

# DREADFUL

THREE READY-TO-PLAY HORROR SCENARIOS FOR DREAD



SAM GUNDAKER

BUT THAT DREAD OF SOMETHING AFTER DEATH,  
THE UNDISCOVERD COUNTRY FROM WHOSE BOURN  
NO TRAVELER RETURNS, PUZZLES THE WILL  
AND MAKES US RATHER BEAR THOSE ILLS WE HAVE  
THAN FLY TO OTHERS THAT WE KNOW NOT OF?

HAMLET



**LOST DUTCHMAN**  
SOFTWARE • PUBLISHING

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Dread was written and developed by Epidiah  
"Eppy" Ravachol and Nat Barmore.  
Please support Dread by visiting  
[tiltingatwindmills.net/games/dread](http://tiltingatwindmills.net/games/dread)  
and checking out the official Dread rulebook.

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DREAD- if you haven't already played it- is a powerful ttrpg that utilizes a jenga tower to guide play. Dread works for a ton of scenarios but as the name implies, it has a special relationship with horror.

Dread excels at tension and the sense that the stakes are raising ever higher- just like the tower itself as players pull and place blocks to quantify their risky actions.

In this humble supplement, I have prepared 3 scenarios for fuss-free game nights. They come with everything you need to run a couple hours' long gaming session (except the tower, you'll have to procure one on your own).

Please check out [TILTINGATWINDMILLS.COM/GAMES/DREAD](http://TILTINGATWINDMILLS.COM/GAMES/DREAD) to check out Epidiah and Nat Barmore's core rulebook on this incredibly fun and deceptively simple game.

If you are so inclined, you can check out my own work at [LostdutchmanSoftware.com](http://LostdutchmanSoftware.com) and on both [DriveThruRPG](http://DriveThruRPG.com) and [Itch.io](http://Itch.io).

Thank you for checking out **DREADFUL**

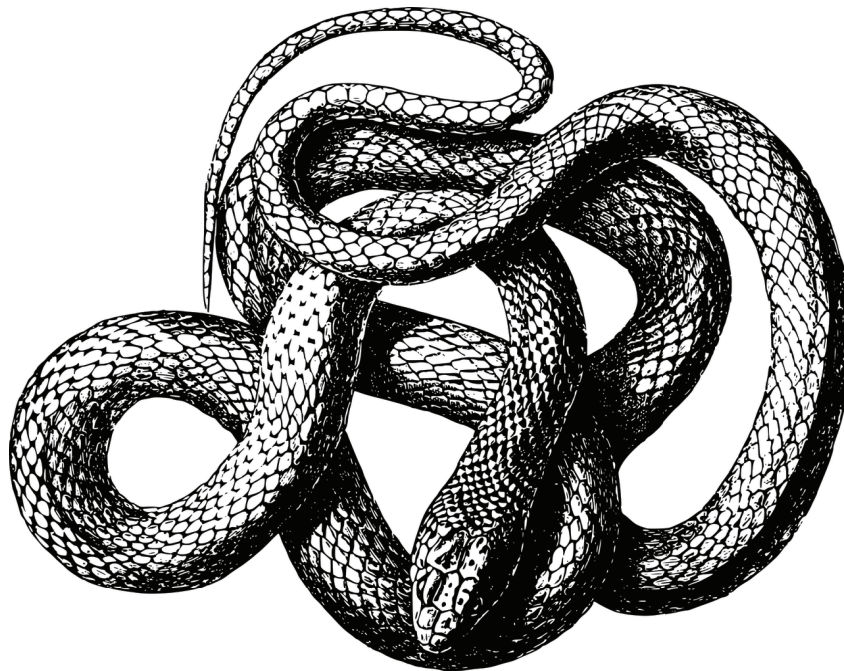
- Sam Gundaker



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# INTRODUCTION

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Dread is, without a doubt, one of my favorite games. It's accessible to new players and refreshing to veterans... which is why I write scenarios for it fairly often. I've packed three fully formed games into this PDF, along with everything you may need to run them. At first glance, it may seem like a lot of information for such a straightforward game but the scenarios here are 100% flexible to suit your game group and the story you want to tell. Each game scenario has multiple parts to help make running them as simple as humanly possible.

The first half of each game is information for the players and the GM to go over together before playing. Most of this sets up the story- a **synopsis** and a **setting guide** for each separate game will help inform everyone what type of story you'll be running through. Each game also has six different **character roles**, which you can alter or omit as you need for the number of players you have. They're all well rounded but none of the games hinge on having specific roles in play so you can really change them to your heart's content without worrying about the integrity of the scenario. Additionally, there are easy-print pages for the **character questionnaires** that you can print as you need included with each scenario. I've also included a **background info** page for the players which will lay down all of the basic information they

would have access to before the game begins.

The second half of each scenario includes specific information for the GM, that- ideally- the players should not read before the game begins. This includes **extra lore** to help GMs guide the story plus each game revolves around a **plot outline** that can be altered in any way you see fit. They follow a traditional literary three-act structure, meaning they begin with a set up, follow the steps into disaster, and culminate with a confrontation. I've provided a lot of information in these but feel free to use what you like best to serve as a springboard for your own horror tales.

Each game also comes with a vague **content warning**, just to give everybody a head's up as to what kind of horror tropes they can expect to find within. Again, the nature of graphic and/or difficult content can and should be altered to suit your group's level of comfort. All the stories contained here could easily be more or less graphic, depending on your tastes. Which is also why the warnings are very generalized- ultimately, you'll have control over that aspect of the game as well.

Thank you very, very much for checking out Dreadful and I hope these stories terrify and delight your next game night!

# THE BEACON KILLER

A 90s SLASHER FILM HOMAGE

CONTENT WARNING: GORE, POSSIBLE ARBITRARY MORALITY



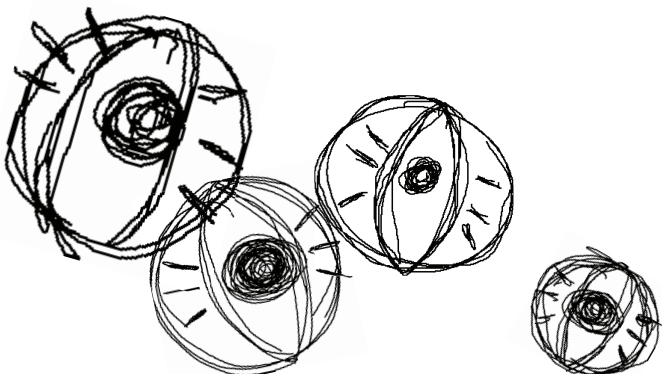
# SETTING

Agate is every bit a modern Old West ghost town. In the 80s, the mines were rich with copper and silver and the local economy was solid. Things went downhill in the late 90s, culminating in a mass exodus that left the town derelict and dusty. It's almost entirely deserted these days, inhabited by aging residents who have almost nothing to show for a life lived in this once-quaint blue-collar town.

Like every ghost town, Agate has its fair share of superstitions and legends.

Around the time the town's decline started to gain momentum, a string of horrific murders rocked the community. Twenty one confirmed victims- with the possibility of more unconfirmed deaths- were found eviscerated and arranged in displays that suggested the killer knew exactly what he was doing and felt sadistic delight in his brutality. Facts were hard to put together in a logical sense... for the most part the victims didn't have consistent similarities. One thing they did all share, however, was the "Beacon".

Named such because it invariably calls the killer to his target, the Beacon is a special (some say magical) mark etched into or drawn on the flesh of the victims. Each victim had one. The correlation between the Beacon and the shadowy killer baffled police and ultimately, it was what caused them to abandon the case. Locals insisted the Beacon was the mark of a demon, a hunter who marked his targets before stalking them down... Though how one became marked with the Beacon was another mystery in and of itself. There was some evidence to suggest that they simply appeared on most victims as an oddly shaped bruise, burn, or cut, however one victim had the Beacon's shadow cast across his remains.



# SYNOPSIS



A group of university juniors- as part of a prestigious and literary college- are assigned a group project to present as a semester final before the dean and upper board members. This presentation is more than a mere grade, it will earn successful students more clout and opportunities to network within the school's elite and exclusive literary societies and beyond.

Nothing comes easy in a group project, however, and after much arguing, the group of students decide to research a string of gruesome, unsolved murders that rocked the now-derelict town of Agate, about four miles into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Locals insisted the murders were carried out by a supernatural entity, which resulted in underwhelming media coverage nationally and eventually the police lost interest in the case without greater pressure to uncover the truth, leaving the murder spree unsolved for years.

Locals were adamant that the killer was a supernatural force called the Beacon Killer. This entity supposedly takes its name from belief that this monster relentlessly hunts down targets who are marked with the 'Beacon', a kind of magical brand that can curse a person or spread like a virus. Some local legends believe the Beacon is bestowed upon the sinful or unworthy, others say that there are angry spirits roaming the hills, looking to spread pain and suffering with their mark.

There's a lot of supposition and conspiracy theories in the air with this particular case but even skeptics can't argue with the fact that each victim all had the Beacon on some identifiable part of their remains- clothes, flesh, etc. In all, there were 21 victims over the course of two years but the investigation was officially ended quickly as local insistence on magical happenings drove away reporters and frustrated police.

This offers the students the unique opportunity to give the murders a closer look and perhaps the attention they were denied when this happened. While the assignment's details have been argued about almost constantly, most of the group is apprehensive about the long drive to Agate and even moreso when they are forced to bunk in Agate's only overnight accommodations a street side motel next to the mining facility, where most of the murders occurred.

# CHARACTER ROLES



## THE NAIVE

Innocent and willing to believe the best in people, you're empathetic and usually a mediator or therapist in your circle of friends. The world of academia can be cut-throat and this project has most of the group with their claws out before it really even gets started. You know that it's your best chance at an impressive presentation that doesn't require you to cut down someone else to get there so you've compromised a lot already in trying to get everyone to cooperate. You do wish that maybe they could have settled on something less macabre than the Beacon Killer, though.



## THE CYNIC

You know full well that it's a dog-eat-dog world out there and just because you're a student doesn't mean people won't screw you if you give them the chance. You're also aware that group projects like this will let you leverage your intellectual talents on contributions from others which will leave you with less work overall and hopefully some fruitful professional contacts after the presentation. Spooky ghost murders aren't really your thing but with such a large group, this project will practically do itself without your input.



## THE AGGRESSOR

Academia- just like the real world- is a battleground. People lie, cheat, and steal their way to the top every single day, from the most well-connected rich kids to the underdogs that'll be in student debt for the rest of their lives. You're more well-

connected than most, of course, but you've fought hard for every step you've taken and you'll be damned if you let anyone push you back down the ladder. This murder-mystery might be hokey but you know that its unusual title will make your research project stand out to the board.



## THE BLACK SHEEP

They call you eccentric and you suppose that might be true. You deeply care about your education's ability to enrich your life and less so about the political jockeying and nepotism of formal university life. It isn't always possible but you do your best to study things you are legitimately interested in. This series of unsolved murders never got the closure or attention it deserved and even if the others are only concerned about their grades, you wonder if there isn't something new you can bring to this case.



## THE CHARISMATIC

Everyone has their talents and yours is dealing with people. Charm and good looks have helped you get ahead in life and you've learned to master these tools. Completing this honors program with distinction will put you closer to the people you're aiming to impress the most- and you're well aware that an evocative, unusual research thesis will make the board pay attention.



## THE IMPASSIONED

Hotheaded and a little stubborn, this case means something personal to you. Your journalism's semester project is the perfect (and only) chance you have to investigate these murders with minimal supervision and you will not let this opportunity go to waste. You were assigned to a group that was difficult to sell your idea to (and it nearly fell through a few times) but with enough compromises you were able to secure grudging acquiescence to use the Beacon Killer as your research thesis. Now you just need to make sure that no one tries to stop you.

# THE NAIVE



1. How has the group tried to take advantage of your kindness or passivity already? Are their motivations easy to understand or do they seem chaotic and destructive for little reason?
2. You sometimes get treated like a child or a liability for your trusting nature. Is this a fair judgment?
3. How has the culture of a prestigious university tried to change you? Are you resistant to the “survival of the fittest” culture intentionally or do you sometimes wish you could be more cold-hearted?
4. Something from your past makes you feel regret or guilt, and taught you a harsh lesson about the world. What was it?
5. What personality trait or characteristic do you consider to be your most virtuous?
6. What have you contributed to the group project so far? What do you stand to gain, specifically?

# THE CYNIC



1. You have some tactical benefit in getting the group to cooperate long enough to research and write this project. What have you been doing to manipulate them into working together?
2. You're not a superstitious person by nature, and mysterious unsolved murders aren't usually your thing. Why will a research topic on the Beacon Killer's practically nonexistent investigation make an impression on the board?
3. You carry a heavy burden that you keep closely guarded, describe it.
4. What is your strongest quality or character trait?
5. Are you the type to see a conflict or issue through to the end or do you try to avoid conflict/struggle as much as possible?
6. You tend to see the world as a 'realist' and don't sugarcoat things that might be difficult for others to swallow. What is the hard truth the others don't want you to tell them?

# THE AGGRESSOR



1. Inaction and passivity irritate you and, usually, when you want something you go after it full force. Has the group's hesitation and arguments affected your temper?
2. Doing a project on the Beacon Killer is bound to stand out among the other topics, but what will you- specifically- gain from covering this topic?
3. What is your most closely-guarded weakness?
4. You normally try to establish yourself as the leader of group efforts, how do you handle challenges to your authority?
5. Who do you look down on?
6. In a crisis, do you prioritize your own survival or do you play the hero (even if it's ultimately for your own benefit)?

# THE BLACK SHEEP

1. You're always the odd one out, it seems. How has that made functioning in this group project challenging?
2. Most of the others seem caught up in the cutthroat culture of academia but you try to avoid destructive competition, for the most part. How are you surviving the pressures of college?
3. Something taught you a hard lesson about your life's priorities a few years ago. What was it?
4. Unlike most of the others, you're legitimately interested in learning about the Beacon Killer and how this unsolved murder string went largely ignored. What, specifically, do you hope to learn or experience?
5. What is your strongest characteristic or quality?
6. You carry a heavy burden that was placed on you by someone you cared about. What is it?

# THE CHARISMATIC

1. You've been a major player in keeping the group cohesive enough to choose a topic and commit to it. How are you going to influence them once you're at the site?
2. While people are usually charmed by your social skills, they tend to write you off as a non-threat. How are they wrong?
3. While you don't normally approve of the overt aggression of university competition, you've used people to get what you want. Are you just as guilty of trampling over others to the finish line or are you absolved of that burden because of your less-destructive tactics?
4. You've always found unexpected routes to impress people and you're sure the Beacon Killer will make your name stand out to the review board. How, specifically, will this recognition benefit you?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest sin?
6. Would you sacrifice someone's physical or mental wellbeing to save yourself?

# THE IMPASSIONED

1. Unbeknownst to the others, you have a very specific reason to investigate the Beacon Killer. What is it?
2. You know this could be your one and only chance for closure. What do you hope to discover or experience on this trip?
3. What are you doing to prevent the others from getting scared or trying to stop you from pursuing this investigation further?
4. Are you prepared to risk your life to explore the abandoned places in an abandoned town where a supposedly uncatchable killer roamed unchecked? Or is your life too valuable to spare, even for this?
5. What are you guilty of? What burden do you carry?
6. What is your virtue? Your most noble characteristic?

# FACT SHEET

## **21 confirmed victims, more suspected. Bodies were discovered in varying places around the town of Agate.**

- 7 victims discovered in copper mining facility and connected shafts, bodies found over a period of two years.  
Corpses were usually separated into limbs and torso arrangements
- 3 victims discovered simultaneously in local post office branch  
Corpses were arranged in a macabre 'scene'
- 1 corpse discovered dismembered in Waffle Stop diner.  
1 employee was working and did not hear signs of struggle from the bathroom, where the kill presumably took place. Employee cooperated with all investigations, seemed shaken up, and was eventually cleared of suspicion on the grounds that they did not possess the physical strength to dismember a body in a matter of five or so minutes.
- 1 victim discovered strung up on the roof of city hall
- 2 bodies discovered locked in a freezer at the meat processing plant.  
Cuts suggest that the bodies were cut while the victims were already cold. Human remains may have also come into contact with equipment, causing massive safety recalls, bad publicity, and for the management company to file for bankruptcy less than six months later.
- 2 corpses discovered three months apart at the Quickie Lube, eviscerated and crucified on the auto lift.
- 4 corpses were discovered by janitorial staff at the county justice courthouse.  
The bodies were arranged in a court-like scene, though it appeared not to mimic any specific trial.
- 1 corpse discovered at the Topaz Roadside Motel  
Particularly gory dismemberment, the walls were smeared and the body was entirely unrecognizable without DNA testing.

# FOR THE GM

BACKGROUND INFO AND PLOT OUTLINE

# SCENARIO & LORE

This scenario- based of 90's slasher movies- hinges on one single rule:

If a person gains the Beacon mark, the Killer will hunt them.

Find reasons for the PCs to become magically marked with the Beacon so that the shadowy, allegedly-supernatural murderer can hunt them one-at-a-time and with implacability. Make sure that the rule stays constant, so that the players can discover it on their own and make plans around it as they try to stay alive.

For further context, looking into the formulas present in slasher flicks as a genre can be a good guiding light and give insight as to what will make this scenario feel like a slasher. In most slasher titles from the 80's and 90's, people who have committed some kind of wrongdoing or immoral mischief (usually of the sexual variety) are mercilessly hunted down by a relentless killer. And you could certainly do that here. This is a widely recognized narrative and your players will pick up on it quickly. If your PCs don't readily give you some punishable misdeeds either during character creation or the very beginning of play, you can flex on

them to prey off less obvious infractions that will keep them guessing and feeling vulnerable.

One of the downsides to sticking very closely to the Hollywood slasher formula is that a lot of those movies are chock full of the same old trope-y bullshit. A lot of the moral logic in slashers is confusingly uptight in choosing who is Wholesome and Pure and Worthy Of Life; ironic in films where graphic dismemberments and sexual violence are commonplace. Additionally, this usually leaves 'sluts', queer people, and POC as the most consistent victims.

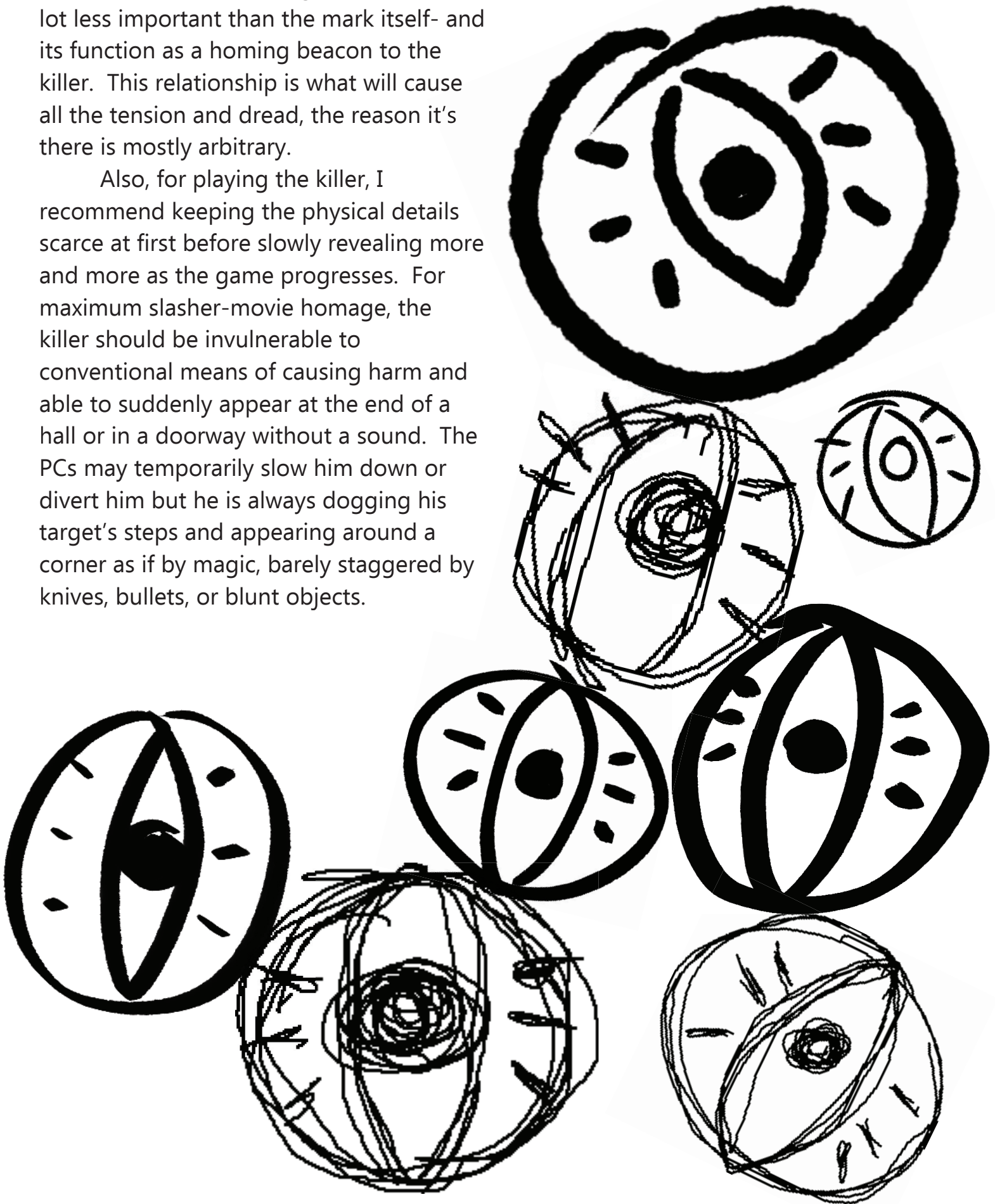
Additionally, the heroes of slasher movies tend to be morally upstanding (to the movie's judgment, anyway) but usually naive and innocent young women. Specifically, there is a perceived vulnerability here that heightens audience tension and intensifies the violence these characters must endure to eventually escape or kill the killer.

So, what I'm getting at here is that there's pros and cons to sticking to the established slasher formula. Being aware of the context will help you run an engaging game, whether you decide to do your own thing or stick to the recognized branding.

In the end, what you decide to make

the criteria for introducing the Beacon is a lot less important than the mark itself- and its function as a homing beacon to the killer. This relationship is what will cause all the tension and dread, the reason it's there is mostly arbitrary.

Also, for playing the killer, I recommend keeping the physical details scarce at first before slowly revealing more and more as the game progresses. For maximum slasher-movie homage, the killer should be invulnerable to conventional means of causing harm and able to suddenly appear at the end of a hall or in a doorway without a sound. The PCs may temporarily slow him down or divert him but he is always dogging his target's steps and appearing around a corner as if by magic, barely staggered by knives, bullets, or blunt objects.



# THE BEACON KILLER

IN THREE ACTS

## ACT 1 - CALL TO ACTION

1. **SET THE SCENE:** The group arrives in Agate after a long drive, made more arduous by the nearly-constant stream of bickering and minor arguing that occupied most of the trip. While the project was intended to be a cooperative one, everyone knows that there is a lot of personal gain to be had here. Some of the more bullheaded students got a bit heated on the way in and are more on edge than others. It's shaping up to be a fun trip.
  - The motel looks as though it has been out of commission for twenty-plus years, no lights on inside as far as you can tell and the flickering plastic sign by the street threatens to burn out with every blink.
  - The glass on the main entrance door is smoked nearly opaque and covered in a thick layer of dust. The inside isn't much better. There's an ancient old man behind a long desk, decrepit and mean-looking when he finally looks up at the noise of the party's entrance.
  - He checks the party in, mostly just by grunting tersely, writing the students' names down in a ledger and pulling one dingy key off the wall. If pressed or questioned, the man should make it clear he finds the students a nuisance and doesn't trust them. Also, he's assigned them all one room with a lone queen bed and a few cots and will, repeatedly if necessary, refuse to rent out another room to them, citing "renovations". He knows he's the only lodgings for at least a 2 hour drive.
  - The man- as a last thought- tells the party that he clocks out at 7pm on the dot, and is the only employee so no one will be available to wait on them if they need something.
2. **GAIN MOMENTUM:** The lodging and rude proprietor adds further strain to group tension. The students will likely fight over beds and a crafty GM could certainly use this as an opportunity to build on the relationships the PCs have with each other to build more tension- and also discover what each person has done or will do to attract the Beacon mark.

- After an appropriate amount of time arguing, remind the PCs that the mining facility is just next door, abandoned and likely without any real security. Some of them will no doubt be interested in investigating the site of so many unsolved murders first hand.
  - Try to keep the PCs in a group but if they seem adamant on splitting up, let them. This is a good point to play off what the characters already know about the setting and the murders already. As the PCs establish their pre-project investigation feel free to make up details about how the bodies were discovered. Just make sure that each body had the Beacon on it.
  - A 'trick' I like to use a lot in games that rely on mystery content is to pose a scenario (dismembered bodies and a mysterious killer who hunts marked targets) and then give some ancillary details (situation in Agate would likely have been tumultuous at the time of the murders. Backstabbing, vicious venture capitalists, selfish bosses leaving employees high and dry, shady government officials, real estate sharks, cult leaders, etc are all plausible threats on this stage). Instead of connecting the dots yourself, let the players make their own theories based on what you tell them about the bodies and setting and then just roll with it without ruining the illusion that they're following a vague path you've set. This strategy typically pays off very well because it 1) eases some of the workload the GM has and 2) makes the players more engaged by making them feel clever and invested.
  - Your main goal is to incite the characters to action. Sneaking into the mining facility should be fairly tempting and alternatively, the hotel proprietor leaving for the night provides an opportunity to investigate the motel as a murder site.
3. **HESITATION:** As they get into their task, this point is ideal place to put in a non-threatening jump scare or false alarm. Give your PCs some trepidation or raise their wariness with a not-physically-threatening thing but something that makes the party somewhat aware of the kind of danger they're walking into.
  4. **CLIMACTIC ACTION:** Once they resolve their second thoughts- by deciding to press on or otherwise turning back, it's time to reveal the real danger. It's time for your first PC to gain the Beacon. Some ready-made ways are having them sustain minor injuries in another moderate display of danger- the cuts, scratches, or bruises can form the shape on their body. If you want to get really occult you can have them discover that the sign has been sewn into the inside of their jacket or something similarly eerie.
  5. **PEAK:** Act One should culminate with their first harrowing encounter with the killer and, ideally, an extremely narrow escape.

# ACT 2 - CRISIS

- 1. ROADBLOCK:** The group should encounter their first major roadblock at this juncture. Something that prevents them from progressing (either back the way they came or forward towards the truth). Your goal now is to divert them to an alternate path where there are more unknowns and more variables.
  - If your party went into the mines they could get lost in a shaft after getting away from the killer at the end of Act One. If they stayed at the motel, they could discover secret passages or underground shafts that connect to other places in town if you're going for a widespread conspiracy.
- 2. PLAN B HAS COMPLICATIONS:** Just when the group thinks they've got Plan B figured out, another PC should gain a mark.
- 3. SHED A LITTLE LIGHT:** Now is an ideal time to reveal a few critical details as your PCs scramble to get two of their number away from the implacable killer. Whatever overarching story you're shooting for, drop some details or proof leading to the truth here. Some examples:
  - The nature of the killer
    - The killer is inarguably supernatural in some way (non-corporeal)
    - The killer is definitely human (bleeds when attacked)
    - There were/are multiple killers (conspiracy)
  - The nature of the murders
    - Why the killer targets certain people
    - What really connected the victims
    - Who was involved in a cover up (if any)
- 4. ANOTHER ROADBLOCK:** By now your PCs are likely scrambling to find a way to erase the beacons or kill the killer. Let them slap together a plan and refine their theories about the situation. Just when they seem to have a solid direction, it's time for another roadblock. Another character should gain a Beacon.
- 5. DISASTER STRIKES:** Keeping your PCs on their toes will maintain the game's pace and now is the time to commit to the danger. At this point, something awful should happen. The characters could become separated, trapped, or injured. The structure could lead them somewhere terrible. A secret gets revealed that could follow the PCs back to their day-to-day lives even on the off chance they survive. Make it intense and charge a heavy price for getting involved in Agate's mysteries.

**6. RAISE THE STAKES:** In coping with the crisis, the stakes should raise dramatically. All of the PCs' lives are on the line now, and the violence could potentially spread beyond Agate. Give the PCs a burden that forces them to solve the problem here, lest it follow them back to their regular lives to haunt them and endanger the people they care about. They understand the danger, now make them understand that they have to do something about it or meet their maker at the hands of a sadistic killer. Make it clear that they're running out of time. Also, feel free to give one or more of your remaining PCs the Beacon to drive home this point.

## ACT 3 - RESOLUTION, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

1. **RAISE THE STAKES AGAIN:** Open Act Three by doubling down on Act Two's ending. Make your party deal with the fallout or side effects of the increased danger from the end of the last act, and show them exactly how the danger has intensified and/or what they stand to lose. Here is a great opportunity to have some really close calls with the relentless killer as he dogs their steps.
2. **ANOTHER ROADBLOCK WITH BAD TIMING:** As you pick up pace to the big climax, the final road block should present itself. This is the last wrench in the gears of the players and your last chance to divert their plans. Make them scramble and keep them moving. An outside force could get involved (someone's going to seal the mine entrances), the killer could be fully transformed into something demonic, or they could discover his true identity and motive. One of the last things you'll want to do at this point is to give your PCs a potential solution or escape, something they can do to get away with their lives. Confirm or correct their theories with in-game information and let them come up with their final plan to overcome death.
3. **COMMIT:** When your PCs are ready to pursue their final plan to escape the killer, it's time to ramp up the threats as Act Three comes to a climax. Now is the time to throw everything you have at them as the killer stalks the whole party.
  - If anyone has died or vanished at this point, now is a good time to discover their remains or other, unfortunate fate.
4. **HEAD ON CONFRONTATION:** Now is the final confrontation with the killer or the forces that influence him. How will your PCs put this angry monster to rest? What are they risking to do this? How will this affect not only Agate but the party themselves afterwards? What scars- physically and mentally- will they bear?

5. **DOWN-SHIFT:** If your PCs defeated the killer and uncovered the truth about Agate, give them a moment to breathe and take satisfaction in their hard-earned victory. Mourn any who were lost (they'll need alibis too, after all). What have they accomplished for Agate? How has their outlook on life changed? As your PCs emerge battered but triumphant from the mine, you can throw them a campy slasher twist and let them discover that one of the Beacons still remains on one of them- and then promptly end the game. Tell them to wait for the sequel.



# The HELLHOUSE of Folly Hill

A MODERN HAUNTING

CONTENT WARNING: BODY HORROR

UNSPECIFIED MENTAL ILLNESS



# Setting

Passerelle Manor is a huge, countryside manor home located in the pristine forests of Folly Hill. It's been almost one hundred years since the manor was in its prime, however, and its once-grand gardens and lawns are overgrown and tangled, its roof filthy and caved in a few spots, and its windows remain grimy and vacant. The manor's first owner was an eclectic author whose body of work mostly consisted of essays on the occult and theological folktales with a particular interest in the afterlife. His books were not successful enough to warrant national or global success but they have garnered a little local fame over the last decades. For most though, his name has faded into obscurity.

The manor itself has gained a strange reputation over the last decade or so, as the building comes closer to total ruination every day. Legends circulate about weird sights and sounds, electronic deadzones, sulfuric smells, and is even linked to some local disappearances. To any aware of these rumors, the conclusions seem too otherworldly to be wholesome, which is probably why the locals living closest to the manor try hard to pretend it doesn't exist in the first place.



# Synopsis

What was supposed to be a group-therapy retreat in the woods swiftly turns into a time-twisted, supernatural nightmare.

The group has booked a long weekend in a huge, antique manor house situated in the picturesque woods of Folly Hills. The home once belonged to a writer of moderate local fame and was converted into a historical landmark and museum after his death. The house- Passerelle Manor- is inhabitable but in rough shape and available for use as a short-term vacation rental through the local historical society. It doesn't see much traffic, however, as apparently little effort is put into marketing the property to tourists.

In need of a relaxing, secluded venue for a peaceful retreat, the group-therapy councilor was quick to secure a few nights at Passerelle. The group will, ideally, spend time bird-watching, sketching local plant-life, and practicing their mindfulness exercises in a serene natural setting.

The group is underwhelmed by Passerelle when they arrive. It is decidedly run down and the historical society declined to show up and meet them (or even answer calls, frankly). The group barely has time to settle in for the night before weird things start happening. From the inside, the building seems impossibly large and its layout is extremely confusing. So confusing, in fact, that many of the group begin to wonder if they are thinking clearly or if the manor is somehow preying on their self-doubt and confusion. Many of them begin to see things out of the corner of their eyes...



# Character Roles



## The Cognitive Therapist

You were the one who researched and booked Passerelle Manor for the holiday weekend. You had hoped the fresh air and beautiful antique villa would inspire some peace and relaxation in your clients. Passerelle's history is darker than the out-of-date website suggested, however. Your patients may depend on your guidance if an unforeseen crisis happens... but will you be up to the task?



## The Trauma Survivor

You've lived through something harrowing and carry many scars- both mental and physical- from your trials. The idea to utilize a group therapy setting to help you relate to other people was recommended by your private therapist. You were dubious, of course, but she was fairly insistent that connecting with others who may have similar backgrounds would be a healthy step... so you committed to the task, determined to make the best of the change of scenery now and peaceful isolation. Crisis is waiting for you, though. How will you cope as your group is confronted by the past?



## The Recovering Patient

A long and arduous hospitalization has left you physically weakened as you slowly recover your health. This group therapy program was intended to help you cope with stress management as you transition to life outside of constant medical care.

You're not sure if this retreat is really necessary for you but you've gone through all the trouble of group therapy so far, you may as well see it through. How will you cope with inexplicable forces, pulling you deeper and deeper into the winding hallways of Passerelle Manor?



## The Long-Term Client

You've been to many therapists over a period of years, struggling to find the best way to cope with a slew of difficulties. You jokingly call yourself a "lifer" sometimes, referring to the idea that you feel you'll need guided therapies for most of your life. It has helped, however, and this group-therapy retreat left you hopeful for grounding your self-help techniques. There's hidden danger here, though, and you'll need to call on all of your strengths to keep from being dragged straight to hell.



## The Reluctant

You did not want to come. There is something about attending group therapy with nowhere to escape to that gets you feeling restless and anxious. The powers that be believe that you could benefit from completing a full circuit of social therapy like this and they don't seem intent on letting you get away without it. Something about Passerelle sets you on edge immediately and there's a chill coming from somewhere deep in the house.



## The Recluse

Group therapy was not your idea, being around people while discussing extremely personal subjects holds approximately zero appeal to you. Factor in the long drive into the woods, lack of internet connecting you to your favorite comforting media, and being forced into close quarters with strangers in a strange place and already your chest feels tight with stress. Passerelle does seem interesting, despite your misgivings about the entire weekend but you wonder if that will be enough to outweigh the anxiety of being stuck out with strangers.

# The Cognitive Therapist

1. Your clients' comfort and safety are your top priorities. What do you consider to be your next most important directives?
2. Do you have any specialties or extra qualifications that set you apart from other group-therapy facilitators?
3. What is your reputation in the organization you work for? Do your colleagues find you eccentric or boring and by-the-book? What about supervising medical staff? Do they believe you capable and equipped or do your methods and original ideas make them nervous?
4. What made you decide to become a therapist?
5. Your patients are your responsibility but how far does that extend? Are you the "off the clock, out of mind" type or do you work beyond a simple daily schedule?
6. Do you go to therapy yourself?
7. You have an unusual fear of something, what is it?



# The Trauma Survivor

1. Many would say life has been unfair to you. Do you agree, to some extent? Or is this something you consider to be more of an unfortunate chance produced by an unfeeling universe?
2. What do you wish someone who hasn't gone through what you have understood better about your situation?
3. You had a close encounter with something inexplicable some time near a traumatic incident. Do you believe it was supernatural or is there some other explanation?
4. How has therapy helped? What do you still struggle with?
5. When your recovery has been difficult do you risk succumbing to frustration or are you fairly skilled at maintaining patience in the face of adversity?
6. Is group therapy helping?
7. What are your most common symptoms?



# The Recovering Patient

1. Group therapy was something of a tall order for you. You've been hospitalized for a while and being mobile under your own power has been a little challenging. You're getting stronger every day, however, and your doctors are impressed with your determination to recover. What are some of your most common difficulties regarding your physical independence? In what areas are you improving quickly?
2. Are you looking forward to full release and recovery or are you stressed out by being fully discharged back to your old life.
3. The injury that landed you in the ICU was grave and nearly killed you. What was it? Were others involved? Were you the only survivor?
4. How has therapy helped? What do you still struggle with?
5. Do you trust your instincts when something scary or dangerous happens? Or do you worry that rash action will harm you more than it will help?
6. You've had some intensely realistic dreams during and after surgery that involve impossible things like speaking to people you know are dead and seeing inhuman figures of angelic or demonic beings. Is there any off chance that really happened or were these dreams/hallucinations the product of stress and pain?



# The Long-Term Client

1. You have been in some form of therapy for a number of years now to help you cope with a variety of issues that can make life difficult for you. What is your goal with this particular group therapy?
2. There are many people in this group that have suffered immensely and it is obvious (whether they are open about it or not). Do you feel the desire to try and offer comfort to them or do you worry that their needs will prevent the head therapist from giving your issues enough attention?
3. What would make you stop going to therapy?
4. What is your most common recurring nightmare?
5. How well do you function socially? Are you outgoing and comfortable or do you play it close to the chest? Are you standoffish?
6. What do you consider your strongest positive characteristic?



# The Reluctant

1. Is your distaste at being forced into this group putting a strain on the mood or are you attempting to keep your displeasure to yourself?
2. One of the group members has tried to make a connection with you a few times via friendly chatter and one time they brought you a coffee when they ran to the local cafe on a session break. Have you rebuffed their attempts at polite conversation or are you trying to make the best of this situation?
3. The fact that your insurance and medical professionals are basically forcing you to do this group therapy retreat is obviously stressful, how are you keeping yourself from being constantly angered by it?
4. Can you benefit from this long retreat or are you going to try and survive it as painlessly as possible and get on with your life?
5. Do you trust your instincts when something scary or dangerous happens? Or do you worry that rash action will harm you more than it will help?
6. Have you ever had a near-death experience?



# The Recluse

1. When was the last time you were with a group this large for this long of a duration?
2. Were you a social, outgoing child? Did something change to cause you to isolate yourself or have you always had strong reclusive tendencies?
3. What is the worst part about being around people you don't know?
4. When you're- figuratively- backed into a corner, are you all 'fight or flight' animal response or are you calculating and cognizant?
5. Is there anything positive to gain from this outing?
6. Do you want to improve your ability to socially connect with others or are you satisfied with your isolation and slight disconnect from society at large?



# Background Info

Passerelle's history is long and most of it has been glossed over in local history books. Regionally, it is known as a historic building an eccentric author called home for several decades. The writer published some notable books on his beliefs in Hell, theological musings, and several murder mysteries. A serial widower, the writer lost multiple spouses and children over the years and ultimately went missing into his twilight years. Most assumed he died in the manor but a body was never discovered. Per instructions in a will that was discovered, Passerelle was opened to the public as a historical monument. Decades passed and interest and upkeep wane. The local museum association created a website for Passerelle in order to pump it as a tourist B&B but the work to make the building attractive and hospitable again was never completed.

Occasionally, teenagers break into the house to smash out windows or scare each other but after an incident a few years ago involving the disappearance of four teenage boys, most parents are more inclined to warn their kids about the dangers of exploring Passerelle these days.



For the GM



# Scenario & Lore

Passerelle- which means "gateway" in French- was the lifelong project of an eclectic writer that believed he could hear and see demons. After years and several largely-ignored volumes on his occult experiences, the writer became obsessed with the idea that a gateway to hell was somewhere in the region and that it was responsible for his increased sensitivity to the supernatural as well as a source of suffering for the surrounding area. The writer was also taken with the idea that sacrificing people in ways that maximized their suffering was the only way to sate the hellgate and keep the demons inside at bay.

The writer spent the next several years marrying into wealth, using their newly established wealth to buy land and construct Passerelle manor, masking the true purpose of the sacrificial site as a fancy landmark/attraction for local social functions and where he could operate with minimal scrutiny. Once he had exhausted his current spouse's use, he would sacrifice them to the hellgate and move on to the next. While the constant remarriage was suspicious, the authorities were never able to disprove his solid alibis. For a while, the hellgate was sated with the writer's spouses, several of his children, and a rookie police officer...

But the writer was convinced that he needed to keep the suffering going to continue to keep the hellgate sealed and the rest of the region safe. He began writing books on theology and occult

happenings to attract people to the site and managed to ensnare several journalists and research students.

Over the course of many decades, it is impossible to tell exactly how many victims the writer has claimed. Nearly 70 years have passed since Passerelle's initial construction. By all accounts, the writer is dead and likely passed somewhere in the mansion. He became incredibly reclusive in his old age, and its been almost thirty years since his last confirmed appearance in the nearby town, his old bones barely strong enough to keep him upright at that point.

Eventually, locals went to check on the old eccentric and a handwritten will was found inside Passerelle which was determined to be his. He wished for the home to be passed onto the local historical society for preservation so future generations could enjoy it.

If only one knew the whole picture, however, it becomes easy to see that this was a ploy and that the writer still lived inside- unnaturally ancient and decrepit, surely- but alive somehow and still periodically sacrificing people to the hellgate, somewhere deep under the cursed mansion. The most recent unsolved disappearances in the area were just last year. A group of teenage boys reportedly posted about breaking into the manor as part of a hazing or dare. All four boys vanished without signs of violence or struggle and have not been seen since.

# The HELLHOUSE of Folly Hill

IN THREE ACTS

## ACT I - LAY THE FOUNDATION

- BUILD THE STAGE:** The group arrives at Passerelle Manor with mixed feelings. The structure looks unkempt and not entirely safe... more like an abandoned building than the rural bed and breakfast it was advertised as on the internet. Cell service is spotty out here and even the vehicle's electrical system seems to get unreliable as soon as it crosses onto the long driveway.
  - If you have players that immediately try to find the boundaries with electronics and cell phones, let them get it out of their system now by having everything basically work for them as normal. You can more effectively isolate them later and letting them develop a false sense of security can work in your favor. Additionally, other PCs might consider this behavior paranoid, which might increase the tension of the story.
  - Upon entering the house, the faint but definite smell of sulfur greets the party. The windows are grimy and lend a brownish tint to everything.
  - The foyer is in bad shape, some litter and rocks are on the ground from where it looks like someone may have tried to break the windows.
  - Again, you might have players at this point who are determined to find the borders of where "scary things" might happen. Let them try. They can go back outside if they want to, for instance, it will just make their characters appear incredibly paranoid which could set everyone else on edge.
- TEASE AT DANGER:** To incite the group and begin kindling the sense of fear and dread in Passerelle, you'll need to make it apparent that the building itself is somehow against them. Start subtle, of course, but you don't need to wait long

before you start getting really weird. As the group heads deeper into the manor, several things should become more apparent:

- The building is huge. Far bigger than what it seemed on the outside. The hallways twist and turn, rooms connect directly to others... There always seems to be more of the manor to explore.
- The layout is **extremely** confusing. Don't be tempted to give the players a map and if they try to keep their own during play you should deliberately contradict it often.
- Now is a great time for "weird" things to start happening. The ghosts and spirits that haunt the mansion are trapped in their last moments and most powerful emotions. They're not cognizant enough to truly understand what is happening, only that new people have entered this sacred site. Here are some ideas you could use as inspiration:

- Stains on the walls in the vague shape of human bodies. (You can link this later to show how some of the writer's victims met their end by being buried alive into new parts of the mansion or something equally nasty)
- Glimpses of people outside windows or at the end of hallways (bonus scary points if they are very tall- past 7ft- or are weirdly proportioned)
- Something subtly unsettling can scare the players- like a rope falling from the ceiling or a big heavy chain rattling in a room that certainly wouldn't necessitate chains. Random cell calls are also good, as are randomly power cycling electronics.
- Your main goal is to get all the PCs on the same page: something scary is going on here.

3. **REGRET:** You'll probably have at least one PC who is trying to escape at this point- your chief tool here is using the manor's extremely confusing layout against them to keep the PCs hopelessly lost and away from any possible exit. Really dial up the tension here; have more weird things happen that are more explicitly strange and scary than you have so far.
4. **CLIMAX #1:** Now is the time for your PCs to have their first up close encounter with a ghost. For maximum plot fidelity, I recommend starting with the most recent victims of the house and work backwards over the course of the game, lead the party closer to the root of the problem and the truth of Passerelle:
  - Encountering the four boys should be the group's first major confrontation. The ghosts should be mostly nonviolent, distorted apparitions that display in some gruesome way- that they met their end as sacrifices (cuts in some kind of pattern, broken bones, blinded, rope marks, burned, anything that shows the injuries were inflicted with intent).

- For maximum creepiness, the ghosts of the teenage boys can play out the scene of them entering the manor, expressing second thoughts, and largely stuck in their own timeline before they suddenly and abruptly acknowledge the existence of the PCs in some way- looking directly at them and/or asking why they came before leading them deeper into the manor in some way.

## ACT II - THE STAKES GET HIGHER

1. **EYES ON THE PRIZE:** This is an opportune moment to tease the PCs by placing something they want very badly just out of reach. This is most likely going to be a way out of the manor. Have them come across a larger door that they can smell fresh air behind or a staircase that leads to a room with large windows. Just when the party thinks they have a clear shot to escape, throw them their first roadblock- an angry ghost.
  - Ghosts should display their method of death as much as possible and wail angrily (or miserably) about how much they've suffered at the hands of the writer- who was someone many of his victims trusted up until he tortured and killed them.
  - Ghosts should lunge at the PCs and while their touch might not cause physical damage, there is pain and the experience should be a **very bad feeling** the PCs will want to avoid. If they're having trouble treating the ghost-touch with a suitable amount of wariness, there are many detriments you can add to make the point clearer, such as hallucinations, telepathic links to the ghosts, it could leave the PC open to possession, or even exacerbate their own mental illness.
  - Make sure that every time your PCs encounter a ghost, they learn something more about Passerelle and the writer.
  - Most PCs will try to run, but if you have any combat-minded characters with clever ideas, letting them try to banish or pacify the ghost is fine. Just be sure to keep your PCs feeling mostly powerless and not let their solution be too strong or too foolproof.
2. **ENDURANCE TEST:** As the PCs escape their first violent encounter with a vengeful spirit, they should be ambushed by another as soon as they try to take a breather. As with their last encounter, this one should also reveal something about the story of Passerelle.

3. **AND THE SCOPE BROADENS:** At this stage, the PCs should start to really grasp what they're up against. Either through a ghost's inane ramblings, literal or figurative writing on the wall, or some other means (environmental clues like the sulfur smell or temperature), the group should learn of the existence of a real live hellgate under the manor and that most of the victims were killed to keep it 'satisfied'.
4. **ANOTHER DIVERSION:** Now you'll need another roadblock to divert the PCs from escaping the manor after learning this terrible truth. This is an opportune time to introduce a narratively-important ghost- the writer's first sacrifice, likely a spouse or child. In this encounter (violent or nonviolent, you can choose whichever fits your game's pacing) the PCs should learn that ghosts believe that if the writer is killed, they can escape their suffering in spiritual limbo and be free of the hellgate. I recommend conveniently leaving out what would happen to the hellgate if the sacrifices stop. The ghosts only care about being freed, afterall, and likely do not understand how that may affect the living.
5. **THE PROVERBIAL SHIT HITS THE FAN:** Raise the stakes and feel free to get wild here as Act Two begins to climax and the PCs start feeling overwhelmed and panicked. This is a great time to ramp up creepy encounters and ambient scares.
  - Armed with the idea that they need to kill the ancient, decrepit writer still shambling about in the manor somewhere, the group should suffer a heavy blow of despair when they discover his remains on the inevitable path they take that leads them closer to the hellgate.
6. **CLIMAX #2:** Keep the stakes high and daunting as Act Two comes to a head. Raising them again here will bring a sense of urgency and fear to the PCs as well as drastically increase the emotional impact of your game.
  - The group should discover the hellgate far below the manor's ground floor. A huge, gaping stone portal that leads to a black, still void takes up most of one of the walls. A sulfuric wind blows from it and brings a deathly chill. The PCs can see something huge shifting deep inside but they can't make out any details besides the faintest impression of alien movements and undulations in their periphery.
  - And of course, the group should be confronted by the angry, murderous ghost of the writer, who hysterically tries to make them understand that if the gate isn't fed 'suffering' and sacrificial blood, the thing(s) inside will escape into the world.
  - This point can be flexed upon however you wish but if your PCs have learned how to subdue the ghosts temporarily (for example, cameras, holy objects,

prayers, etc) now is a great time to give them a slight break and let them use it to slow down or temporarily subdue the writer's twisted spirit.

**7. CLIMAX #3:** The final speed boost of Act Two would be some kind of interaction with the hellgate. Your PCs have seen things that will haunt them forever at this point and now is an ideal time to remind them of the burdens they'll bear. Laying eyes on the hellgate, crossing the threshold (if they are insanely brave), attempting to communicate with what's inside, or simply stepping in the truth of the mansion's curse demands some kind of price.

- The PCs could gain the ability to see and hear the demons hiding in the mansion, clear as day. They are **everywhere**.
- As they try to make it away from this volatile danger zone, try to bring back unsettling things from earlier in the game and make them much more explicit with their newfound knowledge and increased Sixth Sense. The vague human stains on the walls are now clear outlines of bodies that were buried to be hidden, blood stains are fresh across almost every surface, ghosts and twisted non-corporeal monsters watch the party from every nook and cranny, angry things scream at them from the dark...
- You should also indicate that the longer they spend in the manor, the better shape it seems to be in. Rooms that were half-destroyed at the beginning of all this are now clean and furnished, no rubble or broken glass litters the floor, surfaces are seem cleaner. The manor house itself is trying to draw the party back in time to where abundant sacrifices were keeping the gate sated.

## ACT III- FINAL CONFRONTATION

1. **IMPOSSIBLE ODDS:** Keep coming at your PCs hard and fast. At the opening of Act Three, the stakes need to raise yet again.

- The party should feel as though the whole mansion- the spirits, the writer, the hellgate, even the building itself- is against them and trying to harm them.
- Earthquakes, scary noises, rumblings, and bad smells should be a potent indicator that whatever's inside the hellgate wants to come out.
- The ghost of the writer- especially twisted and monstrous looking- is unhinged and enraged, chasing the party and dogging their every step, desperate to kill and appease whatever demons reside beneath Passerelle.

2. **DESPAIR:** Create the illusion of a hopeless situation. A pincer attack may be an effective way for you to do this: The writer's ghost and the thing in the gate pin the party between them (either explicitly or figuratively, whichever appeals to you). The pincer attack could also come between the writer's ghost and some of his victims, or any other configuration you can dream up.
  
3. **A SLIVER OF HOPE:** This is your opportunity to have something positive pay off into some kind of salvation for the beset PCs. Here's some ideas:
  - Did the PCs discover a way to subdue the ghosts?
  - Is one of them willing to be a sacrifice?
  - Has a PC tried to befriend or peacefully pacify any of the spirits so far?
  - Any of these could be the seed of resolution here. Your PCs should- through whatever means they've discovered- subdue the writer. If they befriended another spirit(s), those could arrive to help just in the nick of time. If one of the party is willing to be sacrificed, they will need to submit to the writer and his ritualistic torture to seal the gate (though you should make it very clear that this will not break the cycle of violence and fear for long).
  
4. **APPEASEMENT:** The seed of resolution blooms into some form of triumph. If one of the party did not choose to sacrifice themselves as a temporary fix, the writer's ghost should be defeated, overwhelmed by the other vengeful spirits or whatever offensive capabilities the PCs devised.
  - You can't really kill what's already dead, however, and the defeat sparks a transformation in the writer. His appearance becomes more human and less monstrous, almost boring. At last he has come to his senses and is free of his fear.
  - The writer is now burdened by the full realization of what he has done and this becomes the salvation for the PCs. With the help of the party to witness and acknowledge his suffering, the writer retreats to the hellgate as the final sacrifice himself, believing his status as a non-corporeal being will allow him to pacify the gate for much longer than the human suffering he had inflicted. Additionally, the angry ghosts of his victims are eager to take their revenge in order to appease their own lingering regrets. He makes a poetic last request of the party- submitting to his victims and the hellgate- and with their final agreement, the ritual is complete and the party may leave the manor.



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# Running

with the

# Devil

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Content Warning: Some pregnancy horror, references to biblical horror

# Setting

Leed's Point, New Jersey is famous for one thing and one thing only: The Jersey Devil that supposedly roams the stretch of forest known as the Pine Barrens. The town is tiny- one zip code covers the whole area- and the locals can at a glance that you're here for monster sightings. They're obviously annoyed by this, presumably tired of their town being famous for something as embarrassing as a Satanic cryptid and the steady trickle of tourism it inspires... Mostly rowdy college kids looking for cheap thrills and conspiracy enthusiasts lugging tons of camera equipment.

The people of Leed's Point answer questions about the Jersey Devil with disdain and sometimes even hostility but it is immediately obvious- even to an outsider- that the people of Leed's Point fear the Beast and treat it with some amount of terrified awe. Nobody talks about it if they can help it, no one goes near the Pine Barrens (except for the off-the-grid types that live there, the Pineys), and no one certainly goes near there during the equinox, which is rumored to be an important ritual day for colonial heathens that once lived in the area in secret. Rumor has it that the Pineys leave the Barrens for the autumn equinox even in this day and age, as they consider remaining an invitation for the Devil to whisk them away to the ritual festivities and an eternity of damnation.

Still, Leed's Point gives off an undeniably tense and anxious air, with its dense, secretive Pine Barrens and its wary, defensive citizens...



# Synopsis

You are part of an intrepid crew of cryptid hunters, holing up in rural Leed's Point, New Jersey in hopes of finding America's Moby Dick: The Jersey Devil. Cryptids and monsters have been your bread and butter for a long wile, but this excursion is special. Your vlog is in danger of losing its sponsors and that means you're in danger of losing your income. The sponsors demand more consistent viewership, more exciting content, and they've told you in no uncertain terms that if your next vlog doesn't bring in some big numbers, they're pulling the plug.

You and the rest of the crew are desperate and have staked everything on this last excursion. By landing some footage of the Pine Barrens monster, some tracks, or even some good noises in a scary forest, more people will engage with your vlog, and could even lead to fame, fortune, and solidify your presence in the annals of cryptozoology.

A hard choice awaits you in the Pine Barrens, however, and your expectations won't prepare you for it.



# Character Roles



## THE HOST

You're the star of the show, the face most people associate with your vlog channel and your content. Or they would if you could hold down steady viewer counts and engagement, at any rate. The Manager put together this last-ditch opportunity for you to try and generate some traffic to your content and you intend to make the most out of it. With the threat of losing sponsors, you know this video series has to be absolutely outstanding to captivate viewers. And if that means click-bait titles and thumbnails with googly eyes, then so be it.



## THE CO-HOST

Your views rely on you to play off the Host's on-camera persona and you usually perform as a foil to their antics, even if you keep your on-screen personality natural and close to your real self. You sometimes feel overshadowed, however, and relegated to one-trick-pony when your talents and charm could easily land you a starring role in a real project, not just as the co-host of a cryptozoology vlog. Still, you've put blood, sweat, and tears into the channel and you don't intend to let your sponsors forsake you without a fight.



## THE TECHNICIAN

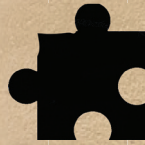
You have a specialized skill with a variety of technological gadgets that the vlog relies on to produce content. Cryptozoology isn't in your professional background, of course, but you've filled a big need on this show. You've actually gotten somewhat popular on-screen with the channel's tiny but dedicated fan base as the

occasional voice of reason and face of exasperated jump cuts when something underwhelming happens. You're perhaps not as charismatic as the hosts but people seem to enjoy your level-headedness and practicality when you do make it into the footage. Footage you no doubt tried desperately to save from mishaps and mishandling.



## THE BELIEVER

You imagine yourself a cryptozoology expert, you've amassed lore and legends from every corner of the globe, and analyzed every grainy second of footage to be found on the internet. You know your stuff and the Jersey Devil is a couple centuries overdue for a tell-all expose. You may not be the face of the show like the hosts, but you are certainly the brains. You always have a lead and a helpful research link as you pursue the truth of these beasts roaming the hidden parts of the world.



## THE SKEPTIC

Cryptozoology is decidedly **not** your thing. You wound up working on this vlog as a favor to a friend and ended up staying because they actually pay their crew- an unfortunate rarity in this business. Your time on the vlog hasn't really challenged your beliefs (if anything, it's kind of only made you more skeptical) and you're certain that there's a cultural explanation or mundane biological reason for a few centuries of demon sightings in the Pine Barrens.



## THE MANAGER

This show needs to make money and it's your job to make that happen. You're not a fancy Hollywood producer, but you need to help guide this mystery machine to some honest-to-god mysteries or your sponsors will dry up when they see the lack of traffic you're getting. The Jersey Devil, oddly enough, might be your last shot at glory.

# The Host

1. What's the name of your show?
2. You worked at a place you hated before setting up this vlog channel about monsters. You're aware that if the channel falls through, you may have to turn back to your old career to survive. What did you do before? What would you do to keep having to do that job again?
3. Are you worried that the others may suggest replacing you with another host may help them keep the sponsors from bailing? Who are you afraid they'd replace you with?
4. You put a lot of yourself into this channel, what do you have to lose besides income if this whole thing goes belly-up?
5. Do you believe in cryptids/aliens/urban legends like the Jersey Devil?
6. You had an unexplainable encounter with something that seemed otherworldly or supernatural at the time. What was it? How do you explain it to others?



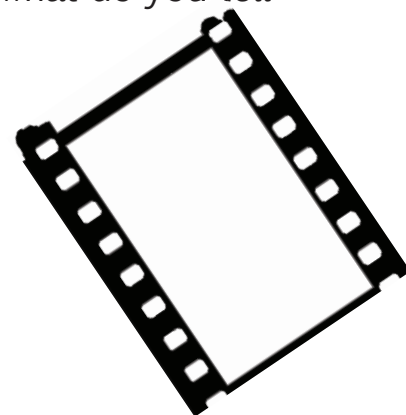
# The Co-Host

1. Do you sometimes feel like your ideas get ignored or placed on a lower priority because of your job-title as the co-host?
2. You and most of the crew have worked together for a long time. How are they as coworkers? Do you all mostly get along or are there personality clashes?
3. You have a special talent, something you are really, really good at after long years of specialized practice. What is it?
4. Do you have a back-up plan in case this whole “Hunting the Jersey Devil” plan goes askew and the channel tanks?
5. Do you believe in cryptids/aliens/urban legends like the Jersey Devil?
6. You put more into this channel than just your time and face, what will you lose forever if this thing doesn’t get off the ground?



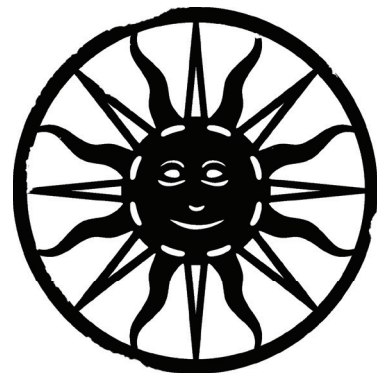
# The Technician

1. You have a less-than-exciting career to fall back on if this monster vlog falls through... What is it and why did you choose internet ghost-hunter videos over it?
2. You've gained a small faction of dedicated fans for your unique humor and occasional video appearances. In recent months, they've been leaving comments asking to see more of you in future episodes, much to the subtle but undeniable frustration of both hosts. Is this an opportunity for you to get in front of the camera or are you hoping that doesn't happen?
3. You're typically a realistic type but what is one legend or myth you do believe?
4. You're usually the last person anyone related to the channel asks for opinions from in regards to content. To be fair, you were brought on as a veritable stage hand but do you wish you could contribute more or that the others were more willing to ask for your input?
5. What is the worst part of this job? Immediate demonetization aside, of course.
6. When your family or friends ask you what you do for a living, what do you tell them?



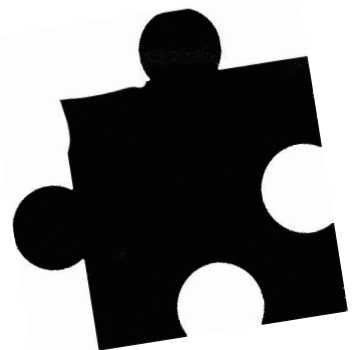
# The Believer

1. A long time ago, you were the one that came up with the show's concept... Along the way, it gained a new face in the hosts and a team of committed people and even wider viewership, but you've always remained the brains behind the operation. In what ways is this an improvement from when you ran solo vlog casts out of your bedroom all those years ago?
2. Why do you believe in the "supernatural" or "unexplainable"?
3. What's one myth, legend, or supernatural conspiracy you think is 100% bullshit?
4. Your main role in the show these days is to research and write episode scripts, though sometimes you get to charter excursions based on lore- like this one. Do you ever wish you could go back to being the host or main face of the show?
5. What lengths are you willing to go to prove that cryptids, monsters, aliens, ghosts, etc exist?



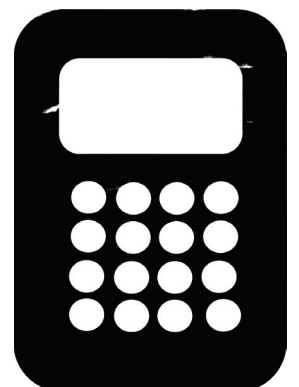
# The Skeptic

1. You were hired on to this vlog project to be the 'realistic' voice during episode recaps or to offer more plausible theories for wild rumors. You're fairly eloquent and don't usually come off as a smug jerk so you're glad to lend your expertise. In recent months, however, the situation has gotten somewhat desperate and you've frequently been handed scripts that paint you to be, well, a smug jerk to try and create some on-screen drama. Some of the fans have even left nasty comments about what a self-important normie you are. Are you finding yourself leaning into this typecast for the sake of the channel or do you resent it?
2. Do you butt heads with The Believer often or have you learned to appreciate each others' strength, weaknesses, and unique interests?
3. While this channel hasn't produced any earth-shattering revelations about cryptids, there was one incident you worked on with this team that really rattled you. What was it?
4. Conversely, you straight up Scooby-Doo'd a criminal ring the summer before last because the rest of the team thought they were on the trail of Mothman in an abandoned amusement park. Did unmasking a criminal in a monster suit affect how you write and film for this vlog?
5. What is the hardest part about filming for this channel?



# The Manager

1. You may not be a jerkwad Hollywood producer type but you are a business person and you need this channel to be fiscally viable if it wants to survive. You have tried a number of things so far to try and placate the sponsors but to no avail. Why is venturing into the Pine Barrens your last hope? What other things have you tried?
2. Does the rest of the crew share your sense of urgency with this project or are they treating it like business as usual?
3. While planning for this trip, you pitched an idea for something to save the channel that was unanimously voted down. What was it?
4. Why is it so important that this cryptid channel survive? Aren't there other small-time vloggers that could utilize your business management skills?
5. Considering the whole crew, who is the weakest link in this production?



# Lore

The Jersey Devil has a much more lore associated with it than any mere monster roaming the moonlit woods, but most would-be monster hunters know the basic story:

The Jersey Devil has an older, more secret name. A long time ago it was called the Leeds' Devil. The Leeds' Devil and the town of Leeds Point are named after the same family, one who reportedly did a lot of devil worship in the dead of night and preyed on the innocent colonial villages of the surrounding area in the first half of the 1700s.

The most well-known version of the tale involves Mrs. Leeds discovering that she was pregnant with her thirteenth child. Many of their other children had died during or after childbirth while the surviving ones were cursed with strange and inexplicable sicknesses, which kept them isolated from the rest of the community. Rumors always circulated about Mrs. Leeds devilish inclinations and her love of "riding Satan's broomstick" but the thirteenth child was irrefutable proof of something wicked for any unfortunate enough to lay eyes on it.

Born with a twisted goat's head, leathery wings, and cloven hooves, the Leeds' last child was a monster- undeniably offspring of the devil himself. Immediately after birth, the demon had strength enough to flee the home through the chimney, running cackling into the night- a deep, guttural noise that rumbled out of its hideous and swiftly growing body.

The demon became known as the Leeds' Devil, the community quick to ascribe blame for its existence in its very name. For nearly three hundred years, sporadic sightings of the beast were recorded, including a slew of rumored sightings and other interactions clustered in 1909.

A lesser known version of the story paints a slightly different picture. Mr. Leeds was apparently a writer of almanacs at the same time as Benjamin "Six Degrees of Separation" Franklin. Ben Franklin was very annoyed that Mr. Leeds published an almanac at the same time as him and conspired to start rumors in the surrounding community of devout Quakers. With Ben Franklin pulling the strings, the Quakers came to believe that the astronomy and alchemical symbols inside Mr. Leeds almanac were occult formulas that could summon Satan. Alarmed, the Quakers censored and banned the book, even burning it in some cases. Mr. Leeds suffered a heavy blow with the poor sales of his book

but he responded the way most New Jersey-ians would: by promptly authoring many volumes on Christian esotericism, demonology, occult references, and catalogs of historical witchcraft to ruffle some feathers.

It went over about as well as you'd imagine in the god-fearing Quaker community and Mr. Leeds had successfully stirred contempt in the area. He had also succeeded in getting himself and his family branded as Satanic heathens and lost most of the rest of his wealth. Ostracized and feared by his local township, even more rumors started to fly once the poor health and mortality of his numerous children became known, as well as unsavory stories about his wife's virtue and loyalty (who was presumed to be a practicing witch, at this point). Mrs. Leeds, her mental health deteriorating quickly under the strain, went into throes of grief upon learning she was pregnant with her thirteenth child. Drowning in a dark depression, rage without an outlet, and the fear her unborn child would burden the family with even more suffering, Mrs. Leeds cursed the baby while it was still within her.

The story continues much the same from here for the Leeds' baby-devil. Sightings are rare but they all describe the same gangling, humanoid beast of impossible proportions, hypnotic stares, and the strangest feeling of temptation when the monster is near. Like many elusive cryptids, the killing of livestock is occasionally attributed to the Leeds' Devil but human murders and disappearances credited to the monster seem to lack consistent methods- which makes pinning down the beast's motives and actions difficult.





For  
the  
G.M.



# Scenario Info

The Jersey Devil is a well known cryptid but one that doesn't have a lot of killings, maimings, or general destruction attached to it. Mostly, rumors circulate of its horrible visage in random, often clustered sightings within the confines of the Pine Barrens.

People say that it is a horrible composite nightmare- a horse or goatlike head, sometimes described as skull-like, bat wings, stretched out, gangling body, cloven hooves, and a whiplike tail are some of the more common features attributed to this hellish fiend.

For all intents and purposes, the Jersey Devil seems to have committed no crimes other than being a hideous amalgamation of biblical fears and taking up residence in a creepy old forest. For this scenario, presenting an honest opportunity for the PCs to befriend or peacefully interact with this still-quite-horrifying entity will make them feel vulnerable and scared but also deliver potent narrative payoff when their focus shifts to the antagonism and cruelty surrounding the Jersey Devil's creation.

Most of all, you will want to hinge most of the scenario around the sightings of the Jersey Devil, which escalates with one more encounters to provide the opportunity for your players to interact with it and possibly discover that it is nonviolent to them. You'll want to give them the ability to choose whether or not to expose the beast for vlog views and fame or allow the legends to continue so that it can live on semi-peacefully.

The devil has long been associated with temptation and bargains so laying that foundation here can set the stage for a variety of endings and tones depending on how your party plays and the true nature you choose for the Leeds' Devil.



# Running WITH THE Devil

IN THREE ACTS

## ACT I - ESTABLISH THE STAKES

1. **SET THE STAGE:** The group arrived at Leeds Point yesterday morning and has since been preparing for their venture out into the Pine Barrens later this evening. The locals have been semi-hostile the entire time, able to determine immediately that the group is here for monster sightings on the fall equinox- rumored to bring an increase in movement from deep within the woods. The locals do not appreciate the negative attention their town has garnered for its monstrous association with the Jersey Devil, a resentment going all the way back to 1730. Once night falls, the autumn air is crisp and biting- ideal conditions to film something scary in a last ditch effort to save their vlog channel.
  - The locals are decidedly unhelpful and the party must walk to the Pine Barrens as no taxi service will oblige to take them there upon seeing their equipment or hearing their destination.
  - The crew has some water and food with them, but not enough to stay out for more than a night or so, which really sets a timer on whether or not they'll get the footage they so desperately need.
2. **FOREBODING:** A scary endeavor into the woods should always come with a feeling of dread as things get underway. Surprise the party with an unexpected encounter with a Piney- a rural, off-the-grid hillbilly type allegedly found in the Pine Barrens. Pineys are similar in character to other Appalachian fringe-dwellers and woodland yokels and typically prefer the privacy and insular nature of their tiny communities. They're also typically god-fearing and extremely wary of strangers while, likewise, outsiders are usually quite unnerved by the skittish Piney, who can sometimes seem like they stepped out of a historical reenactment.

- The Piney that takes them by surprise is nonthreatening, though his appearance was certainly alarming. As soon as he lays eyes on their camera, the Piney issues them a dire warning to the PCs to leave immediately.
  - The Piney is difficult to understand and somewhat frightening in his fervor but he tries to explain that the Jersey Devil is real, that it is the literal spawn of Satan, and that they must get out of the woods as fast possible. The Piney will not wait for them either, and he swiftly leaves with a hasty, muttered prayer before literally sprinting off at full speed.
3. **SLIPPERY SLOPE:** The group can heed the Piney's warning and try to follow him, or they can decide to press on further into the Pine Barrens. Either way, they will end up walking for hours without making any apparent progress. The group is lost and it seems like it is supernatural.
- Landmarks will shift and move, the PCs will repeat the same trek endlessly, the stars and the moon will not move in the sky, and a thick fog is beginning to rise off the ground.
  - At this stage, your PCs are likely to start getting emotional under the stress and you should absolutely do everything you can to build on that.

## ACT II - CRANK UP THE DIAL ON SCARES

1. **ALIEN TERRITORY:** The group comes across their first new sight in hours- a few low stone walls, obviously old and in bad shape, partially covered with dead leaves. The party can likely deduce that they're the remains of a few colonial era buildings, likely a farmstead, as that is fairly commonplace in the area.
2. **SET HEAT TO LOW:** The group starts discovering unsettling things centered around this area. Strange symbols are scratched into the dirt, rocks are arrayed in some kind of patterns, images or stick figures are primitively scratched into boulders... Lots of passive/environmental scares that could make decent B side footage if the PCs are still worried about their channel.
3. **SET HEAT TO MEDIUM AND THEN CRANK IT UP:** Two things need to happen at this junction to light a fire under your PCs. Your goal is to freak them out so bad that they either abandon their goal of getting footage entirely, or are really, **really** tempted to in an effort to escape alive. The first thing they need is a mundane scare. Basically, one or more of the PCs needs to have a near-death experience that is not overtly supernatural in nature. This will scare them without confirming their suspicions about the Jersey Devil just yet- which will build tension!

The next thing the party needs is a very supernatural scare, something that communicates pretty plainly that all is not well here and they are in way over their heads.

- Mundane, near death experience could be anything that could feasibly kill them in a freezing forest in the middle of the night: weak ice over a creek, a falling tree, a concealed pit, a bad fall down loose rocks, thin, freezing mud that's much deeper than it looks...
- The supernatural encounter is your first real chance to flex your devilish imagination. Depending on your groups comfort level with gore, you may want to have them stumble across the body of the Piney they met earlier- or multiple Pineys who did not leave quickly enough. One thing you'll need to do is make it very clear that this wasn't done by an animal. The body (or bodies) should be hung up or crucified, dissected like science experiments, covered in strange markings, anything that removes the PCs ability to ascribe it to a bear or cougar. Let them come up with their own theories, of course, but just ensure they're deeply unnerved by it.
- The shift from near-death but normal to "proof" that something murderous hides in the woods will probably get most of your party desperate to find a way back to civilization and even the most stalwart of them to hesitate. You'll want to play into that fear as much as possible.

4. **HAVE THEM MEET THE MONSTER:** It's time to crank up the pressure. Up the ante with furious, loud noises chasing them through the brush from an unseen entity. Have unholy howling or braying echoing from seemingly all around them. Its important to communicate to the party that whatever's in this forest knows that they're there and vulnerable. Hold the tension here for just a moment before you turn it into a full-blown chase.

- You'll need to corner them somewhere that leaves them incredibly vulnerable and then proceed with the reveal.
- The shift from near-death but normal to "proof" that something murderous The Jersey Devil emerges from the fog and it's every bit the monster they've read up on. Its body is stretched out and weirdly proportioned, with huge spindly limbs, sinewy goat legs, and pointed, cloven hooves. Its head is a thick, bleached ram's skull with wickedly sharp horns, luminous red eyes, and an empty mouth that slavers black slime. On its back, enormous, flight-ready wings hang limply and it rears up on its hind legs as it stalks slowly towards the cornered PCs.

5. **SUDDEN SECOND THOUGHTS:** The party is vulnerable and the monster seems to hesitate for just a fraction of a second as it approaches. When it is close enough

to see every wiry black hair on its leathery hide, the beast crouches low to better see into their terrified faces and breathe the smell of death over them. It truly looks like something out of a god-fearing person's most hellish fever dreams.

- This is a good opportunity to **not** remind your PCs that they're here for footage. Leave it up to them to remember why they came here in the first place. The Jersey Devil won't be tremendously interested in their camera either way.
- Now is the time to challenge their preconceptions about the Jersey Devil. So long as the group does not act with hostility, the Devil will approach them slowly, until it stands at the edge of arm's reach (it's reach, by the way, which is longer than a human's). While the party remains terrified, the Devil slowly extends a skeletal, slimy hand towards whichever PC is closest.
- Here is a great opportunity to get your PCs paranoid with all they know about bargains and temptations where the devil is concerned. You can give them a verbal clue by saying that it appears to be reaching for a handshake. That word alone set playtest groups into panic, so it will likely work with yours. Above all, let the PCs worry about whether that constitutes a deal with the devil or not.
- If the PCs do not react for long seconds- either by hesitating or by arguing- the Devil will get impatient, holding out its hand more aggressively and making it quite clear that it wants a handshake now. It will also change targets if necessary.
- The Jersey Devil is intelligent but cannot speak. It **can** make horrible animal noises, so grunting and snorts will have to suffice for communication if anyone tries.
- With a willing participant, the Devil can bestow a vision with its touch and its goal now is to explain to the PCs what is happening here.
- The Devil imparts a vision to a PC, who knows now- without a shadow of a doubt- the monster before them means them no harm and is actively trying to warn them. Of what, the PC is not certain, but it is something purely evil and menacing, something that is made of unadulterated hatred and malice. The Devil is trying to warn them that this unknown thing knows they are here and has been stalking them.
- As a final note as Act II wraps up, if your game group is prone to paranoid or mistrustful accusations, they may no longer trust the PC who has communed with the Jersey Devil. Which is good for you as you can utilize their bickering to keep the sense of dread up.

**6. THE BIG REVEAL:** Via the extrasensory vision the Jersey Devil has bestowed upon one or more of the PCs, the following truth is revealed: The most dangerous thing in the Pine Barrens is Mrs. Leeds- an ancient, demonic witch held in an undying limbo thanks to her backfired curse on an innocent life. Leeds is trapped in a runic burial circle somewhere in the woods- until she escaped thanks to the equinox's affect on regional arcana. The thirteenth child- the Jersey Devil- is similarly cursed, linked forever to the Pine Barrens where it was born into a hateful world. The Devil makes the most of this situation, by fighting to keep Leeds trapped within its borders year after year, ever since that horrible night in 1730.

## ACT III - HERE IT COMES

- 1. BACK TO SQUARE ONE:** As the PCs prepare to move on or further react to the Devil's dire warning, the braying, horrible wailing picks up again and the group gets their first glimpse at Leeds. She is ancient and decrepit, naked and covered in sagging, papery skin that's littered with scrapes and cuts. Her hair is overgrown and shockingly white, its thick mats dragging in the mud. Huge, jagged fingernails scrape along the ground as she stumbles towards them and the PCs are afforded a clear view of her awful face under the light of the harvest moon for just an instant before she lunges at them. To everyone's shock, the Devil launches into action, intercepting the witch and giving the PCs a chance to flee. The fog rises further.
- 2. ALONE AND AFRAID:** To further enhance tension and perhaps drive a rift between players, have them discover they lost something incredibly valuable once they have a chance to catch their breath and the sounds of clashing demons fade. You could reveal that the PC who interacted with the Devil broke or lost something to further churn the drama. Good choices would be the camera, sound equipment, food, gps, etc.
- 3. ANOTHER BARGAIN:** As the group comes to terms with being lost in a magically frozen forest with two demons and lacking critical equipment, they realize they must keep moving or they will certainly never escape. After some desperate wandering, the Jersey Devil should approach them again, though this time it is moving with difficulty and obviously wounded, dripping black blood all over the ground. It demands another handshake in order to communicate.
  - The vision, should the party accept the physical link again, reveals new information: They are 100% trapped in the Pine Barrens until the equinox is over, the Devil cannot allow the borders to come down without giving Leeds the chance to escape.

- The Devil requires one (or more) PCs to act as bait to lure Leeds to her ritual burial site within a stone foundation. Leeds is on alert and will not easily be fooled of course. The Devil makes it clear that it will not be able to intervene or protect the PCs if something goes south or they give themselves away. The Devil reiterates that Leeds' containment is of utmost importance for the safety of all.

4. **BRAVADO AND REDEMPTION:** Depending on your PCs, they may be willing to oblige the Jersey Devil its plan to lure Leeds out. The square foundation is the low wall the party found earlier and the Devil assures them they will find it. The party can head back there without any trouble this time and- if they are obliging, they can pass the time waiting for Leeds to corner them. Whatever your game group's mood is at this point, however, lean into it. The Devil would be likely to help them so long as it ended in Leeds recapture. You could also sow seeds of distrust here as well, if any of the group thinks the Jersey Devil could be lying to entrap them. When Leeds shows up to confront the party, start having them do lots of pulls for basically every action now as they're acting in spite of unholy terror.

5. **CONFRONTATION AND CONCLUSION:** I encourage you to lean in fully to whatever your PCs seem most emotionally committed to at this point. The Leeds confrontations should be terrifying and difficult, if PCs die here it will only make it scarier. As GM, you have full rein to decide how to conclude the story actions, however. Some options to consider:

- The party lures Leeds into the house by taunting her, making her so angry she decides to pursue even though she is aware she is in danger here. The Devil intervenes in the nick of time, activating the burial stones and belching black blood onto skeletal remains hidden beneath the anointed stones. Leeds vanishes with a scream but the Devil warns that she'll try again next year.
- The Devil and Leeds are working in tandem to feast on the flesh of the innocent and the naive. The Devil has lured them to an inescapable area to finish them off.
- The Devil and Leeds are simply two monsters cohabiting in the same forest, fighting each other for the souls of some fresh meat that wandered inside. The Devil utilizes temptation and the vision ability to gain the trust from people before turning their souls hellish.
- Leave your players with a tough choice if you let them live: sell any footage they got and risk Leeds escaping with the increased attention to the area or burn the footage and keep silent about the Jersey Devil's existence.

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