack or unleash a trap, inflict harm as established.

CRAFTING

When you want to repair or make gear, discuss what you want to do with the Keeper.

Normally when making something new, you will use the listed defaults for a piece of gear from the basic gear list. If you want to make something else, get agreement amongst the group about whether it is possible and what the basic tags will be.

If the hunter puts himself in danger or jeopardises the investigation of a mystery in order to acquire rare or special materials for crafting, they take +1 forward on the roll.

To repair something, agree with the Keeper what materials you will use and how long it will take. Then roll +Sharp:

- On a 12+, if you have advanced crafting, add an extra and restore the item to its maximum wear level.
- On a 10+, it is restored to its maximum wear level.
- On a 7-9, restore 2 points of wear, and if you take extra time, restore 1 more.
- On a miss, restore 2 wear, but the Keeper decides what bad thing happened as you took the time.

To make something new, say what you want to make and agree with the Keeper what materials you will use and how long it will take. Then roll +Sharp:

- On a 12+, if you have advanced crafting, you make it plus pick two extras.
- On a 10+, you make it. Pick one extra.
- On a 7-9, you make it, but you must take extra time or allow the Keeper to reduce starting wear by 3 or add a tag.
- On a miss, you make it, but the Keeper decides what bad thing happened as you created it.

Extras:

- Add a tag.
- Add +1 maximum wear.
- Add +1 harm (for a weapon, may only be selected twice per item).
- Add +1 armour (for clothes or protective gear, may only be selected once per item).
- Change or remove a tag from the basic ones for that gear.

HEALING

The regular *Monster of the Week* healing rules are not in effect. Instead, use these. Injuries in the Stone Age are more serious. Note that for illnesses, the healing rules are fairly punishing. If you **use magic** to cure an illness, it will usually be easier. The healing basic moves can't be advanced.

Any playbook moves that affect healing remain the same.

RECOVERY AFTER THE MYSTERY

Between mysteries, all hunters recover 2-harm and remove the unstable status. Short-term illnesses may be gone (at the Keeper's discretion).

ENDURE HARM EACH DAY

When you have an unhealed injury or illness, you must endure harm each day. Roll +Tough, and if your harm is unstable, take -1:

- On a 12+, recover 1-harm.
- On a 10+, the harm is stabilised (if unstable), otherwise recover 1-harm.
- On a 7-9, you become unstable (if not already), otherwise suffer 1-harm.
- On a miss, you become unstable (if not already) and suffer 1-harm.

HEALING AN INJURY

When a hunter tries to heal an injury or cure a disease, gather the required medical supplies and roll +Sharp:

- On a 12+, they recover 1-harm and become stable.
- On a 10+, their harm is stabilised (if unstable), otherwise heal 1-harm.
- On a 7-9, they become unstable (if not already), otherwise no change.
- On a miss, they become unstable (if not already), otherwise they suffer 1-harm.

You may only use this move to heal each injury once. You may not heal your own injuries.

HELP OUT

When you help another hunter, roll +Charm.

- On a 10+, your help grants them +1 to their roll.
- On a 7-9, your help grants them +1 to their roll, but you also expose yourself to trouble or danger.

The change here is to the rating rolled: Charm instead of Cool. This represents the hunter knowing how best to help people.

INVESTIGATE A MYSTERY

When you investigate a mystery, roll +Sharp. On a 10+, hold 2. On a 7-9, hold 1. Each hold may be spent to ask the Keeper one of the following questions:

- What happened here?
- What sort of creature or effect is it?
- What can it do?
- What can hurt it?
- Where did it go?
- What was it going to do?
- What is being concealed here?
- What might it want?
- What is causing this effect?
- What might fix, cure, or slow down this effect?
- How far does this effect reach?

INTIMIDATE

When you try to get your way by threats and tough talk, roll +Tough.

- On a 12+, if you have advanced intimidate, they do what you say and don't hold a grudge. If they're a member of your community, add a mark to their hunter support track.
- On a 10+, they do what you say.
- On a 7-9, you may inflict harm and they'll do it, otherwise let them go.
- On a miss, it's a fight now.

PERSUADE

When you attempt to convince someone to do what you want, first check with the Keeper if you have any chance. They decide if:

- This person is open to persuasion.
- The hunter must do something first.
- It's just not happening.

If the person is open to it, or the hunter has done the required thing, make your argument and roll +Charm.

- On a 12+, if you have advanced persuade, they're convinced. If they're a member of your community, add a mark to their hunter support track. If they are an outsider, they instead become an ally.
- On a 10+, they are convinced.
- On a 7-9, they are convinced, but the hunter owes them.
- On a miss, you have angered and offended them.



PURSUIT

When you're tracking or chasing a target, the Keeper makes a countdown to track how far ahead your prey is (guidelines—close: 4 boxes, very far: 8 boxes). As the pursuit continues, the Keeper may erase an earned mark on the countdown if the target makes a move or takes steps to conceal their trail.

When you chase your prey, roll +Sharp.

- On a 12+, if you have advanced pursuit, you close the distance plus pick three options from the following list.
- On a 10+, pick three options.
- On a 7-9, pick two options.
- On a 6 or less, pick one option, but not “avoid dangers.” The Keeper will tell you what dangers you encounter.

Pursuit options:

- Close the distance—mark one box. May be selected multiple times.
- Avoid dangers.
- Don't mark 1 wear on a piece of gear.
- Find something useful along the way.

When you fill the countdown track, you have caught up with your prey.

SPIRIT FRIEND

This is an alternative Weird move.

Spirits like you, and one is your good friend. You must follow certain rules to retain its goodwill—restrictions to how you live, often self-denial such as fasting or celibacy. Create a spirit ally with the Keeper and agree what rules you must follow. You may roll +Weird instead of +Charm when you **persuade** a spirit.

TALKING TO MONSTERS AND OTHER THINGS

In this setting, all monsters are essentially human-like in nature: you may potentially talk to, make deals with, or try to **persuade** anyone: person, monster, animal, tree, or other natural objects. Sometimes the entity will be ready to talk, other times you might need to **use magic** to awaken the spirit.

USE MAGIC

Overall this move works the same, but some of the potential requirements are different.

Altered requirements:

- Mystic designs must be drawn, rather than “arcane symbols.”
- The advice or assistance of a spirit, rather than “tomes of magic.”

New requirements that the Keeper might specify are:

- Sacrifice something of value (this often is part of making a deal with a spirit).
- Enter an altered state of consciousness (with music, dance, and/or drugs).
- Seek the assistance of the community shamans and lore-keepers.
- You must take part in a particular ceremony.

There’s also a change regarding how to think about the effect “communicate with something you don’t share a language with.” You can use this effect to talk to things that normally don’t talk: animals, plants, rocks, rivers, the sky, etc. Ultimately, everything has a soul.

END OF A MYSTERY

At the end of each mystery, there are a few things to do before you start the next one:

- Mark a community support on one person the hunter team agrees they helped in the course of the mystery.
- Each hunter recovers 2-harm and clears unstable.
- Each hunter chooses one:
 - Make one **crafting** move.
 - Heal another 2-harm.
 - Mark another community support (how did you help this person out?).

ANCESTRAL FAVOUR, NOT LUCK

The *Bone Spear* setting renames Luck to Ancestral Favour. It works the same way: you can spend Ancestral Favour to change a roll to 12 or avoid harm you are about to suffer.

Ancestral Favour may be restored when spent. To restore a point, you must do something that the ancestral spirits and spirits of your community regard as a major achievement. Usually this means success in a mystery that's of special interest to the spirits, but you may also speak to a spirit and ask them for a quest to restore an Ancestral Favour.

Anything else that would normally apply to Luck (such as an improvement that erases a Luck mark or a move referring to Luck) applies the same to Ancestral Favour.



GEAR

Every piece of gear has a wear rating. This is how tough it is, and represents how long it can be used before you need to spend some time fixing it up. Each item's starting wear rating is based on the main materials it's made from.

Gear loses a point of wear at the end of any session it was used. If the gear was used during a move or came up in the game fiction, that counts as using it.

For example, my antler and wood axe has wear of 5. I use it to **kick some ass** against a corrupted wolf, and mark off 1 wear at the end of the session. The next session we need a log canoe to travel down the river. Although it doesn't need a move, using the axe to chop down a tree and carve the timber is definitely a use, so I mark the wear down to 3.

If a piece of gear reaches 0 wear, it's no longer usable. It needs some work to restore it, usually using the **crafting** basic move.



BASIC WEAR RATINGS

The basic wear rating of any piece of gear is determined by two things. First, the main material it's made from gives it a starting rating. That's a combination of how strong and long-lasting the material is.

Then assess if there is a significant part that is stronger or weaker than the main material. This might be due to construction technique or the inclusion of another material. Add +1 wear for major use of a stronger element, or -1 wear for a weaker one. There's no need to ensure you get this correct as long as the group agrees that a wear rating is fair. It's not important to be fully realistic, just to provide a baseline for how quickly objects will wear out.

Because the wear rating relates to how much work it is to make an object, this is also a good guideline for how much people value things.

MATERIAL WEAR GUIDELINES

Base wear	Description	Examples
1	Weak	Grass, twigs, hair
2	Decent	Flax, thin leather, feathers, mud brick, branches
3	Strong	Timber, horn, sandstone, thick leather
4	Hard wearing	Bone, limestone
5	Very hard wearing	Flint, antler, ivory
6	Extremely hard and tough	Jade, gemstones, meteoric iron

Examples:

- A grass rope has wear 1. A grass rope that is carefully woven might have wear 2 or 3.
- A nice leather coat has wear 2. Adding a few opal buttons doesn't change the wear (because the overall strength isn't affected).
- A mace made of wood has wear 3 because it's made out of a solid piece of wood. Another mace has the same wood for the handle but also a jade head, so it has wear 4.

EVERYDAY GEAR LIST

Here are some basics that anyone might use and have access to:

- Arrows are made in a variety of styles for different purposes. Hunters with bows pick a few types of arrows they normally carry, such as: small game, large game, war, barbed, stabilised, blunt. Decide what material they're made from.
- Bone flute (3-wear)
- Bone spear (3-wear 2-harm hand/close)
- Bow (3-wear 2-harm close/far) and a selection of arrows (see previous description)
- Everyday clothing (2-wear)
- Firestarting kit (2-wear)
- Flint knife (4-wear 1-harm hand)
- Heavy leather vest (2-wear 1-armour)
- Horn knife (3-wear 1-harm hand)
- Huge wooden mace or club (3-wear 3-harm hand heavy)
- Leather bag (3-wear)
- Leather sling (3-wear 2-harm close)
- Linen bag (2-wear)
- Paints (2-wear)
- Rain cloak (3-wear rainproof)
- Spear-thrower (3-wear thrown spear gains +1-harm, adds far range)
- Stone axe (4-wear 2-harm hand useful)
- Stone dagger (4-wear 2-harm hand useful)
- Stone oil lamp (4-wear fire refill)
- Tough clothing (4-wear)
- Winter clothing (3-wear warm)
- Wooden bead jewellery (2-wear)
- Wooden drum (2-wear)
- Wooden flute (2-wear)
- Wooden knife (2-wear 1-harm hand)
- Wooden mace or club (3-wear 2-harm hand)
- Wooden oil lamp (2-wear fire refill)
- Wooden spear (2-wear 2-harm hand/close)
- Wooden throwing club (2-wear 2-harm hand/1-harm close)

RARE GEAR LIST

These are some items that are a bit more unusual or harder to find or craft. Some hunters may get gear picks from this list.

- Bamboo blowpipe (3-wear 0-harm close poison)
- Bone vest (4-wear 1-armour)
- Fancy clothing (2-wear fancy)
- Gemstone bead jewellery (5-wear)
- Heavy hide and bone armour (3-wear 2-armour heavy)
- Ivory flute (4-wear)
- Jade knife (6-wear 1-harm hand)
- Jade axe (5-wear 2-harm hand)
- Ritual mask (2-wear fancy holy)
- Stone bead jewellery (3-wear)
- Sword studded with flints or teeth (4-wear 2-harm hand messy)



MYSTERIES

This framework uses the atonement mysteries rules module (page 15) and the *Bone Spear* threat types. Otherwise, everything works as in regular *Monster of the Week*.

There are some differences about how monsters are constructed. Minions, locations, bystanders, and phenomena threats work exactly the same.

Build your countdown as usual.

CREATING A MYSTERY

- Begin with a concept (perhaps a monster or a situation).
- What was the wrongdoing that created this problem? Who suffered? Who was to blame?
- The hook: Which community member is directly affected and comes to the hunters for help?
- Think about what sorts of things the hunters might do to fix the problem created by that wrongdoing.
- How is the community endangered (countdown)?
- What is the danger (monster or phenomenon, and minions)?
- What locations are involved? What bystanders are involved?

THE TRANSGRESSION

Following the atonement mystery rules, decide what transgression or wrongdoing started the situation that is now causing danger.

Examples:

- A ghost wants revenge on the people who murdered her and her kin.
- A tree spirit has not received the gifts and sacrifices it expects from the community, and brings an illness to the village.
- A fox has become angered by people taking more than their share of the forest's game, and now—in a huge, monstrous form—hunts humans to balance things.
- A youth on a shamanic quest stole a magical cloak from a spirit.
- A village of non-humans live downstream from a clay mine, and the spoils of the diggings are poisoning them. One of their elders has cursed the clay-diggers.
- A river spirit is angry that people are bathing in it. It doesn't like people, and certainly doesn't want their grime, or to see them naked.



The destruction of the monster is not the usual—or best—way to resolve a mystery. The hunters need to solve, make recompense, or otherwise sort out the problem that started it all. When the monster feels that the hunters have made up for the transgression, then it will return to its natural or non-monstrous ways.

The same applies to a phenomenon. Think of each phenomenon mystery as a spirit that has taken issue with the wrongdoing, and it will only calm down when the problem is resolved. The phenomenon might be a terrible storm, but behind it is a spirit with reason and emotion.

If the hunters kill a monster, in this framework, that is always a new transgression to be addressed. Monsters and minions are people too. The hunters will need to resolve that in a later mystery.

Here are some example resolutions for these wrongdoings:

- The ghost is appeased after the kin of her murderers make a massive undertaking to build a memorial tomb for her and her family's spirits to inhabit.
- The village agrees to give a great gift as recompense and not to neglect the spirit again in future.
- The hunters broker a deal with the fox: the humans and foxes now have a clear understanding of how much hunting in the forest each is entitled to.
- The youth agrees to be the spirit's servant for a season after returning the cloak and apologising.
- The non-humans lift the curse once the hunters have solved the problem of the poison runoff, and are given many gifts of fine stonework in recompense.
- The bathers agree to wash somewhere else, or the people convince the spirit to allow their activities, but they must obey strict rules about it (for example, when bathing is acceptable).

THE HOOK

The hook for every mystery is a particular member of the community who is affected by the problem.

Usually, this person brings the problem to the hunters' attention, and they have the most to lose if the problem isn't solved. Sometimes it might be someone else who comes to the hunters, perhaps a parent or friend of the affected person.

Using a specific person to introduce each mystery gives us a few advantages:

- It allows you to bring interesting community members into play if you want to see them get some more attention.
- It allows you to create new community members for the hunters to interact with.
- It gives the hunters an opportunity to boost their community support (at the end of the mystery, they can mark the support track of an affected person).
- It makes each mystery personal for the hunters. It's not just a beast attacking someone, it's attacking someone they know and may rely on.



COUNTDOWN

Creating a countdown works just the same. Aim for steadily increasing danger, with the Midnight option usually resulting in the community suffering a major catastrophe. Sometimes the countdown may threaten the wider region or even the world. Other mysteries might have smaller stakes, affecting only one family or individual. A major threat to the community is the baseline.

Another aspect to consider here is that the countdown may also involve increasing corruption amongst people who committed moral wrongs, especially if that involved spirits or magic. If there are people acting badly, they may be increasingly marked by corruption as the countdown progresses.

You should also focus the countdown events on how each affects the community. Which people are in danger? What critical resources might be lost? What strife between folks may develop?

THREATS

As in standard *Monster of the Week*, a mystery has threats: monsters or phenomena, minions, locations, and bystanders.

The threat types available have been adjusted for the setting. Most only change the wording to ensure that the locations evoke the right feeling for Stone Age play. A few are new; others have been removed.

MONSTERS

Start with the monster, as usual. The shape of a mystery is mostly unchanged, but *Bone Spear* monsters have their own types and moves.

Monsters need the following details:

- A monster type and motivation.
- The wrongdoing that was committed. The monster is reacting to that (it could be the wrong angered it, caused it to manifest, or even created it).
- A form and description. The form is the general category of monster: beast, elemental, ghost, nature spirit, un-human, or sinner.
- A list of supernatural powers it possesses. These may be short descriptions or detailed custom moves.
- A list of attacks it can use.
- Harm capacity and any armour or defences it has.
- A note on community and culture. Is this monster a loner or part of its own community? How do these creatures live? How are they similar and different to the hunters' community and culture? You may want to build monster communities that reflect and/or contrast with the hunters' community to emphasise a motif or theme of your mystery.



First, pick the monster's type. The types (and the motivations that go with them) are:

- **Breeder** (motivation: to give birth to, bring forth, or create evil)
- **Cleanser** (motivation: to eradicate humans)
- **Collector** (motivation: to steal things and keep them for itself)
- **Corrupter** (motivation: to transform people into monsters)
- **Devourer** (motivation: to consume people)
- **Inciter** (motivation: to create division)
- **Plague-bearer** (motivation: to spread rot and disease)
- **Imperator** (motivation: to possess, control, and dominate)
- **Revenger** (motivation: to punish and give payback)
- **Sorcerer** (motivation: to steal unnatural power)
- **Trickster** (motivation: to create chaos)
- **Wrecker** (motivation: to run wild, destroy, and kill)

The monster forms are a general categorisation of the sort of thing it is. This helps you decide the sorts of ways that it reacts and what it might be like. Pick one:

- **Beast:** A creature (or plant or fungus) with supernatural powers.
- **Ghost:** A dead person (or animal) returned to the world. Could be insubstantial or a living corpse.
- **Nature Spirit:** Spirits of a natural feature, place, or natural element. They reflect and embody their home location. May be substantial or insubstantial.
- **Un-human:** Creatures that are almost but not quite human. This includes animal-folk, forest-folk, river-folk, ogres, and the like. These are quite like humans but with other features such as animal heads, claws, predator's teeth, strange colouration, larger or smaller size than humans, or possessing magical powers.
- **Corrupted:** A human—perhaps from the hunters' own community—who has become corrupted. This corruption may be from wrongdoing or making a pact with a spirit for power. This corruption has transformed them into a monster. The transformation may be physical or mental. It may also be only some of the time, as with werewolves and similar monsters.

**Monster moves:**

- Hint at its presence.
- Display its full might.
- Appear suddenly.
- Make plans and preparations.
- Attack with boldness and fury.
- Seize someone or something.
- Attack with stealth and calculation.
- Destroy something.
- Talk persuasively.
- Escape from a tight spot.
- Terrify and intimidate.
- Conceal itself.
- Give chase.
- Pursue relentlessly.
- Convince someone to take their side.
- Return to home ground.
- Boast and gloat, maybe revealing a secret.
- Return from seeming destruction.
- Transform the local environment.
- Unleash magical power.
- Remain unseen, although taking direct action.
- Show an aspect of the monster's community life.

For the monster's powers, attacks, armour, and harm capacity, use the regular *Monster of the Week* rules. Take into account that Stone Age weapons and armour have lesser effect: most hunters will have weapons that inflict up to 3-harm, and if they use armour it will usually be only 1-armour.



PHENOMENA

Phenomena share with monsters the need for a wrongdoing that created the problem and the need to resolve it to succeed in the mystery. Generally, phenomenon mysteries aren't appropriate for this setting, due to the more diffuse and amorphous source (rather than an individual monster to interact with, as in a monster mystery).

When you create the phenomenon, think about how the wrongdoing caused a problem, and what the effect of making recompense for the transgression will be: does the phenomenon instantly go away? Will it slowly reduce in power?

Consider also who or what might be the entity that recompense is made to. This could be a person, creature, spirit, or place that is connected to the wrongdoing. It might also be someone who isn't directly connected by suffering from the original problem, but who thematically speaks for those who did.

These are the phenomenon types:

- **Alien** (motivation: to be unfathomable)
- **Power** (motivation: to grant someone more power than they can handle)
- **Plague** (motivation: to infect, harm, and spread)
- **Bubble** (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside)
- **Conspiracy** (motivation: to gather power, keep secrets, and create confusion)
- **Corruption** (motivation: to erode the laws of nature)
- **Changing Curse** (motivation: to transform creatures and people)
- **Panic** (motivation: to make people act irrationally)
- **Portal** (motivation: to draw things from one world to another)
- **Zone** (motivation: to harm all that venture within)



MINIONS

There are ten minion types:

- **Killer** (motivation: to destroy the hunters)
- **Brute** (motivation: to intimidate and attack)
- **Cultist** (motivation: to aid a monster or phenomenon for their own benefit)
- **Guardian** (motivation: to bar a way or protect something)
- **Right hand** (motivation: to back up the monster)
- **Swarm** (motivation: to overwhelm and destroy)
- **Servant** (motivation: to lure victims towards the monster)
- **Scout** (motivation: to stalk, watch, and report)
- **Thief** (motivation: to steal and deliver to the monster)
- **Traitor** (motivation: to betray people)

Aside from the adjustments to the minion types, the other difference is that in this setting you should never create weaknesses for minions. Once the hunters resolve the transgression that started the mystery, any minions go back to their regular non-dangerous behaviour just like the monster or phenomenon does.

The rest of minion creation works the same. As with monsters, keep in mind the general changes to gear (weapon harm and armour ratings are lower in the Stone Age).

LOCATIONS

There are eleven location types:

- **Badlands** (motivation: to harm intruders)
- **Borderland** (motivation: to allow weirdness in)
- **Den** (motivation: to harbour dangerous creatures)
- **Barrier** (motivation: to deny entry)
- **Liminal Space** (motivation: to allow access to other worlds)
- **Hellgate** (motivation: to bring evil and corrupt what is good)
- **Maze** (motivation: to confuse and separate)
- **Meeting-place** (motivation: to bring people together)
- **Prison** (motivation: to constrain and prevent exit)
- **Sacred Ground** (motivation: to protect)
- **Wilds** (motivation: to contain and reveal hidden things)

BYSTANDERS

There are nine types of bystander:

- **Busybody** (motivation: to interfere in other people's plans)
- **Gossip** (motivation: to pass on rumours)
- **Helper** (motivation: to join the hunt)
- **Innocent** (motivation: to do the right thing)
- **Mystic** (motivation: to foretell potential consequences)
- **Nuisance** (motivation: to get in the hunters' way)
- **Skeptic** (motivation: to deny explanations)
- **Victim** (motivation: to put themself in danger)
- **Witness** (motivation: to reveal information)



EXAMPLE MYSTERIES

The following mysteries are quick sketches to illustrate how to prepare in the *Bone Spear* setting. They're also there to be used, but you'll probably need to fill in a few details to do that—when you do, be sure to include things that the group has built into the community and local area.

WRATH OF THE ICE MOTHER

This mystery is about a hostile spirit of the ice sheet. She's angry with humanity generally (and the community in particular) and is sending ice storms and snow-folk to punish them for the slight she perceives.

If your game isn't set in the Ice Age and near the ice sheet, you could adjust this mystery to suit your climate. The problem can be an extreme winter instead of storms caused by the advancing ice.

HOOK

The community member Short-leg asks the hunters to help with a shamanic ritual to divine the cause of horrible storms and snow-folk threats and attacks. The group sees visions of the Ice Mother urging the ice sheet to advance towards their home, accompanied by storms and creatures of the ice sheet.

COUNTDOWN

Day	Snow-folk start moving from the fringes of the ice and threaten community members travelling near it.
Shadows	Snow-folk ambush and kill a community foraging group.
Sunset	A desperate dire wolf pack, driven from the fringes, attacks the community.
Dusk	Snow-folk raid the community.
Nightfall	Massive storms and blizzards attack the community.
Midnight	The community migrates to a distant land, losing many to storms and snow-folk before they escape the Ice Mother's reach.

THREATS

The threats fall into two main areas. First is the Ice Mother and her minions and location (snow-folk, ice storms, the ice sheet). The rest are closer to home—the fringes of the ice, the wolf pack, and some bystanders from the community.

SNOW-FOLK

Minions: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack), Form: Un-human

Shaggy, white creatures that like to hunt and devour. They're currently being directed by the Ice Mother to target humans in particular, but they're usually not so fussy about their prey.

They usually hunt in small packs of about five, but sometimes team up to take out larger targets.

They live in villages that they dig out within the ice sheet, but outsiders rarely see these tunnels.

Powers:

- Hide in snow.
- Burrow through ice.
- Cold aura.

Attacks: Javelin: 2-harm hand/close; Claws: 2-harm intimate/hand; Teeth: 3-harm intimate messy.

Harm capacity: 6

Moves:

- Ambush the hunters.
- Harass and pursue.
- Work as a team.
- Eat in a messy and gross way.



THE ICE MOTHER

Monster: Cleanser (motivation: to eradicate humanity), Form: Nature spirit

A powerful spirit of winter, snow, and the ice sheets. She appears as a somewhat reserved woman, clad in garments of shimmering blue, green, and white ice.

She is cold both literally and metaphorically, but also jealous of other spirits who are given more respect and sacrifices by the people of the warm lands.

Transgression:

The transgression that must be resolved to overcome her is that the community has failed to appease her with rituals and sacrifices. Other spirits have their festivals and sacrifices, songs and stories, but the Ice Mother thinks she is not appreciated by the community (quite possibly due to the harsh cold of winter being something that is endured rather than celebrated!).

The most natural recompense is for the hunters to arrange a huge festival impressive enough that she no longer feels that other spirits have been honoured more than she has.

After she has been appeased, she'll return to her glacial home and call back the trolls and cold weather that she has been sending to punish the community.

Powers:

- Call the storm.
- Freeze someone in place.
- Call snow-folk.
- Freezing aura.

Attacks: Spear of ice: 3-harm hand/close cold forceful; Draw life's warmth: 2-harm intimate/hand cold life-drain.

Harm capacity: 25



Moves:

- Monologue about how she isn't appreciated.
- "Snow-folk! Seize them!"
- Be offended out of all proportion to a slight.



ICE STORM

Minion: Swarm (motivation: to overwhelm and destroy)

When the Ice Mother sends a storm to stop the hunters, use this minion block.

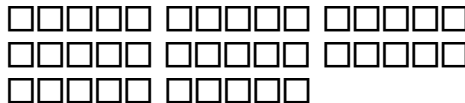
A storm is not an easy thing to fight: the hunters will need to be creative if they want to destroy it. They might try to fight the storm spirits, but more likely they need to take shelter until it passes or find some spirit allies or magic that can drive it away.

Powers:

- Smash with hail, snow, rain, and wind.
- Create a barrier of snowbanks.
- Freeze someone to death.

Attacks: Cold: 1-harm close/far cold; Pummeling precipitation: 1-harm close/far cold; Wind gust: 0-harm close/far knockdown forceful.

Harm capacity: 40



Moves:

- Gather its strength in towering clouds.
- Change the wind.
- Unleash all its fury.
- Slowly ease off.

DIRE WOLF PACK

Minion: Swarm (motivation: to overwhelm and destroy), Form: Beast

They're not servants of the Ice Mother, but her actions have made them desperate enough to attack groups of humans.

Treat the whole wolf pack as a single minion. Harm it suffers might be injuries to wolves, or even kill an individual, but only when the pack's harm capacity is exceeded will they flee and not come back.

Attacks: Harass: 1-harm close area; Takedown: 4-harm hand messy.

Harm capacity: 15

Moves:

- Chorus of howls.
- Stalk and harass.
- Suddenly attack a lone target.
- Push you into a trap.

THE ICE SHEET

Location: Badlands (motivation: to harm intruders)

A massive glacial ice sheet. Getting onto it isn't easy: it's a climb of a few hundred meters, and the ice is rough and treacherous.

Once on the ice sheet, food is hard to find and the cold winds are biting. Somewhere, if you make it far enough, you will find the Ice Mother's hall.

Powers:

- Freeze people to death.

Attacks: Freezing cold: 1-harm intimate cold area.

Moves:

- Something seen in the distance: is it real?
- A storm tears across the ice.
- Cold and hunger.
- A crevasse.

FRINGES OF THE ICE

Location: Borderlands (motivation: to allow weirdness in)

Near the wall of the ice sheet, the land is being swallowed up in snow and ice. If nothing changes, the ice sheets will advance and cover these lands.

Moves:

- Animals flee the ice.
- Snow-folk from the ice sheet.
- Places filling up with unmelting snow.
- Food is harder to find here.

SHORT-LEG

Bystander: Witness (motivation: to reveal information)

Note: If the hunters have already created someone similar to this in their community, substitute that character instead!

Short-leg is a middle-aged woman who knows the areas toward the ice sheet very well. She's generally taciturn and fairly businesslike, not much tolerance for trivialities or play.

At the start of the mystery, she's the one who noticed the changes in weather and wildlife and figured out what that meant. She'll tell the hunters anything she knows, and will also be happy to guide them to locations of interest.

Attacks: Wooden spear: 2-wear 2-harm hand/close; Flint knife: 4-wear 1-harm hand.

Harm capacity: 7

Moves:

- Stay quiet.
- Say exactly what is asked for.
- Make no careless mistakes.

FORAGING CREW

Bystander: Victims (motivation: to endanger themselves)

This is a group out from the community, looking for food. They approach the ice too close and are targeted by snow-folk, unless the hunters do something about it instead.

If possible, include some of the characters that the hunters have existing connections with.

Attacks: Wooden spear: 2-wear 2-harm hand/close; Flint knife: 4-wear 1-harm hand.

Harm capacity: 7

Moves:

- Gather food and chat.
- Attract the attention of snow-folk.
- Run away!

TREMBLING BRANCH, A FOREST SPIRIT

Bystander: Witness (motivation: to reveal information), Form: Nature spirit

A spirit of the forest that is suffering from the ice's advance, Trembling Branch wants to help the hunters. However, its perspective is a bit long-term, as a tree spirit.

Trembling Branch looks like a tiny person, around 50cm tall, with bark-like brown skin and pale green eyes. It wears clothing made from woodland creatures' pelts and carries a small wooden spear and knife.

Powers:

- Grow larger or shrink smaller, but not all that fast.

Attacks: Wooden spear: 2-harm hand/close; Wooden knife: 1-harm hand.

Harm capacity: 10

Armour: 1 (tough skin).

Moves:

- Listen to the woodland, and tell the hunters what it heard.
- Get things wrong about how "fast folk" live.
- Talk slowly.

THE ANGRY FOREST

Community hunters have been stressing the forest with overhunting, and it has become hostile in response.

To deal with this, the hunters may have to come to an agreement with the forest and/or the predators who live there about what acceptable fair share belongs to the community. This will require some effort from the hunters to talk to the spirits and creatures of the forest in order to figure out what's happening and then negotiate a solution. This mystery will focus mostly on investigation through conversation and diplomacy, rather than fighting.

HOOK

The hunter Laurel petitions the hunters to deal with the spirits of the forest, as it has become treacherous and dangerous over recent months. The hunters and foragers have been making extra efforts as the season has been harsh for the community, and there's a danger that food stores could run out this winter.

COUNTDOWN

Day	A hunter is injured falling into a gully.
Shadows	Hunters and foragers start to avoid the forest. Some families start to worry (and complain) about the state of food stores.
Sunset	A forager is killed by an animal attack.
Dusk	Animal attacks become frequent on any who enter the forest. They seem to be carefully coordinated.
Nightfall	Several more people are killed in the forest.
Midnight	The community runs out of food over winter, leading to starvation.



THE FOREST

Phenomenon: Zone (motivation: to harm all who venture within),

Form: Nature spirit

The forest is angry because things are unbalanced, and it has a strong sense of how things ought to be. The stress put on the animals and plants of the forest has contributed to the urgency of that feeling, to the point that it has broken out into hostility to the human community (in the form of all who go into the forest).

Although the forest may act on any within its borders, using the various trees and animals that make it up, the spirit takes the form of a large antelope. This will be somewhere near wherever the forest's attention is currently focused. If the hunters attempt to fight the spirit in this form, treat it as one of the forest predators, but it will reform if slain.

Transgression:

The transgression is over-hunting and over-foraging in the forest. The hunters must find a compromise between the forest and the community. After that, the Forest Predators will return to their normal behaviour.

Attacks: Sudden "accident": 3-harm any messy ignore-armour. Includes unseen cliffs, falling branches, falls in a river, etc.

Moves:

- Call forest predators.
- Entangling roots and branches.
- Lead into danger.
- Confuse a path.
- List its grievances.
- Watch.
- Take a (very, very) long view of things.

THE FOREST PREDATORS

Minion: Brutes (motivation: to intimidate and attack), Form: Beast

This minion encompasses all the forest creatures who are suffering due to overhunting by humans. It includes smaller creatures like foxes, stoats, otters, badgers, falcons, and the like, as well as a few larger beasts such as wolves, lions, or bears. There is an indefinite number of predators in the forest, so you'll need to use your judgement as to how many appear in each situation.

Attacks: Harass: 1-harm close area; Large beasts may takedown: 4-harm hand messy.

Harm capacity: 2–8 based on beast size.

Moves:

- Stalk and harass.
- Sudden ambush.
- Flee into the undergrowth.
- Watch and wait.
- Talk to the forest.

LAUREL

Bystander: Victim (motivation: to put herself in danger)

An ambitious hunter who wants to be respected in the community for her efforts, and the focus of the forest's anger as she has been killing more than other humans. More community hunters and foragers are affected by the forest's feelings, but Laurel is the face of what's wrong.

She's businesslike about her vocation, and spends a lot of time away from home. Even her family find her rather standoffish.

She wears a wolfskin jacket (or the equivalent, if wolves aren't found near your community), a prize from a recent hunt. She has a prized family spear and is also a good shot with her sling.

Attacks: Flint-headed spear: 4-wear 2-harm hand/close; Leather sling: 3-wear 2-harm close.

Harm capacity: 7 □□□□□ □□

Moves:

- Disregard a warning.
- Stalk off. "I have work to do."
- Go hunting.
- Ignore the feelings of others.



TOO MUCH OF A BAD THING

This mystery is built around a person who—in a time of famine—selfishly hoarded and stole food from others. After this, they were exiled from the community and now live as a hermit nearby. They're called the Hermit in this mystery, although their name was originally Green Hands. As another consequence of these evil acts, they transformed and became even more greedy and monstrous. They continue to steal food and objects, and is on a path of increasing chance of violence.

HOOK

Dark Clouds, a member of the community who likes visiting other people and trading with them, mentions that the recent thefts of food in your community are matched by similar events amongst your neighbours. Someone is stealing from everybody!

That wouldn't be a case for the hunters, but there are a couple of reports that the thief is some kind of monster. A few people caught glimpses of them running away, they had thick shaggy fur and sheep-like horns.

COUNTDOWN

Day	A member of the community is injured when they interrupt a theft.
Shadows	The Hermit goes looking for people who argued for their exile all those years ago and attacks them.
Sunset	The Hermit rampages through the community, attacking people, wrecking things, and taking food.
Dusk	As the Hermit's anger is released, it boils hotter and the Hermit grows larger, stronger, and more monstrous.
Nightfall	The Hermit rampages through the community again, this time trying to kill (and ultimately eat) people.
Midnight	The community survivors abandon this region forever and become refugees.

THE HERMIT

Monster: Collector (motivation: to steal food), Form: Corrupted

Once a member of the hunters' own community, the Hermit was exiled many years ago for the theft of food during a time of crisis. They have now become monstrous, and are obsessed with taking things (especially food) from other people.

If the group has any particular history in their community that would fit the famine, have that be when the Hermit was exiled. If not, make it about 25 years previously. Long enough that it won't be the first thing anyone thinks of but will still be remembered when the hunters ask about it. The hermit's pre-exile name was Green Hands.

After Green Hands was exiled, they lived alone and rejected other people for a long time, making do at their hut in the forest. The community knew where they went and generally avoided the area. Now that part of the forest has a bit of a creepy reputation: "That's where the weird hermit lives." It might be different if the Hermit had some useful skills they would share with outsiders, but they don't talk to people.

Over time, the resentment and guilt festered and now has transformed the Hermit into a shaggy-furred and horned (but still basically humanlike) form. They have slowly and steadily increased their thefts and as they realise that their strength and agility are also increased, they are becoming more and more likely to use violence as well.

Transgression:

There are two transgressions here, the first being the Hermit's selfish behaviour so long ago, and the second being the Hermit's recent thefts. If the hunters manage to solve the first, the Hermit might be able to recover from their corruption. If the hunters manage to arrange a compensation for the thefts, that will solve things for a short time, but the Hermit will likely return to their ways again later.

Attacks: Violent grapple: 3-harm intimate/hand messy.

Harm capacity: 10 initially, later 15. □□□□□ □□□□□
(□□□□□)

Moves:

- Sneak around, finding the best way in.
- Grab food and flee.
- Attack with a burst of violent anger.
- Covet things (especially food) that other people own.
- Hunger.
- Stoke their hatred about what was done to them.

DARK CLOUDS

Bystander: Gossip (motivation: to pass on rumours)

A keen traveller and wanderer, mainly because they take pleasure in meeting new people and sharing stories from other communities. Dark Clouds makes themselves useful by doing some trading when they go on journeys and bringing back interesting things for the community.

Although friendly and gregarious, Dark Clouds also knows that sometimes it's wise to be careful. Not every group you meet is welcoming, and a traveller needs to be prepared for suspicion and danger too.

Attacks: Flint knife: 1-harm intimate/hand; Wooden spear: 2-harm hand.

Harm capacity: 7

Moves:

- Report on events in other communities.
- Show off something interesting they brought home.
- Know lots of handy paths and places.

OLD ROSE

Bystander: Innocent (motivation: to do the right thing)

One of the elders of the community, Old Rose (who was just "Rose" back then) was the main person arguing for a punishment of exile for Green Hands. In fact, that was a moderate line: some wanted a physical punishment instead. However, the Hermit only remembers that Old Rose is one of those who ruined their life.


Attacks: Struggle: 0-harm hand loud.

Harm capacity: 5

Moves:

- Talk about old times.
- Run away from the Hermit.
- Recall the Green Hands story.
- Move slowly.





BUILDING YOUR OWN WORLDS

When you set out to build a custom framework for a *Monster of the Week* series, you'll need to understand what you want to build. We've put together our best advice here. At the end of the day, however, it all comes down to just one general principle:

What needs to change to get the style of game I'm looking for?

The advice is presented in order, but there's going to be a lot of going back and forth as you work on a framework. Expect to return to things that you thought were finished and change them as your ideas develop or new decisions are made.

You'll also see there aren't hard answers to your questions here. As you look at each aspect, you'll have to decide what might need to change for your purposes. We can't tell you what the answer to that question is, but we can highlight areas that will help you think about it for yourself.

MAREK'S SIDENOTE: A LATECOMER'S PERSPECTIVE

I wasn't part of the original *Monster of the Week* design team; I started working on this game by sending Michael my ideas, getting his permission to publish them at GRAMEL Books, and getting invited to submit materials for *Tome of Mysteries*. When I first started toying with *Monster of the Week*, of course I wanted to create as many new rules and materials as possible. Then I realized everything works smoother when I add brand-new things only when absolutely necessary.

Monster of the Week has tons of playtesting behind it, even more if you count the testing and fine-tuning of *Apocalypse World* as well. When you fit your new ideas within the existing rules, they benefit from this trove of experience and expertise. You can achieve a lot by using base "economies" of base movies, holds, forward bonuses, ongoing bonuses, and so on. This foundation is very solid but also very flexible, and I'd generally advise to work within it rather than trying to create something absolutely new.



THE SUPERNATURAL: MONSTERS

One of the areas that informs a framework is the nature of weirdness. What is the source of the supernatural? Are explanations more likely to be mystical, scientific, or both? Where do monsters come from? What sorts of monsters will be common? Are there even monsters, or are the problems to be investigated of another sort?

You don't need to answer these right now, but if you do know any answers, they will help build your concept.

For example, in standard *Monster of the Week*, mystical explanations are common. There are monsters. The other questions are left open for each group to fill in.

If you use the phenomenon mystery rules (from *Tome of Mysteries* or the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week*), these may be another option in addition to—or in place of—monsters.

Looking at *This Strange Old House* (page 145), this setting has a few more answers defined. The House will be at the centre of the supernatural for your series, although it may not be the source of it. As your group works through the setup, answers will be provided for some of these.

Defining the origin of the supernatural in a very strict way will lead to a more focused gameplay, but might make it difficult to come up with new kinds of mysteries. *Dreaming with the Gods* and *Monster Marches* (pages 217 and 287) both have a very precisely defined source of monsters. It means that every single mystery reveals important facts about the world and can easily show the frameworks' central themes, but it also means those frameworks aren't suited for very long campaigns because mysteries in them can feel samey after some time. That's why *Dreaming with the Gods* contains Dreamtouched Musketeers (page 248)—monsters that work a bit differently from others, offering a change of pace.

Gothic Century (page 165) takes a different approach. The main type of threat in this framework is a haunt (page 190), a phenomenon that always has a few minions and locations under its command. That way, the main source of supernatural danger is clearly defined and gives the framework a distinct feel, but also allows for lots of variety in what the hunters are actually facing.

USE OF FOLKLORE

If your setting is going to build on existing folklore, be sensitive to the people whose culture that is. Be sure you understand what you're using, and that you use it in accordance with the traditions of the culture you're drawing from.

Michael says: I make my best effort to treat other cultures as respectfully as I can. That includes research into the history and context it developed from. As a product of a colonial culture, I'm aware I need to take extra care when looking into folklore and history for inspiration.

Marek says: If you don't want to research a monster's or ritual's culture of origin deeply, it might be a better idea to create a new monster loosely based on the folklore that fascinated you. So "living dead" instead of zombies, "ghosts" instead of banshees or yūrei, and so on. If you really want to use a supernatural element drawn from folklore, research what makes it special and create its powers, weaknesses, and place in the world to reflect this.

Monsters taken from folklore usually have their place in the world, a place that can be sacred or terrifying, or both. When using them, please use this place as inspiration to build a breathing world of minions, locations, and bystanders around them. It will allow you to use their origins in a fuller and more respectful way, but it will also make the mystery richer and more engaging—a win-win scenario.





CONCEPT AND AGENDAS

The overarching concept is where to start. What do you want to do with the game?

- Do you want to keep it basically the same but change to a different historical period, or a fantasy or science fiction setting?
- Do you want to change assumptions about how mysteries play out, who the hunters are, or the nature of monsters and the supernatural?
- Do you want to change the way that the team works together?

You're going to need to really get this concept firmly in your mind, because it will be the foundation you use to build the rest of the framework. It's okay if it's not fully detailed, but it needs to be a solid idea. Missing details will get filled in naturally as you build it, but a nebulous concept will lead to something that doesn't hang together properly.

Then take your concept and examine the player agendas: both the hunter agenda and the Keeper agenda. Using your concept as a lens, think about each of the elements of the agendas. Does it still apply, as is? Does it need to be tweaked a bit? Does it need to be thrown away? Is there something missing that should be there?

For example, in *Bone Spear*, there is one changed hunter agenda item and two new ones. In *This Strange Old House*, there is one new hunter agenda item. In both settings, the Keeper agenda remains the same. On the other hand, *Dreaming with the Gods* doesn't change the agendas because it's a typical story of fighting monsters and then discovering an apocalyptic conspiracy behind them, only set in a fantasy setting.

THE BIG PICTURE

The next step after coming up with any changes required for the agenda is the big pieces of the game rules that players interact with all the time:

- The Keeper principles.
- The basic Keeper moves.
- The threat types and threat moves.
- The mystery creation process.
- The basic hunter moves.
- The hunter playbooks.
- The peripheral moves (such as levelling up, healing harm, and the harm moves).

Which of these items need big changes? Which need small tweaks? Which will stay the same? Sketch out the answers to these questions first.

THE DETAILS

Now we'll go through each of those areas and look at what to consider.

KEEPER PRINCIPLES

The principles are where the Keeper agenda is spelled out. It's there to remind us in play of what we should be focusing on and where to push the game to keep the atmosphere where we want it.

Most frameworks aren't going to need to alter the Keeper principles much, but you should still look through them and assess each one against your overall ideas. Is each principle still applicable and important?

Add, change, or remove principles as needed. Some of the principles probably won't need to change. In fact, change them only if you feel your series should have a substantially different tone from a generic *Monster of the Week* game.

For example, the *Bone Spear* framework adds these principles of the setting: everything has a spirit and personality, and mysteries are always caused by previous wrongdoing.

"Be a fan of the hunters," for example, will remain relevant as long as your framework is recognisable as *Monster of the Week*. Even that isn't a hard and fast rule, of course. I can imagine a framework inspired by Suicide Squad with anti-heroic characters that you may not want to always be a fan of.

BASIC KEEPER MOVES

This is an area that's likely to include a lot more changes. The genre that the game embodies comes out of the moves defined. Looking through the basic Keeper moves, you can see that these are an attempt to encode all the typical things that will happen during a monster hunting story.

Consider each move in line with your framework. Add, change, or remove basic Keeper moves as needed. If you would have to add the same power to lots of monsters, minions, or locations, it probably means it's an important aspect of your framework that would better work as a new basic Keeper move (for example, "Show how fighting corrupts them").

Notice that these moves in particular are quite general: they're there to allow the Keeper to play their side of the mystery and keep things moving, whatever happens. For that reason, a framework may require the addition of new, specific moves required by your ideas. The other option is to rephrase a move to capture a slightly different feel. However, be cautious about actually removing one of these in case you restrict the Keeper from actions that might be needed in play.

THREAT TYPES AND MOVES

The threat types and moves are the next place to examine. Threat types give you the motivations of the mystery elements that the hunters will have to deal with, and the threat moves tell you what each type is capable of. These areas are both good places to adjust the feel of your framework.

Even tiny changes—a name change, or your own wording for something—can make a difference in these areas. A different emphasis can have a big effect across the style of the game.

For example, in the *Bone Spear* framework, a number of the monster types are renamed but keep the same motivation. Some of the motivations are changed to fit the setting. Some are completely new, like the inciter that wants to create division. All of these changes are there to make the monsters feel like they fit the setting better and help the Keeper get into the intended mindset.

Stories are built on conflict, and threats are meant to create various sorts of conflict. When creating new threat types, think about what sorts of conflicts should be important in your framework. Think not only of physical conflicts but social, ideological, and moral ones as well. Then browse the standard threat types list and think if something seems to be missing.

You might even come up with whole new categories of threats. Perhaps in a game where there are lots of secretive factions causing trouble for the hunters, there might be a whole range of conspiracy threats that could play a part in your mysteries.

For example, in the *Monster Marches* framework, ordinary people can be as problematic as monsters if they have influence and pursue nefarious goals. That's why this framework contains a new threat type, the villain. Villains can take the place monsters usually occupy in mysteries, including having minions, but they can be killed normally, don't have supernatural weaknesses, and have a different set of moves.

MYSTERY CREATION

Does your concept require that mysteries are built in a specific way? Consider the elements and how they can be fitted to the framework.

If you made any changes to the threat types, that will contribute to mystery creation. However, there are other aspects available for making adjustments: the countdown, weaknesses, how monsters are constructed, and generally what to consider as part of preparation.

The countdown provides a short set of events that would have happened if the hunters didn't come along. You could add more events if you want more detail. But the big thing about how countdowns are built is how bad things get. The more devastating or even apocalyptic the final events, the more epic and urgent the mystery will be. Finally, you could rename the countdown events to fit your framework. The "darkening to midnight" style is there to give you the feel of a horror movie's progression, which may not apply to your setting.

Weaknesses are another good place to focus. The sorts of things that count as a weakness will give your game a lot of flavour. Consider these different options:

- Weaknesses are always discovered and synthesized with scientific analysis.
- Weaknesses are based on transgressions against a specific set of religious laws.
- Weaknesses are always mystically significant items.
- Weaknesses are always based on specific genre conventions. For example, "Can't be defeated until it explains its plan," or "Can't be defeated until it seems like it has already been killed and has returned."
- Weaknesses are always individual and unique.

By default, *Monster of the Week* allows for all of these. Creating certain baselines can reinforce a particular feel that your setting concept requires. Remember, however, that creating narrow baselines might make subsequent mysteries feel very similar.

Moving on to monster creation more broadly, this is another area that provides a lot of room for your framework. You can put rules in place over the basic ratings that monsters and minions have (harm capacity, attack strength, armour, and powers) as well as introduce new elements to consider. You might also add rules that must apply, such as “all supernatural creatures are ultimately from the realm of Faerie,” or “all supernatural effects come from other dimensions.” The *Bone Spear* setting adds a specific set of monster forms that all supernatural creatures fall into within that setting.

For example, *Gothic Century*'s haunts are meant to be powerful phenomena that are extremely hard to dispel. That's why they have a tenacity track, representing the power of their hold over the world. Tenacity is marked off by defeating minions and destroying locations connected to a haunt, thereby structuring the mystery.

Lastly, there is the general mystery preparation advice. Here you can specify guidelines about what is appropriate and change up what is expected of a prepared mystery. How many threats of each type are required? How much detail should go into each one?

Mysteries full of bystanders and locations are usually about the impact of monsters on the world as much as about the monsters themselves; mysteries focused on monsters and minions will probably have a survival horror feel to them.

BASIC HUNTER MOVES

The basic hunter moves, like the basic Keeper moves, are a key element of adjusting the style of your framework. They need to be handled more carefully because they are a more mechanistic and specific interface between the players and the game than the Keeper moves. They give structure to the basic things hunters do in this sort of supernatural investigation, so removing a move might have a big, unexpected impact. Look at modifying the existing moves or adding new ones before taking one away.

Each of the basic hunter moves encodes the rules of the game world in the effects. Making changes to these will shift your framework in significant ways from the baseline.

Let's consider **kick some ass** as an example. If you reduce how much harm a hunter might suffer, it will mean mixing it up with monsters becomes safer. You're pushing towards a more action movie style, where the hunters can go up against bigger monsters without having to worry so much about getting killed or maimed. If you make the harm likely to be suffered by a hunter worse, that pushes more into the territory of horror, where the hunters aren't going to survive so long. The same goes for the amount of harm that a hunter can potentially inflict.

You can also adjust other aspects. In a game where capturing monsters alive was a concern, you might include options to "restrain the target for the moment" and "tranquillise a restrained target" on a successful roll.

You can push in the focus—include fighting moves that have their own specific effects to give more tactical options during a fight. You can go the other way as well, and have a broader move that resolves a whole fight scene.

When you change the basic hunter moves, small changes can have big effects. The best way to see if things work is try them out, then revise if you need to. Keep trying out different versions until you settle on something that works the way you want it to. You'll need a tolerant playgroup for this process! Find some folks who are happy to try out new things and are okay with revisions happening each session of play, if needed. I also find it's best to lock the rules for each play session. Make notes, but don't change anything on the fly. Your changes will be better if you consider them in between games when you aren't playing at the same time.

When your framework has an important and unique aspect, you might want to add a new basic move that governs this aspect. If the hunters are leading huge assault teams against hordes of monsters, you might want to create a move for leading in big battles. This could be as simple as writing up assault teams as gear, then creating a **kick some ass** variant that rolls with Charm or Sharp and has modified consequences of a 10+. Or, if you want more detail, you might include several battle moves for different situations.

For example, gathering knowledge from dreams is a significant aspect of the *Dreaming with the Gods* framework, so it adds a **dive into dreams** move (page 232). It's not a basic move technically because it needs special conditions or **big magic** to use, but it essentially works like one—it adds rules any hunters can use to give clear structure and stakes to something they'll do on a regular basis. In a sci-fi or cyberpunk framework, you could use **dive into dreams** as the basis for a **hack a device** basic move—if you want hacking to feel different enough to make it a move separate from **investigate a mystery**.

THE PLAYBOOKS

The hunter playbooks are the main interface players have with the game. Changing the playbooks is a critical area for building the setting.

For a historical framework that otherwise sticks close to a regular game, the changes may only need to be small. Changing the gear lists and removing any anachronistic references in the moves could be all that is needed.

Then start considering these questions:

- Is this hunter archetype fitting for the setting?
- Is a different version of this hunter archetype fitting for the setting?
- Does this hunter archetype not belong at all?
- Is there a hunter archetype that is missing?

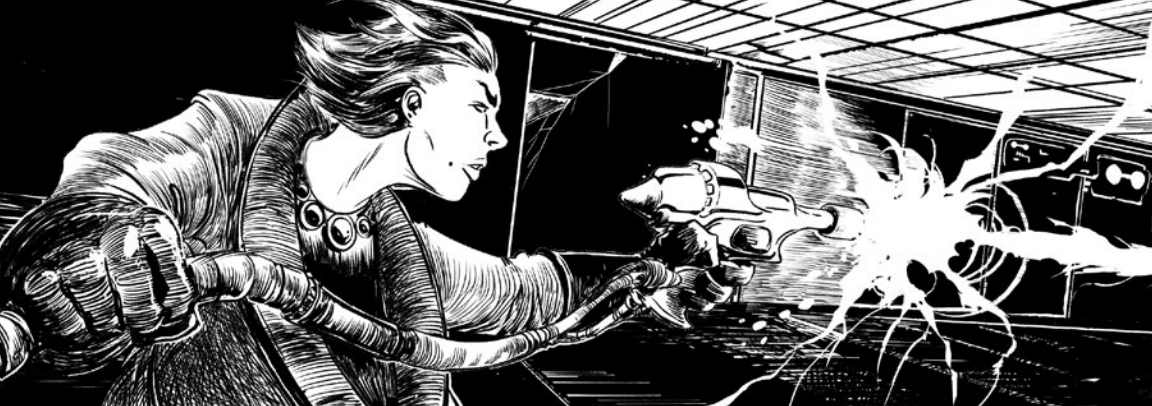
Remember that each playbook connects the hunter team to an aspect of the world. The Crooked means the criminal underworld will feature in your campaign, the Divine always comes from a divine or powerful realm of some sort, and so on.

If there is absolutely no place for the playbook's place in your setting, remove or modify it. If this aspect can be part of your game, but you don't have good ideas for it, you can ask the players to try those playbooks and invent something together. *Dreaming with the Gods* has no typical godly realm and therefore initially was meant to exclude the Divine, but the playtesters' ideas about Divines as beings with vague missions given by the Dreamscape itself turned out to be great.

If you're going further afield, much greater changes may be needed, with the ultimate end being a full new set of playbooks tailored to the framework. Be cautious about getting too ambitious right away! Creating a whole set of hunter playbooks is quite a lot of work. You can reduce that work by beginning with changing the existing set to fit your setting rather than starting from scratch.

The advice for making custom playbooks in the main *Monster of the Week* book applies just the same, but read everything in the context of what's needed for your setting.

If you need to "colour" the hunters' abilities and backstories in a way that fits the framework, but don't want to change all the playbooks, you might add an additional minor choice to the process of hunter creation. *Gothic Century*, for example, gives them dark pasts (page 176), which work a bit like mystery letters and a bit like additional free moves with problematic side effects.



GEAR

Changing the gear available to hunters is one of the easiest parts of altering playbooks. Just put in the gear that makes sense for your new or updated playbook.

If you're making new gear options, add tags that make sense to you (and freely expand the list from the main rules). Tags don't need a mechanistic rule if they provide a clear fictional indication of what the item does. Create a rule for a gear tag only when it needs to be absolutely clear what it does.

For example, a new piece of gear, the ice ray, has the tags "restraining" and "freezing." The first already exists in the gear tags list (*Monster of the Week* page 114, hardcover page 126). The second doesn't need a tag description as it is obvious what being frozen means.

If the new gear was a quantum ray, with tags of "melding" and "tunnelling," it's not immediately obvious what might be meant by these effects. Let's add tag descriptions for this one! Perhaps "melding: two small items each of a single material are merged into a single item sharing features of both original items," and "tunnelling: targeted objects instantly appear somewhere else. The larger the target, the shorter the distance. Guidelines: a person will tunnel up to 50cm, a rat up to a few meters, a coin up to 100m."

Don't worry about balancing the harm inflicted by weapons against the other options. Pick the number that fits the concept: how bad is it when this hunter uses this weapon? Use the existing playbook gear lists as guidelines while trusting your instinct. Nothing is going to break if you pick the wrong number (and you can revise if necessary).



THE PERIPHERAL MOVES

This is the “everything else” that makes up your setting, all the other moves that come up now and then. A great deal of the individuality of your setting comes from these pieces, even if they’re not always front and centre in play (like the playbooks and basic moves are).

To build these moves, consider what makes this whole setting different from the basic assumptions of the game.

This can cover broad special features and underlying reasons that things happen:

- How does healing work?
- Where does magic come from?
- What is the underlying nature of monsters?
- How do the hunters gain experience?
- What happens when a hunter is killed?
- How do the hunters relate to the rest of their community and world?
- What other forces are acting to shape events in the world?
- How should mysteries be structured?

Some examples follow, focusing on particular areas that can make a big difference.

HEALING AND HARM

A key design goal for healing and harm is to capture the adventure show style of harm. It can be dangerous in the immediate action scene, but it’s quick to heal between scenes. Finally, everyone is fine when the next episode begins.

If you’re looking for a different style in your fights and recovery, these rules are a good place to make changes. That’s particularly the case for more grounded historical settings, where medicine is limited compared to the modern world.

EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

This is another area where you can change the feel of the game substantially. The baseline is designed to give hunters quick access to new, powerful abilities. The aim is to capture the feel of characters in a show coming up to speed for the end-of-season finale.

You can change this pace by:

- Making experience checks more or less frequent by changing the availability of end-of-session questions, playbook moves, or changing the “mark experience on a 6 or less” rule.
- Altering the number of experience marks required to level up.
- Changing the “power level” of available improvements or making some improvements require more than one advance to acquire.
- Using alternative experience tracks, such as the team playbook improvement tracks and the exploration rules in *This Strange Old House*.
- Giving additional ways to gain experience, such as the question about having a place to call home from *Monster Marches* (page 300).

THE NATURE OF MONSTERS

In regular *Monster of the Week*, monsters are usually 100% evil. They also can't be manipulated, representing that whatever a monster says, it will break any promise or agreement whenever it feels like it.

Changing these is another way to bring a different feel to your game.

Bone Spear is an example of changing both. It postulates that everything has an animating spirit that is a full person, and also some monsters are regular people (or animals or spirits) that have been twisted in response to wrongdoing. This means that the hunters are no longer primarily concerned with fighting and defeating monsters, but instead need to focus on making arrangements and attempting to cure them.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

After going through all those individual pieces, you need to take a look at the big picture you have created. Does it fulfil the vision you had at the start?

If not, go and tweak the pieces that don't fit. Playtesting is a critical part of that—it's not always possible to predict how a rule will operate in play. Try them out, take note of what works and what doesn't. Then revise and polish until there are no more rough edges to fix.

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