

STRANGE TIMES



DEMO

BY GAVIN RUBIN

THE CALL OF THE VOID

A common experience where an individual feels a sudden need to do something that is either dangerous or self destructive. Most who have felt this phenomenon have no desire to harm themselves, yet the urge to do so comes to them nonetheless. It is as if there is an instinct within us to seek out danger. An obsession with knowing the forbidden feelings of death and suffering.

This is a game about horrible things happening to those who feel compelled to answer the void's call.

CREDITS

Created By:
GAVIN RUBIN

Edited By:
BOJANA IVANIC

Art By:
ABDURHAFIDH
(Fiverr)

Lead Play Tester:
BEN LIEBERMAN

Play Testers:

Lael Burge, Bojana Ivanic, Mac Kramer,
Ben Lieberman, Steve Moore, Artemis Pappas,
Yared Sanbet, Tim Santy, Quinten Sodra, Chris Vial

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Pg. 1
PLAYING THE GAME	Pg. 3
CHARACTER CREATION	Pg. 22
GENERAL ADVICE	Pg. 27
SETTINGS	Pg. 36
MODULES	Pg. 44
SUPPORT	Pg. 95

TUTORIAL VIDEO



WHAT IS STRANGE TIMES?

Strange Times is a setting agnostic investigative horror RPG. It combines the competency of detective narratives with the powerlessness of horror stories. Players will be taking the role of those who became obsessed with learning about the dark forces hiding in their world--be they monsters, aliens, or ghosts. Every dive into the dark unknown will wear them down until they need to claw their way back into the light.

HOW DO YOU PLAY STRANGE TIMES?

Strange Times is played with one player as the Game Master and 1-5 players as characters. All players have a responsibility to play their parts in a way such that the game tells a gripping story.

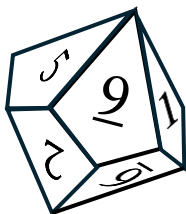
As a character, you will be dictating the actions of an imaginary individual inside the fiction. You will want to play your character in a way that allows for the narrative of the game to progress. If you were a sensible person that avoids danger and always calls for help, you wouldn't be in this position to begin with. Something deep within your character wants to get into trouble and see horrible things. Be the person that looks forward to being in danger. You should also want to solve the problem rather than just solve the mystery. Finding out that a demon has possessed the local mayor is interesting, but "what's to be done about it" is a far more compelling question.

As the Game Master, you are expected to place the characters into interesting mysteries that expose horrifying truths about the world being explored. You will want to construct the mystery before you start playing. Mysteries will involve locations, NPCs, and clues. Once play starts, you will be narrating the result of actions taken by the players and interpret the rules to determine how actions will be handled mechanically, if at all.

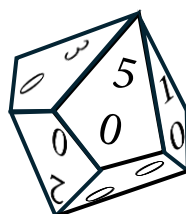
DICE

Strange Times is a d100 system (“d” standing in for “die” and the 100 referring to the number of sides it has). Now, if you don’t know what a d100 is already, you are probably wondering where on earth you are going to get a 100-sided die from. You don’t. Instead, you get two 10-sided dice (d10s) and have one of them represent the 10s place and one represent the 1s place. Some d10 are specially made for the 10s place and are referred to as percentile dice.

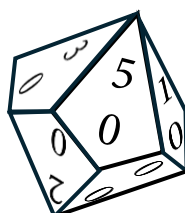
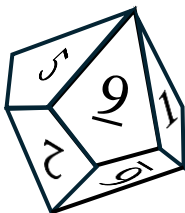
10-Sided
Die
(d10)



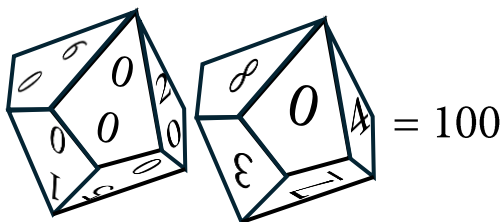
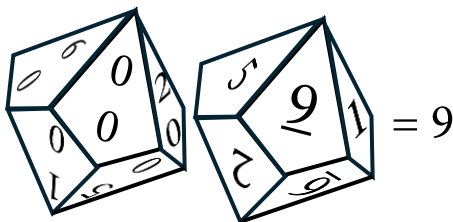
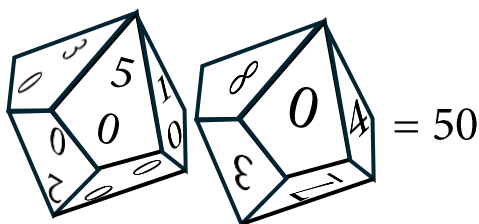
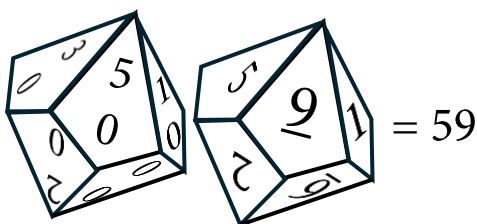
Percentile
Die



10-Sided Die &
Percentile Die
(d100)



DICE EXAMPLE





PLAYING THE GAME



PLAYER TERMINOLOGY

Game Master – Often abbreviated to “GM,” this is the person in charge of the table. They will create the mystery, interpret and apply the rules of the game, and determine the consequences to actions. Despite playing the game, they will not be referred to as a “player” (this is confusing but standard terminology).

Player – This is everyone at the table who is not the GM. They will be in charge of dictating the actions of a singular character in the story. When this book refers to “the player” it is referring to the person at the table.

Character – This is the pawn of the player. A character is a manifestation of the player’s imagination and is the person experiencing the story. They have characteristics that help determine the result of actions such as Saves, Traits, and Skills. When this book refers to “the character,” it is referring to this imaginary person and their abilities. As a general rule, the player makes decisions, the character experiences the consequences.

SAVES

Saves are a measure of a character's ability resist negative effects as well as their capability to push themselves further. There are 3 Saves.

BODY - The character's ability to resist being moved, dodge out of the way of danger, and general health.

MIND - The character's ability to keep sane, tell the difference between reality and fiction, and rationalize illogical events.

SPIRIT - The character's ability to avoid succumbing to fear, motivate themselves to keep fighting, and overcome magic.

Characters will have **Max Saves** that will often range from 20 – 60. These are the starting value for their **Saves**. If a **Save** ever reaches 0, the character is removed from play permanently.

TRAITS

Each **Save** has two corresponding **Traits** associated with it. Whereas **Saves** are a character's ability to resist things, **Traits** are the character's ability to perform related actions with some level of competence. There are 6 Traits.

SAVE	TRAIT	DESCRIPTION
BODY	STRENGTH	The character's ability to lift heavy objects, push things, and to perform general athletic feats.
	SPEED	The character's ability to run fast, evade dangers, and react first.
MIND	INTELLECT	The character's ability to think on the fly, make things, and use magic/technology.
	KNOWLEDGE	The character's ability to recall information, make connections, and general access to trivia.
SPIRIT	INSTINCT	The character's ability to notice things, tell when something is wrong, and fight for their life.
	EMPATHY	The character's ability to connect with, lead, and communicate to others.

SKILLS

Skills are the specific talents a character possesses that can help that character perform related tasks. They are not connected to any **Trait** or **Save** but can help a character when applicable (See Pg. 7 for details). There is no limit to what a **Skill** could be, but they range in value from +5 to +25.

RESILIENCE

Resilience is a character's general ability to deal with difficult situations and resist urges that go against their interest. Each character starts with some amount of **Resilience** (**Max Resilience**). **Resilience** will help players pass **Save Rolls** (See Pg. 8 for details). As a general note, things get dangerous when a character's Resilience gets low.

OBSESSION

Each character has an **Obsession** with the unknown. All characters start with some amount of **Obsession** (**Min Obsession**). When the GM believes the thrill of discovery would be too tempting for the character(s), they may invoke the character's **Obsession** to perform a related action. If the player does not want to perform the action, they may reduce their **Resilience** by an amount equal to their **Obsession** and afterwards increase their **Obsession** by 1.

EXAMPLE-

GM – You hear a noise coming from the basement. I will invoke your Obsession to investigate it before waking anyone else up.

Player 1 – Like hell I'm going down there alone! I'll spend the Resilience. My Obsession is currently 3, so I will drop my Resilience from 14 to 11 and raise my Obsession to 4.

Player 2 – Wait! We're going into the cultists' lair tomorrow! You're going to need that Resilience.

Player 1 – Oh, you're right! I guess I am curious what that noise was... Fine, I'll keep my obsession at 3 and go into the basement.

CONDITIONS

Conditions are negative attributes the characters gain through play, often through failing **Save Rolls** (See Pg. 8 for details). At their most basic form, **Conditions** are inverse **Skills** ranging from -5 to -25 that can make related tasks more difficult; however, **Conditions** can also have more creative and unique effects. For example, if a character falls from a tree, they could receive the **Condition**:

Broken Leg: -15

or

Broken Leg: 5 - Whenever the character moves to a new location, they subtract one from Broken Leg. When it reaches 0, the character is immobilized.

or

Broken Leg - Whenever the character moves to a new location, they lose 1d5 from their Body Save.

or

Broken Leg - The character can only crawl unless assisted.

Each one of these would be a fitting effect for the Broken Leg Condition and each have their place depending on the current situation the players are in. GMs are encouraged to be creative when assigning **Conditions** to players to better elicit the themes of their game (See Pg. 35 for example **Conditions**).

A Note for GMs: Players have very limited room on their character sheet. Any effect other than the simple flat negative will need to be remembered. That is not to say “do not use more creative conditions,” but use them sparingly and don’t feel like you should never assign a flat negative condition.

ROLLING DICE

There will be times when it is uncertain whether a character will succeed at an action. When such a time arises, the GM will call for the player(s) to roll dice. The GM will state which **Trait** or **Save** the roll will be made with and then the player will determine and announce a **Target Number** (details of which are explained in the following sections). The player will roll 1d100 and if the result is below or equal to the **Target Number** announced, the action is successful. Otherwise, it is a failed action.

TRAIT ROLLS

If the action that caused the roll was player driven (meaning the player requested to perform the action) then the GM will call for a particular **Trait** to be used. The **Target Number** for the roll will be equal to that **Trait** for the character performing the action.

If the character has a **Skill** the player believes is applicable, they may ask the GM if they can add the **Skill** to the **Target Number** before the roll is made. If the character has a **Condition** that would hinder their action, the GM may dictate the player to subtract it from the **Target Number**. Only one **Skill** may be used for any individual roll, but any number of **Conditions** can be applied.

Once a final **Target Number** is determined, the player rolls the dice. On a success, they do the action without further complication. On a fail, either the player does not achieve their goals, something bad happens, or both.

EXAMPLE-

GM – You follow the creature into the woods but lose sight of it.

Player 1 – Can I try to identify any trail it left behind? I mean, it is covered in slime, it had to leave some clue as to where it went.

GM – Sure. Make an Intellect roll.

Player 1 – Can I add my Tracking Skill to it?

GM – Yeah, that definitely applies here.

Player 1 – Perfect! My Intellect is 40 and my Tracking is a plus 10, so I need a 50. *Rolls Dice* ... 13! Success!

SAVE ROLLS

There are times when the characters will need to be reactive. Rather than the player dictating what they want their character to do, the GM will ask the player to roll using one of their character's **Saves** to resist a negative effect. The player will determine their **Target Number** by adding their current **Resilience** to the **Save**. **Skills** and **Conditions** cannot be added or subtracted.

Once a final **Target Number** is determined, the player rolls the dice. On a success, the character avoids the consequence. If they fail, the GM determines a consequence based on the number rolled. The lower the failed roll was, the worse the outcome. (See chart below for suggested consequences)

FAILED NUMBER ROLLED	100-71 MINOR	70-41 MAJOR	40-11 SEVERE	10-01 FATAL
Possible Effects	Lower a Save by 1d10 or Resilience by 1d5 Increase Obsession by 1d2 Gain a -5 Condition that lasts the Episode Gain a -10 Condition that last for minutes/hours	Lower a Save by 2d10 or Resilience by 1d10 Increase Obsession by 1d5 Lose 1d2 Vitality Gain a -10 Condition that lasts the Episode Death in hours unless assisted	Lower a Save by 3d10 or Resilience by 2d10 Decrease a Max Save, Resilience, or Vitality or increase Min Obsession Gain a -20 Condition that lasts the Episode Death in minutes unless assisted	Permanent loss of Character

EXAMPLE-

- GM – You try and read the text in the ancient tome. Before I tell you about what it says, I am going to need a Mind Save.
- Player 1 – Okay! My Mind Save is 45 and my Resilience is 15, so I am aiming for a 60! Easy! *Rolls Dice* ... 62! No! So close!
- GM – Oh man, that is a Major Consequence. As you read the book, you feel the words imprint onto your mind. Whenever you close your eyes, you still see the words. Raise your Obsession by 1 and gain a condition called “Otherwordly Visions” at -5.

CREATING CONSEQUENCES

The suggested consequences in the chart are not meant to be viewed as the only options for failed Save Rolls. Rather, they are guiding markers for GMs to get an idea of what an appropriate consequences could be. GMs can create their own consequences or combine multiple effects if appropriate. Here is a short description of the intended severity of each bracket.

Minor: A small set-back or inconvenience.

Major: A noticeable effect with lasting impact or a significant complication.

Severe: A detrimental consequence or permanent mark on the character.

Fatal: The character is no longer playable.

PREDETERMINED CONSEQUENCES

Sometimes the GM already has a particular consequence in mind. If a character is bitten by a zombie, “Infection” makes sense as the consequence for a failed **Body Save** roll regardless of the result. In that case, the GM could remove the use of the chart entirely (inform the player before the roll that the result will be a binary pass/fail). The GM could also use the chart to determine the severity of the consequence. For example, the player *will* be infected if they fail the roll; however, if they rolled a **Minor Consequence**, the infection might take days to take hold whereas a **Severe Consequence** might see them turning in minutes.

PUSHING TRAIT ROLLS

If a player fails a **Trait Roll**, they may choose to **Push** their character to succeed instead. To do this, the player must reduce the **Save** that corresponds to the **Trait** used by the difference between the number rolled and the **Target Number** needed for success. Only **Trait Rolls** may be **Pushed** and only if they are not a **Critical Failure** (Pg. 11). The GM may deny a player the ability to **Push** a roll but must declare so before the roll is made.

EXAMPLE-

Player 1 – I want to try and intimidate the farmer into telling us more about what he saw that night.

GM – Go ahead and give me an Empathy Roll.

Player 1 – Can I add my Brute Skill? I do look rather menacing.

GM – Sure, go ahead.

Player 1 – My Empathy is 30 but my Brute Skill is +15, so I need a 45 or less. *Rolls Dice* ... 48. I am going to Push, dropping my Spirit Save from 40 to 37 to make that a success.

ADVANTAGE & DISADVANTAGE

Characters might have things either helping or hindering them in a given situation outside of their attributes. The way the GM can model this is by giving the player **Advantage** or **Disadvantage** with their **Trait Rolls** or **Save Rolls**. **Advantage** means that the player rolls twice and uses whichever result yields a better outcome. **Disadvantage** is the same, but the player uses the result that yields the worst outcome.

ASSISTING

A player may **Assist** another character with their **Trait Roll**. They pitch to the GM what they are doing to help, and if the GM approves, the assisting player loses one **Resilience** and the player performing the **Trait Roll** gets **Advantage**.

CRITICALS

Rolls of doubles (22, 44, 66, 88, etc.) are a **Critical** result. If the roll was a success, it is now a **Critical Success**, meaning the player gets more out of the action than originally intended. If the roll was a failure, it is now a **Critical Failure**, meaning the player receives an additional penalty and the roll cannot be **Pushed**. Rolls cannot be **Pushed** to become **Criticals**.

ROLL SUMMARY

TRAIT ROLLS

1. The Player announces intent.
2. The GM calls for a specific Trait to be rolled.
3. Advantage/Disadvantage is declared as well as Assistance.
4. The Player requests a Skill. The GM declares Conditions.
5. The Player determines and announces a Target Number.

Target Number
Trait + Skill – Condition(s)

6. The Player rolls a d100 and states whether the result is a success or failure and whether or not it is a critical. If the result is a non-critical fail, the player may **Push** the roll.
7. The GM narrates the result.

SAVE ROLLS

1. The GM calls for a specific Save to be rolled.
2. Advantage/Disadvantage is declared.
3. The Player determines and announces a Target Number.

Target Number
Save + Resilience

4. The Player rolls a d100 and states whether the result is a success or failure and whether or not it is a critical. If the result is a fail, the Player states whether it is a Minor, Major, Severe, or Fatal consequence.
5. The GM narrates the result.

ITEMS & WEAPONS

Most **Items** have no defined effect. Rather, items can be used to justify having **Advantage** on a roll or to avoid the roll completely. The GM should aim to reward players for bringing the correct equipment or using **Items** creatively. Players may not share **Items**, but they can use them as justification for giving **Assistance**. Weapons are also **Items**. They can be used to make tasks easier and help characters achieve goals that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. They do not apply damage, and they are NOT an answer. Shooting monsters might slow them down, but players shouldn't expect to see their problems off with a shotgun and some chutzpah.

DAMAGE & VITALITY

Should a character be hit by a monster's claws, strangled by a warped tentacle, or just stand a little too close to an explosion, that character is liable to take some amount of **Damage**. **Damage** is a reduction of the **Body Save**. The amount of **Body Save** lost is determined by the GM, often by rolling an appropriate number of dice. If needed, GMs can use this table as a reference.

1d5	1d10	2d10	3d10	4d10
Minor scratch or burn	Hit with blunt object	Shot with small pistol	Clawed by large monster	Gored by a sharp object

When a character would take **Damage**, they first reduce the amount of **Damage** by their **Vitality** (a measure of a character's general toughness ranging from 0-5) before applying it to their **Body Save**. After taking **Damage**, the GM may ask for a **Body Save** to be made if they feel it is appropriate.

A Note for GMs: Ask for a **Body Save** when the **Damage** should be dramatic or when a large amount of **Damage** is taken at once (5 or more as a general rule). Avoid having a failed **Body Save** caused by **Damage** result in more **Damage** that leads to an additional **Body Save**.

HOSTILE ENCOUNTERS/COMBAT

There is no combat. “Combat” implies that there is some chance that the characters can compete in a battle against the horrors of the dark. When there is an active threat, the players are considered to be in a **Hostile Encounter**. This should cause some minor changes in gameplay. Namely, consequences for failing **Trait Rolls** should cause the character to take **Damage** from the **threat**, and players should occasionally need to make **Save Rolls** to avoid **Damage** if inactive. Other than that, play remains the same.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The next paragraph and the following 2 pages are dedicated to a full and drawn-out example of what playing *Strange Times* should look like.

EXAMPLE-

GM – You come to a dark cave in the middle of the woods. The trail comes to a dead end here.

Player 1 – This must be where the bodies are! Let’s get help and come back in the morning.

Player 2 – Great idea! We can get the sheriff involved!

GM – Not so fast. I think I am going to invoke both of your Obsessions here to go inside now. Seems like too thrilling of a discovery to pass up.

Player 2 – Oh man, this isn’t good... My Obsession is at 3; I can pay that.

Player 1 – ... My Obsession is a 7...

Player 2 – 7!? That is so high!

Player 1 – I know! Well, I don’t think I can afford to lose that much Resilience so... I wander into the cave.

Player 2 – I swear if you get my character killed... I follow.

GM – You both enter the cave. A small path with a shallow slope becomes apparent. You see trails of blood on the ground, as if the bleeding body was dragged. You also see shallow cuts in the wall.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Player 1 – Can I examine the blood trails? I want to figure out whether the people were alive when they were taken here.

GM – Absolutely. Let's call it Intellect and you can even add your Medicine Skill to it.

Player 1 – Awesome! I have a 50 in Intellect and +10 for Medicine so I need a 60! *Rolls Dice* ... 44! Critical success!

GM – Nice! The blood spatter does indicate they were alive when they were dragged. You also notice there are layers of blood, the topmost of which are recent, within a few days, and the others are older. Perhaps a month as an estimate.

Player 2 – The same time Mr. Ferns reported losing cattle... Can I take a closer look at the shallow cuts? Maybe adding Cryptozoology?

GM – I think that works. I want you to use Knowledge though, and I am going to say you have Advantage.

Player 2 – Sweet. Knowledge is 30, cryptozoology is 20, so I need a 50. *Rolls Dice* 78 and... *Rolls Dice* 23!

GM – So, you recognize these marks. They look exactly like the depictions of troll marks you were looking at in the library this morning.

Player 1 – I knew it was a troll! Let's keep going!

GM – You continue down the path. As it becomes narrower and darker, I want you both to make a Spirit Save.

Player 1 – Spirit is at 33 and my Resilience is at 13, so I need a 56 *Rolls Dice*... 48. Success!

Player 2 – Spirit at 24, Resilience at 15, so aiming for 39... *Rolls Dice* ... 72... Why do I never get any luck?

GM – Oh, that is a Minor Consequence. You are going to gain a new Condition called "Claustrophobic" at -10.

Player 2 – Yeah, that makes sense. I'll write it on my sheet.

GM – The path eventually opens up to a large grotto. You see what remains of the villagers: a pile of viscera and meat. That's when you hear a moan come from the pile. Someone in it is still alive.

Player 2 – We need to help them! I run to the pile.

Player 1 – I follow!

EXAMPLE OF PLAY: HOSTILE ENCOUNTER

- GM – You run up to the man. It's the shopkeep! He's still breathing but his wounds look pretty gruesome. Then you hear a snarl come from behind. As you turn, you see the hulking green figure. The troll has returned to its den!
- Player 2 – Aw dink! We need to get out of here! I make a run for the exit!
- Player 1 – You coward! We need to save the shopkeep!
- Player 2 – We can't save him if we're dead!
- GM – Make a Speed roll. I think your -10 Claustrophobia is going to be working against you here as you need to squeeze through the opening again.
- Player 2 – Speed is 40, minus 10, I am going to need a 30; this doesn't look good. *Rolls Dice* ... 95! Oh no!
- GM – The troll lets out a barking sound before pouncing on you. You are going to take *Rolls Dice* ... 12 damage. I am also going to ask for a Body Save after.
- Player 2 – I have 2 Vitality, so I will take 10 damage to my Body Save dropping it from 35 to 25. Now I will roll that Body Save. *Rolls Dice* ... Failed with a 54.
- GM – That is a Major Consequence. I am going to say you are heavily wounded from this and will die in a matter of hours if not taken to a hospital. Worst of all, it looks like the troll isn't finished.
- Player 1 – Can I try and draw its attention with my pistol?
- GM – Yeah, roll your Instinct.
- Player 2 – Can I Assist? I can yell at the troll to keep it distracted.
- GM – That makes sense to me; lose 1 Resilience to pay for the Assist. Go ahead and make the shot with advantage.
- Player 1 – Awesome! I need 70 with my Shooting Skill. *Rolls Dice* ... 14, that's a success and *Rolls Dice* ... 66! That's a critical!
- GM – Well done! You land a slug directly in its head and it passes out. You are safe for now, but you can already see the wound regenerating. It won't be down for long.
- Player 1 – Can I drag the shopkeep out?
- GM – You can if you make a Strength roll.
- Player 1 – I need a 45... *Rolls Dice* 49! I will Push and drop my Body Save by 4 points to succeed at the roll.
- Player 2 – Fantastic! Let's get outta here before the troll wakes up!

ABILITIES

Abilities are the unique talents or aspects individual characters possess. If a character has a weird quirk, or if there is something a character can do easily that would otherwise be impossible or require a roll, then it can be modelled as an **Ability**. **Abilities** can take on many different forms depending on the setting: spells, special training, cybernetic implants, etc. See example below.

Mask of Mischief-

Description: Your face becomes moldable like clay. You may form it into a new shape and take on the appearance of another for up to 3 hours. Lose 1d10 from your Mind Save.

A Note for GMs: There is no set way for players to acquire abilities nor is there a list of defined abilities available for players. It is up to you to determine how often players will gain access to abilities *if at all* as they are a completely optional component of Strange Times.

PLAYTIME TERMINOLOGY

Playtime is broken into Sessions, Episodes, and Seasons. This is terminology barrowed from television to help carry the idea of continuous and episodic narratives.

SESSION - A Session is whatever length of time your group plays for in one sitting. It could be 45 minutes, or it could be 8 hours, whatever works.

EPISODE - An Episode is a single storyline. This could be an individual mystery, an event that is happening, an encounter with a horror, or some combination. Ideally, players will finish one Episode per Session on average, with some being shorter or longer as needed.

SEASON - A Season is a grouping of Episodes. They may have an overarching plot in common or not. The end of a Season should see some changes, such as a new storyline or even the conclusion of the story for those particular characters.

BETWEEN EPISODES & IMPROVING

Once an **Episode** ends, it is assumed that some number of weeks will pass before the next one (in game time). This will give the characters an opportunity to recover from their injuries, both physical and mental, before jumping into another horrific mystery.

Once an **Episode** ends, players will gain **Experience**. They receive 2 **Experience** by default and then they will make a **Body Save**, **Mind Save**, and **Spirit Save** roll. For each **Save** they **FAIL**, they receive 2 additional **Experience**. There is no other consequence for failing the **Save**. Players may spend **Experience** to improve their characters.

- Spend 2 exp to increase a **Save** by 1 to a maximum of 70
- Spend 1 exp to increase a **Skill** by 1 to a maximum of +25
- Spend 10 exp to gain a new **Skill** starting at +5

Afterwards, players may return all **Saves**, **Resilience**, and **Health** to their Max amount as well as return **Obsession** to their Min amount. This is the only way to recover these values in Strange Times.

A Note for GMs: To prevent players from abusing the **Experience** system, lock **Saves** and **Resilience** spending once the mystery has been resolved and they are no longer in danger. They may still roll dice, but they cannot **Push** or **Assist** rolls.

CHANGING THE GAME

Strange Times was made to be easily modified to help accommodate different desired tones and play styles. The following 4 pages are dedicated to optional rules to add into your game. While none of these modifications are necessary, it is highly encouraged for GMs to look through and add in the individual rules they believe would best serve their desired experience.

OPTIONAL RULES: MISCELLANEOUS

Inter-Character Conflicts: Should players want contradictory things or compete for a result, the conflict is handled via a Vickrey Auction of a relevant **Save**. Each player in the conflict sets their dice to a number in secret behind their hand. This is their bid. All players reveal their bid simultaneously and the person who bid the highest wins the conflict, but they then lower their character's **Save** by the second highest bid. All other players suffer no consequence. Players must be able to cover their own bid, meaning they cannot bet more than they have in the relevant **Save**.

EXAMPLE-

GM – The gun collapses to the floor with a clatter.

Player 1 – I rush to pick it up!

Player 2 – Wait! I want to try and get to it first!

GM – Sounds like a competition. Set your bids with your Body Save.

Both Players – *Secretly Set Dice*

Player 1 – *Reveals* I bet 15.

Player 2 – 15!? You're crazy! *Reveals* I only put 7. You got it.

Player 1 – Sweet! I lose 7 from my Body Save and grab the gun.

Omens: Rather than 100s being **Critical Fails**, they are called “Omens.” Supernatural forces come to the character's aid. Think of Omens as “complicated successes” where the player may choose to succeed at a high level, but at a significant price. Perhaps it is something mechanical such as an increase of Minimum Obsession or a loss of Max Health, or perhaps it is narrative, like drawing the attention of the fishmen or ruining their lucky hat.

Luck Roll: If a player asks a question the GM does not know the answer to, a Luck Roll can be made to determine the answer. The GM has the player roll a d10 and makes a judgement based on the result (lower being better). Alternatively, the GM states the odds before the roll is made (i.e. 3 out of 10).

OPTIONAL RULES: ROLEPLAY FOCUS

Roleplay Based Progression: Rather than characters gaining **Experience** by failing **Saves** at the end of **Episodes**, the GM may award **Experience** for roleplay during sessions. GMs should answer the following 3 questions for each player at the end of each session.

- Did the player reference their character's Background?
- Did the player reference their character's Origin Encounter?
- Did the player cause complications due to their character's Trouble?

For each question answered "Yes" the character is awarded 2 **Experience**.

Resilience Trading: Players can move **Resilience** between characters. Two consenting players may decide to shift any amount of **Resilience** from one character to another but must justify this through roleplay. The character gaining the **Resilience** does so by insulting, needling, yelling at, and overall being unpleasant towards the character losing the **Resilience**. Players must act this out.

Relationship Compels: During character creation, players should be explicit on the pre-existing relationships and power dynamics at play between the characters. During play, the GM can compel a character's **Obsession** to act on these relationships and dynamics.

EXAMPLE-

Player 1 – I am going to lead the way into the cave; sound good?

Player 2 – Yeah, works for me!

GM – Hold on. Didn't you say at the start that you want your character to be the "brave one" and the "defacto leader" of the group? I am going to compel your obsession to take lead here.

Player 2 – And be the first one hit by razor sharp claws? No, thank you! I will lose 2 from my Resilience and bump my obsession to 3.

Player 1 – ... What was that thing about "razor sharp claws?"

OPTIONAL RULES: DEADLY

Increasing Dread: When a character fails a roll, they also lose 1 **Resilience**.

Brutal Saves: Critical Fails for **Save Rolls** are treated as one consequence bracket lower (i.e. a **Major Consequence** would become **Severe**).

Losing Willpower: Successful **Save Rolls** may still cause the players to lose some **Resilience** when applicable.

Lower Standards: The standard distribution of **Traits** (Pg. 23) is changed to
50 | 40 | 40 | 30 | 30 | 20

OPTIONAL RULES: FORGIVING

Last Chance: Should a character ever reach 0 with a **Save**, rather than that character being removed from play immediately, the player may choose to lose any **Resilience** they have left (they must have some **Resilience** to do this) and then set the **Save** to 1.

Notice Roll: The GM can offer a player to make a **Trait Roll** using **Instinct** to notice something nearby. This should never be used to reveal critical information. Anything gathered via a Notice Roll should add context and details, not solutions.

Obsession Experience: When a player has their **Obsession** compelled, if they listen their compulsion, they receive one experience immediately.

Pushing Saves: Players may **Push Save Rolls** using their **Resilience**. This does not affect the **Target Number**.

OPTIONAL RULES: COMBAT ADD-ON

Weapons Dealing Damage: If you would like weapons to play a bigger part in your stories, you can give them a damage dice to be rolled when they hit.

1d5	1d10	2d10	3d10	4d10
Unarmed Attack	Blunt Melee Weapon	Pistols, Sharp Melee Weapon	Semi-Automatic Rifle	Shotgun, Explosive

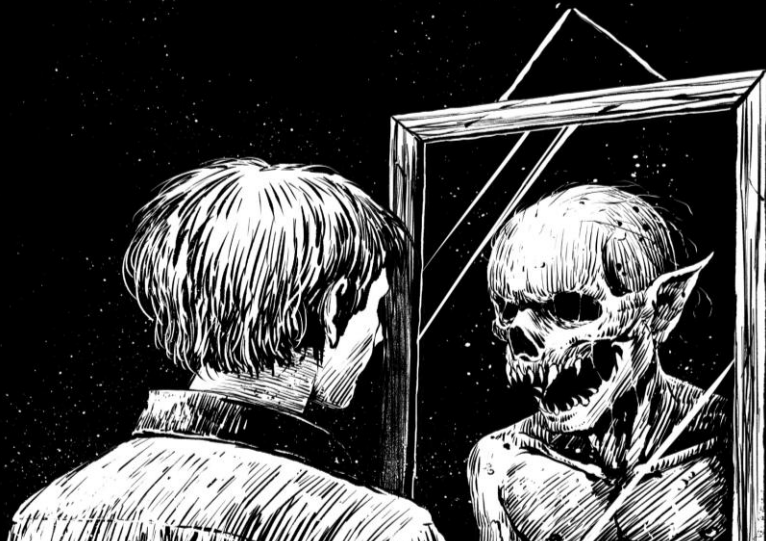
During character creation, consider making more powerful weapons cost additional item slots.

Be aware that, by weapons having damage values, players will be more inclined to use them as the primary solution rather than search for answers. This will drastically change the feel and tone of the game.

Armor: If a character is wearing armor, then they can add 1 to their **Vitality**. More could be added for heavier armor, but GMs should cause this to have some detriment such as **Disadvantage** on certain **Speed** rolls.

Turn Order: When a hostile encounter begins, players enter a turn order. Turn order is determined with a Speed roll. Critical successes go first, then successes, then failures, then critical failures. Ties are broken in favor of the lower roll. On a player's turn, they may attempt one action. Almost all actions should require a Trait Roll of some sort. The threat does not get a turn; they are still the consequence of player failure.

If the threat having a turn is desirable, then they also roll Speed (determine their Target Number the same way you would an NPC detailed on Pg. 35). The Threat no longer hurts players for failure but gets to perform a number of actions equal to 1 plus the number of failed rolls by the players since its last turn or the start of the **Hostile Encounter**.



CHARACTER CREATION

AN OBSESSION

Anyone can investigate the horrors of the unknown. It doesn't take an amount of strength or skill or knowledge. The only requirement is that the person be *obsessed*. That they have a need. A need that surpasses their desire for comfort. A need that makes them look into the dark. A need that overrides their instinct for survival and justifies each step towards the writhing horror before them. They need to *know*. Every character has a curiosity about what hides in the shadows and is willing to put everything on the line to learn a fraction of the truth. Anyone else would give up the moment they got a glimpse into reality. Characters must possess this need to justify, again and again, looking into the depths.

While creating a character, keep this obsession in mind. The GM can use your obsession to put you into dangerous situations, so it may be beneficial to consider how your character rationalizes their obsession. Is it because the truth is the only thing that matters to them? Or perhaps they want to prove that they aren't crazy. Maybe they feel a need to protect the rest of the world from the dark forces. Either way, they will step forward when everyone else steps back.

CREATE YOUR PAST

Your character did not come into being the moment the game started. They were around before and there are a few details about their past that will be helpful to define.

Background –

What did the character do before they started their current adventure?

Trouble –

What aspect of your character causes them problems?

Origin Encounter –

What did your character see that caused them to believe in dark forces?

These are not mechanically significant, but they will help guide choices made in character creation as well as roleplay opportunities in game. You can fall back on these attributes as guidepost to what your character would do in certain situations.

DETERMINING TRAITS

Once a character's past is fleshed out, players need to determine their 6 **Traits**. There are 3 main ways of doing this.

STANDARD – Distribute the following values across your **Traits**

60 | 50 | 40 | 40 | 30 | 20

POINT BUY – Distribute 240 points across your **Traits**. The maximum value of any given Trait is 65 and the minimum value is 10.

RANDOM – For each **Trait**, roll 1d10 and consult the table below. Decide the character's background after Traits are assigned.

Roll	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
Stat	15	20	25	30	40	40	50	55	60	65

CALCULATING SAVES

Calculate a character's **Max Saves** using their **Traits**. Each **Max Save** is equal to average of the related **Traits** (rounded down).

- **Max Body** = $1/2$ (Strength + Speed)
- **Max Mind** = $1/2$ (Intellect + Knowledge)
- **Max Spirit** = $1/2$ (Instinct + Empathy)

Once these are determined, they can be adjusted in game independently of the character's **Traits** i.e. a character can lose **Max Body Save** without affecting their **Strength**, **Speed**, or **Vitality** and vice versa.

VITALITY, OBSESSION & RESILIENCE

Each character sets their Max/Min values for **Vitality**, **Obsession** and **Resilience**.

- Set **Max Vitality** to 2 (Add 1 if your **Body Save** is above 40)
- Set **Min Obsession** to 2 (Subtract 1 if your **Mind Save** is above 40)
- Set **Max Resilience** to 15 (Add 2 if your **Spirit Save** is above 40)

A Note for GMs: An easy way to better form the game to your preferred style is to adjust these starting values. For example, if you are playing with a larger group or would just prefer that the game is overall more dangerous, consider lowering **Max Resilience**.

SELECT SKILLS

Select a character's 3 starting **Skills**.

- One **Skill** starts at +20
- One **Skill** starts at +15
- One **Skill** starts at +10

Skills can be anything, but players should confirm **Skills** with the GM to ensure they will be appropriate for their game. The **Skills** a character has can drastically change how they are played as these will likely inform character choices in the future.

GENERAL LIST OF SKILLS

Here is a collection of possible **Skills**. This is meant to be a starting point and by no means meant to be viewed a limitation.

Agriculture	Deception	Home Repair	Philosophy
Alchemy	Disguise	Hunting	Photography
Architecture	Divination	Inspection	Physics
Art History	Driving	Interior Decoration	Piloting
Athletics	Etiquette	Intimidation	Psychology
Attunement	Explosives	Investing	Racing
Bureaucracy	Fashion	Leadership	Research
Biology	Fast Hands	Legal	Rope Tying
Brawling	Finances	Listening	Running
Chemistry	Fishing	Literacy	Sailing
Chicanery	Footwork	Logistics	Seduction
Cleaning	Foraging	Mathematics	Shooting
Climbing	Foreign Language	Medicine	Smelling
Command	Fraud	Monologuing	Smooth Talk
Computers	Gambling	Music	Story Telling
Cooking	Geography	Mythology	Sword Fighting
Crafting	Hacking	Navigation	Telecommunication
Cryptography	Hairdressing	Obscure Trivia	Tracking
Cryptozoology	Herbology	Occult	Witchcraft
Dancing	History	Painting	Zoology

*It is recommended that players do not take any equivalent of a Stealth Skill as this can limit the horror of the game in a way that is often anticlimactic.

SELECT ITEMS

Select a character's 3 starting **Items**.

Much like **Skills**, **Items** can be anything. **Items** do not have designated effects, rather they are used to help with rolls made during the game. For example, if a character were trying to navigate the woods, that might be made easier with a compass letting the GM give the character **Advantage** on the roll or bypass the need for a roll entirely.

If you are having trouble determining what **Items** your character should have, consider taking one **Item** based on your background, one **Item** based on your trouble, and one **Item** based on your origin encounter.

BUILDING THE TEAM

If you are playing with others, it is important that you determine your relationship with everyone else's character before you start playing. Your characters should not be with strangers as this often leads to awkward and forced roleplay. The specifics are up to you, but there are 2 things all groups should have.

The first is a mutual respect and understanding. Whether or not your character likes these people is irrelevant; these are the only people that believe you when you talk about the horrors you have seen. This is your character's justification for sticking with them even during times of tension.

The other aspect all groups need is a common goal. Why do you all seek out the unknown? This will depend largely on your setting. Perhaps you are fantasy adventurers keeping your local village safe, government agents sent out to neutralize threats, or just podcasters that don't have the best understanding of boundaries or safety. This is to provide the motivation your characters need to seek out trouble and have stories worth telling.



GENERAL ADVICE

SAFETY TOOLS

Given the horror themes in *Strange Times*, it is important to set up the communication channels needed for players to express when they are no longer having fun. Players should be a little uncomfortable, as is the nature of horror, but no one should have a bad time. Here are a couple options on how to form those channels easily and without judgement.

X-Card: Place a card or piece of paper with an “X” inscribed in the middle of the table in reach of all players. If any player is disturbed or triggered by the events happening in game, they may touch the X-Card, signaling all players to end the current conversation and move on to the next scene. **DO NOT** question the player that touched the X-Card on why they felt the need to use it.

Lines and Veils: Lines are things that cannot be talked about ever. Veils are things that can be talked about, but not in detail. For example, if horses are a line, then the subject of horses will never enter the game. If horses are a veil, there can be horses, but no one will describe a horse in detail or put significant focus on it. Before play, open a discussion about the lines and veils of the people at the table. Lines and veils may be added during play.

THERE IS NO WINNING

The most important thing to realize for playing any RPG is that it is not a game, it is a story. Games are things you win whereas stories are things you tell. Think of this as you and your friends writing your own TV show or movie. Your primary goal should be to entertain, though that looks different depending on where you are sitting at the table.

If you are playing a character, think of yourself as an actor writing their lines as they go. An actor can't "win" a movie. The best an actor can do is play their part well in a way that is engaging for the audience which, in this case, is the other people at the table.

If you are the Game Master, think of yourself as the director. The director in any project is in charge of keeping the story focused and keeping the pace up, but you also need to leave room for your actors to breath.

PLAYER TIPS

Some people assume that because they are not the person in charge of the game, they do not have any responsibility for the fun at the table; this is not true. RPGs function best when everyone is working together to make the game enjoyable. Here are some tips to help make your game fun for everyone.

Care About Other Characters: It is very common for people to become self absorbed in their RPG character. Try and take some of that energy and put it into caring about the other characters at the table.

Stay on Task: Because this is an investigation RPG, there is some assumption that the characters should follow the clues of the mystery and try to be invested in the story. While some goofing off and gags are expected, try to keep the story flowing.

Help the Game Master: The GM is putting in a lot of work to run the game; try to make their lives a little easier. This can be as simple as putting in a little more effort into learning the rules, helping others when they are confused, or engaging with the NPCs and environments they put effort into creating.

GENERAL TIPS FOR GAME MASTERS

While being a GM can be challenging, it is also an extremely rewarding skill to develop. Here are a few ideas to have your games hit the ground running and make the experience more memorable for your players.

Encourage All Characters: This is perhaps the most important tip. When someone does something creative, weird, or in character, be sure to find a way to encourage that behavior. Be excited with them and mention how much you enjoy their idea (sometimes even if you didn't). Players tend to love their characters, and it means a lot to them when someone else loves them too.

Enhance the Experience: Do whatever you can to make the experience more immersive and fun. Do voices for NPCs, play appropriate background music, use a sound board, make prop versions of the clues to hand out to players, turn out the lights when the characters are in the darkness (smart bulbs are very affordable and great for this). While all of these are totally optional, each one makes sessions more engaging and memorable for players.

Moments Over Plots: It is extremely important to have a cohesive and interesting plot; however, players tend to only remember the interesting moments of any given session. Consider what big moments might happen in play and put some planning time into how to make those moments sing.

Keep it Pacey: Try to recognize when the story is slowing down and start to encourage players to move on to the next spot (this can be a great time to compel Obsessions). Likewise, if the game is moving too fast, try and ask questions to the players to slow them down. You should be the master of the story's speed. As you get closer to the end, try to increase the stories tension until the big finale and then end the game almost immediately afterwards.

Have Stakes: Make sure there are clear consequences for failing to follow the plot. Something bad should happen when the characters do not accomplish their task and they should be aware of that.

Ask Questions: Do not be afraid to ask the players what they are expecting or what they want out of a situation or roll. You don't need to guess at what they envision an action looking like; you can just talk to them.

MYSTERY TIPS FOR GAME MASTERS

Writing a mystery can be intimidating at first, but it is incredibly satisfying to have players follow the trail of clues to a conclusion. Here are a few tips to help GMs write and run compelling mysteries.

High Concepts: To start writing a mystery, consider two things: what is happening and why is it weird? This is your high concept that will help you plan the rest of the adventure. The “what” should be something that is straightforward: a string of bank robberies have occurred. Then throw in the weird twist: it is by a man who invented a teleporter.

Plan Out Clues: Once you have your high concept, start considering what clues might lead players to discovering the weird solution. As a general rule, try to have 3 clues per location, each of which point to another location or person. Plan redundancies in clues in case the players miss one.

Some Clues Should be Obvious: If players are looking in the right place at the right time, then they should find clues without a roll of the dice, especially if that clue is crucial for solving the puzzle. Your mystery should be solvable without players succeeding at a single roll.

Float Clues: If there is a particular clue that is important to the story, or if it is just something you are excited to tell players, then consider how it could appear in other places should the players not find it in its intended location. Some clues might not even have an intended location and just float to the location the players are currently at once it is appropriate.

Use Dreams: It is very common in horror for dreams to communicate information; use that concept to drop hints to players. If the players are getting stuck or missing an important clue, consider giving one of them a dream/vision “from the beyond” to subtly push them in the right direction.

Don’t Marry a Solution: Your job as a Game Master is to create problems, not to solve them. The players will always have a more creative and more interesting solution than you so embrace it. It is recommended you come up with a solution for your creation, but you should be ready to throw it out the door for whatever the players come up with almost immediately.

MYSTERY TIPS FOR GAME MASTERS

While creating a mystery make sure you have your C.L.U.E.S. in place.

C all	The event that puts the characters into action. This is how they discover that something worth looking into is happening.
L earning	This is the bulk of playtime where players learn more about the true nature of what has been going on and who and/or what is responsible.
U nexpected Twist	Something occurs that the players weren't expecting. This should push them to act sooner than anticipated or put them in an undesirable situation.
E scalation	Things get worse. Lives are put in danger, the characters are constantly under threat, and everything in the shadows comes to the forefront.
S olution	The characters find a way to stop the worst from happening. The mystery is solved, no one is in any more danger, and the dark forces are repelled back.

C.L.U.E.S. can be a handy tool to make sure there is a good arc to adventures. While not all mysteries will follow C.L.U.E.S. exactly, it acts as a useful guidepost when you are stuck writing.

HORROR TIPS FOR GAME MASTERS

A misconception many people hold about running horror games is that they need to actually scare players to be successful. That is not true. Horror themes and elements do not need to be scary to exist and, in many cases, horror is not about being scary but having ideas that other genres cannot accommodate. Things that are bizarre, disturbing, and even sometimes wacky. This is why genres like *horror comedy* and *action horror* exist; not because they are scary, but because they have strange elements. All of this is to say, do not judge your games based on how scary they are. Scaring players is not a requirement to have fun nor does it need to be a goal... *but...* it is really fun if you can pull it off. Here are some tips for achieving that experience.

Lose Your Shame: To communicate horror well, you will have to do some things that are inherently silly. You need to fully commit to those things for them to land. This also means sometimes you will have players laugh at you, and that is a good thing! Horror and Comedy are very similar, and people laugh when they are uncomfortable or surprised; it means you are close.

USE SOUND: Horror is all about the senses. You can describe what players see, taste, feel, and smell. You can **make** them hear things. Get comfortable making uncomfortable sounds with your mouth: meeps, squelches, splats, shrieks, howls, growls, creaks, screams, snarls, weird voices, etc. Practice it when you are alone and consider noises ahead of time.

Use Your Body: Use motion to amplify the words and noises you are making. If you are describing the zombie's jerking motions, make jerking motions. If you say there is disgusting viscera on the ground, look disgusted. If the demon is reaching towards a player, then reach towards the player.

Say Consequences Before Rolls: Tell players what will happen if they fail a roll when the suspense is high. If the player needs to pass a Body Save to not be grabbed by the monster, then tell them that they will be dragged off into the darkness if they fail. Allow the dice roll to have all the tension it deserves.

Hint at the Horror Early: Use the players' imagination against them. Hint at what the horror is capable of early on and the players will begin to dread the eventual encounter, making it all the more satisfying when it does happen.

NPC GUIDE

Using NPCs: NPCs (or Non-Player Characters) are the people the characters will run into and communicate with during the game. They do not have any sort of **Traits**, nor can they adopt **Skills** or **Conditions**. Normally, no dice should be used to determine the success of an NPC's actions; however, from time to time, the characters may ask an NPC to do something that is outside of their normal capabilities. When that occurs, consider how good that NPC would be at performing the action and consult the chart below to determine a **Target Number**.

NPC TARGET NUMBER

Terrible	Inept	Poor	Average	Talented	Skilled	Trained	The Best
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80

Once a **Target Number** is determined, communicate that to the players and have one of them roll the dice before resolving the roll as normal. NPC rolls cannot be **Pushed**, though they may be granted **Advantage/Disadvantage** and cause a **Critical** result. Characters may **Assist** NPCs.

Make Each NPC Memorable: Because of the nature of mysteries, there can be a lot of different people the players speak to, and each one has to be memorable. That sounds like a big challenge, but it boils down to three things:

- Personality - How the character behaves
- Voice - What the character sounds like
- Mannerisms - Weird things the character does

Great characters have something interesting about all 3 of these but engaging in any one aspect really well while embodying the character will still make them pop out. **Do not make it subtle.** If a character is friendly, make them overly friendly. If a character is French, make them aggressively French. If a character likes to end dialogue with the phrase "or so it goes" then overuse it. Make them stand out in the players' minds so they will remember the encounter and remember what they said.

STRANGE TIMES SPECIFIC ADVICE

Have Players Announce Target Numbers: It is important to get players in the habit of announcing target numbers before they roll early on. When the players do this, not only does it give you information you need in order to interpret the roll but allows other players to be engaged with the roll.

Have a Consequence in Mind: Anytime you ask for a roll, consider what the consequence for failing the roll will be before the roll is made. Will the character simply fail at their task? Will they succeed, but at a cost? If it is a save, what could a minor, major, or severe consequence look like? What Condition could this cause? (See next page for examples). If you cannot think of a good consequence that would still allow for the story to function, consider whether the dice roll is necessary.

Keep The Threat Active: When in a hostile encounter, the threat should be doing things to make the characters lives more complicated. However, this is not to say that the threat should be asking the players to make saves constantly. Rather, you should aim to describe the threat's actions and then ask the players "what do you do" to try and elicit reactive trait rolls that can then lead to damage. See the example on Pg. 15 and how the GM threatens the players with the troll's actions, causing the players to feel a sense of urgency and forcing them to act immediately.

When to Roll Dice: Dice should be used sparingly when appropriate. Here is when it is appropriate to have a player roll.

When Success Isn't Certain: If it is unknown whether or not a person would succeed, a die can be rolled. It should be assumed players can open doors and drive the speed limit with little difficulty.

When it is Dramatic: When the stakes are high, dice should be rolled more often. Stress can affect people's abilities to perform, and thus even simple tasks can become difficult.

When Failure is Interesting: When failing a roll will result in something that makes the story more compelling, that is a good reason to have dice be rolled.

LIST OF CREATIVE CONDITIONS

Here is a list of conditions for Game Masters to consider and be inspired by

Panicked: # - The Game Master, at a moment of their choosing, can dictate that a roll will be made with Instinct regardless of the task. When they do, subtract 1 from Panicked. When it reaches 0, remove this condition.

Shaken - Doubles the cost of Pushing rolls with Spirit.

Infected: # - The Game Master, at a moment of their choosing, can dictate that a Body Save Roll needs to be made. If failed, subtract 1 from Infected. When it reaches 0, the full effects of the infection takes hold.

Regressed - You can only do actions related to your Background & Trouble.

Left Arm Destroyed - Reduce Strength by 10. This Condition can only be removed through advanced medical technology or magic.

Dread - Whenever you fail a roll, lose 1d5 Spirit.

Stench - You make Empathy Rolls with disadvantage if the person can smell.

Curious - Doubles the cost of refusing your Obsession.

Blinded - Any task requiring sight requires a critical success to pass. Otherwise, it is treated as a failure. (Reminder that rolls cannot be Pushed into Criticals)

Exhausted - Whenever you make a Trait Roll using Strength or Speed, subtract 1d5 from your Body Save.

Chosen - You will be pursued by the monster.

X-Phobia - You have disadvantage on rolls when in the presence of X.



DETERMINING A CORE CONCEPT

Because *Strange Times* is setting agnostic, groups will need to decide on where the game will take place. The setting can be anything, but it should be something everyone at the table will find interesting and everyone is comfortable with. After a setting is determined, the GM should take time to consider what horrors could appear in that setting (don't share this with players) as well as what the impetus for investigation will be. As an example, if the setting was "Caribbean pirates in the mid 18th century" then sea monsters and undead sailors are a clear option for the dark entities the players will encounter. As far as why the characters will look into these horrors, a search for lost treasure sounds like a great option. Characters could be the pirates willing to travel to the places no one else dares to go and then they encounter terrifying things on their journeys all in the name of becoming rich. This setting, horrors, and impetus are this particular game's core concept.

LIMITATIONS

Once a group has determined a core concept, the GM will want to consider what limitations the setting naturally has and what limitations will need to be introduced as contrivances. The two things to consider are “why won’t the characters leave” and “why won’t they call for help.” For some settings, this is a given. If we were to consider the pirate example, then they won’t leave when encountering a horror because sailing requires resources and they can’t afford to leave empty handed. They won’t call for help because it is impossible to do so, at least in any sort of a timely manner. However, if we were in the modern day, then those restrictions would need to be introduced. There is a reason every modern horror movie has the characters’ car battery die and their phones lose all cell signal in the first act.

SKILLS & ITEMS

GMs should prepare a list of **Skills** and **Items** they believe will be useful in the setting. While it is encouraged that players write in their own **Skills** and **Items** based on their vision of the character, it would be useful to GMs to be able to hand them a list of ideas and options to pull from should their imagination falter. The GM should consider what aspects will be important in their games and direct **Skills** that direction. If a GM plans on featuring naval activities heavily, then they might have listed **Skills** for “Rigging,” “Ship Piloting,” and “Cannon Operation,” but if they plan on naval activities being minimal, then they might combine all of those **Skills** into “Sailing.”

GMs should also communicate this to players when they are selecting **Skills** and making their own. If a player wants to take “French Language” as a **Skill** but the GM has no intention of that coming up, then the GM should communicate that to the player and suggest a more useful or generic alternative such as “Foreign Languages.” Likewise, if a player has a **Skill** that the GM believes will be too useful in their game such as “Robbery” then they might ask that player to choose a more specific **Skill** such as “Lock Picking.”

It is recommended that GMs do not let their players take any equivalent of a Stealth **Skill**.

SETTING MECHANICS

Strange Times systems are generic enough to work in any setting; however, if a GM wants to have mechanics that elicit the feelings of the setting specifically, they will need to create those on their own. This can be as small as flavoring a mechanic differently to altering or creating rules. Again, going to the pirate example, one might flavor “Obsession” to be about greed rather than dark forces. They could add in a rule that collecting a large amount of treasure at once can raise a characters minimum Obsession, and perhaps they want there to be a lot of ship combat so there will need to be rules around that as well (Example on Pg. 37).

A Note for GMs: Don’t feel that everything needs to be perfect from the start. Get some ideas down, see how they work, and be open to change. If a skill is proving to be more useful than you would prefer, have a discussion with the player about altering it. If you feel a mechanic you made fell flat, ask the players how they think it could be improved. Experiment, try things, and be okay with failure. Part of the fun of Strange Times is that it allows you to try your hand at game design to better suit the system to your needs; take advantage of that.

EXAMPLE SETTINGS

The next 5 pages contain 3 example settings with all of the elements discussed in this section: Core Concepts, Limitations, Skill & Item Tables, and Custom Rules. Each page has a dotted line below the Game Master specific information so that they may be cut or folded and presented to players if desired. None of these are meant to be taken as finished settings. They are meant to be guiding examples rather than fully fleshed out environments to explore. Take inspiration and make them your own.

SETTING: CARRIBEAN PIRATES

Horror Ideas: Undead Sailors, Sea Monsters, Ghost Ships, Ancient Curse

Impetus: Pirates searching for treasure that no one else is brave enough to get.

Movement Limitation: Small islands only reachable by boat. Sailing consumes resources and leaving empty handed is a luxury not often afforded.

Communication Limitation: Must be either in person or by extremely slow messengers.

SKILLS

Ancient Cultures	Footwork	Medicine	Sailing
Bluffing	Foraging	Navigation	Sea Creatures
Command	Foreign Language	Parley	Swashbuckling
Firearms	Intimidation	Rigging	Tall Tales
Fishing	Literacy	Rituals	Woodworking

ITEMS

Almanac	Flint and Tinder	Jar of Dirt	Rope
Bag of Marbles	Flintlock Pistol	Machete	Rum Bottle
Canteen	Fruits	Pocket Watch	Shovel
Compass	Gunpowder	Rapier	Spyglass

OBSESSION to GREED: Obsession, rather than being flavored as your characters obsession with the dark forces, is now a greed for riches.

Ship Mechanics: Characters will maintain a ship together. This ship contains additional crew, treasures, and special equipment. It also has Hull which is treated like a Save. Characters can push rolls involving the ship with its Hull rather than their own Save. The ship can gain Conditions. Characters can spend money to upgrade their ship, adding in new equipment, rooms, or crew. If anything hits the ship, the ship makes a Hull Save to determine the severity of the consequences.

Ship Name

STRANGE TIMES



GOLD 	HULL 	CONDITIONS
CREW 		SINKING IN ● DAYS ● HOURS ● MINUTES
ROOMS 		EQUIPMENT
ROOMS 		CARGO

100-71	70-41	40-11	10-01
Lose 1d2 Hull	Lose 1d5 Hull	Lose 1d10 Hull	Destroyed
Gain a -5 Condition	Gain a -10 Condition	Gain a -15 Condition	
Sinking in Days	Room / Crew / Equipment Disabled	Room / Crew / Equipment Destroyed	
	Sinking in Hours	Sinking in Minutes	

SETTING: LOW FANTASY

Horror Ideas: Monsters, Wizard Creations, Evil Liches, Wraiths

Impetus: Adventurers trying to make a name for themselves

Movement Limitation: Takes days to journey to a location.

Communication Limitation: Through magic, messages can be sent rather easily; however, there is seldom someone else nearby powerful enough to help.

SKILLS

Alchemy	Brawl	Magic Type	Performance
Animal Training	Charm	Martial Skill	Quick Hands
Archery	Deception	Medicine	Realm History
Athletics	Enchantment	Monster Lore	Religion
Beast Knowledge	Identify Arcane	Plant Speak	Tracking

ITEMS

Bow & Arrow	Divination Kit	Martial Weapon	Shield
Bucket	Flint & Tinder	Mirror	Torch
Cast Iron Pan	Large Pole	Mystical Book	Vial of Acid
Crystal Ball	Magic Wand	Small Pet	Waterskin

Magic Spells: Characters with a **Knowledge Trait** of 50 or more can cast magic spells. When a character wishes to cast a spell, they describe the desired effect to the GM who then declares a negative modifier between -0 and -50 based on how strong the effect is. The player then makes a **Knowledge Roll** to cast the spell, subtracting the modifier from the **Target Number**. If the spell fails, it is treated as a failed **Save Roll** causing a **Minor, Major, Severe**, or **Fatal** consequence.

Once a spell has been cast successfully, the caster must add it to their character sheet as an **Ability**. Players may have a number of spells equal to their **Min Obsession**. Players may choose to voluntarily raise their **Min Obsession**.

SETTING: LOW SCI-FI

Horror Ideas: Parasitic Aliens, Space Ghosts, Experiment Gone Wrong

Impetus: Underpaid insurance investigators sent out to examine claims

Movement Limitation: Weeks required to travel across space.

Communication Limitation: Messages can only travel at the speed of light, drastically hampering communication abilities.

SKILLS

Bureaucracy	Engineering	Laser Cutting	Science
Command	Exo-Biology	Mech Piloting	Ship Piloting
Computers	Explosives	Medicine	Space Religions
Data Reading	Firearms	Navigation	Starship Repair
Disguise	Inspection	Psychology	Survival

ITEMS

Paperwork	Fire Extinguisher	Med-Pack	Power Armor
Cheap A.I. Watch	Flashlight	Motion Scanner	Repair Kit
Data Pad	Laser Pointer	Pet Cat	Safety Manual
Dissection Kit	Mag-Boots	Photon Rifle	Space Suit

Owned By Insurance Corporations: The characters are owned by the insurance company and must complete investigative tasks. Failure to complete a task will result in termination via deactivation of their vessels cryopods. The characters will always have the same 3 tasks.

- Determine validity of claimed event
- Document cause of claimed event
- Find reason to void claim

CARDIS INSURANCES



Form 211-A3: Claim Investigation Report

REPORTED CLAIM

CLAIM INVESTIGATION

INVESTIGATOR I.D. -

CLAIM # -

*Does the claim appear to be valid?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*Is the danger still present after investigation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

*Is the claim entitled to payment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the above question was answered "No" please state plausible reasoning for voiding claim:

DETERMINED CAUSE OF CLAIMED EVENT

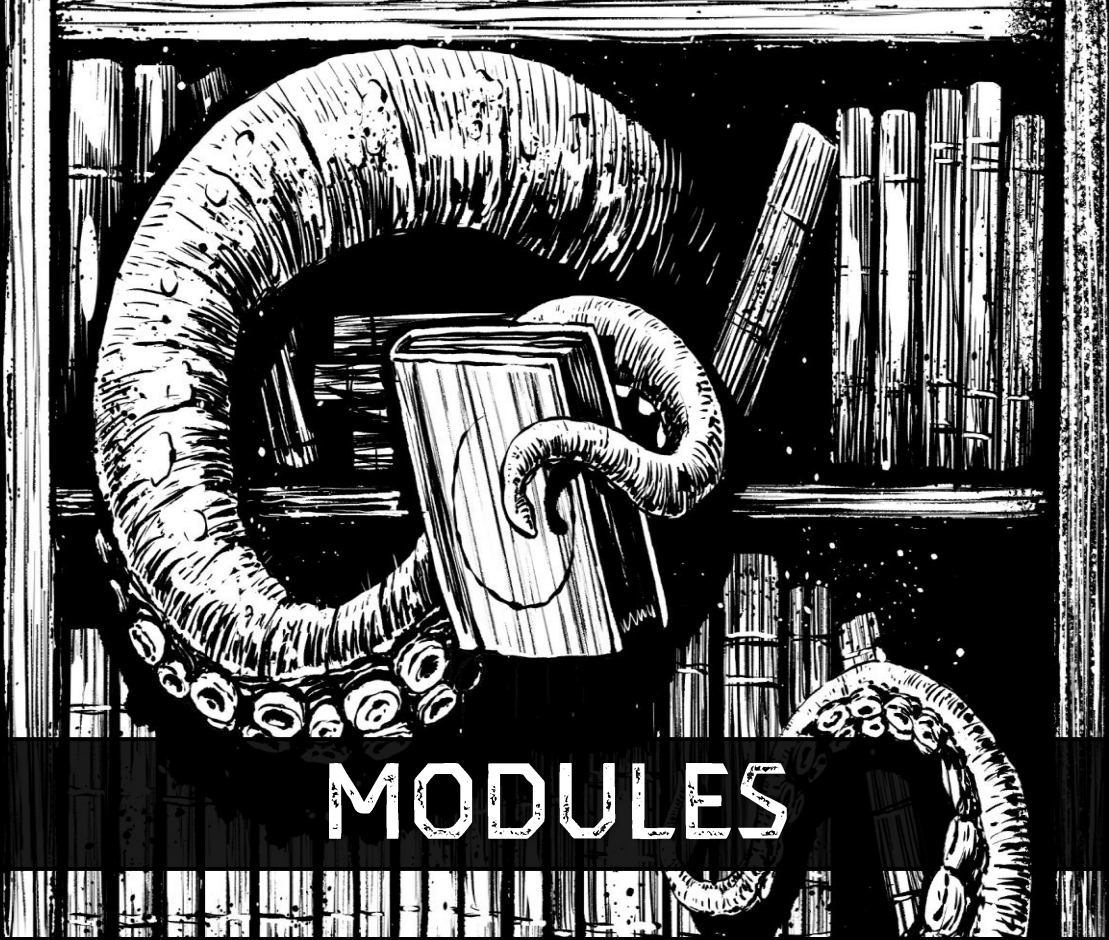
- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Devouring Slime | ☐ Experiment Gone Wrong |
| ☐ Extraterrestrial Ghost | ☐ Hostile Alien |
| ☐ Parasitic Organism | ☐ Portal to Hell Dimension |
| ☐ Space Maddened Killer | ☐ Time Travel Device |

☐ Other: _____

*If any of these questions were answered "No," payout for claim investigation will be doubled

SETTINGS





MODULES

RUNNING THE MODULE

Each module comes with tips and suggestions to best help run the mystery. While these are all optional, they might have insights as to how to get the most out of an adventure.

SETTING DESCRIPTION

The Setting Description is a quick rundown of the module's assumptions about the environment it takes place in as well as any additional or optional rules fitting for the setting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a high-level overview of the ongoing action, as well as what happened before the character's arrived. It sets groundwork for the adventure, so GMs should try to fully understand this section before reading the rest of the module.

HIDDEN INFORMATION

Some clues and testimonies are labeled as “Hidden.” This does not mean someone is actively hiding them or attempting to withhold information (though that sometimes is the case), but that they will require more than a generic effort to discover. This might be a player saying the right thing at the right time or a successful Trait Roll, whichever comes sooner. For example, if a note is hidden in an office and a player specifically wants to “search the desk” then it makes sense that they will just find the note there without needing a roll. A player saying they “search the room” will likely need to roll to find the information. Note that if something is not labeled as “Hidden” then it should become apparent without effort from the players.

CONTROL PANEL

This is the Strange Times “Control Panel” →

It is to there help GMs run the module. While there is nothing vital to the mystery on it, GMs might find it helpful to piloting the session and making sure things run smoothly. If you are struggling to make a scene feel impactful, check the control panel for useful information.

Environment Adjectives

or

Map

Important Information

Suggested Saves

Character Information

Tips and Reminders

Scene Suggestions

DEMO MODULES

These are the modules included in the demo:

DRAINED (Pg. 47)

Setting- Dystopian Sci-Fi

A distress signal from a nearby moon base quickly becomes a fight for survival.

FEEL – A sci-fi body horror nightmare with nowhere to run

TAGS – Contained Mystery | Linear | Isolated Environment | Sci-Fi |
Body Snatchers | Intense Body Horror | Vampires | Lethal

MEADOWS & MISCHIEF (Pg. 59)

Setting- Wild West

A discovery of a town's past and the secrets once buried.

FEEL – A paranoia filled adventure of discovery and dread

TAGS – Uncovered Dark Past | Genre Mash-Up | Swarming Creatures |
Fairies | Creepy Child | Traps

THE SHADOW OF DOUBT (Pg. 76)

Setting- 1940s America

An investigation into a small town where someone goes missing every month.

FEEL – A slow burn, sprawling mystery that slowly leads to a single destination

TAGS – Sandbox Mystery | Many Locations & NPCs | Red Herrings |
Creature Feature



RUNNING THE MODULE

Understanding Pace: This module has the players walking into the middle of a horror movie. The intro has already happened, and now they are going to experience the aftermath. Let them discover an aspect of the horror before revealing it. Allow the story to naturally progress into a nightmare as players try to find some way of surviving.

They Live: The threat doesn't kill people; it takes them over. The people are still very much alive and aware of what is happening to them. Play into the horror of this. Allow the people who are being controlled to speak (through great effort) and describe their panicked eye movements. Death should be a preferred outcome.

Vents: The monsters travel through the vents of the map. Rooms that have a vent in them are denoted with a Vent Icon. The monsters can appear in these rooms at any time. Use this for dramatic moments.



VENT ICON

SETTING DETAILS

DYSTOPIAN SCI-FI: A universe of slow spaceships making runs between planets lightyears away. Most people live in poverty and are constantly trying to find ways of making enough money to escape their problems, but they never will be able to. Debt consumes most. A handful of major companies control all aspects of life, and they have a singular goal: profit at any cost.

RETRO-TECH: Despite the advancement of technology, some machines have regressed in form. All communication must be localized and thus communication devices are simple radios. “Internets” are regional; each planet has its own, but spaceships and distant bases will only have downloaded material. As a result, computers are massive and can only be accessed through terminals. Most have an AI to help synthesize the data for easier use. Fear of corporate espionage has caused limits in remote access so most technology can only be operated at designated control panels.

ANDROID LIMITATIONS: While androids are firmly in the uncanny valley, they have been programmed to be more human. They can feel facsimiles of emotions and have desires. They are created to be additional crew members with specific functions when a human replacement would be too expensive; they are not super computers with limitless knowledge.

PLAYING AN ANDROID: If a player would like to be a robotic companion, they can choose to do so. They gain the following abilities.

Machine-

Description: You are made of metal and circuits. By default, you have Advantage on most Body Save Rolls and Mind Save Rolls.

Priority One: Company Profit-

Description: Rather than your Obsession being with the unknown, you are compelled by your Corporate Programming. Compels on your Obsession will be to do things that are in the company’s interest at the expense of your team members’ safety. Before paying Resilience to resist a compel, make a Spirit Save. On a fail, you cannot resist the compel.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SET UP-

The crew will receive a distress signal from a nearby forested moon facility: Wimbley Mining Base. Upon investigating, they will find that the workers of the facility are in desperate need of a medical officer; theirs has gone missing and the security officer was badly injured while searching for the missing doctor. The workers of WMB hope the crew can help figure out what it was that caused the injury and help find the medical officer. It will be in the crew's best interest to agree; the intense ionosphere of the moon fried the ship's flight computer upon entry; they will need a replacement if they are ever going to take off from this rock.

GM BACKGROUND-

The Wimbley Mining Base is a relatively new facility. Due to the intense UV radiation and eternal day-time tidal lock, the base is windowless and outside travel is forbidden. A skeleton crew of 7 individuals run the entire facility.

Two days ago, a sudden rock fall crushed 2 workers. Their violent demise awoke ancient spores inside the soil.

Thirteen hours ago, their bodies were excavated. A mysterious red fungus was growing on their bodies and in the ground where they were killed. Their bodies were brought to the medical bay.

Three hours ago, the medical officer Wilhelm Bram went missing. He has been infected with the red fungus and now is on the search for blood as a pseudo-vampire.

Fifty minutes ago, the security officer, Mac Douglas, was attacked by the pseudo-vampire. He fired his rifle instinctively as soon as he was struck, and the vampire ran away. The wound was deep and bleeding profusely. Luckily, the bleeding stopped on its own after a couple minutes.

THE RED FUNGUS

The red fungus found in the cave is a parasitic organism that feeds on the proteins and iron inside blood. If it enters an open wound, it will spread until it takes control of the host. This process takes anywhere from 30 minutes to 8 hours, depending on how active the person is. An infected individual will experience minor fever, chills, and intense thirst. In addition, infected areas will cease to bleed.

PSEUDO VAMPIRE

Once a person is controlled, the fungus can pilot their body around as a pseudo vampire searching for more blood. The body of a pseudo vampire is drained of all moisture, making them appear gaunt and lanky. The veins of the body are bulged to the surface with some bursting, revealing the red fungus sprouting out. The person is still alive, and some retain the ability to speak but only in a hoarse whisper.

Pseudo vampires will use the vents to travel and ambush their prey, targeting those it perceives as weak and alone. They are attracted to blood, be it inside of a person or pooled onto the ground. They are also incredibly resilient and can survive almost any injury.

At the start, Dr. Wilhelm Bram is the only Pseudo Vampire. Mac Douglas will turn soon if not cured.

Should a character be attacked by a pseudo vampire, they will take 2d10 damage and need to make a successful Body Save Roll or become Infected.

Infected: 3/2/1/0 - The Game Master, at any moment of their choosing, can dictate that a Body Save Roll needs to be made. If failed, subtract 1 from **Infected**. When it reaches 0, the red fungus takes control, turning you into a pseudo-vampire.

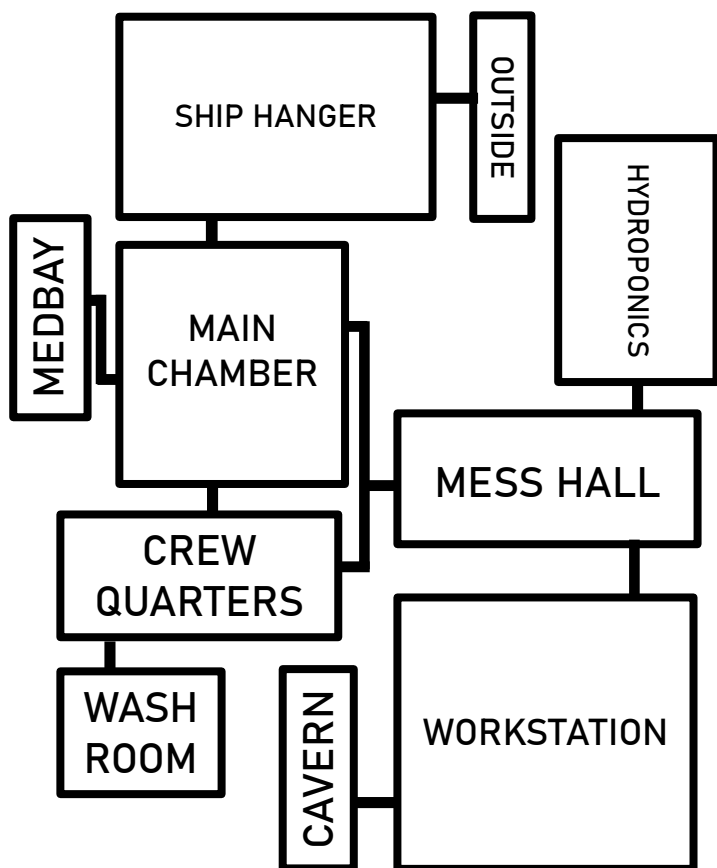
GM Note – If you would like to keep the exact nature of the Body Save a mystery, consider calling the condition “Thirsty” until the players understand what the red fungus is.

ANTI-FUNGALS

Several antifungals can be found in the base such as garlic, silver nanoparticles, and UV radiation. If an infected individual (not a pseudo vampire) is exposed to these directly, they make their next Body Save for the Infection with advantage. On a critical success, they are cured of the red fungus.

If a pseudo vampire is exposed to antifungals, they become vulnerable. Any successful attack can kill them off for good.

MAP OF WIMBLEY MINING BASE



INTRODUCTION

The characters are all relaxing on their spaceship when they get a distress call from Wimbley Mining Base. The crew of the base are stationed in a small facility on a nearby moon next to a UV intense class B star. All the distress signal communicated was that they are in need of medical assistance (determine with the players why they are obligated to respond to the distress signal). After the characters get ready, their ship descends into the hanger of the WMB. It was a rough flight into the moon's atmosphere.

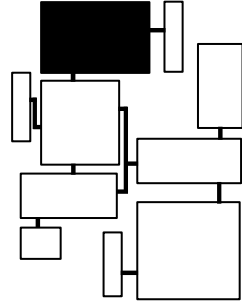
SHIP HANGER



The characters find themselves in a hanger meant for a small space craft or lander. Large tools and machinery for ship upkeep are covered in dust from lack of use. The whole place looks abandoned, but as soon as the hanger doors close, a man walks through the interior doors.

Clues:

- ⌘ Mac Douglas comes in once the hanger doors are shut. He greets the crew before informing them that their medical officer Dr. Wilhelm Bram has gone missing and it appears an animal has gotten into the facility. Helping with either of these would be of great service.
HIDDEN: Wilhelm was last seen in the Medbay, and he changed the security code to get inside.
HIDDEN: Mac has blood on his clothes from an animal attack. He fired a shot in panic and scared the thing off before he could see what it was.
HIDDEN: Mac is no longer bleeding despite the large size of the wound.
HIDDEN: Small red sprouts can be seen in the wound.
GM Note – Mac is infected with the Red Fungus. He will turn in a matter of hours.
- ⌘ The ship has visible damage on the sides. It appears moons ionosphere caused some damage upon entry.
HIDDEN: The ship's flight computer is fried. Flying without it is near suicide. It will take about 12 hours to repair and that is only if the needed parts are available.
- ⌘ Several dusty crates are around. It appears that this area is seldom used.
HIDDEN: The parts needed to repair the ship can be found in the crates.



Mac Douglas is a kind and fatherly man. He is happy for the easy security job in his final years before retirement.

“Thank the stars someone was nearby. We could use a hand.”

Try to keep Mac being infected a secret until later in the scenario but highlight that he is drinking a lot of water.

Suggested Scene: After the characters discover that the pseudo vampires are using the vents to move around, if anyone is in the Ship Hanger, they hear a metal clang from somewhere. If they investigate, they will see a vent grating fell off. Shortly after, they will be attacked by a pseudo vampire.

MAIN CHAMBER

The room is a dimly lit living area. There is a long metal table in the middle with random items scattered about. Couches adorn either side along with several other chairs of various designs. As the characters enter, they see all the living workers of WMB arguing about what to do next.

Clues:

- ⌘ Samantha Beck is decorated as the officer. She is trying to get Jesus and Vanessa to calm down but is clearly losing control of them and her temper.

HIDDEN: There was a mining accident 2 days ago. Two miners were lost.

HIDDEN: Samantha's uniform is of a high-ranking position. Too high to be running this place.

HIDDEN: Samantha was reassigned to this location after being declared "incompetent."

HIDDEN: Samantha believes that the creature is an animal that snuck in through the hanger.

GM Note – Current research suggests that the moon is incapable of supporting animal life.

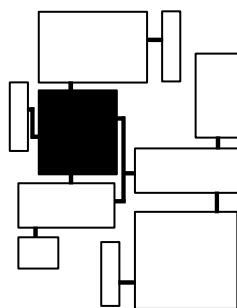
- ⌘ Jesus Gonzalez is demanding they hunt down "whatever it is that hurt Mac." He seems very worried about what is happening.

HIDDEN: Jesus is the base's mechanic. He can help repair the characters' ship.

HIDDEN: Jesus recently lost his older brother Alejandro in a mining accident 2 days ago. He is not handling the loss well.

- ⌘ Vanessa Hammon is dismissing the threat, claiming that "Mac probably scared the thing off with his gun."

GM Note – Vanessa will leave to take a shower shortly after the characters enter the room. She announces this. She will be attacked by a pseudo vampire there unless the characters intervene immediately.



Samantha is smart but lacks confidence. She panics easily under pressure.

"What did I do to deserve this reassignment?"

Jesus is quiet. He is still upset about the loss of his brother and is worried about losing someone else.

"Alejandro would know what to do..."

Vanessa is unserious and relaxed. She just wants to avoid work at all cost.

"How many of us have to die before we get a day off?"

CAVERN

A large cave with icy crystals protruding out of the walls. Portable lights are set up to illuminate the area. Several tunnels sprout from the main cave.

Clues:

- ⌘ The cavern is wide. Most of the icy crystals have been harvested, but some still remain. Mining equipment can be found throughout the cave.

HIDDEN: Pseudo vampires lurk in the cavern when it is too dangerous to be inside the base.

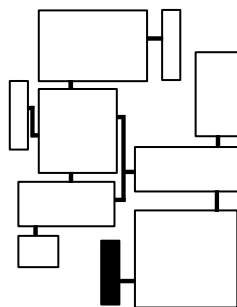
- ⌘ *If Vanessa went to the showers alone: ...*

Cries for help can be heard down one of the tunnels.

HIDDEN: If the sound is followed, they lead to a bed of red fungus that can be seen protruding out of the ground. Vanessa is laying on top of the fungus, drained of all fluid with the fungus running through her veins. She lets out another cry for help.

GM Note – The patch of red fungus can still be found without Vanessa, but it will be much more difficult.

GM Note – If Vanessa is freed, she will either die immediately or become a pseudo vampire.



When a character sees Vanessa, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.

Suggested Consequence-
She is... *alive?*

Gain Condition: Panicked



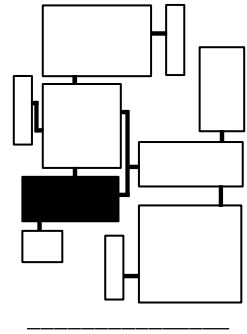
CREW QUARTERS



A corridor with 8 rooms. Each door is labelled with the name of the person who lives inside. One is empty.

Clues:

- ⊗ Most rooms are inconsequential.
- ⊗ Inside Samantha's room is a computer with the base's records and current activity.
HIDDEN: There is a letter detailing her transfer order.
If Vanessa went to the shower's alone ...
HIDDEN: There is a flashing alert that a vent malfunctioned in the Wash-Room
HIDDEN: There is a recent entry into the Cavern.
- ⊗ Inside Wilhelm's room is picture of Wilhelm with another man who looks similar. There is a small urn next to the photo.
HIDDEN: The urn is labeled - Mark 11/38



Consider adding in personal touches to each room based on who lives inside.

Mac – Retro CD Collection
Jesus – Sports Memorabilia
Alejandro – Rock Carving Kit
Isabelle – Diary with Gossip
Vanessa – Dirty Magazines
Samantha – Military Posters
Wilhelm – Medical Textbook

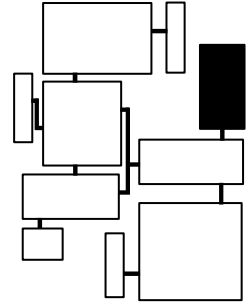
HYDROPONICS



A long room with multiple hydroponic beds growing various crops. Minimalist robotic arms hover above tending to the plants below.

Clues:

- ⊗ Crops of various plants are grown here.
HIDDEN: Garlic is grown here.
- ⊗ UV lamps light up the room.
HIDDEN: Plants need rest time. The lights are on an automatic timer to shut off.
HIDDEN: Pseudo Vampires will not enter this room while the UV lights are on.



Suggested Scene: *If characters are hiding here after realizing that it is safe, have the lights shut off at a moment of tension. Then the characters hear the vent grate open as a Pseudo vampire enters the room.*

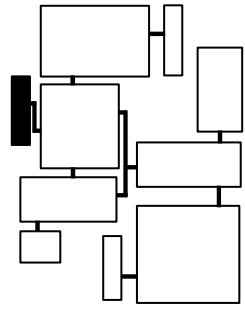
MEDBAY



The Medbay is locked with a 4-digit number code: 1138
A room full of medical supplies.

Clues:

- ⚡ The Medbay is in disarray. Papers and equipment are thrown everywhere.
HIDDEN: The air vent grating in this rooms has been pulled off.
HIDDEN: A bottle of silver nanoparticles labeled “AgNP” can be found on the floor.
- ⚡ The medical fridge has been broken into.
HIDDEN: The lock has been smashed. Wilhelm would have had a key.
HIDDEN: There are no blood bags
- ⚡ The bodies of Alejandro and Isabelle are still on stretchers. They are largely unrecognizable.
HIDDEN: Their bodies have been drained of blood.
HIDDEN: There is a red fungus growing in their veins.
- ⚡ There is a computer terminal here. It is locked with a four-letter password.
HIDDEN: The password is Mark
HIDDEN: An audio program is pulled up. There is a recent recording on it. *Clue 1, Pg. 55*



*If a character sees the fungus in the veins, they might need to make a **Mind Save**.*

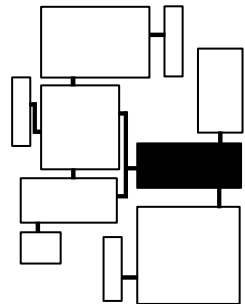
Suggested Consequence-
You become fully aware of the veins under your skin.
Lose Resilience

MESS HALL

A small cantina with a functional kitchen. There are several metal tables, most of which have been used as a storage space.

Clues:

- ⚡ There is a large walk-in freezer with various meat and grain products.
GM Note – A Pseudo Vampire can be trapped here but the cold will not kill it.

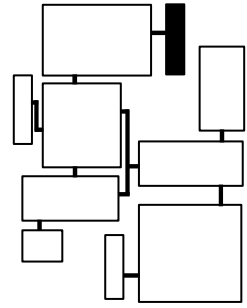


OUTSIDE

The moon's long orbit has placed this side in an effective eternal day. A tree line can be seen about 100 feet from the hanger doors.

Clues:

- ⌘ The harsh sunlight will cause UV burns in seconds. Protective clothing has limited effects.
GM Note – A pseudo vampire would only survive a few seconds in direct sunlight.



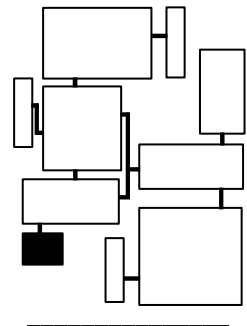
WASH-ROOM



A small washroom with several toilets and showers.

Clues:

- ⌘ *If Vanessa went to the showers alone ...*
There is a shower still running, but no one is inside.
HIDDEN: Steam is escaping through an open vent grate.



When a character sees the empty room, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.
Suggested Consequence-
What happened to Vanessa?
Increase Obsession

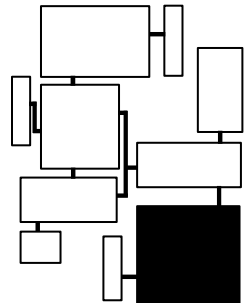
WORKROOM



Large benches and lockers with geology and mining equipment. Minecarts filled with crystals are pushed off to the side next to empty, large metal crates.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is a passageway into the Cavern. A digital sign above it say's "next shipment due in: 89 Days."



CLUES

CLUE #1

Recording on the Medbay Computer:

Voice of Dr. Wilhelm Bram: *This is Doctor.... Doctor Wilhelm Bram, first.... (sigh) Third class surgeon reporting from the Wimbley Mining Base. We... well... I have been exposed to what I believe to be a parasitic fungal organism. While working on the deceased Alejandro, I pricked my finger on a shard of bone. I removed it immediately and.... And I did not bleed. I thought nothing of it originally, regloved, and continued my work. After 8 hours, I began to show signs of infection. I became hot, had sudden chills, and needed to consume copious amounts of water. Upon removing my glove, I... I saw a new growth of fungus emerging from my fingertip... Whatever it is...*

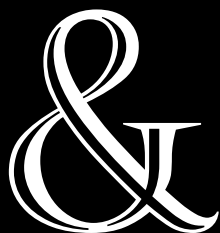
(Knock on door)

Voice of Mac: *"Doc? You in there?"*

Voice of Dr. Wilhelm Bram: *Don't come in!... Whatever it is, it is spreading... I can feel it in my veins... If this is to be my last message, know that I did what I could to keep this contained.... I do not believe I will make it out of this lab alive... Funny... I am almost exactly the age of Mark when he... when I... Ugh! It's in my head!..."*

(A scream followed by a lengthy silence. The sound of destruction follows before the sound of a metal hatch opening.)

MEADOWS



MISCHIEF



RUNNING THE MODULE

Understanding Pace: This module is a medley of horrors. As the session goes on, the mystery should get stranger and stranger until the nature of the terror is revealed. Players should feel like they are constantly under threat as they experience and discover the weird events happening to the town.

Hidden Monsters: Players should largely only see the results of the creature's actions for the first half of the game. Keep what is causing the events a secret for as long as possible.

Creepy Child: This module features a creepy child prominently. Use it. Once the party meets the child, they should constantly be popping up in the worst places. Nothing unnatural, but unnerving. Use a monotone voice and say ominous things.

(Trigger Warning: the child is effectively one of the monsters of this scenario. As a result, they can be used as a hostile force in the game. However, doing this will likely cause a scene where the characters hurt something that looks like a child. If you or anyone in your group is not comfortable with that, do not use the child for hostile encounters.)

SETTING DETAILS

WILD WEST: A frontier with limitless possibilities. A new beginning for some, a chance of wealth for others, and to a few, an escape from the laws of western civilization. People in this setting are optimistic to a fault, always believing that life will work itself out so long as they work hard. However, these people are also wary of strangers. Laws out here are light, and some scoundrels will take advantage of that fact.

HORSES & WAGONS: There is a lot of empty space between settlements in the west. Horses and carriages are a requirement for safe and easy travel. Without them, even a trailed journey can become dangerous.

WORD TRAVELS FAST: It is hard for anything to be kept a secret. People are often bored, and gossip and rumors help make the day go by. The characters' exploits will often be known before they arrive at the location. This can either work for or against them.

GUNSLINGING: Only a fool would venture west without a weapon. The threat of using a gun is more important than the actual function. People will be more polite and accommodating toward those with weapons, but respectful use is expected. If someone taunts or threatens someone with a gun, those around them will respond in kind.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SET UP-

Strange events are happening in the cattle town of Galdin. After a fierce windstorm, one of the cows was found dead and picked clean of flesh. Along with this, farmers have reported a strange buzzing coming from within the woods at night. Fear of a new predator has the farmers spooked and they have urged the sheriff to reach out for help to investigate exactly what happened to the cow.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

GM BACKGROUND-

Galdin was founded in 1818 by Irish immigrants hoping to escape the persecutions of city life. After a safe journey west, the small tribe of 30 members were able to carve out a successful settlement in the northeast region of the Colorado Territory. However, unbeknownst to the other travelers, their good fortune was not luck.

A girl by the name of Brianna May had made a deal with the fae back when she was in Ireland. The original contract was that she would bring a young court of fairies with her to the new world if they ensured her protection. When Brianna wished to escape from the city and move west, she turned to the fairies again for aid to keep her safe. This time, the fairies' price was much more steep. They would accompany her to the west, but now they wanted her first born in exchange once they reached the age of 8. Desperate for escape, Brianna agreed.

Despite the contract, Brianna refused to relinquish her child on their 8th birthday. This angered the fairies who began to torment the town of Galdin as a punishment for the betrayal. Crops were ruined, cows were killed, people were murdered, and a child was abducted. After the other residents of Galdin discovered that Brianna was the cause of the blight, she was burned as a witch, and her home was sealed with iron gratings to keep the evil at bay.

Many abandoned Galdin after this. For years, only a few families maintained the settlement, but when the cattle industry boomed after the civil war, many prospecting ranchers became interested in Galdin again. New life was breathed into the town as more people made their way to the almost forgotten community. The newcomers were not aware of the horrible events of the past, and those that did know did not speak of it. All the old families would say is "do not go into the witch's house."

After the windstorm, the chimney to the "witch's" home was knocked over, breaking the iron grate sealing the fairies in the basement. The starved creatures immediately flew out of the chimney and devoured the first thing they could: the cow in the field. Now they emerge every night to exact their revenge on the town that imprisoned them.

FAIRIES

The fairies are an ancient species of mischievous creatures native to the United Kingdom and Ireland. They are tricksters that love nothing more than having humans fall victim to their deadly “pranks.”

The fairies can produce a bright biofluorescent light in their mouth and use this to lure people into the woods. This is known as the Will-O-Wisp.

Fairies have a singular goal: to replace a child with a changeling such that they may enter human society.

Individual fairies can be killed rather easily by normal means; however, fairies have 2 unique weaknesses: they are burned by iron and sunlight. They will go to great lengths to avoid both. Changelings do not have these weaknesses.

Should a character be attacked by a single fairy, they will take 1d10 damage. If they are attacked by a swarm of fairies, they will take 4d10 damage.

The fairies in this scenario have been imprisoned and starved for over 75 years. They desire vengeance and will do so by tormenting the townsfolk of Galdin.

Each night, the Fairies emerge to perform “pranks.” They will do 2 or 3 a night. The fairies are experts at staying hidden; no one ever sees a fairy in the act unless they want to be seen. By the time the characters arrive, the fairies will have already done the following:

Eaten the cow in the field

Dug up the grave of Brianna May and stole the body

Replaced Martin Hernandez with a changeling (the real Martin is alive)

Placed traps in the woods

Lured and Killed Erik Flinn

Created an effigy of skulls on the edge of the forest

There will be more death and destruction in the nights to come. The next page is some of the possible “pranks” the fairies could commit during the module. The GM may cause them in any order they feel is most dramatic or roll to randomly determine them.

PRANKS

1. THROW THE WITCHES BODY:

The fairies will find someone wandering at night (preferably the characters) and drop the body of Brianna May onto them.

2. THE FAE FEAST:

A massive pile of flour, rotten meat, and inedible branches will be found on the main road. If not eaten by sundown, the fairies will become more violent.

3. LURE PEOPLE INTO THE WOODS:

The fairies will use their Will-O-Wisp to bring people into the trapped forest.

4. RELEASING HORSES INTO WOODS:

The fairies untie all the horses in the stable and scare them into the woods.

5. TAIN'T DRINKING LIQUIDS:

The fairies will pour blood into the towns water supply, put soured milk into milk jugs, and urine in beer taps.

6. ANGRY BULL

The fairies will torment a bull into a fit of rage before releasing it onto main street. Anyone attacked by the bull will take 3d10 damage.

7. DEAD BIRDS

The fairies will fling dead birds aggressively through windows.

8. DROWNING IN RIVER

The fairies will use their Will-O-Wisp to bring someone to the river and then try to drown them in the water.

9. HOLLOWED ANIMALS

The fairies remove the insides of various animals (mostly pets).

10. BURNING THE CHURCH

The fairies set fire to the town's church. Father McLeary claims that he saw the "winged devils" that did it and that they tried to attack him, but he held up his cross and "the power of Jesus protected me."

INTRODUCTION

The characters arrive in the mid afternoon to the main road of Galdin: a small cattle farm in northeast Colorado. It is a pleasant town. Wide open pastures make up the majority of the hamlet with a large forest to the north and a creek to the east. People can be seen walking in the street and most welcome the new faces with a bright smile and gentle wave. It seems happy here. However, the urgent note the characters received the day before from the town sheriff implies otherwise *Clue 1, Pg. 71* (determine why the sheriff reached out to them specifically). After depositing their carriage at the nearby coach house and tying up their horses, the characters are approached by Sheriff Mabel.

MAIN ROAD

A long dirt road that acts as Galdin's main thoroughfare. Most of the shops and public spaces connect to this road and can be seen clearly down the strip. Most of the homes are built seemingly randomly in the meadow.

Clues:

- ⌘ Sheriff Charlet Mabel has a somber look as she approaches the party. She greets them before asking them to come with her to the farm fields.
HIDDEN: A cow's skeleton was found in the fields 2 days ago. This is what the letter was about.
HIDDEN: A pile of skulls was discovered this morning near the forest.
HIDDEN: Charlet inherited the job of sheriff when her husband died and "no one else stepped up."
- ⌘ Several buildings can be seen from the main road: the church, the inn, the lending library, and the saloon are the prominent figures. The characters are informed that they will be staying at the inn.

Environment Adjectives
Friendly, Happy, Homely,
Open, Pretty, Quaint, Small,
Trusting, Warm

Charlet is a strong leader. She is naturally charismatic but often stoic. She is extremely well respected in Galdin.

"I've given my word to keep these people safe, and I don't intend to break my word."

Consider adding locations not specifically mentioned in this module for characters to interact with, such as:

Lumber Mill
General Store
Bank
Blacksmith
Post Office
Barber Shop

FARM FIELD

A wide expanse of grassland. Cows can be seen spotted around and the forest blocks the view of the horizon. The grass is long and sways with the wind on the cool autumn day.

Clues:

- ⚡ The field is several acres wide. A bunkhouse can be seen to the south and to the north is the farmhouse.
- ⚡ There is the skeleton of a cow. *If Sheriff Mabel is with the party*, she reports that it was found like this 2 days ago after a mighty storm.
HIDDEN: The skeleton has no traces of meat left.
HIDDEN: Tiny needle-like indents can be seen in the bone.
GM Note – These are the teeth marks of the fairies.
- ⚡ At the edge of the tree line is a pile of skulls stacked into a mound. 4 skulls in total. The top skull is the only one with visible viscera on it. *If Sheriff Mabel is with the party*, she says it was found this morning.
HIDDEN: The top skull is the only skull that is recent. The rest are approximately 60 years old.
HIDDEN: *If Sheriff Mabel is with the party*, she informs them that only one person is missing from town: a farmhand by the name of Erik Flinn.

BUNK HOUSE

A small dwelling meant for several people on the southside of the pasture. It is largely featureless.

Clues:

- ⚡ The door is unlocked. Inside are several beds with storage trunks at their base. A man by the name of Samual Grant is laying down in one of the beds.
HIDDEN: Samual assumes Erik ditched town.
- ⚡ Erik's trunk is locked.
HIDDEN: It does not appear as if anything is missing nor did Erik take things out.

Environment Adjectives
Beautiful, Cow-Covered,
Green, Idyllic, Lush,
Vulnerable, Wide-Open

Consider having some farmhands in the field to talk to the characters. They can discuss what they have seen at night (such as lights from the woods) or their feelings on Erik Flinn.

HIDDEN: Some might know about the “Galdin Witch”

When the characters discover the skull pile, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.

Suggested Consequence-
Is this a threat?

Decrease Resilience.

Environment Adjectives
Dull, Grey, Musty

Samual is a poor mannered man in their early 20s. They often make jokes at the expense of others.

“So if he doesn’t come back, I get Erik’s stuff, right?”

CEMETERY

A group of headstones and crosses by the river. A gentle babble can be heard from the running water.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is a cluster of graves. A grave marked for a Brianna May is separate from the others. The headstone is mostly bare outside of the name.
HIDDEN: Brianna May's grave has loose soil
HIDDEN: The casket in Brianna May's grave is empty

Environment Adjectives
Falling Apart, Improper, Plain, Unkept

*When the characters discover the empty casket, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.
Suggested Consequence-
Where is the body?
Increase Obsession.*

THE CHURCH

A tall wooden building at the heart of Galdin. It is a well decorated structure, but clearly aged. Numerous filigrees and marks denote it as a catholic institute.

Clues:

- ⌘ Father McLeary is often seen outside the church doors smoking cheap cigarettes. He wears a metal cross around his neck.
HIDDEN: The cross is made of iron.
HIDDEN: The church keeps records of every sermon. It is the only recorded history of the town.
HIDDEN: Father McLeary is aware that the town executed a witch by the name Brianna May.
HIDDEN: Father McLeary can locate the sermon given before Brianna Mays execution, but it will take him some time. -*Clue 2, Pg. 71*
- ⌘ The church has been used as a large storeroom for the town. General tools, supplies, and rations can all be found in the crates piled into the corner.
- ⌘ In the basement are the church records which are largely composed of past sermons. Some of the town's history can be pieced together by reading them, but it requires interpretation and time to do so.

Environment Adjectives
Aged, Decorated, Dusty, Empty, Intricate, Open

Father McLeary is kind and quick witted. He is very casual about religion despite his position.

*"People don't 'find God.'
They realize that He has
always been by their side."*

If the characters ask anyone about the town's history, they will be pointed towards either the church or the lending library for information.

FARMHOUSE

A large home built at the north end of the farm. It has been well maintained and is clearly loved.

Clues:

- ⌘ Farmer Glenn Camper has not seen Erik for 2 days.
HIDDEN: Glenn heard Erik was dancing at the saloon with a girl named Rosie Meyer the night before he went missing.
HIDDEN: Glenn has a large collection of firearms.

Environment Adjectives
Big, Cozy, Red

Farmer Glenn is a lighthearted individual happy to help anyone who asks.

“No need to spin yarn dry; let me pour ya’ a drink!”

FOREST

A dense wooded forest with a thick canopy blocking out the light. There is space to move and even run, but navigation can be difficult.

Clues:

- ⌘ *If it is nighttime*, a bright light can be seen from the wood. Those who see the light feel compelled to follow.
GM Note – This is the Will-O-Wisp
- ⌘ The trees are large and easily block line of sight.
HIDDEN: There is a strange green ooze on the trees similar to sap.
GM Note – This is secretion from the fairies
- ⌘ **HIDDEN TRAP!** – A pit full of spikes.
HIDDEN: Inside the pit is a headless body. It is wearing the clothes Erik was last seen in.
- ⌘ **HIDDEN TRAP!** – A rope snare attached to a hornet's nest.
- ⌘ **HIDDEN TRAP!** – A trip wire that causes a swinging spike log to fall.

Environment Adjectives
Dark, Deep, Disorienting,
Ominous, Unnerving

If a player sees the light, consider invoking their **Obsession** to investigate immediately.

If players are walking through the Forest, consider having them make **Body Saves** to avoid the traps.

THE INN

A small inn at the edge of town. It is plainly decorated on the outside, but the inside is covered in items and memorabilia from far away places.

Clues:

- ✂ Gloria Hernandez is the person who runs the Inn. She is happy to house the characters while they help the sheriff. She gives a room key for each pair.
HIDDEN: Gloria says that her son, Martin, is usually a terror but has been so well behaved the past few days.

- ✂ A newspaper is framed on the wall. -*Clue 3, Pg. 72*

- ✂ Martin Hernandez is an 8-year-old child that often hangs around the Inn.
HIDDEN: Martin has been replaced with a changeling.
GM Note – Martin will quickly learn of the character's intent and will try to convince them to leave before "the bad things happen."

Environment Adjectives
Bright, Colorful, Decorate,
Neat, Quiet, Tacky

Gloria Hernandez is a bubbly individual that always says something kind.

"So glad you're visiting our humble Galdin!"

Martin Hernandez (or the thing that is pretending to be Martin Hernandez) is a creepy, unnerving child.

"Hello... I hope you slept well..."

LENDING LIBRARY

An old two-story home made of stone that has been redone as a public library.

Clues:

- ✂ Numerous bookshelves filled with different books and novels. They have varying stages of wear.
HIDDEN: There is a book much older than the others labeled "The Traditions of Éire." It has a tattered ribbon marking a page. – *Clue 4, Pg. 73*
- ✂ Noises can be heard from upstairs. The passageway to the stairs can be found with minimal effort.
GM Note – The noises are from the movement of Cara and Cillian Kelly.

Environment Adjectives
Aged, Book Smell, Brown,
Calm, Leathery, Old

If the characters ask anyone about the towns history, they will be pointed towards either the church or the lending library for information.

LENDING LIBRARY (UPSTAIRS)

The upper level to the library where Cillian Kelly is housed with his caretaker Cara Kelly.

Clues:

- ⌘ Cillian Kelly is an old man that lives on top of the Lending Library. He is visibly unwell.
HIDDEN: Cillian has Alzheimer's
HIDDEN: Cillian was one of the original town settlers.
HIDDEN: Cillian was an artist but has not been able to draw for some time.
GM Note – At some point during the module, Cillian will draw a depiction of the fairies. Clue 5, Pg. 73/74
- ⌘ Cara Kelly is Cillian's caretaker. She is usually by his bedside.
HIDDEN: Cara is Cillian's niece
HIDDEN: Cara has some medical training.

Environment Adjectives
Blank, Dark, Dingy, Old

Cillian Kelly is often peaceful and mute but can become agitated and confused.

Cara Kelley is a very pleasant and gentle woman. She has a mother's instinct.

"Oh, let me get that for ya darlin'."

SALOON

A mostly stereotypical saloon with decorations and comfortable furniture everywhere. The Irish influences of the founders can be seen, but it isn't overbearing.

Clues:

- ⌘ Most of the people in the saloon are unbothered by the cow incident. They are just happy to be drinking.
HIDDEN: Some patrons declare that "the witch has returned." They do not know about the legend but know of her house up the hill.
- ⌘ Rosie Meyer remembers seeing Erik two nights ago.
HIDDEN: She claims they were going to go for a walk outside when Erik said he needed to "go relieve himself" before wandering into the woods.
GM Note – Erik saw the Will-O-Wisp

Environment Adjectives
Comfortable, Friendly,
Loud, Merry, Obnoxious,
Open, Strong, Warm

Suggested Scene: Have someone annoyingly flirt with a character before wandering into the woods.

Rosie is a polite but selfish person. She wants what's best for her and doesn't care much about others.

"That no good Erik; ditching town after dancing with me. If I ever catch that man..."

WITCH'S HOUSE

An old brick house, overgrown and unattended, far away from the rest of Galdin. It is placed in a relatively empty field near the edge of the forest.

Clues:

- ⌘ The front door has several metal locks on it. The windows have similar protection in the form of metal bars across their length.
HIDDEN: The locks and metal bars are made of iron.
- ⌘ At the back of the home is a knocked over chimney.
HIDDEN: The chimney fell over recently.
HIDDEN: There is an iron grate in the rubble.
- ⌘ The inside of the house is small. There is a kitchen area, connected living area, and a hall with two doors: one leading to an adult's bedroom and one leading to a child's bedroom.
HIDDEN: A strange green ooze can be found on the walls of the home.
GM Note – This is secretion from the fairies
HIDDEN: There is no fireplace despite the chimney.
HIDDEN: There is a false wall. Behind it is a chimney flue leading down and a door that leads to a basement.
- ⌘ The child's bedroom has a small bed and a few old children's toy (blocks, spinning top, etc.)
- ⌘ The adult's bedroom has minimal furniture: a bed and a nightstand.
HIDDEN: In the nightstand are 2 strange documents in an unknown language (Gaelic). They appear to have been written with the strange green ooze. One has been burnt. *Clue 6, Pg. 75*
- ⌘ The basement is covered in hardened green ooze. It is hard to see anything underneath. If it is during the daytime, dozens of fairies can be found here.
HIDDEN: The real Martin Hernandez is inside a cocoon like vessel. They are alive and can be removed.

Environment Adjectives

Antique, Cramped, Creepy,
Damp, Dark, Dusty, Foul,
Slimy, Small, Untouched

Suggested Scene: *If the characters are here when night falls, they can hear the sounds of fairies flying out of the chimney.*

Suggested Scene: *If the characters are here during the night, fairies will be crawling on the walls.*
GM Note – Save this as a possible climactic scenario.

Suggested Scene: *If the characters are here during the night, Martin Hernandez is hiding under the child's bed. If he attacks the characters, his eyes will become beady, and his mouth will extend out to reveal jagged and razor-sharp teeth.*

CLUES

CLUE #1

Letter received by the characters:

Your services are hereby requested in the town of Galdin at your earliest convenience. A cow was found dead in the field, and it is unknown how it was killed. We hope for you to shed light on the situation. You will be paid a sum of \$200 for identifying the cause of death. God be with you.

*Sincerely,
Sheriff Charlet Mabel*

CLUE #2

Sermon of Brianna May's execution:

For 15 years, Galdin was a paradise. Crime was not present, everyone worked and was happy, but due to the sins of Ms. May, Galdin has lost its impeccable record. For the last 5 weeks, tragedy after tragedy has befallen our humble town and we were left asking the lord "Why us? Have we not been through enough?" May He forgive us for our insolence. Rather than look towards the divine for blame, we should have looked toward our fellow man. Brianna May, who we at one point considered to be a friend, had made a deal with the devils of the old country: Safe passage to the America's and into the West and in return she would give them her first born. Nonetheless, when the bastard William was born, Brianna May saw it fit to shuffle off the cost onto us. Allow me to remind you the price we paid:

The death of 6 cows. A blight on our crops. Bellies filled with rotten meat and raw grain. The death of Anthony Roberts, Gregory Freeman, and Wilhem Toll. The Disappearance of little Jeremy Holmes.

How much more will we have to pay to fulfill a single sinner's debt? By hanging Brianna May, we might once again know peace. Let us end this torment and seal off the evil in that house once and for all.

CLUES

CLUE #3

Newspaper framed in the inn.

Published by the Denver Daily in 1893

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF GALDIN'S FOUNDING

Prosperity and hope. That was the promise given to the founders of Galdin in 1816 when they first arrived in the United States. Not 2 years later, they learned of the harsh reality of the new world. That many would not give the new settlers the opportunities promised due to their Irish heritage. It was this prejudice that sent the settlers west, where they would eventually discover the meadows and woods of what we now call Galdin. For years, the settlers flourished in the Colorado territory. Crops planted well, cattle grew fast, and the nearby river always delivered fresh and clean water. It was a paradise.

Sadly, it was not meant to last. After a supposed witch trial and execution of a woman by the name of Brianna May in 1833, many thought the town to be cursed. Dozens fled west to Denver, leaving the once idyllic settlement to be forgotten. However, fate had other plans. Those that stayed continued to raise cattle, and after the Civil War caused the cattle boom we are still in, interest was renewed in Galdin. Ranchers came first, but soon to follow were workers hoping for pay and shop-keeps selling supplies. By 1870, Galdin was reborn as one of the fastest growing towns in the west with amenities that rival Denver. Now, 75 years from its founding, despite the shadow of its past, Galdin's future has never looked so bright!

HIDDEN: 1833 is exceptionally late for a witch trial.

CLUES

CLUE #4

The Traditions of Éire marked page

The creatures of the fae wilds are diverse, but they do share some traits in common. For one, they all obey a strict hierarchy. Fae Queens are considered to be the highest position. Below them are fairies and gnomes, and then the trolls and ogres. To betray or question this order is punishable by death, often via exposure to sunlight.

There is also a great cultural significance around food. Many fae do not require food, but they are always hungry. To be presented with food is considered to be a great honor, and feasts are often used as political offerings, be it land trades, allyships, or peace deals. To not eat the food present, or even leaving a crumb, is considered an incredible insult. This is perhaps why so many fae dislike humans. What the fae consider “food” is alien to us, and thus any early attempts at negotiations were likely short lived. Perhaps this was for the best. The fae’s disdain for iron might have prevented the early Gaelics from developing their metalcraft which allowed for their rise to power.

CLUE #5

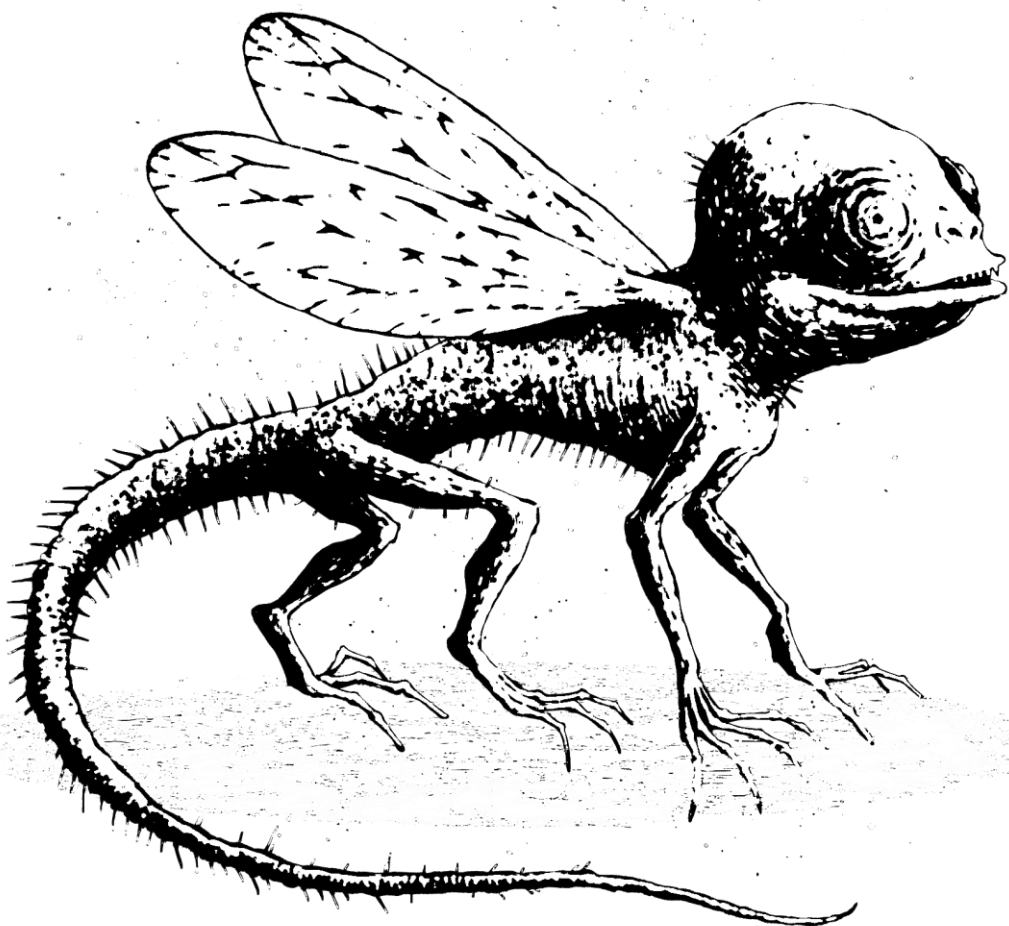
Cillian Kelly’s drawing description

A creature that has both reptilian and insectoid features. It has a slender body with a long and winding tail. Its limbs are thin and end in razor claws. On its back are a set cicada wings almost too small for its body. Its head is bulbous and hosts a set of beady eyes that seem to be looking into the soul of the viewer. It has a narrow set of lips that fail to hide its needle-like teeth.

CLUES

CLUE #5

Cillian Kelly's drawing



CLUES

CLUE #6

Strange Documents

Translated from Gaelic

Document 1

The fae court hereby agrees to the request of Brianna May: safe passage to the new world so long as she brings a breeding set of fairies with her. She may in no way attempt to harm the fairies. Once in the new world, this contract is to be considered completed with no debt held by either party.

Document 2

The fairies of the new court hereby agree to assist Brianna May again with her travels. The fairies will accompany the caravan west until settlement is found and ensure safety from the wilds of the new world. In exchange, Brianna May agrees to give the fairies of the young court her first born child once they turn the age of 8. Failure to do so ... (the document has been burned below this point)



THE SHADOW OF DOUBT

RUNNING THE MODULE

Understanding Pace: This mystery is a slow burn. Ideally, players will forget that this is a horror game until they encounter the monster. Allow players to explore at a leisurely pace, gathering clues and testimonies as they see fit until they reach the big climax. Let the dramatic moment linger, and as soon as it is over, try to draw the story to a conclusion with the players finding a solution to the problem.

Put Them in the Well: This scenario is relatively safe up until the characters eventually enter *The Well*. *You want them in The Well.* That is the climatic moment that the rest of the mystery is building up to and, for the best results, you want them to go in as soon as they realize that is where the monster is hiding. Consider finding ways to increase Obsession and lower Resilience early on so players can be compelled later for the big moment.

Red Herrings: There are numerous red herrings throughout the adventure; do not be fooled by them. There is a very simple (if bizarre) solution, and the rest are the ravings of a madman.

SETTING DETAILS

Late 1940s America: A time of change and optimism in the United States. After WWII, people were hoping to move on from war and focus on change on the home front.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SET UP-

It is currently Wednesday, May 25th 1949.

A darkness has fallen on the town of Argenta. Once a month, a person goes missing, seemingly pulled out of their domiciles in the middle of the night. The local police can't make heads or tails out of it, but they know people are scared and need answers. With no leads, the police turned to independent investigators to hopefully shed light on the mystery. This is the role the characters will play.

GM BACKGROUND-

Peter McCall was the chemistry professor at the local university, famed for his advancements in silver electroplating. However, during his time overseas for wartime research, he had an encounter with a dark entity. He was driven to madness and paranoia. His fears were innumerable. He was convinced that the world is a very dangerous place and was frustrated and confused by the fact that no one else was as terrified of the things hiding in the shadows.

His obsession lost him his reputation, his career, and his friends. Desperate, he turned to the occult. He began experimenting with dark forces he did not fully understand and tapped into a power far greater than he expected. He was warped into an embodiment of his hatred of those who doubted him. The Thing That Was Peter McCall, confused by their new body, hid in the stone well at the center of town. They emerge every new moon to execute their revenge. Each disappearance is of a man who wronged Peter McCall, and the thing will not rest until all who doubted him are silenced.

The next disappearance will be May 27th.

THE THING THAT WAS PETER MCCALL

The creature was once Peter McCall and carries with them all of the emotions and beliefs they had when they were human. They have a deep hatred for the residents of Argenta but particularly the men that would openly mock them. When the night is darkest, they crawl out of the well and find one of these men, killing them, and dragging their body back to their lair.

Boredom overtook the creature early on and they have been building a collection of books to read. They also talk to the now polished skulls of their victims. Whether or not they actually hear the voices from the beyond is unknown.

The creature does not want to hurt the characters but will if the creature believes that the characters will expose their hiding spot. This may cause the creature to emerge early on a non-new moon to pursue them.

The creature has adopted Peter's fears: direct sunlight and moonlight, silver, lake water, etc. They will be afraid of and avoid these objects at all cost. Whether or not they have any real effect on the creature is up to the GM.

The magic spells Peter used to commune with the dark forces can also be used against him. An appropriate use of the spells or a recreation of Peter's original summoning circle may send the creature to Hell, bind them to a location, or banish them from existence depending on the GM's interpretation.

Likewise, the spells in the book "Wards of Scotland" may prove to be effective against the creature or at least hold it at bay.

Should a character be attacked by the creature, they will take 4d10 damage.



THE THING THAT WAS PETER MCCALL

"They doubted me... They said there was nothing to be afraid of; that monsters don't exist... they will soon learn to regret those words."

Suggested Scenes During a Hostile Encounter

The creature feels the skull of a character, mumbling "time to make a new friend" | The creature reaches for a character and pulls them into the darkness | The creature grabs a character's arm and snaps the bone underneath | The creature takes to the air while holding someone | The creature stabs its hand into the stomach of a character



INTRODUCTION

This scenario starts with the characters driving through the late spring woods of upstate New York in the rain. The driver and car were sent by the Sheriff of Argenta to fetch the characters in the hope that they can help with a mystery his officers can't seem to solve. As they enter Argenta, the buildings are all made of dark stone but become wooden as the car moves deeper inwards. A pale stone well marks the town center, apparently a relic of the fishing village this town was supposed to be before silver was discovered in the hillside. The town square has several buildings of note: a store front with a boarded-up window labeled "The Argenta Press" written above the door, The Silver Hand Inn where the characters are supposed to lodge, and the sheriff's office where the characters are meant to go to first.

THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A small police station with several officers filing out paperwork and chatting. At the back of the building is Sheriff Gruber's office. He welcomes the characters in.

Clues:

- ✂ Sheriff Matthew Gruber is waiting in his office. He is happy to see the characters and gives them any information they need to know. People have been going missing in the middle of the night every month for the past 6 months. Outside of the first two being professors, there is no known connection between victims. Break-ins coincide with the last two disappearances, but they are assumed to be unrelated.
HIDDEN: People are scared. No one walks the streets at night, and the workers at the mine all quit.
HIDDEN: Break-ins occurred at Argenta Library and Argenta University along with the disappearances.
HIDDEN: Sheriff Gruber needs the characters to investigate so they can mark the people down as "Disappeared." It is a clause in the town's bylaws.
- ✂ List of Missing People with Location of Disappearance
 - Phil Carter – April 28th, 2031 Lahuske St.
 - Isaac Wilhem – March 29th, 301 Silver Ave.
 - Will Finley – February 27th, The Argenta Press
 - Gregory Milton– January 28th, 577 Harlow St.
 - Peter McCall– December 30th, 1507 Woodle Rd.

Environment Adjectives
**Cluttered, Distracted,
Friendly, Loud, Unserious**

Sheriff Gruber is polite but obviously views this case as an inconvenience more than anything. Does not seem to be very good at his job.

"This is all quite unusual, but probably nothing serious."

List of locations available to the players:

Argenta Library
The Argenta Press
Argenta University
Gregory Milton's House
Isaac Wilhelm's House
Peter McCall's House
Phil Carter's House
The Silver Hand Inn
The Silver Mine

HIDDEN:
Elizabeth Jordan's House
The Well

ARGENTA LIBRARY

An old building near the center of town. Multiple additions have been grafted onto the original construction to accommodate the increasing population of Argenta.

Clues:

- ⌘ The doors to the library have recently been repaired.
- ⌘ Meridith Jones is at the front desk organizing books.
HIDDEN: Only books from the restricted section were taken. They haven't yet determined which books were taken as it isn't a high priority.
HIDDEN: There is a list of people who have checked out restricted books. - *Clue 1, Pg. 89*
- ⌘ Generic, scientific, and historical information can be learned here.
HIDDEN: Every disappearance happened on a new moon. The next new moon is this Friday (May 27th)

Environment Adjectives
Dark, Deep, Disorganized
Dusty, Hypnotizing, Long,
Organized, Strange

Merideth Jones is a mean old lady. She does not like people and is annoyed with anyone who talks to her.

“SSSSSSSSHHHHH!!!!”

THE ARGENTA PRESS

A small paper press office. A machine can be heard whirring away as well as the frantic movements of someone inside.

Clues:

- ⌘ James McLeary saw Will Finley the night he was taken. Heard the crash as he was walking home at night.
HIDDEN: James heard what sounded like big wings
HIDDEN: Peter McCall sent various letters to be published. They never were.
- ⌘ There is a hole in the side of the building about 6ft in diameter, boarded up. It breaks through to the office.
HIDDEN: The hole is broken inwards.
- ⌘ In the office is a wooden desk, a turned-over chair, and the debris from the forced entry.
HIDDEN: A letter from Peter McCall - *Clue 2, Pg. 90*
HIDDEN: Grey dust mixed in with the debris.

Environment Adjectives
Chaotic, Cramped, Dirty,
Fast, Loud, Overwhelming

James is confused and overwhelmed.

"Please find Mr. Finley..."

If this is a character's first time seeing the damage caused by the creature, they might need to make a Spirit Save.

Suggested Consequence-
Whatever did this was incredibly powerful. The ideas of what it could be swirl in your head.
Increase Obsession.

ARGENTA UNIVERSITY

A small but impressive campus made of black stone located on the north-east side of Argenta. Students can be seen walking between classes. There is a noticeable increase in security.

Clues:

- ⌘ President Justin Loom is in his office at the administration building.
HIDDEN: Justin Loom hated Peter McCall
HIDDEN: The medical center was broken into. Only a couple things were stolen: gauze and generic reading glasses. Assumed to be a student prank.
GM Note – Justin Loom is the next victim

- ⌘ The medical center is still under repair with a glass window being broken.
HIDDEN: Green fluorescent blood can be found on the floor.

The science building has 3 offices: Peter McCall's, Gregory Milton's, and Thomas Verne's.

- ⌘ Peter McCall's office has been cleaned out and his name has been etched off the door.
HIDDEN: A letter from Justin Loom threatening Peter McCall's employment - *Clue 3, Pg. 91*
HIDDEN: "Avid Reader" award from the university

- ⌘ Gregory Milton's office is still intact
HIDDEN: A receipt from the Argenta Library for "The Origin of Species." It is not in the office.

- ⌘ Thomas Verne's office has a note posted on the door "Gone Fishing. Back May 27th." He is the professor of geology.
HIDDEN: Thomas Verne can identify the grey dust as being from stone used in the original construction of Argenta before the mine.
GM Note – If players are struggling, have Verne mention the Well specifically.

Environment Adjectives

Art Deco, Clean,
Claustrophobic, Impressive,
Looming, Modern, New

Justin Loom is smug. He puts on an air of superiority but feigns sympathy well.

"Let's make this quick; I am very busy"

If this is a character's first time seeing the green blood, they might need to make a Spirit Save.

Suggested Consequence-
This thing is not natural...
Lose Resilience

Thomas Verne is happy-go-lucky. He is very excitable and more than happy to help anyone that asks.

"You know, a majority of people can't tell the difference between a rock and a mineral. Can you believe that!?"

ELIZABETH JORDAN'S HOUSE

An old large home at the edge of town embedded in the surrounding woods, isolated from everything else. It is slightly overgrown, but clearly still lived in and upkept.

Clues:

- ⌘ Elizabeth Jordan is almost always home and welcoming to strangers. She is wearing mourning attire that the characters would know is appropriate for 2-5 years after a spouse's death.

HIDDEN: The title of the book "Circles of Protection" was a mistranslation. The book should have been named "Circles of Communion." – *'Horrid Book.'*
GM Note – Circles of Protection is the book McCall used to contact the entity that caused his change.

HIDDEN: The book "Wards of Scotland" actually details how to create protective circles.

- ⌘ Elizabeth has an extensive collection of black spined books. It would take weeks to find one that is useful.

Environment Adjectives
Decorated, Floral Patterns,
Expensive, Old-Money,
Peaceful, Perfumed

Elizabeth Jordan is overly friendly to everyone. She is happy to talk and gossip.

"I know it is strange to read such dark books, but after Harold died... well... A girl needs her hobbies."

A player could attempt to cast of spell from the Wards of Scotland book by passing an **Intellect Trait Roll**

GREGORY MILTON'S HOUSE

A nice home near the university. It is tall and made of wood. It appears to be overgrown with weeds and dust is visibly collecting on surfaces.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is a hole in the side of the home about 6ft in diameter, boarded up. It breaks through to the office.
HIDDEN: The hole is broken inwards.

- ⌘ In the office is a wooden desk, a turned-over chair, and the debris from the forced entry. The bookshelf has been cleared.

HIDDEN: A letter from Peter McCall - *Clue 4, Pg. 91*

HIDDEN: Grey dust mixed in with the debris.

Environment Adjectives
Dusty, Quiet, Rustic

*If this is a character's first time seeing the damage caused by the creature, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.*

Suggested Consequence-
Whatever did this was incredibly powerful. The ideas of what it could be swirl in your head.

Increase Obsession.

ISAAC WILHELM'S HOUSE

A mansion on the East side of Argenta. Stone statues and silver filigree decorate the home's lower exterior. Everything about the home radiates expense.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is a hole in the side of the building on third story about 6ft in diameter, boarded up. It breaks through to the bedroom of Isaac Wilhelm.

HIDDEN: The hole is broken inwards.

- ⌘ In the bedroom is a bed, turned over furniture, and a broken mirror. The wreckage from the event has not been cleaned.

HIDDEN: Large silver nuggets can be found throughout the room, once used as decoration.

HIDDEN: Grey dust mixed in with the debris.

- ⌘ Jessica Wilhelm did not see the event (they have separate bedrooms) but did hear the commotion.

HIDDEN: Jessica stopped at the door to the bedroom, believing she heard voices.

HIDDEN: Due to fear, the mine has been abandoned by its workers. - *'I guess McCall got what he wanted'*

HIDDEN: Isaac openly mocked Peter McCall after he sent letters trying to close the Mine.

GM Note – Consider moving the letter clue from the Silver Mine to here. - Clue 6, Pg. 93

Environment Adjectives

Bright, Expensive, Fancy,
Ostentatious, Silver-Plated,
Spacious, Tacky

*When the characters see the damage, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.*

Suggested Consequence-
How did the thing get up to the third story?

Increase Obsession.

Jessica is still distraught about the taking of her husband. She is desperate to have him back.

"How could anything happen to my Isaac?"

PETER McCALL'S HOUSE

A dilapidated and overgrown small home at the south-east corner of town. It was clearly a cheap house before the abandonment.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is a hole in the side of the home about 6ft in diameter.

HIDDEN: The hole is broken outward.

GM Note - The creature emerged from the house rather than breaking in

- ⌘ All mirrors have been removed from the home.

GM Note - Peter McCall had a fear of silver

- ⌘ In the bedroom is a newspaper article clipping from the Argenta press criticizing McCall. - *Clue 5, Pg. 92*
HIDDEN: The article was written by Will Finley

- ⌘ The bookshelves have been cleared of most books. Dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopedias are all that remain.

GM Note - The creature reads books for entertainment

- ⌘ In the main study where the hole is, a large circle drawn with chalk can be seen with strange sigils written along the edge. It appears to be fully intact.

HIDDEN: This room has been exposed to months of rain, yet the chalk has not been washed away.

HIDDEN: On the wall is a bronze placard: "Argenta University Reading Champion"

HIDDEN: The sigils around the circle are a pidgin language that crosses Latin with Sumerian.

HIDDEN: The sigils translate to: "Entity of the underworld, giver of wishes, commune with my blood to answer my prayers."

GM Note - There is no grey dust.

Environment Adjectives

Aged, Dark, Destroyed,
Foul, Overgrown, Stained,
Strange, Torn, Warped

*If this is a character's first time seeing the damage caused by the creature, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.*

Suggested Consequence-
Whatever did this was incredibly powerful. The ideas of what it could be swirl in your head.

Increase Obsession.

*If someone attempts to copy the sigils, they might need to make a **Mind Save**.*

Suggested Consequence-
The image of the sigils is burned into your memory.
Increase Obsession.

Someone can attempt to recreate the sigil circle. Doing so could be a method of removing the creature, either sealing it away, killing it, or banishing it to hell.

PHIL CARTER'S HOUSE

A two-story home on the lake shore. The home is built in the middle of a meadow with no other houses in sight. There is a boat house 50 yards from the house.

Clues:

- ⌘ There is no hole in the house or lake house.
- ⌘ Sue Carter is the only child of Phil Carter. She is a young woman in her 20s wearing handmade clothing.
HIDDEN: Sue's mother died when she was a baby.
HIDDEN: Sue heard gunshot the night her father went missing.
HIDDEN: Sue's father told her to stay inside and not look out the window the night he disappeared. He said that it was going to be a "dark night."
HIDDEN: Sue spits at the name "Peter McCall." She says that he threatened their livelihood by spreading rumors about the lake.
- ⌘ The meadow stretches out in all directions.
HIDDEN: Near the boathouse is a shotgun shell
HIDDEN: In the middle of the meadow, green fluorescent blood stains the grass. Broken reading glasses can be found nearby.
- ⌘ Inside the boat house is the shotgun resting on a desk broken in half. Everything else is in place.

THE SILVER HAND INN

A homely inn next to the town center. The characters have complimentary rooms.

Clues:

- ⌘ Merideth May runs and owns the Inn.
HIDDEN: Business has been struggling lately

Environment Adjectives
Calm, Peaceful, Simple, Wet

Sue is independent and tough. She is frustrated that the police have not been helpful and does not like talking to others. Even though her face will never show it, she wants her dad back.

"You gonna find my pa?"

*If this is a characters first time seeing the green blood, they might need to make a **Spirit Save**.*

Suggested Consequence-
This thing is not natural...
Lose Resilience

Environment Adjectives
Empty, Homely, Quaint

Merideth is kind and always willing to offer advice should the characters ask.

"Always nice to see new faces in Argenta, especially as of late. Seems like no one wants to come here anymore."

SILVER MINES

A mining operation recently abandoned. No one is around, including any security. There is a small worker's building near the mine entrance. On the door is a torn "Help Wanted" poster.

Clues:

- ⌘ Inside the mine are tracks leading deeper into the earth. Items such as lanterns, pickaxes, and dynamite can be found inside.
GM Note – There is no grey dust. The rock is black.
GM Note – The mine is meant to be a red herring; however, if the players are convinced that it is the true lair of the monster, consider moving it here if it is late in the session.
- ⌘ Inside the workers building is a main office.
HIDDEN: A letter from Peter McCall - *Clue 6, Pg. 93*

THE WELL

A pale stone well located at the heart of Argenta. A spool of rope still hangs over the opening even though it is no longer in use.

Clues:

- ⌘ The well is a prominent landmark of the town square
HIDDEN: The well is the source of the grey dust.
HIDDEN: There is something moving down there.
GM Note – This is where the creature is. Avoid the players making this connection early on.

Because it is vital for investigators to learn that the creature is hiding in the well, consider having one of them have dreams at night that hint towards its location. The dreams should be progressively more descriptive as the adventure goes on.

1st Dream: A circle of black

2nd Dream: An unfocused grey band appears around the circle

3rd Dream: The grey band comes into focus and appears to be brick

Environment Adjectives
Abandoned, Crumbling,
Dark, Decrepit, Maze-Like,
Narrow, Silver, Vast

The trek through the mine can be physically demanding. Communicate this to the players, and, *if they want to go deeper*, they might need to make a **Body Save**.
Suggested Consequence-
Rocks fall from the ceiling, hitting your back as you try and navigate the Mine
Lose Body Save

Environment Adjectives
Dusty, Grey, Pale

*Once players realize that the creature is inside the well, consider invoking their **Obsession** to go down there to investigate immediately. They can use the rope hanging overtop.*

THE WELL (INSIDE)

The descent into the well is approximately 40 meters deep into darkness. At the bottom, the well opens up into a reservoir about 20 ft in diameter. Very little light reaches down this deep and it is hard to see anything not immediately underneath the well tunnel. A thin layer of water covers the floor.

Clues:

- ⌘ During the descent, claw marks can be seen along the sides of the well.
- ⌘ Against the wall is a pile of books stacked high.
HIDDEN: The Origin of Species is one of the books.
- ⌘ There is a stone with 5 skulls neatly arranged on top.
- ⌘ A splashing can be heard. If a light source is used to try and identify the source, then the splashing amplifies as whatever it is tries to avoid the light.

HIDDEN: The thing making the noise is the creature
GM Note – The creature is the thing that used to be Peter McCall

Creature Description-

The first thing seen is two eyes glowing an eerie yellow, staring directly at the intruder of its home. It is a humanoid figure with burnt black skin obscured by the darkness of the well reservoir. Its limbs are unnaturally long. Even crouched down, it stands taller than most men. Its hands end in claws. Leathery black wings can be seen folded against its back. For now, it just stands there... watching.

Environment Adjectives Creepy, Dark, Quiet, Wet



The creature will not attack immediately. It has no desire to harm the characters but will if it believes they will reveal its hiding spot.

TIPS FOR EMBODYING THE CREATURE

Respond to the name Peter McCall

Talk to the skulls on the rock

Speak in a calm soft voice and switch to an intense roar without warning

Once discovered, be excited by the presence of another person, but **do not let them leave** after entering the well

Convey a great sense of justice. What you did was right and needed.

CLUES

CLUE #1

Argenta Public Library Restricted Section Checkout List-

<i>DATE</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>TITLE</i>	<i>STATUS</i>
11/21/45	Will Tims	Beliefs of Buddha	Returned
3/7/1946	Elizabeth Jordan	Myths of Egypt	Purchased
4/18/1946	Peter McCall	African Rituals of Harm	Returned
10/18/1946	Will Finley	Kama Sutra	Purchased
1/14/1947	Gregory Milton	Theory of Evolution	Purchased
1/22/1947	Peter McCall	Creatures Unknown to Man	Returned
2/17/1947	Elizabeth Jordan	Magic of the Roman Empire	Returned
4/2/1947	Peter McCall	The Psychology of Fear	Purchased
4/29/1947	Thomas Penn	History of the East	Returned
11/10/1947	Elizabeth Jordan	Circles of Protection	Returned
2/12/1948	Elizabeth Jordan	Artifacts of the Sea	Purchased
5/30/1948	Ernest Williams	Improve Theater Theory	Returned
10/30/1948	Peter McCall	Circles of Protection	Overdue
10/30/1948	Peter McCall	Metamorphosis of Bipeds	Overdue
3/29/1949	Elizabeth Jordan	Wards of Scotland	Purchased

GM Note – If reading this to aloud to players, only focus on names they will recognize – Peter McCall, Gregory Milton, and Will Finley. Mention that a woman by the name “Elizabeth Jordan” appears several times.

CLUES

CLUE #2

A letter sent to The Argenta Press-

Citizens of Argenta,

My name is Peter McCall - I am the Professor of Chemistry at Argenta University. It has come to my attention that Lake Luhaske, the source of Argenta's drinking water, is unsafe. The concentration of peptides is not in alignment with similar lakes, and the pH has historically been more basic than the local mineral make-up would typically allow for. This would usually indicate a larger than predicted population of marine life in the lake; however, upon investigating other possible reasons for these discrepancies, I came across the history of the Kavi'daga people which I fear may be related to the mysterious data.

The Kavi'daga were an ancient civilization that lived along the shores of Lake Luhaske. They were described as having "fish-like" features, such as bulbous eyes, rough and scaly skin, and webbing between their fingers. They were considered one of the most dangerous cultures of the Americas. Then they vanished. It is my belief that they did not leave the lake but instead completed their evolution and have since been resting on the lakebed. I fear that, with our constant fishing and consuming of the lake water, we might anger the Kavi'daga, and thus I implore you to write to the mayor urging him to switch our water supplies with a safer source and terminate fishing in the lake immediately. We must fear the consequences should we not take action.

-

For the consideration of publication in the Argenta Press at the earliest possibility

CLUES

CLUE #3

A letter found in Peter McCall's office-

Peter McCall,

You are hereby relieved of all teaching duties here at Argenta University until further notice. Dr. Verne will be taking over your classes for the Spring Semester. This will come with a pay deduction of \$16,275 effective on January 1st.

While a reason does not need to be given for this action, I want you to know that this is due to the numerous complaints I have received from your students about your "lectures." I did not think I would have to remind you that you are the Professor of Chemistry, not the Professor of Dark Arts. While you cannot be fired due to your tenure, I will be expecting your resignation before the end of the summer. If I do not receive it by August, then funding to your research will also be cut along with another deduction to your salary. I suggest you begin looking for alternative work immediately.

Sincerely, Justin Loom, President of Argenta University

CLUE #4

A letter found in Gregory Milton's office-

Dear Gregory,

I hope this letter finds you well. I understand your current frustrations with my, as you would say, "fixations" with the supernatural; however, I implore you to consider our history together. I know what a loss of sanity looks like, and this is not it. My frustration is that no one else sees it. The world is not merely a product of our scientific observations but influenced by the beyond. We should respect it, and we should fear it. I am of more sound mind than any other, I need you to recognize that... I also need a favor. I need you to convince Wilhelm to halt mining operations. I have proof of a subterranean species living in the silver mines and I fear we are close to disturbing its slumber. Wilhelm will not listen to me after the last incident, but this new discovery explains my old readings! I never considered the possibility of a new animal in my interpretations. Please friend. See what I see. There are forces in this word that should frighten us.

Your Friend, Peter McCall

CLUE #5

A newspaper clipping found in Peter McCall's home-

A DULL REACTION TO CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR'S MAD RAVINGS

Little hope remains for the future of Argenta University's chemistry studies. Professor Peter McCall, once famed for his work in the field of "electro plating," gave a talk this Wednesday at the Wilhelm Auditorium on campus. Great minds from across the nation came to our little town to hear his recent findings on what was initially claimed to be a breakthrough in UV radiation. The full name of the talk, only stated once the lecture had begun, was "the harsh effects of reflected UV emissions on neurotransmitters." To put that in layman's terms, his speech was on how the moon can cause violent and erratic behavior.

It is in the Professor's opinion that we should avoid going outside at night to reduce these effects and that repeat exposure could eventually cause a "permanent bout of madness." Perhaps Dr. McCall has experienced this phenomenon firsthand because the predominant theory amongst the crowd was that the professor had fallen into the realm of utter quackery. Numerous scientist jeered at the lecture and not a single person took what Dr. McCall had to say seriously. Even his colleague and once friend Dr. Milton could not defend the hypotheses presented.

I am trepidatious to diagnose a man I hardly know when I, myself, am not qualified to do so, but I think it is inarguable that Dr. McCall is experiencing an acute form of "shell shock." It is well known that he went over seas during the World War II to conduct research, and while he has never spoken of his work there publicly, many can attest that he did not return the same man. The once "man of science" has now fallen into raving about the horrors of the occult, monsters, and now the moon itself. Dr. McCall seems to be afraid of his own shadow and is convinced that we should fear it as well.

Published April 18th 1946

CLUES

CLUE #6

A letter sent to the Silver Mine

Dear Miners of the Wilhelm Silver Mine,

My name is Professor Peter McCall. I am the head of the chemistry department at Argenta University. What I have to say may be disturbing, but I believe the silver in the mines to be toxic. "Cursed" is probably a more accurate term for it, unscientific it may sound. I believe that silver was placed into the hillside for a good reason, and us digging it up is near thievery. Now, I do not believe we have taken enough yet to be noticed, but if mining continues, especially with that loud dynamite, I fear what might be "awakened." If you have any questions, feel welcome to meet me in my office, Monday through Thursday between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00pm.

I urge each and every one of you to cease your work in the mine. Please do not let skepticism lead to our downfall. This is something we should fear.

-Sincerely, Peter McCall

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING!

A special thanks to...

Bojana Ivanic

My life partner that has been with me every step in this project. I could not have done any of this without her love and support.

Ben Lieberman

My best friend who introduced me to RPGs in high school and inspired the creation of Strange Times. If not for his friendship, I would have never discovered this hobby.

SECTION 6: SUPPORT

Thank you so much for checking out Strange Times! This is a passion project for me, and through a lot of hard work, it has become my favorite system. I will keep working on it until it is my favorite physical RPG book as well. That goal will eventually be reached, even if it is just me dragging the system forward for a decade, but if you would like to see a Strange Times book sitting on your shelf a little sooner than that, please consider supporting Strange Times. That can look like subscribing to the Strange Times RPG Patreon, giving feedback at [StrangeTimesRPG.com](https://www.strangetimesrpg.com), or creating and sharing your own content for the system. The more support I get, the sooner I can see Strange Times realized into a proper RPG.

Here is what will be added to Strange Times in the future:

Quality

- Horror illustrations throughout the book
- Professional formatting
- Better layout for included mysteries

Book Content

- Fully realized settings to play in with accompanying modules
- An intro campaign
- Campaign downtime mechanics
- More dynamic healing and improving options between episodes
- A fleshed out General Advice and Setting Creation section
- Full section on writing and running mysteries
- Random Tables
- Lists of Skills, Items, and Abilities
- Nightmarish concepts to include in games
- Curated list of RPGs, Books, Movies, and TV shows to pull inspiration from

Non-Book Content

- Pamphlet Mysteries
- Campaign and Setting Zines

INDEX

ABILITIES

Pg. 16

ADVANTAGE/DISADVANTAGE

Pg. 10

ASSISTING

Pg. 10

BACKGROUND, TROUBLE & ORIGIN ENCOUNTER

Pg. 19, 23

CONDITIONS

Pg. 6

CRITICALS

Pg. 10, 11

DAMAGE

Pg. 12, 13, 21

EPISODE, SEASON & SESSION

Pg. 16, 17

EXPERIENCE & IMPROVING

Pg. 17, 19

HOSTILE ENCOUNTER

Pg. 13

ITEMS & WEAPONS

Pg. 12, 21, 26

OBSESSION

Pg. 5, 19, 20, 22, 24

PUSHING

Pg. 10, 11, 20

RESILIENCE

Pg. 5, 8, 19, 20, 24

SAVES

Pg. 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 18, 20, 24

SAVE ROLLS

Pg. 6, 8, 13

SKILLS

Pg. 5, 7, 24, 25

TARGET NUMBER

Pg. 7, 8

TRAITS

Pg. 4, 7, 23, 24

TRAIT ROLLS

Pg. 7, 10, 13

VITALITY

Pg. 12, 21, 24