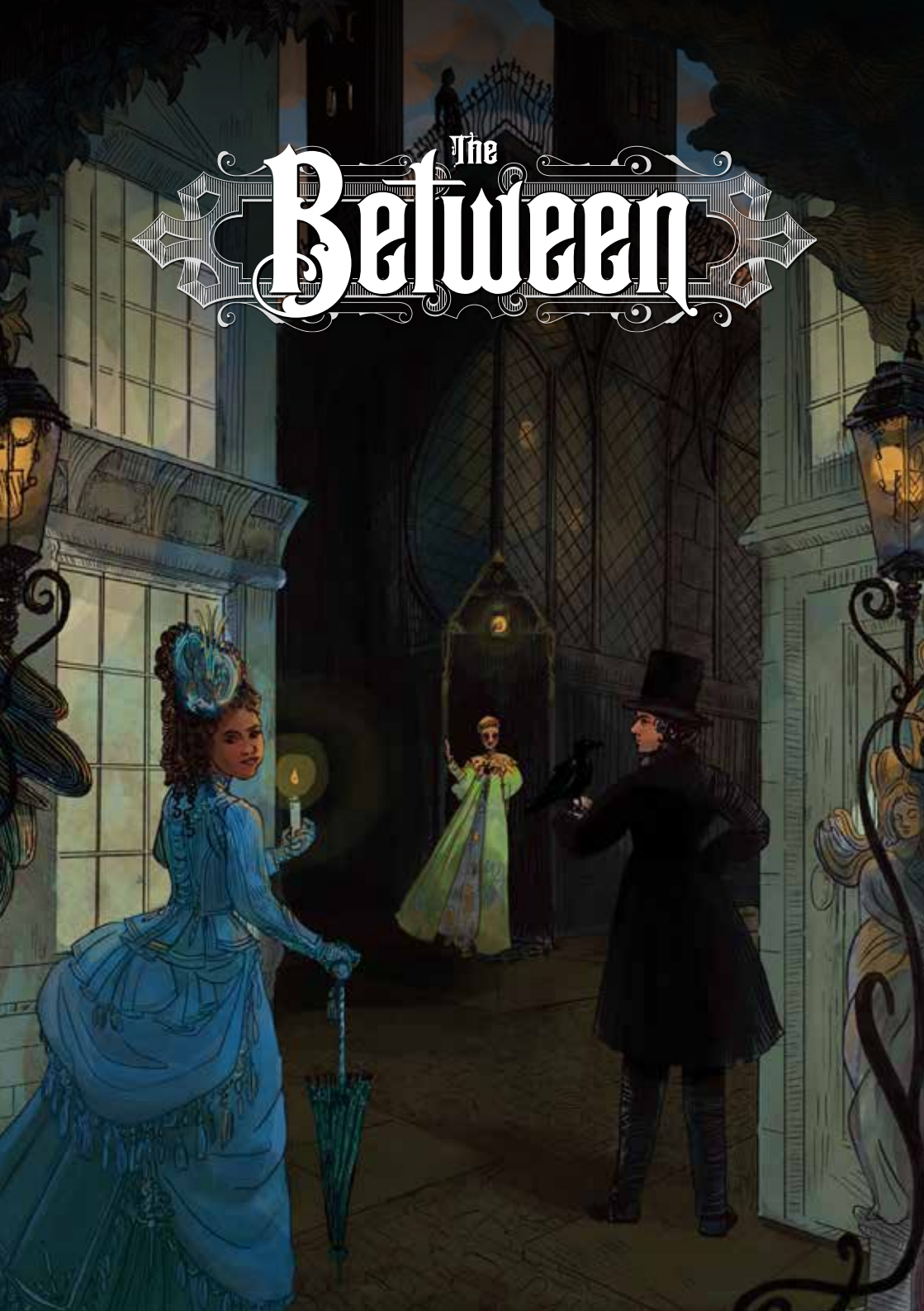


The Between



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INTRO



THE BETWEEN is a tabletop roleplaying game about a group of mysterious monster hunters in Victorian-era London. These hunters learn about various monstrous threats in the city and conduct investigations, or “hunts,” in order to neutralize them. They gradually become aware of the machinations of a criminal mastermind who is sometimes connected to the threats, but always scheming to bring the Crown to its knees. The hunters will ultimately be forced to reckon with this criminal mastermind in order to save the country.

THE BETWEEN is directly inspired by the TV show *Penny Dreadful*, but also takes inspiration from British horror classics, the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pulp-era media, and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.

THE BETWEEN is Powered by the Apocalypse, meaning its mechanics are inspired, in part, by Vincent and Meguey Baker’s *Apocalypse World*. It is also Carved from Brindlewood, meaning the mystery mechanics and procedures are inspired by *Brindlewood Bay*.

Hargrave House

Hargrave House is the name of a grand residence on Belgrave Square, and the shared home and workspace of the monster hunters. The house's contents and physical spaces are explored in the gameplay, but the owner of the house, and presumed patron of the hunters, remains a mystery throughout the game. "Hargrave House" is also used as a collective noun for the hunters.

The Mastermind

The Mastermind is a Moriarty-style criminal genius who wishes to destroy the Crown and bring the empire to its knees; Hargrave House will eventually have to face them and stop them, probably near the end of the campaign. The default Mastermind is an extremely wealthy woman named Theodora Brathwaite, but different Mastermind options will be available in the future. Importantly, the Mastermind never has occult or supernatural powers—they are a major threat because of their intellect, their wealth, or some combination of the two—although they may be manipulating the various monstrous and supernatural threats from behind the scenes.

The Most Important Thing

The hunters are intentionally occluded; the game is called **THE BETWEEN** because we find these characters caught between a very dark, mysterious past and an equally dark, possibly tragic, future. We aim to explore these dark pasts, but only at the right time—dramatically-speaking—and only when the game's rules tell us to.



As a player, you must always try to avoid speaking about your character's past—in character or out of character—unless a specific mechanic in the game demands it (such as The Vulnerable Move or the Janus Mask, both of which will be discussed later in this text). If a side character asks your character about their past, you must always demure or change the subject; if a player asks about your character's past, you must remind them that you're not allowed to say, but they are welcome to trigger The Vulnerable Move in order to get you to talk.

It's sometimes impossible to avoid talking about the hunters' pasts, regardless of the game's intentions. In those cases, don't fight it—say what you need to say—but try to give only the minimum amount of information needed to satisfy the circumstance.

You should always strongly resist talking about elements of the hunter's past suggested by a special part of the game called The Mask of the Past (see Anatomy of a Playbook, Invoking the Janus Mask page 24).

The 2nd Most Important Thing

THE BETWEEN takes place in Victorian-era London, but the game does not concern itself too much with historical accuracy, and neither should you. In play, we embrace a fantastic version of this historical setting, one that is drenched in darkness and gothic horror, but we don't get too bent out of shape if things aren't exactly as they would have been. This is particularly important when it comes to portrayals of race, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, disability, and neurodivergence.

People from marginalized communities would likely have been treated very badly during Victorian times, but it doesn't mean they have to be treated badly in this game. Likewise, people with marginalized identities would likely not have been able to move within upper class social circles or hold high office, but in **THE BETWEEN** they can.

DO: *embrace a dark, horrifying vision of Victorian-era London.*

DO: *make a reasonable attempt at historical accuracy.*

DO: *play whatever type of character you want, regardless of historical accuracy.*

DON'T: *worry about it too much if you get historical and cultural details wrong.*

DON'T: *use offensive epithets and language just because it would have been appropriate for the era.*

DON'T: *... be that guy.*

Content Warning

THE BETWEEN is an unavoidably dark game. Murder, cannibalism, body horror, dark sexual themes, threats to children and animals, foul language, blasphemy, witchcraft, and defiling corpses are all things that come up in the game on a fairly regular basis. Safety tools will be discussed later in the text, but at the outset, if you have a suspicion that this game's themes are not for you, then this game is probably not for you, and that's perfectly fine. We recommend checking out other excellent games that either 1) have similar, but more toned down themes, or 2) have similar mechanics but entirely different themes. Some suggestions are: *Monsterhearts*, *Brindlewood Bay*, *Monster of the Week*, and *Blades in the Dark*.



GAMEPLAY BASICS

The Conversation and Moves

Gameplay in **THE BETWEEN** is mostly a conversation. One participant, the Keeper, says how the world behaves; they frame scenes and present challenges to the other participants, the players, who are responsible for saying how their character, a hunter, reacts. This is all largely done via a back-and-forth conversation between the Keeper and the players; the narrative authority—who gets to say what—changes from time to time, but it's always within the confines of the conversation.

The conversation ends when a player describes their hunter doing something that triggers a move. At that point, you read the text of the triggered move, do what it says (usually rolling dice and interpreting the results), and then narrate that part of the story, as needed. Once the move is resolved, you return to the conversation. It won't always be as clean as that when you sit down to play—the Keeper may prefer to shift the spotlight to another character in the middle of resolving a move, returning later when it's dramatically interesting—but that is generally how the game should go.

Abilities

Abilities are the hunter attributes that are applied to most die rolls in the game. They each have a modifier from -3 to +3. The abilities are: Vitality, Composure, Reason, Presence, and Sensitivity.

Use **VITALITY** if the hunter's action involves strength, dexterity, endurance, athleticism, or raw physicality.

Use **COMPOSURE** if the hunter's action requires a steady hand, a calm disposition, or intense concentration; or if they are trying to avoid a fear-based reaction.

Use **REASON** if the hunter is studying books, researching a problem, examining a crime scene, or otherwise engaging their mental faculty.

Use **PRESENCE** if the hunter is trying to charm someone, intimidate someone, or capture someone's imagination.

Use **SENSITIVITY** if the hunter's action involves occult or supernatural forces; the Keeper may decide that an action that is seemingly governed by a different ability is actually governed by Sensitivity because of the supernatural, spiritual, or occult nature of what is being undertaken.

Rolling Dice

In most cases, when you roll dice because a move instructed you to do so, you roll two six-sided dice, sum them, and then add the modifier from the relevant ability. You then check the result against the text of the move. If a move refers to a "hit," it means a result of 7+. If a move refers to a "miss," it means a result of 6-. Moves also frequently have success tiers: a miss, 7-9, 10-11, and 12+.

Advantage and Disadvantage

When you have an advantage, you roll three dice, keep the two highest, sum them, and then add the modifier of the relevant ability.

You will most often have an advantage because of the following:

- A move gives you an advantage.
- The hunter is using an unmarked item from their Personal Quarters in their action (see Anatomy of a Playbook, Personal Quarters page 25).

When you're at a disadvantage, you roll three dice, keep the two lowest, sum them, and then add the modifier of the relevant ability.

You will most often be at a disadvantage because of the following:

- A Condition negatively impacts your hunter's action (see Anatomy of a Playbook, Conditions page 23).
- The Keeper believes it's appropriate under the current circumstances.

If circumstances would cause you to both have an advantage and be at a disadvantage during an action, they cancel each other out and you roll as normal. Note, however, that advantage and disadvantage do not "stack," nor can one outweigh the other. For example, if you have two Conditions, each of which would plausibly put you at a disadvantage, and one playbook move that gives you an advantage, you would simply roll as normal, without advantage or disadvantage.

The Janus Mask

The Keeper will be very hard on hunters when describing adversity because players have a powerful tool that allows them to resist: invoking the Janus Mask. After a die roll, and after an outcome has been narrated, the player can choose to invoke the Janus Mask and increase their die result by one success tier (so, a miss becomes a 7-9, a 7-9 becomes a 10-11, and a 10-11 becomes a 12+). In that case, we narrate a different result, and what was previously narrated does not occur (we say it was a different timeline that we got to collectively experience but that did not actually happen).

Oli's character, Colizabel, is attempting to escape the clutches of an angry vampire, triggering an appropriate move. Oli, understanding that Colizabel's death is a distinct possibility, rolls his dice and gets a miss. The Keeper describes how the vampire catches Colizabel and disembowels her, killing her instantly. Oli decides he doesn't like this outcome and invokes the Janus Mask, making his die roll a 7-9. This time, per the move's text, Colizabel escapes but drops a piece of information the vampire can use to track her down later.

You may be asking yourself: “Why does the Keeper fully narrate a result that they know the player is just going to discard by invoking the Janus Mask?” Answer: because it's fun! The Janus Mask lets us glimpse different timelines, play them out, feel them, experience the anguish and terror, and then... do something different. It's sort of like one of those old Choose Your Own Adventure books: part of the fun is making the wrong choice so you can see the disaster that befalls your character (and invoking the Janus Mask is like putting your thumb on the page of those old books, so you can go back and choose something else if things turn out poorly).

Moves

There are three types of moves in **THE BETWEEN**: basic moves, playbook moves and custom moves (a “playbook” is what we call a character sheet in **THE BETWEEN**). This chapter focuses on the five basic moves: The Day Move, The Night Move, The Information Move, The Vulnerable Move, and Answer a Question. It also lightly touches on playbook moves and custom moves. The Keeper chapters contain a more in-depth treatment of the basic moves and select playbook moves.

The Day Move

When you *do something risky* or *face something you fear*, name what you're afraid will happen if you fail or lose your nerve. Introductione, then roll with an appropriate ability.

On a 10+, you do what you intended or you hold steady; describe what it looks like.

On a 7-9, the Keeper will tell you how your actions would leave you vulnerable, and you can choose to back down or go through with it. If you go through with it, the Keeper describes what it looks like.

On a 12+, you do what you intended or you hold steady, and the Keeper will tell you some extra benefit or advantage you receive. Describe what it looks like.

The Day Move is used when hunters take risky actions during the day, or when they encounter something scary or unnerving during the day. The Keeper has final say on which ability is used for the roll.

The Night Move

When you *do something risky or face something you fear*, name what you're afraid will happen if you fail or lose your nerve. The Keeper will tell you how it is worse than you fear. You can choose to back down or go through with it. If you go through with it, roll with an appropriate ability.

On a 10+, you do what you intended or you hold steady; describe what it looks like.

On a 7-9, you do it or hold steady, but there is a complication or cost; the Keeper describes what it looks like.

On a 12+, you do what you intended or you hold steady, and the Keeper will tell you some extra benefit or advantage you receive. Describe what it looks like.

*The Night Move is used when hunters take risky actions at night, or when they encounter something scary or unnerving at night. In **THE BETWEEN**, nighttime is more dangerous than daytime, and so *The Night Move* is written to have more perilous outcomes for the hunters than *The Day Move*. The Keeper has final say on which ability is used for the roll.*

The Information Move

When you *search for a clue, conduct research, or otherwise gather information*, describe how you're doing so and roll with an appropriate ability.

On a hit, you find a Clue. The Keeper will tell you what it is.

On a 7-9, there's a complication—either with the Clue itself, or a complication you encounter while searching. The Keeper will tell you what the complication is.

On a 12+, you also find a Mastermind Clue.

The Information Move is the main way a hunter turns up the clues necessary to resolve the monstrous threats. In rarer instances, it can turn up clues related to the Mastermind's plot to destroy the empire. It is written to cover all types of information-gathering actions, and the ability used for the roll should match whatever action is taken. For example, if a hunter is gathering information by sweet-talking a local law enforcement official, their player would roll with Presence. If they are gathering information by silently listening to a conversation they aren't supposed to hear, their player would roll with Composure. If they are digging through the archives at a university library, they'd roll with Reason. And so forth. The Keeper has final say on which ability is used for the roll.

The Vulnerable Move

When you *have an intimate moment with another hunter while one of you is engaged in your vice*, you may clear an appropriate Condition. If it's your vice, you can also:

- Stumble on a Clue. Tell the Keeper what it is. The Clue cannot conclusively answer a Question by itself, OR
- Invite the other hunter to ask you about your past; you must answer truthfully but not necessarily completely.

This move serves the practical purposes of clearing a Condition and/or revealing a Clue, but is principally designed to show the relationship between two hunters. It is also one of two major opportunities to explore a hunter's dark past (the other being the Janus Mask; see Anatomy of a Playbook, Mask of the Past).

Answer a Question

When the hunters *have an open, freewheeling discussion about the answer to a Question once they have gathered a number of Clues equal to at least half the Question's Complexity—and reach a consensus—roll plus the number of Clues incorporated into the answer or otherwise explained away, minus the question's Complexity.*

On a 10+, the answer is correct and an Opportunity can be pursued.

On a 7-9, as above, but the Keeper will add an unwelcome complication to the answer and/or pursuing the Opportunity will be more dangerous.

On a 6-, the answer is incorrect and the Keeper reacts.

On a 12+, the Mastermind will reveal themselves while the hunters are pursuing the Opportunity.

The Keeper will regularly introduce Threats to the story—serial killers and literal monsters terrorizing London—and it's the job of the hunters to neutralize those Threats. The way they do so is by first gathering Clues, then using those Clues to answer a Question about the Threat, which then unlocks Opportunities to take the Threat down. As an example, here are the Questions and Opportunities for the Threat called Sally No-Face:

Question: *Where is the killer hiding? (Complexity: 4)*

Opportunity: *Resolve the Threat by infiltrating the killer's lair, then capturing or destroying them.*

Question: *How is the killer choosing their victims? (Complexity: 6)*

Opportunity: *Resolve the Threat by luring the killer to you, then capturing or destroying them.*

Question: *What is the true identity of the killer, and what drove them to this madness? (Complexity: 8)*

Opportunity: *Resolve the Threat by empathizing with the killer, then bringing them in peacefully.*

Importantly, there are no canonical answers to these Questions—players are expected to use their Clues to formulate an answer of their own—to theorize, if you will—and then roll dice to see if they are correct.

One last note about Answer a Question: the roll can never be taken with advantage or disadvantage. The success tier can be increased by invoking the Janus Mask, but only if every hunter does so.

Playbook & Custom Moves

The proper way to think about the differences between the basic moves, playbook moves, and custom moves is that each represents a different level of fictional specificity. Put more simply, the basic moves cover roughly 75% of all actions the hunters might take in the story; the playbook moves are for narrower circumstances involving powers or talents that are unique to a particular hunter, and account for about 20% of their actions; and custom moves are for extremely niche cases, usually for highlighting a specific location or Threat, or a dramatic, one-time action, and account for less than 5% of all actions.

The Keeper chapters contain some notes about certain playbook moves, but they are otherwise not detailed in this book; playbook moves can be found on their respective playbook sheets.

Custom moves are found on the Threat sheets (for Threats that have them), and are discussed in more detail in the appendix.

Anatomy of a Playbook

Playbooks are what we call character sheets in **THE BETWEEN**. They are unique to each hunter and represent character archetypes that are found in the various media sources that have inspired the game. While the details on each playbook are specific to that playbook, the broad categories of information are largely the same between them, and those are the focus of this chapter.

PLAYBOOK NAME AND DESCRIPTION: The description is a bit of colorful text used to get players' imaginations running wild. It is also used during the first session when populating the part of the playbook called Personal Quarters (see page 68).

NAME, LOOK, AND VICE: Players will come up with a name, look, and vice for their hunter by making selections from the lists located at the end of the playbook. In all cases, players can disregard the lists and make up their own.

DAWN QUESTIONS: These questions represent roleplaying goals for the game session. For each marked question the player answers "Yes" to during the Dawn phase (see Play Structure, Dawn Phase), they mark a box on the XP Track (see the next page). The first three questions are always marked, and two other questions of the player's choice are marked, for five total questions marked at any time. After the questions have been answered in the Dawn phase, players can unmark the two elective questions and mark two different ones, leave one marked and change the other, or leave both marked.

XP TRACK: When a player marks all five boxes on the XP track, they can erase them whenever they wish and mark an advancement (see Advancements, below). There are two ways to mark the XP track: 1) by answering "Yes" to a Dawn question or 2) when the text of a move instructs you to do so.

ADVANCEMENTS: When a player marks an advancement, they immediately apply its effects to their playbook. The hunter can no longer mark XP or advance when all advancements have been marked, but they remain in play until forced to retire by the Janus Mask or a Keeper reaction.

ABILITIES: Abilities are the hunter attributes that are applied to most die rolls in the game. For more information, see the Gameplay Basics chapter.

CONDITIONS: Conditions are negative traits that cause players to make die rolls at a disadvantage if the traits would feasibly hinder the hunter during an action. A hunter can have up to three Conditions. If they would ever take a fourth Condition, the player instead marks one of the Masks (see Invoking the Janus Mask). Conditions are removed as the result of moves or when the Keeper instructs the player to do so.

PLAYBOOK MOVES: Playbook moves are moves that are unique to their respective playbook. In most cases, one move is a defining move for the playbook and is automatically selected at the start of play; other moves are elective, and either chosen at the start of play or after taking an advancement.

INVOKING THE JANUS MASK: The next section of the playbook is divided into two parts: The Mask of the Past and The Mask of the Future. Whenever you “invoke the Janus Mask,” you pick one, read its specific instructions, and then mark a box. You must do whatever the text from your marked selection instructs before the current session ends.

The Mask of the Past is a metaphor that represents the hunter’s dark past. It usually involves flashbacks showing key moments in the hunter’s life leading up to their career at Hargrave House. These moments are meant to be conveyed in a dramatic and cinematic way—they’re important. Also, the details of the hunter’s past that are suggested by the Mask of the Past should never be spoken of—in character or out of character—until the Janus Mask is invoked or the hunter is compelled to by The Vulnerable Move.

The Mask of the Future uses the metaphor of gates or portals to suggest various dark fates the hunter may succumb to. They also trigger specific events in the game which are hidden to the players until the Keeper reveals them.

There are other aspects of the Janus Mask that can’t be found on the playbooks. These “special” masks function in the same way, but remain hidden until the Keeper reveals them.

PERSONAL QUARTERS: This section of the playbook is where players note interesting and distinctive items that can be found in their hunter’s room at Hargrave House. This section also functions as an equipment list, since anything from the Personal Quarters that might reasonably be on a hunter’s person in a scene, is. Items from Personal Quarters can be marked to get an advantage on a die roll. Generally-speaking, they cannot be unmarked, but marked items remain in Personal Quarters for use in future scenes, in which case they add to the fictional positioning of the hunter’s actions but do not convey a bonus to a die roll.

Players will have a chance to add items to their Personal Quarters at the beginning of the first session of play. After that, items can be added as the result of moves, as rewards for resolving Threats, or when the Keeper instructs a player to do so.

PLAY STRUCTURE



Unlike many tabletop roleplaying games, **THE BETWEEN** has a strict play structure; there are four distinct phases of play—Dawn, Day, Dusk, and Night—and each serves a different gameplay purpose and/or has a distinct feel. The game is structured this way for several reasons, but the main one is this: following the structure helps create a cinematic story.

When playing **THE BETWEEN**, the Dawn phase leads directly to the Day phase, the Day phase leads directly to the Dusk phase, the Dusk phase leads directly to the Night phase, the Night phase leads directly to the Dawn phase, and so on.

Dawn

Perform the following steps, in order:

- I Collect Rewards if a Threat was resolved.
- II Answer Dawn questions.
- III Mark new elective Dawn questions (or leave either or both the same).
- IV Resolve any playbook or custom moves that are resolved during the Dawn phase.
- V **Optional:** Resolve any Janus Mask prompts that remain unresolved (players can choose to wait until a later time, unless this is the end of the session).

Dawn is an upkeep phase that takes place immediately after a Night phase.

Day

Perform the following steps, in order:

- I The Keeper presents a new Threat if there are less than three active Threats.
- II Regular scenes commence, and continue until the Keeper decides to move to the next phase.

Day is when new Threats are presented by the Keeper and regular scenes commence; it takes place immediately after the Dawn phase. Of the four phases, Day is the one that feels most like every other tabletop roleplaying game: the Keeper frames up scenes (or players request them) and the players describe what their hunters do in response. The roleplaying conversation begins, moves are triggered and resolved, and gameplay continues like this until the Keeper decides to move to the Dusk phase, usually after each hunter has been the focus of one or two scenes.

Importantly, Day should feel fairly relaxed, even languid. The hunters can continue their investigations, have intimate scenes with other hunters, trigger playbook moves that are interesting to them, take actions that help them answer “Yes” to a Dawn question, resolve a Janus Mask prompt, or simply show a little bit of their day-to-day life, but in all cases, the scenes should have a casual, unhurried feel. Finally, you cannot resolve a Threat during the Day phase.

Dusk

Perform the following steps, in order:

- I Resolve any playbook moves or custom moves that are resolved during the Dusk phase.
- II The Keeper poses a Paint the Scene question about Hargrave House to the players, who then answer it. Skip this step if all the questions have been answered.
- III Each player says what their hunter will be doing during the upcoming Night phase.
- IV **Optional:** Resolve any Janus Mask prompts that remain unresolved (players can choose to wait until a later time, unless this is the end of the session).
- V The Keeper introduces the Unscene.

Dusk is a short phase with two overarching goals: 1) to explore the physical interior of Hargrave House and 2) to set up the Night phase that follows. Following is specific guidance for some of the Dusk steps.

PAINT THE SCENE: HARGRAVE HOUSE

“Paint the Scene” is a phrase that comes up a lot when playing THE BETWEEN. It’s a roleplaying game technique that aims to explore a theme or motif related to a location in the fiction. The Keeper poses a question to the players about the location, and the players take turns answering it. By the end, a strong sense of the location—both visually and thematically—has been built up, or “painted,” in the minds of the Keeper and players.

Paint the Scene questions most often occur while exploring locations connected to Threats, but they also occur during the Dusk phase, when the focus of the question is Hargrave House. The Keeper decides which room the Dusk scene is taking place in and poses the associated question to the players:

THE RECEPTION HALL: *Do you feel unsettled or at home when you enter Hargrave House? What do you perceive in the reception hall that reinforces this feeling?*

THE TROPHY ROOM: *There were hunters living in Hargrave House before you; trophies from their encounters with the supernatural can be found here. Describe one.*

THE MAP ROOM: *This room is littered with maps—of the city, of England, of the world—and some of them are highly unusual. Name one and describe why it’s so strange.*

THE DINING ROOM: *You don’t take meals together often, but tonight is an exception. What’s on the menu?*

THE SALON: *What do you see in this room that makes it the most comfortable spot in the entire house?*

THE MUSIC ROOM: *A former hunter in residence once used this room to wrangle a spirit using the power of music. There are still subtle signs of the struggle in this room. What are they?*

THE LIBRARY: *Of all the rooms in Hargrave House, none feel more “unstuck” than this one. As you enter the library, what do you see or experience that feels a little... off?*

THE CONSERVATORY: *A former hunter in residence turned out to be the legendary killer Roger the Reaver. This was his favorite room in Hargrave House. Looking around, how do you know that?*

THE GARDENS: *Being in this space is like being totally disconnected from the stink and grime of London. Is that reassuring to you or does it make you feel uncomfortable? Why?*

THE BALLROOM: *Hargrave House once hosted a ball for a group of visitors from the fae realm. Even today there are subtle reminders of that night in this room. What are they?*

THE KITCHEN: *The kitchen existed long before the rest of the house, having been part of a pub that stood on the spot before Belgravia was redeveloped to be a residential district. What do you see that reminds you of this fact?*

THE BASEMENT: *This space is cluttered with the belongings of long-dead hunters who used to live in Hargrave House. What do you take from it? Add it to your Personal Quarters.*

THE SERVANTS’ QUARTERS: *These rooms are mostly empty nowadays as, given the place’s history, very few people want to work at Hargrave House. They have most frequently been used as a place for trysts between the house’s residents. What here reminds you of that?*

HUNTERS DECLARE WHAT THEY'LL DO DURING THE NIGHT

PHASE: Each player, in turn, says what their hunter will be doing during the upcoming Night phase. Anyone who wishes to revise their plan may do so after everyone has had a chance to speak.

We assume the hunters are always discussing the actions they want to take in order to resolve Threats, and during the Dusk phase, we further assume they are having a meeting in a specific location in Hargrave House in order to plan that night's hunt. These planning scenes are great in, say, heist movies, but they tend to be slow and unfocused in a tabletop roleplaying game. You get a simpler, more streamlined effect by simply having each player say what their character is going to do, and then giving them each one revision. This process is also easier and clearer for the Keeper, who has to frame the upcoming Night phase scenes.

INTRODUCE THE UNSCENE: The Unscene will be explained in more detail at the end of this chapter, but for now, just know that it's a scene taking place somewhere else in London on the same night as the upcoming Night phase. It has no direct connection to the Threats, the Mastermind, Hargrave House, or any other element of the main story; the purpose of the Unscene is to create a cinematic play experience and to show other parts of London at night, particularly its seedy underbelly.

The Keeper will select an Unscene and read its introduction at the end of the Dusk phase.

Night

Perform the following steps in order:

- I A player reads and resolves the first Unscene prompt.
- II The Keeper frames up a scene for one or more hunters; the scene is played out until each hunter who is a focus of the scene has had a chance to take or resolve an action.
- III Repeat Step 2 until every hunter has been the focus of a scene.
- IV Repeat Steps 1 through 3 until you get to Step 1 and there are no more Unscene prompts, at which point the Night phase immediately ends.

The Night phase can seem tricky, particularly as it compares to how other tabletop roleplaying games play. Unlike the Day phase, which is meant to have a casual, unhurried feel, the Night phase is meant to feel fast and feral. The scenes should be punchy, and the Keeper should smash cut to the next hunter as soon as one hunter takes an action, particularly if that action results in a die roll, returning to resolve the action or die roll at a later time. To make matters more unusual, players will be narrating the events of an entirely unrelated scene (the Unscene) in between these fast, feral scenes with their characters. Knowing how to manage the structure of the Night phase is a skill the Keeper has to acquire; fortunately, it's not difficult to get the hang of, and there will be detailed advice on how to do so in the Keeper chapters of this text.



The Unscene

The Unscene is, without doubt, the most unusual part of **THE BETWEEN'S** game procedures. It is a scene that takes place in parallel with what the hunters are doing during a Night phase, and is meant to show a side of London that only rears its head when the sun sets. Before you continue reading this section, grab the document called London at Night: The Unscene and read through one of the options there. Once you've done that, continue here.

How does it work?

The Unscene is introduced by the Keeper during the Dusk phase. During the Night phase, a player selected by the Keeper (or a player selected in any other manner the group agrees to or that is otherwise called for in the rules, as in the case of certain playbook moves) reads the first prompt in the Unscene and resolves it, meaning they do what it says to do; the prompt usually involves narrating a scene. After the prompt is resolved, hunter scenes begin. After a round of short scenes, the Keeper asks a player to read the next Unscene prompt, which is then resolved as above, and then followed by another round of short hunter scenes. This continues until the end of the hunter scenes that follow the last Unscene prompt, which also signals the end of the Night phase. The players' goals during the Unscene are to bring evocative details about the city to life and to achieve what the game calls Echoes in the Night (discussed later in this section).

London as a character in the game

One of the major gameplay goals of **THE BETWEEN** is to bring your group's version of Victorian-era London to life at the table. London should almost feel like another character in the story. **THE BETWEEN** helps accomplish this in several ways, but the Unscene is the most significant and explicit.

Cinematic gameplay

THE BETWEEN embraces cinematic gameplay. Put another way, it's less concerned with perfectly simulating its world than it is in creating big, dramatic moments that make that world memorable.

This idea of cinematic gameplay extends to who has narrative authority in the game. In a traditional roleplaying game, most of the narrative authority, particularly authority over the setting, is held by the game master (the Keeper in our parlance); the role of the players is to simply inhabit their characters and say how they respond to things. **THE BETWEEN** rejects this by giving players the authority to describe the world at key moments (such as during Paint the Scene questions). You might compare it to the writer's room on a TV show or movie—the director or showrunner has a lot of say over the general arc of the story, but the writers get to shape the details. That's what playing **THE BETWEEN** is like: it's a collaborative experience.

The Unscene is the most direct and pronounced expression of this gameplay style, as it requires the players to step entirely out of character and narrate a scene that develops the entire world, not just the corner their character occupies.

Echoes in the Night

And yet, with all of the above said, we still have an interest in connecting the Unscene to the main story, even if that connection is subtle or ephemeral (and maybe even especially if that connection is subtle or ephemeral), because it makes the entire experience more coherent and satisfying. We do this with what the game calls an Echo in the Night.

An Echo in the Night is when a Night phase hunter scene references something in the Unscene, and vice-versa. This reference can be thematic, or it can repeat a motif. Examples:

During the Unscene, a player narrates a scene of a prostitute dying of consumption by describing the vivid red blood she coughs into a bowl. Later, they describe a bowl of vivid red flowers situated on a table their hunter is sitting at.

The Keeper describes the sorry state of a poorly-funded orphanage the hunters are investigating during the Night phase. Later, during the Unscene, a player repeats the theme of poverty by describing the sorry state of a tenement house.

A player describes how their hunter, who has a beautiful singing voice, entertains a group of wealthy partygoers with an impromptu song. Later, during the Unscene, while describing a performance at the Grand Guignol, a different player describes how a down-on-their-luck mezzo soprano commands the stage and mesmerizes the audience with their solo performance.

Rich, damask curtains are described during the Unscene. Rich, damask curtains are described during the hunter scene.

The above examples show how an Echo in the Night can be subtle or dramatic, nuanced in meaning or very straightforward—the goal is to simply create some connection between the Unscene and the hunter scenes. Even very simple occurrences, like the curtains in the last example, count as an Echo in the Night.

Importantly, the play group should not dwell on whether an Echo occurred. The Night phase is about fast, feral action for the hunters, and the dark, often hidden side of life for the city of London—there’s no time for stopping to discuss Echoes in the Night. Players should focus on their hunters’ actions and answering their Unscene prompts in the most interesting or entertaining fashion. If they see an opportunity to introduce an Echo, they should take it, but it shouldn’t be a major concern, especially when first learning how to play **THE BETWEEN**. Players will get better at spotting opportunities to introduce Echoes as they get more familiar with the game’s rhythms, and with time, introducing clever or elaborate Echoes becomes a point of pride within the play group.

The only time players should actively discuss Echoes in the Night is during the Dawn phase. One of the Dawn questions on every playbook is: “Did you experience an Echo in the Night?” In order for a player to answer “Yes” to this question, one of the following must be true: 1) their hunter experienced an Echo from the Unscene or 2) they themselves experienced an Echo by narrating something into the Unscene connected to the hunter scenes. In the first case, the Echo can be from any player’s Unscene descriptions; in the second case, the Echo can reference any hunter’s scene.

The Unscene has no connection to the main story

It has been stated once before, but we’re going to say it again here to emphasize the point: the Unscene has no direct connection to the main story. Players should not make reference to Hargrave House, the hunters, the Mastermind, or any Threats when resolving Unscene prompts. The Unscene is only indirectly connected to the main story via Echoes in the Night.

The Unscene is a timer

One last note about the Unscene: it acts as a timer for the Night phase. When the Unscene is over, the Night phase is almost over, too. The Keeper has some wiggle room on this point—they can let the last hunter scenes stretch on for a bit if the fiction demands it—but for the most part, the Night phase concludes shortly after the Unscene concludes. To reiterate an earlier point, the game works this way because it is concerned with a cinematic presentation, and part of that means ensuring the hunter scenes in the Night phase don’t get dragged out. The hunter scenes should be dangerous and melodramatic, but also short.

THE KEEPER BASICS



The next three chapters are presented as if the game designer is speaking directly to the Keeper, and so the tone and presentation is a bit less formal than in other chapters.

Your Role

This is a game about finding and stopping monstrous threats that are terrorizing Victorian-era London. You'll present the basics of a threat to the hunters, who will then begin an investigation, gathering clues to help them answer relevant questions about the threat and ultimately putting a stop to what it is doing. If you have played other tabletop roleplaying games where the characters solve supernatural mysteries, much of **THE BETWEEN** will feel familiar.

However, there are three significant differences with most of those games you need to be aware of:

- I The clues are not located in specific places, and, in fact, can be found wherever the hunters are looking.
- II You don't know the explanation to any of the mysteries surrounding the threat until the players do the Answer a Question move.
- III The various threats aren't the real threat—there's another, more insidious danger, a criminal mastermind who may be pulling the strings from the shadows.

In addition to presenting these monstrous threats and managing the machinations of the criminal mastermind, you are generally responsible for portraying the world around the hunters. This means you give voice to all the various characters they interact with, you describe elements of a scene when needed, you challenge them with dangers and obstacles, and you show how the world reacts to the actions they take.

You have a lot of responsibility as the Keeper, but please understand that you don't have to be a creative genius or improvisational wizard to run **THE BETWEEN**. Threat sheets and the Mastermind sheet not only help you keep the game organized, but also provide you with loads of inspirational details; there are many instances when it is the players' responsibility to describe the game world rather than yours; and, if all else fails, you can take a break to think about what should happen in the story, or even ask the players for their ideas.

Finally, while everyone is responsible for making sure everyone else is having a good time and maintaining each others' boundaries of safety and consent, it is your responsibility before play begins to make sure the players understand what kinds of subject matter might come up in **THE BETWEEN**.

This game deals with some incredibly dark and provocative themes—it's a game about exploring those dark places—and you need to make sure players understand what they are getting into. If you know your normal playgroup isn't likely to handle these subjects with care or respect, you need to be honest with yourself about that (and possibly not offer **THE BETWEEN** as an option on your regular game night).

If you're running **THE BETWEEN** at a convention or in some sort of public space, like a Twitch stream, you need to exercise extra care when presenting the game to players and/or viewers.

Managing the Play Structure

One of your most important jobs as the Keeper is managing the game's play structure. Below is advice for how to run each of the game's phases.

Running the Dawn phase

Dawn is a short, simple upkeep phase; just do the steps listed in the Play Structure chapter and you'll be fine. The main piece of advice I would give you for this phase involves answering Dawn questions, which is: be generous. Sometimes it won't be clear if a player is able to answer "Yes" to a Dawn question, and so you might have to weigh in. Strive to be expansive and open-minded—look for an opportunity to give the player credit for the Dawn question. If you still can't get to a "Yes," then say so, but tell the player what they might have done differently in a scene in order to get that XP.

Running the Day phase

It's really important that you follow the players' leads when it comes to the Day phase. This is their time to explore the game and story in the way that is most interesting to them. They may want to continue their investigations, or they may want to have lower-stakes scenes that serve to develop their hunter's personality or personal agenda. Always be honest about what is possible at any given time, but do your best to give them the scenes they want.

After you have introduced a new Threat (provided there are fewer than three when the Day phase starts), the best way to get things rolling is to simply go around the table and ask: "What would you like to do?" You may want to frame up a scene immediately after they give you an answer, or you might want to hold back and hear out the other players first, especially if the first player requested a scene with another hunter. Once a scene is framed up, meaning you describe where it takes place and what's going on when the hunters arrive, ask them: "What do you do?" Things should pretty much take off from there: the conversation with the players begins, hunters start taking actions, moves are triggered, and so forth.

The Day phase is intentionally unhurried and casual. Because of this, it's important that you keep the spotlight moving; spending too long on one hunter's scene can make the other players get bored or feel resentful. Cut in the middle of an ongoing scene to ask another hunter what they're up to. Get that second hunter's scene going and then cut to another hunter, or return to the original hunter. The important thing is to just keep moving around the table; never spend more than five to ten minutes on a scene before cutting away to check in with another character.

End the Day phase whenever it feels right. In my experience, that's after each hunter has had one or two full scenes. In a three to four hour game session with four players, the Day phase should take up roughly 50% of the playtime.

One last note about the Day phase: the day in question may not always follow directly from the night that came before. Decide how much time has passed between the Night phase and the Day phase and tell the players. For example, if they have just resolved a Threat, it might make sense for a decent amount of time to pass—a few days, a week or two, even a month.

Running the Dusk phase

Dusk is a fairly short set-up phase; just do the steps listed in the Play Structure chapter and things will go smoothly. There is no real science to picking a Hargrave House question or an Unscene—just read through them (ideally before play begins) and pick the options that are most interesting to you.

The part you'll want to pay close attention to is when players tell you what their hunter will be doing during the upcoming Night phase. They each get to speak once, and then make one revision after they hear what everyone else has to say.

Some groups tend to fall into groupthink at this stage, or they think the hunters have to always be together ("Don't split the party!"). Gently remind players that they absolutely do not have to go along with what other players are doing, and that they can safely explore the dark corners of London on their own because, so long as they have the Janus Mask available to them, their hunter cannot be killed.

Running the Night phase

I'm going to spend some time on this section because the Night phase can be tricky to run, even for seasoned game masters.

THE NIGHT PHASE IS YOURS: Just as the Day phase belongs to the players, the Night phase belongs to you. The players get to express their preferences during the Dusk phase, and, in general, you should try to accommodate them by framing up scenes that allow them to do the things they want to do, but you are always free to ignore them. They may want to go out searching for the Creature of Cremorne Gardens, but you might decide it's more dramatically interesting if they spend their evening defending Hargrave House from the Coven.

Perhaps the hunters have been ignoring the Pinkerton and so you decide this Night phase is when the Pinkerton is going to make their lives complicated. Maybe you've been saving a Keeper reaction from earlier in the game and decide you want to use this Night phase to finally unleash it.

PACING THE NIGHT PHASE: The Night phase has a distinctly different feel from the Day phase—it's faster, more dangerous, more feral. Your job as the Keeper is to maintain this energy and keep the scenes moving toward conclusion. The Unscene is there to put a timer on the whole thing—when the last Unscene prompt is resolved, the phase is almost over—but you need to keep the action direct and punchy during the individual hunter scenes.

Let's take a look at an example involving three hunters who are investigating ghostly activity at the townhouse that is the focus of the St. James's Street Ghost.

Player #1 reads the first Unscene prompt and resolves it.

The Keeper frames up a scene where the hunters have just entered the entry hall of the townhouse. The Keeper asks Player #1 what their hunter does.

Player #1 describes their hunter conferring with Mrs. Beale, asking her questions about what's been going on. A little bit of roleplay takes place, and the Information Move is triggered. After dice hit the table, the Keeper immediately cuts away and asks Player #2 what they are doing.

Player #2 describes their hunter going up the stairs, examining pictures that are hanging on the wall, seeing if there is anything that can be learned from them. The Information Move is triggered. After dice hit the table, the Keeper immediately cuts away and asks Player #3 what they are doing.

Player #3 describes their hunter going into the dining room. After the Keeper says what they see at a glance in the dining room, the player describes their hunter opening the curio cabinet they find there and examining the figurines inside, hoping to learn something about the history of the family. The Information Move is triggered. After dice hit the table, the Keeper immediately cuts away and asks Player #2 to read and resolve the next Unscene prompt.

Player #2 reads the second Unscene prompt and resolves it.

The Keeper returns to Player #1's die roll. It's a 10. The Keeper reveals a Clue via the conversation with Mrs. Beale. The conversation reaches a natural endpoint, and then the Keeper asks Player #1 what their hunter does. Player #1 says they want to go search the basement. The Keeper frames up a scene in the basement, describing everything the hunter can see. The Keeper then cuts away to follow up with Player #2.

Player #2 rolled a 7. The Keeper reveals a Clue but then explains that as the hunter reaches the top of the stairs, they feel an unnatural and unnerving chill in the air. The Keeper gives the hunter the Condition Chilled to the Bone then asks the player if their hunter presses forward. The player says they do, triggering the Night Move. Dice are rolled and then the Keeper cuts away to follow up with Player #3.

Player #3 rolled a miss. The Keeper reacts by describing how one of the figurines begins to move on its own! The Keeper asks the player how this makes their hunter feel. They say "Terrified," so the Keeper gives them the Condition Terrified and then asks what they do. Player #3 describes their hunter immediately leaving the room. The Keeper cuts away and asks Player #3 to read and resolve the next Unscene prompt.

Player #3 reads the next Unscene Prompt and resolves it.

And so on, until the round of scenes following the last Unscene prompt are resolved, at which point the Night phase ends.

ENDING THE NIGHT PHASE: The Night phase ends after the round of scenes following the last Unscene prompt. It's ok to let those scenes go a little longer than the ones that came before, especially if it wouldn't make sense for the hunter to just randomly abandon whatever they were doing.

Let the hunters resolve whatever actions they were taking or finish up whatever conversations they were having, but as soon as there is a natural lull in the action, the Night phase ends.

Now, I fully acknowledge that ending the Night phase will often feel abrupt, especially if the hunters didn't get to do everything they set out to do, and even more so if there would have been plenty of hours left in the night to do it. The explanation for why it is this way is something that has already been said several times in this text: **THE BETWEEN** aims for a cinematic experience. We care about dramatic moments—especially at night—but have less concern for accurately simulating the world.

DON'T BE A SLAVE TO THE PLAY STRUCTURE: One final note about the play structure: strive to follow it, but don't be an absolutist about it. Perhaps there's going to be a fabulous party one night at Hargrave House, and you want to spend some time on all those fun character interactions. In that case, disregard the Night phase pacing and let scenes linger. Perhaps there is a big, immediate danger Hargrave House has to deal with and no one wants to spend time being emotional over tea or whatever the hunters normally get up to during the day. In that case, cut the Day phase short and go directly to the Dusk phase. Perhaps you're running out of time in the session and you really want to squeeze in a whole Night phase. In that case, ditch the Unscene; the players won't have Echoes in the Night, but that's hardly the end of the world. In short, the play structure is a guide for play, and you should follow it as much as possible, but sometimes you just can't, and that's ok.

Anatomy of a Threat

Here I'll cover everything you need to know about managing Threats. I'll do that by going over each part of the Threat sheet. Some Threats may deviate slightly from this structure or have elements that are unique to that Threat; we're going to ignore that stuff and just focus on the elements that are common to all Threats.

TITLE: The title of the Threat is never withheld from the players—tell them what it's called.

INTRODUCTION: This paragraph features italicized text introducing the basics of the Threat. When you have to present a new Threat during the Day phase, you do so by simply reading this text. This section also frequently has a question that you pose to a hunter. The purpose of asking that question is usually to give Hargrave House a hook into the mystery.

QUESTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES: Questions represent mysteries the hunters are trying to solve. What makes this Threat tick? Where can we find them? How can we get them to come to us? Hunters solve these mysteries by gathering Clues and triggering the Answer a Question move.

If the Answer a Question move is successful, the associated Opportunity is unlocked. Opportunities usually involve resolving the Threat (often by capturing or destroying it). In fact, the only way to resolve Threats is to successfully Answer a Question and then pursue its Opportunity. If the hunters encounter the Threat before unlocking the Opportunity, they can battle it or even attempt to destroy it, but they will never be rid of it completely—the Threat slips away at the last moment, comes back to life at a later time, or simply... reappears.

Additionally, the inherent danger of pursuing an Opportunity is inversely proportional to the Complexity of its Question. So, a Question with Complexity 4 is fairly easy to answer, but pursuing that Opportunity should be much more dangerous than the one whose Question has Complexity 8.

JANUS MASK: Most Threats have their own aspect of the Janus Mask, usually connected to a prominent theme. A player can choose to mark this box when invoking the Janus Mask instead of marking a box on their playbook so long as they are actively investigating or pursuing that Threat. This mask prompt usually require all players to participate, not just the player who marked it. In the case of invoking the Janus Mask in order to get a better result on Answer a Question, marking this mask only counts for the player who marked it—the other players still have to mark a mask from their playbook (or from another active Threat if they were pursuing that Threat).

THE KILLER, VAMPIRE, GHOST, ETC. : This section contains a description of the character or creature that is central to the Threat. It will usually have information about what they look like, how they behave, and what sorts of supernatural abilities they have. It may contain a quote if the character or creature is sentient. Importantly, it contains information about what will happen if Hargrave House ignores the Threat. At the beginning of every session, review this part of the Threat sheet; if Hargrave House has gone a few Day/Night cycles without pursuing the Threat, think about how the Threat might make their lives more difficult.

MOMENTS: These are colorful bits that you can sprinkle in wherever needed. They reinforce the Threat's themes and, frankly, make you look like a rock star Keeper whenever you drop them into a scene.

DANGERS: These are dangers associated with the Threat, usually henchmen of some sort, but sometimes supernatural attacks or third parties interested in stopping the hunters, such as fanatics or Scotland Yard. Importantly, this is not an exhaustive list, but a jumping off point: use it to inspire your own creations and improvisations.

LOCATIONS: These are locations which might be connected to the Threat in some way. Each contains a short description plus a Paint the Scene question to further develop them. Locations can be highly localized, such as the rooms in the house being haunted by the St. James's Street Ghost, or spread over a much wider geographical area, such as the various buildings and districts terrorized by Sally No-Face. Importantly, the list of Locations is not exhaustive; use it to inspire your own creations and improvisations.

SIDE CHARACTERS: These are the characters who might be connected to the Threat in some way. Each has three sensory details, a short description explaining their possible role in the story, and a quote. Sometimes Side Characters are connected to a certain location or circumstance, as with the Beale family in The St. James's Street Ghost, and other times they are free agents, meaning you can drop them in wherever needed, as with the various street people in Sally No-Face. Importantly, the list of Side Characters is not exhaustive—you can and should introduce characters not contemplated by the Threat sheet if it makes sense in the story.

CLUES: These are uncovered during certain moves. When it comes time to reveal a Clue, scan the list and pick the one that makes the most sense in the moment or is the one you find most interesting, and work it into the fiction. Clues are written to be diverse and flexible—you should be able to find something that fits. Also, you can change the Clue or add to it as much as you wish (just be careful your changes and additions don't cause the Clue to answer the Question by itself).

Consider the Clue, “A red smudge believed to be blood, but, on closer inspection, rouge.” Here are some different ways this Clue might be used:

- A hunter discovers a Clue while examining a corpse. What appeared to be a smear of blood on the corpse's ear is actually, upon closer investigation, a bit of rouge.
- A hunter is talking to a Side Character, a mortuary worker, who reveals a Clue. The mortuary worker explains how they were recently examining a corpse and what at first appeared to be a smear of blood on the corpse's ear turned out to be rouge.
- A hunter discovers a Clue while examining a corpse covered in soot. Upon closer investigation, they discover that some of the soot on their face is not actually soot at all, but black greasepaint used by theater troupes.
- A hunter discovers a Clue while examining the corpse of a prostitute. The prostitute's cheeks are seemingly painted with rouge, but, upon closer inspection, the rouge turns out to be blood.

- A hunter is searching the vanity of a Side Character and uncovers a Clue: a pot of rouge that, upon closer inspection, turns out to be blood.
- A hunter is conducting an investigation in a portrait gallery and discovers a Clue: a portrait has been painted using blood in place of red paint.

Let's work through another sample Clue, “Tales of a young romance gone awry.” Here are some ways this Clue might be used:

- The hunter is chatting with a Side Character, who reveals a Clue. The Side Character tells a story about two other Side Characters who used to be in love but who now hate each other intensely.
- The hunter is rummaging through a Side Character's desk and discovers a Clue: half-finished letters written by the Side Character to a woman who clearly no longer loves him.
- The hunter is looking around a private library and discovers a Clue: every novel about unrequited love has been recently removed from the shelves.
- The hunter is chatting with a Side Character, who reveals a Clue. The Side Character explains how another Side Character was so distraught about the loss of his young wife, he had her body exhumed and put on display in his sitting room.
- The hunter is exploring the house of a Side Character while the Side Character is out and discovers a Clue: the recently-exhumed body of the Side Character's dead wife, put on display in the sitting room.

As you can see, there are no real limits on how you can use a Clue. So long as the Clue doesn't automatically answer the Question, you can twist it, remix it, and add to it as much as you want.

REWARDS: Each Threat sheet has a list of Rewards the hunters can claim if they resolve the Threat. Rewards are claimed during the Dawn phase. Each hunter picks a single Reward, marking it off when they do so; no Reward can be taken by two different hunters, though some of them are repeats.

Keeper Principles

This section explains the general principles you should bear in mind when running a game of **THE BETWEEN**. You will occasionally find yourself in a situation that isn't explicitly covered by the rules or where you need to make up something on the fly. So long as you are following the Keeper principles, your improvisations will come across as authentic and fair.

THE KEEPER PRINCIPLES ARE:

- Play to find out what happens
- Make the world and everyone in it seem real
- Be a fan of Hargrave House
- Sometimes, disclaim decision-making
- Keep the daytime casual
- Make the nighttime dangerous
- Present horror in a matter-of-fact way

PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS: You have a Threat sheet, a cast of Side Characters, a list of Clues, and a Mastermind sheet, but none of it is set in stone. Be willing to let the session unfurl on its own terms. If a player has a cool idea that doesn't quite match what's on the Threat sheet, go with it. In fact, many parts of the game will explicitly challenge your preconceived ideas—such as the answers to Paint the Scene questions—so be flexible and ready to incorporate things you hadn't considered.

MAKE THE WORLD & EVERYONE IN IT SEEM REAL: Describe the world in sensory-rich detail. You have some help here: the Side Characters in a Threat each come with three descriptive details and notes on how to play them, and key locations have Paint the Scene questions to help enrich the scene. Use these as a foundation for how you approach everything in the world. Give characters not listed among the Side Characters three descriptive details to bring them alive; think of your own Paint the Scene question for a location that takes on sudden importance.

SOMETIMES, DISCLAIM DECISION-MAKING: You are co-creating the story with the players. Let them chime-in to flesh out the world, describe things they see, and get invested in what's happening. Also, when you aren't sure how to react to the result of a move, ask the table for advice.

BE A FAN OF HARGRAVE HOUSE: This doesn't mean "let them win." It means "give them challenges that make you root for them."

KEEP THE DAYTIME CASUAL: In other words, let the daytime scenes unfurl at their own pace; let them breathe. They should feel unhurried and, importantly, safe. This doesn't mean they have to be safe—sudden danger in the day can lead to great storytelling—but they should at least feel safe.

MAKE THE NIGHTTIME DANGEROUS: The night is always dangerous in **THE BETWEEN**. Players will do their best to maneuver their hunters into circumstances they think are safe—they'll avoid dark alleys and seek out well-lit places or crowds—and your job is to show them how they are wrong.

PRESENT HORROR IN A MATTER-OF-FACT WAY: The temptation to present horror elements in a “scary” manner—perhaps with exaggerated, Vincent Price-esque mannerisms—is very high. Unless you feel particularly confident in your ability to be “scary” at the table, you should present creepy things in a calm, measured, matter-of-fact way. That calm, plain presentation will itself stand in contrast to the things being described, which is its own kind of creepy. The players' imaginations will do the rest.

Keeper Reactions

You will frequently be asked to define and narrate complications resulting from a die roll, or otherwise “react” to a situation. Generally-speaking, a good reaction is one that complicates a hunter's life in an interesting way and follows logically from the established fiction.

If you can't think of a natural reaction based on what's happening in the fiction, choose a reaction from the list below, modifying as needed.

- Separate the hunters
- Kill a Side Character
- Inflict a Condition
- Put a hunter in danger
- Describe a hunter being killed
- Remove an item from their Personal Quarters
- Have an official show up

SEPARATE THE HUNTERS: The hunters will usually want to stay together, so complicate their lives by separating one or more of them from the group. Are the hunters looking around a creepy old townhouse? Perhaps one of them enters a one-way secret passage. Are they getting nosy in the middle of a fete? Have a guest come whisk one of them away. Are they snooping around a ship moored in Chelsea Harbor? Maybe a shadowy figure locks one of them in a cabin. The important thing is that whatever happens next to the separated hunter(s) should be fascinating or perilous.

KILL A SIDE CHARACTER: Nothing will get the hunters' (and players') attention like having a Side Character turn up dead, especially if it's in a gruesome manner. This reaction is particularly effective if the hunters are starting to get close to resolving a Threat or, conversely, if they have been ignoring the Threat entirely. Note that this is a very strong Keeper reaction, and really only appropriate as the result of a missed roll.

INFLECT A CONDITION: This a trusty, go-to Keeper reaction for nearly any situation. A Condition is a one-word adjective or short phrase, and it should follow directly from whatever just happened in the fiction. For example, if a Hunter got side-swiped by a carriage pulling away from a crime scene, you might give them the Condition Banged-up. If they just had a very frustrating, condescending conversation with D.I. Pettigrew, you might give them the Condition Irritated. If they are having a little too much fun at a charity gala, you might give them the Condition Had One Too Many. A Condition can be cleared by the use of the Vulnerable Move, or because you think it's appropriate given the circumstances.

PUT A HUNTER IN DANGER: “Danger” can mean physical danger or something else. Is a hunter sneaking into a warehouse after hours? Maybe some toughs appear from the shadows and threaten them with clubs and knives. Are the hunters tagging along with a fisherman on the Thames in order to pump him for information? Maybe a sudden storm rolls in and threatens to capsize the boat. Is a hunter trying to humiliate a social rival at a party? Maybe the social rival gets the upper hand and tells a scathing joke at the hunter's expense.

DESCRIBE A HUNTER BEING KILLED: Kill a hunter! It's totally fine. Make it gruesome, if you want. The players can always invoke the Janus Mask to get a fictional do-over. Note that this is a very strong reaction that is only appropriate as the result of a missed roll, and even then only if it was adequately telegraphed as a possibility beforehand, such as in the Day or Night move, or in a conversation between the Keeper and player that preceded the roll. This reaction is never appropriate as the result of a missed Information Move roll.

REMOVE AN ITEM FROM THEIR PERSONAL QUARTERS: Just like inflicting a Condition, this is a very dependable, go-to reaction for many situations. Essentially, if they were using something from their Personal Quarters, have them lose it—it breaks, is stolen, is misplaced, etc.

HAVE AN OFFICIAL SHOW UP: This reaction is a very important genre convention and should be used liberally. The idea is that an official, usually someone from Scotland Yard, shows up and interferes with the hunters' investigation in some way. Note that we use the term “official” very loosely here—anyone with authority over the situation will do. A nosy maitre'd can be just as troublesome in a fancy restaurant as a surly detective can be at a crime scene.



THE KEEPER ADVANCED

This chapter contains advanced tips and techniques for being a Keeper in **THE BETWEEN**. Nothing in this chapter is strictly necessary to run the game, but the advice here will enrich the experience for both you and the players.

Day Move vs. Night Move

The Day Move and the Night Move are going to get rolled for the majority of non-investigation actions requiring a die roll, and so you need to have a good understanding of how they work, how they differ from one another, and when to trigger them.

The first thing you need to be aware of is that these moves do not have miss conditions in their text. Should a player roll a miss, they most likely fail in the action they were taking, but not necessarily—it's up to you whether they fail or succeed.

In either case, you will perform a Keeper reaction. In general, this Keeper reaction should be stronger than the complication or cost they might have incurred on a 7-9, and it should flow logically from the established fiction.

Another thing to understand here is that these moves are a negotiation between you and the player. The player tells you what they are afraid will happen if they fail or lose their nerve. You are free to disregard what the player has offered when considering how to react—especially if the player’s suggestion is soft or nonsensical—but if they have given a good, genuine answer to what they are afraid of, you should do your best to incorporate it. Doing so sends a signal to the player that this is a collaborative storytelling process, and they’ll be eager to give you some good stuff to work with in the future.

The Night Move has a slight wrinkle: after the player says what they’re afraid of, you must tell them how it’s worse than they fear. Again, when saying how things are worse, you can disregard what the player suggested if what they suggested was too soft, but do your best to riff off what they give you. Another important aspect of “telling them how it’s worse” is being honest about how it’s worse. If it’s possible for the hunter to sustain a serious injury, tell them that. If it’s possible for a hunter to be killed, tell them that. They have the option of backing down after you say how bad it’s going to be but before they actually roll. If they roll, get a miss, and then you show their hunter being killed when you didn’t previously tell them this was a possibility, the player is going to feel cheated.

One final thing about the Day Move and the Night Move: they trigger whenever a hunter is facing something they fear. This is a passive use-case (and thus easy to forget), but a very important one for a game that has horror elements. The hunters will witness things that are shocking or horrifying, and depending on how they handle themselves in that moment, things could get very sticky for them. Trigger the Day or Night move to see if they can keep it together (in most cases, they will be rolling with Composure).

You might be wondering how a hunter can back down or try a different way when the move was triggered passively. It’s a good thing to wonder about, and the answer for how to handle it will depend a lot on the specific circumstances. It could be that backing down is not possible or that there is no good alternative option, in which case just make that clear to the player. Generally-speaking, it probably means the hunter has to abandon the moment, or give up the thing they were trying to accomplish in the first place. It might mean they have to react in a way that isn’t being scared. Perhaps it’s even an opportunity to show what a badass they are by taking some kind of direct action in the face of the fear.

A note about “saying how it’s worse than [they] fear:” just go for it. If the hunter is trying to run away from a servant of the Mastermind and they say they might fall down and injure themselves if they fail, feel free to say: “It’s worse than that—the servant catches up to you and tears your guts out, killing you.” Remember: the players have total control over whether their character actually dies or not, so just go big when it comes to the stakes—it’s more fun that way.

The tricky thing is if the player goes big themselves by putting death on the table when they say what they are afraid will happen if they fail or lose their nerve—what then? Well, you still must say how it's worse than they feared, but in this case, “worse” might mean long-term effects after the character is dead, such as how it affects their surviving family members or Hargrave House. If you're unsure, ask the table for their input.

A related note: sometimes players tell me they felt like they didn't have a choice when it came to invoking the Janus Mask—that if the alternative to doing so is character death, of course they're going to do it. My answer to that is twofold: 1) they did have a choice: **THE BETWEEN** embraces an ethos that players have the ultimate control over when their character dies, and choosing to have them die rather than using the Janus Mask is a valid choice if it's dramatically interesting, and 2) their agency took place earlier in the Day/Night move when they were given a chance to back down or try a different approach.

Finally, what counts as day or night? If the scene is taking place during the day, you use the Day Move; if it takes place at night, you use the Night Move—easy stuff. Something you might consider, though, is changing what counts as “day” and “night,” based not on temporal considerations, but whether the scene is fundamentally safer or more dangerous. A poorly-lit warehouse in a rough part of the city might be “night,” no matter the time of day, just as a well-lit nighttime gala might be “day,” especially on the ballroom floor, where there are dozens of people around. Just make sure the players understand which move is in play before they take any actions.

The Information Move

This move is a critical part of the engine that makes the game go—if the hunters aren't gathering Clues, they aren't getting any closer to resolving Threats, and the story comes to a halt. The important thing to understand here is that you should be very generous when interpreting what counts as triggering the move. Sometimes it will be obvious: if a hunter is poking around someone's home, they are definitely doing the Information Move. Other times, it will be subtle: if they're comforting a grieving family member, they may be doing so to get that person to reveal something important. Ask the player if you're unsure: “Are you trying to trigger the Information Move here?”

Answer a Question

The text of the move says, “When the hunters have an open, freewheeling discussion...” but, in practice, this discussion is being had by the players, not the hunters, and, as the Keeper, you have a role to play, too. You should feel free to offer your own thoughts, challenge the assumptions being made, and interrogate theories that fail to account for certain Clues. If a player is being demure during this process, cut in and ask them for their opinion on things. If a player is dominating the conversation, go around and confirm with the other players that they agree with what the dominant player is suggesting. Importantly, you need to guide the conversation to a consensus so a die roll can take place.

Another important job you have during Answer a Question is to invite the players to add critical context to the discussion of Clues. The Clues they have gathered will frequently seem disjointed or incongruent with one another—that’s by design, so they can be used flexibly. Encourage the players to add the context necessary to make the Clues fit their answer. For example, if the hunters found a severed finger during an investigation, and their answer depends on the whereabouts of a Side Character called Elena, they need to account for how the finger might be connected to Elena if they want that Clue to count against the Complexity in the die roll. Perhaps Elena is missing a finger, but very likely no one thought to look at Elena’s hands during the investigation. During Answer a Question, it’s ok for a detail like this to be added to the fiction. And so, a player might suggest that Elena was always seen wearing gloves, and that might be how she hides her wound. You should encourage this kind of “ret-conning” of the established fiction so the players can arrive at an answer that incorporates as many Clues as desired.

Personal Quarters

There are many opportunities in the game for hunters to add items to their Personal Quarters, but if something is particularly memorable in the story, or if the hunter goes through the trouble of acquiring something strange or rare, and these things are not otherwise part of a procedure that causes it to be added to Personal Quarters, tell them they can do so. Be advised that power gamers might try to take advantage of this and repeatedly ask you about adding items to their Personal Quarters. Gently remind them they are not allowed to make such requests, and that the decision for adding things to Personal Quarters outside of the prescribed ways is entirely yours.

Also: players tend to forget about or overlook the Personal Quarters, especially in the first couple sessions. You will need to remind the players about this part of the game until they get the hang of it. If a die roll is coming up—especially one where the stakes are high—ask the player how something from their Personal Quarters might be helpful so they can get an advantage (or negate a disadvantage).

Conditions

Just as players will forget about Personal Quarters in the beginning, you will forget about Conditions. Conditions are an important part of the gameplay loop, and you should be doling them out liberally. You can combine Conditions with other Keeper reactions after a die roll, or you can simply give a hunter a Condition because it makes sense, whether there was a die roll or not. Importantly, the players won’t mind. They will want to engage with the Vulnerable Move, but if you haven’t given them enough Conditions, they won’t have much justification for it, and so do your part and hit them with lots of Conditions.

Conditions can be big or small; they can reflect major events in the story or minor, even fleeting, moments. If you feel a Condition is warranted in a scene but aren’t sure what to call it, ask the rest of the table for their input.

The following are sample Conditions divided by “type.”

EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL: Unnerved, scared, shocked, disturbed, angry, irritated, love struck, saddened, melancholy, embittered, jealous, envious, isolated, obsessed with [person or thing], furious with [person or thing], sad about [person or thing], volatile emotions, a desire to lash out, gloomy disposition, shaken to the core

PHYSICAL: Sprained ankle, concussion, smoke inhalation, festering wound, claw marks, bruised ribs, clumps of hair torn out, scratched face, smashed thumb, nearly drowned, chilled to the bone, intoxicated, high, tongue ripped out, pulped eye meat, exhausted, drained, severed hand, limp when I walk, severe vertigo

SUPERNATURAL: Cursed, hexed, haunted, something is following me, seeing unnatural shapes, magically blinded, ensorcelled, blackened veins, strange reflection, the rats are whispering to me, sensitive to sunlight, all water tastes foul, geas, I see dead people, drawn to graveyards, can't enter churches, translucent skin, glowing eyes, nocturnal, member of the fae court

One last note about Conditions: for Conditions that are permanent, such as “severed hand,” clearing the Condition doesn’t mean the hand is magically reattached; rather, it means the hunter has learned to live with it enough so that it doesn’t give a Disadvantage on die rolls.

Fictional positioning

Fictional positioning is a concept you should learn not just for **THE BETWEEN**, but for all your roleplaying game endeavors. Many of us grew up playing games that emphasized the power of numbers and procedures: +1 to hit, ThACo, natural 20, 5d6+1, initiative order, “exploding” 6s, rounds, turns, and so forth. Fictional positioning is the idea that the words we speak at the table and the words we write down on our sheets have just as much power as the hard mechanical and procedural aspects of the game.

Consider this: a hunter is infiltrating a cult; she’s wearing a golden mask the cultists wear when they have a gathering. Because the hunter is wearing the mask, she doesn’t have to make a die roll everytime she enters a new cultist space, because the mask signals she belongs there. The golden mask is an example of fictional positioning. There are no numbers attached to it, nor are there any procedures that have to be performed at the table when the mask is put on; it has power simply because of what it does in the fiction. Or consider this: a hunter has suffered a broken leg and is trying to escape from Sally No-Face. There is no die roll that will allow that hunter to run away (though they can certainly try something different) because a broken leg makes such an action impossible; in this case, the broken leg is negative fictional positioning.

Fictional positioning is very important for Personal Quarters and Conditions. After an item from Personal Quarters is used to take advantage on a die roll, it is marked, meaning it can no longer be used to get a mechanical bonus, but it is not erased from the playbook because it can still be used for fictional positioning. A Condition may or may not incur a disadvantage, but it is always there so long as it is written on the playbook, and that means it has to be addressed before an action is taken to see if that action is even possible (such as in our broken leg example). Similarly, in the case of a “permanent” Condition such as a severed hand, even if the Condition is cleared from the playbook, it still remains a part of the character and can impede (or even help with) actions.

Threats

THE BETWEEN is not an episodic game, and Threats are not meant to be “monster of the week” mysteries. You will often have three active Threats at any given time, and sometimes more if a playbook-specific Threat, like The Coven or The Pinkerton, comes into play. Hunters can certainly choose to focus on a single Threat, but there are always other Threats out there. Think about Gotham City: Batman might presently be dealing with the Joker, but the Penguin and Catwoman are also out there somewhere. **THE BETWEEN**’s London is like that, with the added twist that the Threats might eventually become part of a bigger scheme involving the Mastermind.

Related to that, Threats are not static. Part of your job is to think about what the Threats are doing when the hunters are not focused on them. Take some time between sessions to consider the active Threats and the Mastermind, what they’re up to, and how things might start to connect. Each Threat sheet has a section called “If the hunters ignore the Threat...,” which is a great place to start when thinking about this stuff. Remember: Threats are extremely dangerous until Hargrave House has answered a Question that unlocks an Opportunity to resolve the Threat because, until then, the Threat literally cannot be defeated.

Let’s talk about resolving Threats. There are three things you need to keep in mind: 1) Threats cannot be captured, killed, or otherwise defeated unless an Opportunity to do so has been unlocked; 2) once the Opportunity is unlocked, resolving the Threat is not automatic; and 3) Threats can only be resolved during the Night phase. Make sure players understand all three of these things.

To the first point, it does not matter if the hunters have the Threat cornered or otherwise are in a strong—even logical—position to defeat the Threat if an Opportunity to do so has not been unlocked by answering a Question; the Threat will always escape. It might seem weird or unrealistic for that to be the case, but **THE BETWEEN** is a game and games have rules. Furthermore, the Threat can only be resolved in the manner indicated by the unlocked Opportunity.

Secondly, resolving the Threat is not automatic. Once a Question is answered, the hunters have earned the opportunity to defeat the Threat. They will have to take necessary follow-up actions to resolve the Threat, and those actions might stretch out over the course of several scenes or even several Night phases, depending on the circumstances. They might have to engage the Threat in combat, attempt to trap the Threat in their lair, perform a ritual to subdue the Threat, defeat the Threat’s minions in order to reach the Threat, etc. This is an important aspect of the game because some playbooks have more of an emphasis on action rather than investigation, and the actual process of defeating the Threat is when those hunters get to shine.

Finally, it has been said twice before in this text, and I’m going to say it one more time: Threats can only be resolved in the Night phase. Some Threats, like Figg’s Piggs, have stages that have to be completed before the Threat is fully resolved; in those cases, only the stage that would fully resolve the Threat has to be completed at Night.

Running The Between As a One-Shot

THE BETWEEN is designed to be played over a dozen or more sessions, but sometimes you only have one session, perhaps because you are running it at a convention or as a short diversion for your regular group. My advice is that you simply play the game as it was meant to be played; some aspects of the game, like the Mastermind, won't have much salience in a one-shot, but that's ok because, to some degree, you're just showing the system off, perhaps in the hope of more sessions being played in the future. I recommend following the Session One procedure at the end of this text and, no matter where things stand in the investigation, going straight to Answer a Question when you have about an hour of playtime remaining. That should give you enough time to get a question answered and then frame up some scenes to resolve the Threat. For a one-shot, you should disregard the rule about Threats only being resolved in the Night phase. Additionally, depending on how much time you have, you can ignore the Unscene.

Playbooks

This section contains advice for the six core playbooks included with the game: The Vessel, The American, The Mother, The Undeniable, The Explorer, and The Factotum. The Orphan, which is a special playbook connected to The Mother, will be discussed briefly in the Mother section.

Each section will have general thoughts and advice for the playbook, followed by specific tips related to playbook moves and the Janus Mask.

The Vessel

The Vessel is a character who has intimate, even sexual, relationships with dark entities. The playbook is intentionally ambiguous in places (and even a little provocative—it's called the Vessel) but the expectation is that this intimacy is consensual—the Vessel is an object of desire because of their supernatural abilities, but they are always in control. Some players might want to explore the Vessel in a darker way by showing that these relationships are not entirely consensual or that the Vessel is not always in control. That can certainly be a rich avenue of storytelling and exploration, but make sure everyone at the table is on board with that approach before allowing it. Some players might want to take out the sexual aspects of the character altogether, and that is perfectly fine; intimacy doesn't have to equal sex, and is just as thematically powerful. You can ignore the two Dawn Questions that say “make love to,” or rewrite them to say “have an intimate moment with.”

For **Rites of Salt and Smoke**, make sure everyone at the table is comfortable with the self-harm or perversion of Christian rituals options before a player chooses one of those. Those topics don't come up often in roleplaying games, and so they may not have come up during your safety tools conversation.

For **A Thinning of the Veil**, a player might want to do “goat entrails” or something like that for their divination method; just make sure everyone is ok with the implied animal harm.

A Beacon in the Dark has the potential to put the hunter in direct contact with the Threat. If so, keep things vague or cryptic, and only answer questions with Clues—you don't want to preempt the Answer a Question move by saying something definitive about a mystery.

Additionally, you may be wondering what a “personified Danger” is. It just means that some Dangers on the Threat sheet are not literal people, but you can invent a person connected to the Danger and present them with that. For example, one of the Dangers in The Creature of Cremorne Gardens is the mysterious song. You might like the idea of exploring that Danger during this move, but since a song can’t answer questions, you instead create a pleasure-seeker obsessed with the song or ensorcelled by it.

For **The Mask of the Past**, as with the Dawn Questions, you can change the prompt that says “sexual encounter” to “intimate encounter.”

If and when The Coven comes into play because of **The Moss-Covered Gate**, don’t waste any time introducing them to the setting. The scene that introduces them can be entirely out of the characters’ view or knowledge—it’s something we get to enjoy as players, even if the hunters don’t know about it yet. Additionally, The Coven can come into play when there are already three active Threats.

The American

The American is a terrific choice for players who want an action-oriented character or who want to play an outsider (or who just like werewolves). The key to understanding how the American fits into the story is to know that they’re a character of contradictions: possessed of that distinctly American earnestness, but hiding a terrible secret; rawhide on the surface, but deeply privileged in their upbringing; a social outsider in London, but also a cultural cousin. Side Characters should always comment on the outwardly obvious aspects of the character, especially the fact they’re American.

The **Dawn Question** about a “raw, passionate sexual encounter” can be changed to a “raw, intimate encounter” if a player doesn’t want to explore sexual themes.

I 100% guarantee that a player will read **The Quickening** and be alarmed by the fact that a die roll can cause their character to be removed from the game. This is a good opportunity for you to remind them about the Janus Mask, and that, ultimately, that will only happen if the player is interested in seeing it happen (or, long-term, if the Janus Mask is tapped out).

If the player does **As Cruel as the Harlot’s Curse** and doesn’t choose the option that avoids unwanted attention, that is permission for you to introduce unwanted attention.

Something to be aware of on **The Mask of the Past**: a player may want the Curse to be the result of Native American magic or folklore; I think that’s ok, but encourage the player to do a little research beforehand so they’re being respectful in how they approach it and not falling into lazy tropes.

If and when The Pinkerton or The Cursed comes into play as a result of The Mask of the Future or The Quickening, respectively, don’t waste any time introducing them to the setting. The scene that introduces them can be entirely out of the characters’ view or knowledge—it’s something we get to enjoy as players, even if the hunters don’t know about it yet. Additionally, they can come into play when there are already three active Threats.

The Mother

Desecrating graves and defiling corpses is pretty much unavoidable subject matter in **THE BETWEEN**, and that is especially the case when the Mother is in play. The playbook is just plain ghoulish, but beneath that ghoulishness is loss. The Mother, like so many people, has suffered a tragedy, but rather than wallow in grief, they are taking action; they are defying God by becoming God, and that is the key to how this character works. There is a possibility that, under the right circumstances, the player can switch from playing the Mother to playing the Orphan. The Orphan is an equally tragic character, but their loss is channeled into sweetness and helping others, rather than intense selfishness and hubris. You may be wondering why a character who can be any gender is called “mother.” It’s a wink and nod to the fact that Dr. Frankenstein, the character who inspired the playbook, is often portrayed in a femme way.

If and when The Orphan (Threat) comes into play because of **The Child** move, don’t waste any time introducing them to the setting. The scene that introduces them can be entirely out of the characters’ view or knowledge—it’s something we get to enjoy as players, even if the hunters don’t know about it yet. Additionally, The Orphan (Threat) can come into play when there are already three active Threats.

Night Work is a very powerful move—probably the most powerful in the game—but it comes with an interesting “cost,” which is that the Mother is essentially removed from play for a time and their player becomes sort of a mini-Keeper during the Night Phase, responsible for every prompt on the Unscene. Make sure players understand that before choosing this move.

This move also puts a small amount of pressure on the other players since the only way they can experience an Echo in the Night is through the hunter scenes.

If **The Resurrectionists** move comes into play and the player doesn’t choose the option that helps avoid blowback or complications, treat that as an invitation to introduce blowback or complications.

The Undeniable

THE BETWEEN is a game that explores dark and intense themes, and the Undeniable turns the darkness and intensity up to 11. There are elements of kink and eroticism that are pretty much unavoidable with this playbook, but players are welcome to “fade to black” on a scene before things get too intense. The Undeniable is also very sensual, and is a fun choice for players who enjoy over-the-top sensory descriptions in their roleplay.

The Reflection is the core of this playbook. Players will make whatever choices they make when it comes to the masterwork, but you should take the opportunity to explore how old the masterwork is by asking them questions about it. If the masterwork is very old—say, a wall of hieroglyphics or a classical-era statue—then that means the Undeniable is also very old, truly an immortal, god-like figure. If the masterwork was recently created, then the Undeniable is relatively young, and may still be figuring out their place in the world. Note that you can instruct the player to scar the Reflection outside of a move instructing them to do so; you should do this whenever the Undeniable does something truly ugly or villainous.

Giveth can be a very satisfying move when another hunter engages with it; the story goes into some interesting places when they become a worshipper of the Undeniable. Not every play group will be comfortable with this aspect of the move, and that's perfectly fine—it's still a good move for manipulating Side Characters.

Taketh Away is a very powerful move when used in conjunction with Giveth, and most players will aim to eventually acquire both if they start with one of them. If the player doesn't choose the option that avoids long-term consequences for their actions, treat that as an invitation to impose long-term consequences for their actions.

For the Paint the Scene question connected to **The Room**, players have the option of saying something in the room that excites their senses instead of something that excites them sexually.

The Cosmic Passage opens up an entirely new move for The Undeniable when marked. The move can be used any time thereafter.

The Explorer

The Explorer is meant for long-term play. If your game of **THE BETWEEN** is going to be four or fewer sessions, don't even make the Explorer an option. The playbook is very powerful and has a huge impact on how the story unfurls, but in a short game, none of that really comes to the fore.

The Grand Game is the most impactful move in **THE BETWEEN** in terms of how it affects the story. The Mastermind goes from being a shadowy figure to a nemesis the hunters will interact with regularly. It's also an impactful move mechanically since it affects how Answer a Question works.

The Royal Explorers Club is also a powerful move, and when one of the explorers is invoked, their effect on the story is absolute. For example, General Farsblet-Mogg will prevent the named Threat from breaching Hargrave House, period; no die roll, Keeper reaction, or amount of time passed should override it. Lady Wheatley-Grainworth will stop Scotland Yard in its tracks, period. Gareth Kellogg's effect on the game is profound: the hunters get two Night phases in a row! The hunters might need two Night phases in order to resolve a Threat, or they might want to target multiple Threats, and so they need the extra time.

I want to spend some time discussing **The Mask of the Past** and **The Mask of the Future**. The explorer character type is a classic of the pulp genre, and a looming figure in classic British literature; I don't think it would have been possible to write **THE BETWEEN** without such a character. And yet depictions of this classic explorer character often gloss over the horrors of colonialism; we get to see them as a heroic figure without having to face the historical realities of how they gained their fame and wealth (usually through exploiting colonized people).

Exploring the horrors of colonialism was not one of my central design goals in **THE BETWEEN**, and the subject is generally outside the scope of what the game is trying to do, but I nevertheless wanted to acknowledge the historical reality in some way, and avoid whitewashing the Explorer. First, it was important to me that the character's abilities come from networking and wealth; they are not intrinsically superior or talented. Second, I wanted to use the Mask of the Past to tell the story of the Boy, a young man who suffered under the Explorer's occupation of his village, rather than using that space to add depth and mystique to the Explorer like it does for other playbooks.

This approach is intentionally provocative; I want players to enjoy the Explorer—it’s a fun, classic, pulpy type of character—but I also want them to occasionally wince, and I want them to know that the Explorer’s fate is sealed: the Boy is going to get his revenge, period. Even calling the Boy “the boy” is a provocative choice; many men of color know what it feels like when a white person with social power calls you that. I myself have been called that in professional settings, by men who aren’t even half the man I am, and it always hurts. The Boy, then, is a kind of anger given life in the story; he’s not a perfect character—he’s clearly broken by the Explorer’s actions—and he’s possibly not even sympathetic, but he’s a reality the Explorer will have to face. I considered making the Boy an alternate playbook connected to the Explorer, in much the same way the Orphan is connected to the Mother, but decided against it because the story of the Boy has always been powerful in playtests without that extra step, and, in any case, I’m not sure I possess the life experiences to do it justice. However, if someone with a more direct connection to the effects of British colonialism wanted to write such a playbook, I’d be very supportive of that effort.

The Factotum

The main thing you need to make players aware of before they choose the Factotum is that the character is subservient to another hunter. The Factotum is highly effective, and frequently the hero of the story (as much as anyone can be a hero in **THE BETWEEN**), but they do not get to share the glory; their own desires and triumphs are subsumed by those of their employer.

One thing you’ll notice is that the Factotum is only known by their surname (the player is free to think of a given name, but only the surname is used in play). You’ll also notice that the surnames are distinctly English-sounding; I envision the Factotum as more of a classic English butler or governess-type character, as opposed to the trope of, say, the Indian manservant. Players are free to make a character of any nationality, but do not let them engage in harmful caricatures.

The player is free to change the **Dawn Question** about subtly expressing sexual desire in how the Factotum serves the employer to “romantic desire” or even simple “affection” if they don’t want to explore those kinds of themes, and especially if the player of the employer is turned off by it.

When a player does **The Ghost of Hargrave House** move, make sure they check in with the player of the character whose Personal Quarters item is being taken to make sure they’re ok with it.

When the player asks about a Threat during **Day Work**, don’t answer the question such that it preempts the Answer a Question move. If you’re worried there’s no way to answer it without giving up too much information or putting your thumb on the scale when it comes to Answer a Question, answer with a Clue instead.

If the **Moss-Covered Gate** is marked, it means the next time the Factotum invokes the Mask of the Past, they have to do the first option (“Mark the first unmarked box”).



MASTERMIND



The Mastermind is a wealthy genius bent on bringing the Crown to its knees. They are the ultimate antagonist of the story: they lurk in the background, pulling the strings from the shadows while Hargrave House is focused on the monsters stalking the streets of London. They'll make their move when the time is right, and Hargrave House will have to respond.

Playing the Mastermind

The Mastermind is *your* character. You're responsible for portraying all the non-player characters, but the Mastermind is special: their weight in the story is equal to that of the hunters. In the beginning, the Mastermind will mostly exist in the background, but eventually they'll start to appear in scenes with the hunters. It's important that you play the Mastermind to the hilt: chew the scenery, portray them bigger than life, and, importantly, make them *likable*. The hunters may detest the Mastermind, but the players should get a kick out of them.

Think: the Joker, the Master from *Doctor Who*, and Moriarty from the 2010 *Sherlock Holmes*—they’re baddies but they’re fun (the players might even come to sympathize with the Mastermind since the Mastermind’s “evil plan” is often something that is perfectly reasonable to 21st-century sensibilities). In short, if the players are excited about the Mastermind, you’re doing it right.

A note about the Mastermind and the Explorer: the Mastermind’s relationship with the Explorer is different than it is with other hunters, and it should feel that way in play. Play the Mastermind big when it comes to the other hunters, but dial it back when they’re with the Explorer. Scenes with the Explorer should have an intimacy to them; the relationship between the characters can be romantic and/or sexual so long as the Explorer player consents, but regardless, there should be a “closeness” there. They are nemeses first and foremost, but they also need each other.

Mastermind Clues

The hunters will occasionally uncover a Mastermind Clue. Mastermind Clues, like anything in the game, can be context for the discussion the players have when Answering a Question but, unless the Explorer is in play, they can’t be used against the Question’s Complexity like a regular Clue can. Mastermind Clues remind players that there is a criminal mastermind lurking behind the scenes. They are also a timer (and feel free to explain this to players): each new Mastermind Clue uncovered deepens the Mastermind’s involvement in the story and gets Hargrave House one step closer to the final confrontation.

The Mastermind Sheet

The Mastermind sheet serves three broad purposes: 1) to provide details about characters and places important to the selected Mastermind; 2) to function as a framework for the overall campaign; and 3) to serve as a place for you to put notes about the campaign as it progresses. It is meant to be a fairly light touch: the basics are accounted for, but you are expected to riff on them or fill in the details, as needed.

The following sections will discuss each part of the Theodora Brathwaite Mastermind sheet, which is included with the game. New Masterminds will be released in the future; they may not follow this structure exactly, but the general principles and guidelines will be the same.

BACKGROUND

This section provides basic information about Theodora, including her physical appearance and history, plus a quote. These details are not generally known to Hargrave House unless the Explorer is in play, in which case they represent the extent of the Explorer’s knowledge about Theodora and you can share them freely with the players.

WHY SHE WANTS TO BRING THE CROWN TO ITS KNEES

This section explains Theodora’s motivations. Throughout the campaign you’ll be asked to think about (and revise) Theodora’s ultimate scheme for destroying the monarchy; this section is a reminder about why they are trying to do that, and so you should return to it often.

THE FIRST MASTERMIND CLUE

The first time a player gets a 12+ on the Information Move, you’ll narrate this moment for them rather than picking a Mastermind Clue from the list. This particular moment is fairly subtle: Theodora is squarely in the background and the hunters shouldn’t be able to interact with her. (Emphasize that sapphire gem on her neck!)

You don't have to narrate this moment right away, but should definitely do so at the earliest opportunity; even something simple like, "While you were traveling to [Place A], you noticed the following..." will work here.

THE MASTERMIND CONSPIRACY

The Mastermind Conspiracy is the overall structure for your campaign of **THE BETWEEN**. It is divided into five "layers," with each layer hooking Theodora into the story more and more, until you reach the fifth layer, which signals Hargrave House's final confrontation with her.

Each layer has a Mastermind Clue threshold, meaning that layer enters play once the hunters have uncovered X number of Mastermind Clues. Please note that a layer doesn't become inactive once a new layer is unlocked; if, for example, the hunters unlock Layer Three, you can still reveal historical details from Layer Two.

I — END OF SESSION SCENE: This scene is extremely important; it's your first chance to show the players who Theodora really is. It takes place entirely outside the hunters' knowledge, and its placement in the session—at the very end, even after your debrief—signals its importance and makes it a "moment" in the game.

Think of it like the end-of-credits scene in a Marvel movie: it's there to hook the audience (in this case, the players), to get them excited about what's to come. There's a chance you might forget to do this scene at the end of the session. If so, don't sweat it: just do it at the end of the next session.

Between sessions, you'll write down what you think Theodora's ultimate scheme is. Will she attempt to assassinate the Queen or a member of the Queen's family in order to destabilize the monarchy?

Will she try to cause an international incident, turning one of Great Britain's allies against it? Will she simply sow chaos and terror throughout London, and then blame it on the Crown's ineptitude?

At this early stage of the game, there are no wrong answers. Think about it, but don't dwell on it; if you're unsure, write down the most obvious thing. Sometimes the obvious answer is the best answer and, in any case, you'll have opportunities to revise later. The purpose of this step is to simply get you thinking about the long-term story.

Finally, if the Explorer is in play, this Layer unlocks immediately (the threshold becomes zero), which means the end of session scene might happen before the first Mastermind Clue is revealed.

II — THE HISTORY BETWEEN THEODORA AND THE QUEEN: At this point, you can start revealing the history that drives Theodora. The details provided in this section can be revealed in any order and at any time. Reveal them as a Keeper reaction, as a 12+ bonus on the Day/Night Move, or simply because it feels right in the moment to do so.

Between sessions, you'll write down the names of three Side Characters you'd like to see return during the Mastermind Threat. At this point, the hunters will have interacted with a number of Side Characters, and this is your chance to make note of the ones you want to revisit. The Side Characters can be chosen because they were particularly memorable to the group, because something about them connects well to the Mastermind's ultimate scheme, or because having them return at that late stage in the story would be a good twist (imagine, for example, a Side Character the hunters believed to be dead turning up at the end of the story to play a role in Theodora's plot). Note that you don't have to write down three Side Characters right away; you can do this whenever you'd like, or even erase one you wrote down previously and put in a different one.

You'll also take some time to revise your idea about Theodora's plot. You'll have a lot more context than you did back in Layer One; use that context to refine or sharpen (or entirely rewrite) your idea. Keep the above Side Characters in mind as you revise your idea, and how they might fit in.

III — A THREAT BECOMES A SERVANT: This is a key moment. Choose an active Threat that would be fun to see again at the end of the story, or who fits particularly well with your idea for Theodora's scheme. Avoid picking a Threat the hunters are actively and vigorously trying to resolve; the players might feel cheated if you swipe victory away from them at the last minute. The Threat becoming a Servant of the Mastermind is public knowledge at the table, and you are welcome to ask the players for their input so they feel invested in this part of the story.

You also don't have to do this right away: choose a Threat when it feels right or after you've had more time to learn about them in the story. Finally, the scene where you narrate the Threat becoming a Servant should be handled in a similar way to the scene from Layer One: it's out-of-character knowledge, and can even be done at the end of a session for maximum impact.

You will also write down two more Side Characters and make another revision to Theodora's plan when this layer unlocks.

IV — DIRECT ACTION AGAINST HARGRAVE HOUSE: Things are now very dangerous for the hunters; they have to deal with Theodora's Servants in addition to any dangers associated with the active Threats. Have Mr. Higgins threaten or attack the hunters when they are out and about in London; use Elmore in scenes with the Mastermind; or put Tati Brathwaite in play if a hunter is captured or interacting with high society.

You will also make one final revision to Theodora's plan when this layer unlocks.

V — THE MASTERMIND THREAT: This is what it's all leading up to: the final confrontation with Theodora. The last section in this chapter gives advice on how to handle the Mastermind Threat.

SERVANTS

This section of the Mastermind sheet gives basic information about each of Theodora's Servants, including their physical appearance and tactics, plus a quote. This section also includes space to put some notes about the Threat who becomes a Servant in Layer Three.

THE MASTERMIND CLUE LIST

These are the Mastermind Clues you reveal to the hunters when they get a 12+ on the Information Move (or simply because you want to), starting with the second Mastermind Clue revealed. As with a regular Clue, you should adapt them to the moment (see *The Keeper: Basics* page 41).

Writing the Mastermind Threat

You are going to write the Mastermind Threat after Layer Five of the Mastermind Conspiracy is unlocked. It might seem intimidating at first, but trust me: you've got this. By the time you reach this point in the campaign, you will have so many story elements to draw on, and have so much experience with the Threat structure, writing the Mastermind Threat will be a snap. Let's talk about the details...

Presenting the Threat

This is where you reveal the Mastermind's plan—the idea you've been revising throughout the campaign—to the hunters. The easiest way to reveal it is to have a Side Character who has learned about the Mastermind's scheme tell Hargrave House about it. Only write as much as you need in the moment—it can be just a line or two about what the plot is and how Hargrave House learns about it.

Questions & Opportunities

There is only one Question here: Where will the Mastermind make their move in order to carry out their plan? (Complexity: 6). The Opportunity: Resolve the Mastermind Threat by confronting the Mastermind and stopping them. Obviously, you should write the Question so it fits your idea, but the gist of it should be: where is this all going down?

Locations

You should note a few locations that might be important during the hunters' investigation, especially some places they might get started, informed by how the Mastermind Threat was presented.

Here again, only write down as much as you need to run the game; just the names of locations might be enough. If you feel confident writing a Paint the Scene question or two, do so, but don't worry too much about them.

Side Characters

Write down a few Side Characters who might make an appearance. Start with the Side Characters you noted on the Mastermind Sheet, and then write down one or two more. It's helpful if some of these characters are named as leads the hunters can follow up on when you present the Mastermind Threat. Again, write down only as much information as you need to successfully run the Mastermind Threat.

Clues

You'll need fifteen to twenty Clues. Feel free to steal (or adapt) unused Clues from other Threats, or unused Mastermind Clues from the Mastermind Sheet. When writing an original Clue, be sure it doesn't say anything definitive about where the Mastermind's scheme is going to take place. Also, write the Clue in such a way that it's something that would catch a hunter's eye. For example, "a cigarette case" probably wouldn't catch anyone's attention, but, in the case of Theodora Brathwaite, "a cigarette case encrusted with sapphires" would.

Things you can ignore

You can ignore the following Threat sections when writing a Mastermind Threat: the Janus Mask, the killer/monster/etc., what will happen if Hargrave House ignores the killer/monster/etc., Moments (unless you really want to write some—they can only help), Dangers (that's what the Servants are), and Rewards (unless the story is continuing with a new Mastermind, in which case you might want to write a few).



SESSION ONE



The following is a step-by-step guide to running your first session of **THE BETWEEN**. The times listed with some of the steps are estimates—don't fret if you're taking longer to complete each step. Text in italics> is meant to be read aloud to the players.

Step One: Read the Text

As the Keeper, you should read the rulebook in its entirety. Skim the other materials so you have a basic familiarity with them. Importantly, you should decide which playbooks you will make available to the group and which Threat you're going to start with (we recommend *St. James's Street Ghost*). Consider watching an actual play; the author of the game has videos on his YouTube channel showing how the game works.

Step Two: Gather Play Materials

You will need:

- At least three six-sided dice (more is better).
- Index cards and a marker for making name tents.
- A pencil for each participant.
- A copy of each playbook.
- At least one reference sheet, but one per participant is better.
- Your chosen Threat sheet.
- A Mastermind sheet.
- At least one Unscene from London at Night.

Step Three: Gather Participants

THE BETWEEN works best with one Keeper and three players. One Keeper and two players and one Keeper and four players also work well. Avoid playing THE BETWEEN with five or more players.

Step Four: Player & Keeper Introductions (2 min)

Going around the table, each participant should state their name, their pronouns, and anything else the group might find interesting about them. You can skip this step if you're playing with a group of friends who know each other well.

Step Five: CATS (3 min)

CATS is an acronym that stands for Concept, Aim, Tone, and Subject Matter. It is usually presented by the Keeper and helps establish some basic expectations for how the game is going to proceed. It's also a low-stakes way for the Keeper to get accustomed to being in the spotlight.

Read the following to the players:

Now I'm going to do CATS. CATS is an acronym that stands for Concept, Aim, Tone, and Subject Matter. The purpose of CATS is to establish some basic expectations for what this game is about and what we're going to be doing during this first session.

Concept: THE BETWEEN is a tabletop roleplaying game about a group of mysterious monster hunters in Victorian-era London. These hunters learn about various monstrous threats in the city and conduct investigations, or "hunts," in order to neutralize them. Over time, they become aware of the plans of a criminal mastermind who is pulling the strings behind the scenes. The hunters will eventually be forced to confront this criminal mastermind in order to save queen and country. THE BETWEEN is directly inspired by the TV show Penny Dreadful but also takes inspiration from British horror classics, the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pulp-era media, The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, and From Hell. The game's mechanics are based on Apocalypse World and Brindlewood Bay. You don't need to know anything about those two games before we play.

Aim: The aim of the characters in the story is to keep London safe by investigating monstrous threats and learning how to stop them. Our aim as players is to learn more about these characters' mysterious pasts, as well as to paint a vivid picture of our version of Victorian-era London, a responsibility we all share. The aims for today's session are to create and introduce our characters, learn the basics of how the game works by playing it, and then having a debrief period at the end.

*Tone: The tone of **THE BETWEEN** is dark, mysterious, and sensual. A little bit of levity or humor from time to time is ok, but we will always strive to return to that dark, brooding place the characters exist in.*

Subject Matter: Murder, cannibalism, body horror, dark sexual themes, erotic sensuality, threats to animals and children, foul language, blasphemy, witchcraft, and defiling graves and corpses are all things that come up frequently in this game. We'll talk about safety tools in just a moment, but in the interest of setting expectations right now, you should know that this game deals with dark and intense subject matter.

Step Six:

Safety Tools (5 min)

You can use whichever safety tools your group is most comfortable with. We recommend you use the Open Door Policy, the X-card, and Lines & Veils. You can Google each of those for more information (add "safety tools" and "TTRPG" to your query). The scripted portion of this step assumes you are using the three suggested tools.

*No game is more important than the people playing it. We're going to paint a dark, unsettling portrait of Victorian-era London, but we're going to do it in a way that respects everyone's boundaries of safety and consent. In order to do that, we'll be using three safety tools in **THE BETWEEN**: the Open Door Policy, the X-card, and Lines & Veils.*

The Open Door Policy is very simple: you can leave the game for any reason and you don't have to explain yourself. Just let us know you have to go; no one here will ask any questions about it.

At this point, you should point to the X-card.

The X-card is here in case something in the game makes you feel uncomfortable in an un-fun way. Just tap or hold up the X-card and we will stop play in order to change whatever just happened in the game. As the Keeper, I may ask for clarification on what is being X-carded, but I will never ask why. We'll resume play once the change is made.

*Finally, we'll be using Lines & Veils. Lines are things that we are not going to have in the game, period. Veils are things that we're ok with being in the game but we prefer not to roleplay them, or we simply want to keep them offscreen. Importantly, even though I earlier listed a number of dark subject matters that come up in **THE BETWEEN**, you can still include one or more of those things as part of Lines & Veils. As I said before, no game is more important than the people playing it.*

I will start by sharing my personal Lines & Veils right now. You can tell me your own Lines & Veils privately during a break and I will then convey them to the group anonymously when we're back together.

Here you should tell the group what your Lines & Veils are. The author of this game, for example, always lists “sexual assault” as a Line and “violence towards small children” as a Veil. Remind the group before your first break that they can share their Lines & Veils with you privately and that you will then convey them to the group anonymously.

Step Seven: Character Creation (15 min)

Before we begin character creation, I want to share a few more details about the setting. These characters—the hunters—are the current residents of a place called Hargrave House. Hargrave House is a mansion on Belgrave Square in London. The people who live there share the common goal of defending the city from whatever dark forces are lurking in its shadows, be it monster or murderer. They operate outside official channels, frequently tackling cases that Scotland Yard can't or won't. Importantly, Hargrave House existed long before the characters took up residence there, and previous residents were doing the same work. By the time we join these characters, they have already been living and working together for a time. We don't dwell on how they came to live at Hargrave House, nor do we care about who owns or funds the place. We may learn more about those things in the future, but for now, Hargrave House just... is.

Another thing to know is that these characters are to remain mysterious. We should avoid talking about their pasts—both in and out of character—unless we are prompted to do so by the game's rules. The reason we do that is because we want to learn about these characters as we play.

It's a little bit like watching a good TV show: we don't learn everything about the characters at once; the information is given to us in pieces, at dramatically impactful moments in the story, often through flashbacks.

With that said, I'm going to give you a quick summary of each playbook so you can decide which one is most interesting to you.

Here you should give a short summary for each of the playbooks you have selected. Text for each of the six starting playbooks is included below.

THE VESSEL is a magic-user. They are in regular contact with—and the obsession of—dark entities that give them their magical powers. Throughout the game, you'll explore their history with these dark entities, as well as with a coven of witches they used to be a member of but have since fled. Play the Vessel if you want to explore dark rituals and what it feels like to be in control of dangerous things.

THE UNDENIABLE is an immortal being of incomparable physical beauty. They have been worshipped as a god for much of their lives and they walk through the world with an extreme sense of entitlement. Throughout the game you'll be exploring how they came to be a modern, urbane god. Play the Undeniable if you want to be extremely powerful, occasionally villainous, and focused on sensory experiences.

THE AMERICAN is a gun-slinger from America's Wild West. They grew up with great privilege but abandoned it for the frontier life. Along the way, they picked up a curse that sometimes changes them into a feral beast. Throughout the game you'll be exploring how they came to leave their privileged life and why they eventually fled to London. Play the American if you want to solve problems with violence or if you're interested in being an outsider.

THE EXPLORER is a member of the upper classes. They made their name and fortune mapping the unexplored parts of the world for the Crown. They are also the rival of the criminal mastermind Hargrave House will eventually have to face. Throughout the game, you'll be exploring the story of a young man whose village was terrorized by the Explorer when the Explorer was camped there during an expedition. Play the Explorer if you want to move in elite social circles, use money and other resources to solve problems, and be a rival to the game's main antagonist.

THE MOTHER is a highly-talented doctor and scientist. They lost someone they love and are using that heartbreak to fuel their creation: a person crafted from the body parts of other people, given life by experimental, alchemical processes. Throughout the game, you will be exploring their past with the person they lost, and why they were driven to create a new form of life. Play the Mother if you want to use science and medicine to solve problems, or if you want to delight in blood and guts.

THE FACTOTUM is a servant of one of the other hunters. They are a highly skilled operator—resourceful and practical. When the other hunters are mired in darkness, the Factotum is busy getting the job done. Throughout the game, you'll explore their professional past and how they came to be a servant. Play the Factotum if you want to be highly effective or if you want to explore what it's like to have your personal goals and dignity subsumed by another's.

Give everyone a chance to decide which playbook they want to play. Once everyone has made their decision, they can begin filling out their playbook.

The steps are:

- I Pick a Name
- II Pick elements for the character's Look
- III Pick a Vice
- IV Add 1 to one of the starting Ability scores
- V Mark two Dawn Questions
- VI Choose an additional move, if required to

Lists for Name, Look, and Vice can be found on the back of the playbook sheet, near the bottom.

Step Eight: Introduce Characters and Populate Personal Quarters (10 min)

Now that you've all made your characters, let's introduce them. Going around the table, everyone please introduce your character by Name, Look, and Vice. You can also tell us what your playbook moves do. I'll remind you that you should avoid sharing any details about your character's backstory at this time.

After everyone does this, continue with:

Now we're going to go around again and everyone is going to read aloud the color text at the top of their playbooks. After you read your color text, the rest of us are going to name one object or piece of equipment we think your hunter would have in their bedroom at Hargrave House based on what we know about them so far. You can veto any idea you don't like, or ask for a revision. You'll write down each item in the Personal Quarters section of your playbook.

Step Nine: Break (10 min)

Now that we've met the characters, we're ready to play! Let's take a ten-minute break; I'll introduce the first monstrous Threat when we return. Also: don't forget to find me and tell me your Lines & Veils!

Step Ten: Before We Begin... (3 min)

Before we begin, let me tell you some new Lines & Veils.

Communicate any Lines & Veils that were told to you on break.

*Also, I want to tell you that even though this is a game set in a historical time period, we aren't going to dwell on historical accuracy. We'll do our best to represent the technology and culture of the era, but we're going to get some things wrong every now and then, and that's ok. I'd also like to point out that, during this time period, people with marginalized identities would likely have been treated very poorly in society. We're going to ignore that part of history. In the world of **The Between**, things like race, nationality, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and neurodivergence are not a social barrier.*

Step Eleven: Present the Threat (5 min)

If there are no other questions, let's begin!

Hargrave House is an old, Gothic-revival style building. It stands out from its neighbors on Belgrave Square, which are done in the more conventional, classical style. Hargrave House is also different because it's not just a residence, but a place of work... dark work. And some more of that dark work has just landed on the doorstep...

Here you should read the opening matter of your selected Threat (the italicized portion at the top), as well as the Questions & Opportunities.

Step Twelve: Regular Play (90 min)

At this point you'll begin regular play following the guidelines and advice you learned earlier in the book. Start with the Day Phase. Keep a few things in mind if this is your first time playing **THE BETWEEN**:

There's no rush. Do each step of each phase in a very deliberate way until you get the hang of it.

Don't worry about getting things wrong. You're probably going to forget Conditions and Personal Quarters the first time you play. It will take the players a session or two to master the Janus Mask and the Unscene. That's all fine: just take it slow and do your best.

Focus on teaching the gameplay basics: when to use each move, how the dice work, what the Ability scores mean, Advantage and Disadvantage, and so forth.

You might only finish the Day and Dusk Phase. That's fine, and maybe even preferable since the Night Phase is more challenging and can be handled better during Session Two after everyone's had some time to process things.

Take a five minute break at some point.

Step Thirteen: Debrief (10 min)

Have a short debrief period at the end of the session. You can use any debrief technique you wish; we prefer a technique called Stars & Wishes because it is positive and uplifting.

Let's do a debrief technique called Stars & Wishes. Stars are things you enjoyed about the session: characters, scenes, bits of description, something from the gameplay—anything you liked can be a Star. Wishes are things you hope to see next time: exploring a part of the game we didn't get to today, following up with a character about something, having a scene with a certain character, and so forth.

Step Fourteen: The Mastermind Scene (if applicable; 2 min)

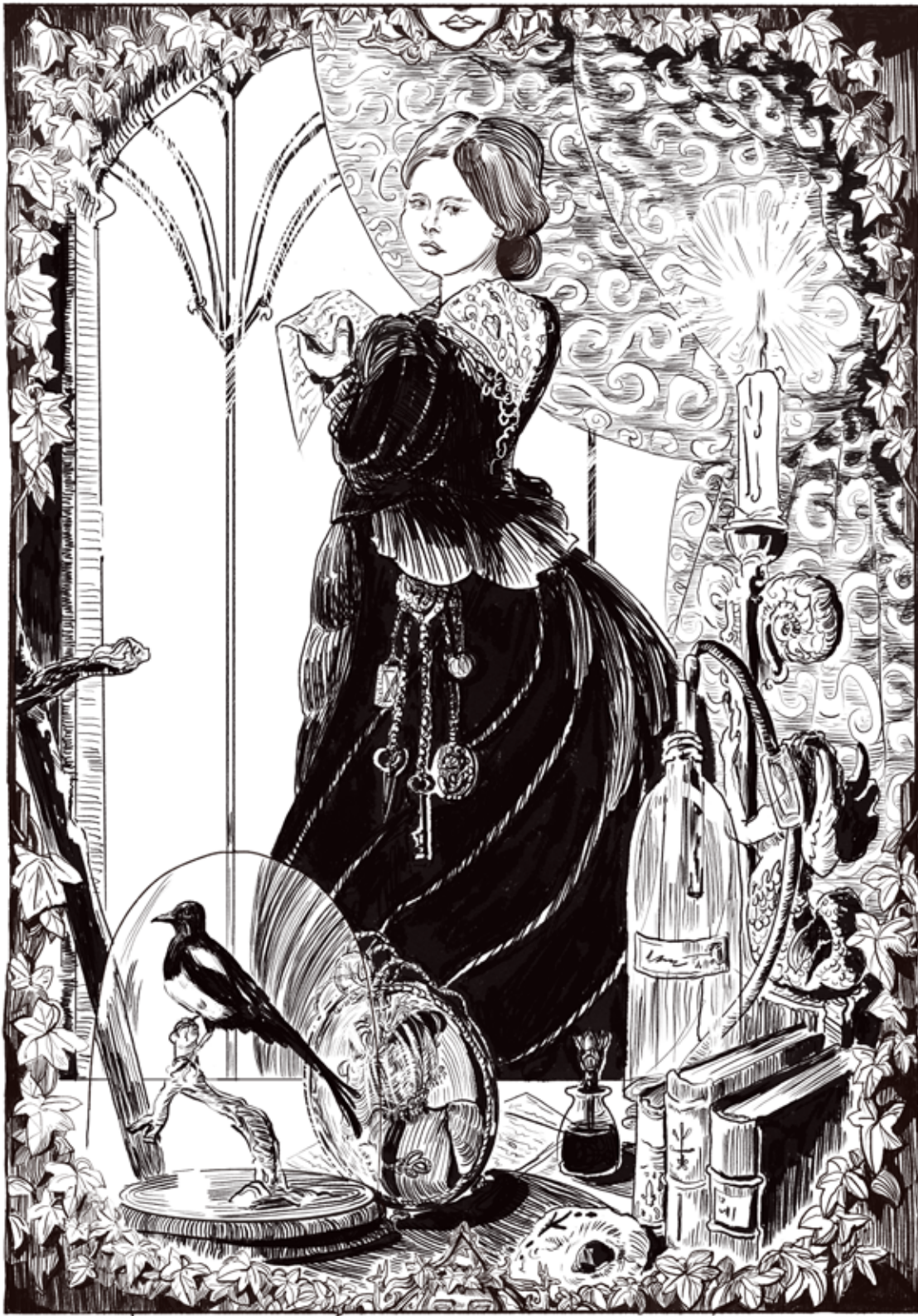
This is when you will narrate the end of session scene from the Mastermind Sheet if you unlocked Layer One of the Mastermind conspiracy.

Step Fifteen: Homework (1 min)

Encourage the players to review their playbook before the next session. In particular, they should read through the section called The Mask of the Past and think about what that means for their hunter.

Session Two and Onward...

Begin the session by doing a light recap of the active Threats: remind the players about any Clues uncovered and where things stand. Continue regular play from there. Save ten minutes at the end for a debrief.



APPENDICES



Appendix A: Writing and Publishing Threats

We know game designers out there are going to want to write and publish their own Threats for **THE BETWEEN**. We encourage that, and this Appendix will contain guidelines for doing so.

Publishing a Threat

You are welcome to write, publish, and sell Threats for **THE BETWEEN**. You are free to use any of the game's mechanics. You can quote the game's text for the purpose of clarifying something in your own Threat. If you want to use any characters, locations, or items we created for the game, send an email to gauntletpublish@gmail.com in order to clear it with us first. "This publication is not affiliated with Gauntlet Publishing or Jason Cordova, though it is created with their permission" must be somewhere on it.

You may not use any of our artwork in your own publications. If you want access to the typefaces and other assets we used so your publication looks consistent with official publications, send an email to the above address.

Writing a Threat

The following are guidelines and best practices for writing Threats. It is assumed you have read the rules for **THE BETWEEN**, or at least understand how Threats are structured.

THE IDEA

Start with an idea. It can be a particular type of monster, a serial killer, something inspired by history or fiction, an evil object—anything that fits into the dark Victoriana of **THE BETWEEN** will work. For Sally No-Face, the idea was “a killer inspired by Spring-Heeled Jack and other urban legends.” If you explore well-trodden territory, like a vampire or ghost, try to think of something that makes it stand out or differentiates it. In *The Limehouse Lurker*, for example, our vampire stands out because it’s in the body of a child.

CONSIDER A THEME

We strongly encourage you to tie your idea to a one-word theme. A Threat’s theme is a writing touchstone you can return to again and again when trying to think of things to populate it with. It’s also a great place to find inspiration for your Threat’s aspect of the Janus Mask. In *Sally No-Face*, for example, the theme is “beauty.” In *The Creature of Cremorne Gardens*, the theme is “pleasure-seeking.”

THE BIG SYNC

This is the trickiest part of writing a Threat and you should read this section carefully. The idea is that the presentation of the Threat has to lead directly to investigating the Threat, which then leads directly to resolving the Threat. We call this “the Big Sync” and it is important you get it right or your Threat won’t work in play.

THE THREAT

PRESENT ➤ INVESTIGATE ➤ RESOLVE

Let’s take a look at each of these components individually...

PRESENTING THE THREAT: This is the italicized text at the beginning of the Threat that the Keeper reads in order to present the Threat to the players. It should be fairly brief—a paragraph or two will do. It should contain some basic background information about the Threat, what brought the Threat to Hargrave House’s attention, and some leads Hargrave House can immediately pursue. Put another way, by the time the Keeper finishes reading the text, the players know exactly what to do in order to start the investigation.

This section also includes what’s called an establishing question. It’s usually framed as “Direct the following to [some player]:” The answer to the establishing question should do one of two things: 1) give one or more of the hunters a personal connection to the events of the Threat OR 2) summarize or confirm an aspect of the Threat so the hunters don’t have to investigate it.

INVESTIGATING THE THREAT: Presenting the Threat must lead directly to investigating it. The relevant part of the Threat sheet is the Questions portion of Questions & Opportunities. Finding answers to the Questions is the main activity the player characters engage in in **THE BETWEEN**. For purposes of the Big Sync, the Questions have to logically follow from what was revealed to the players during the presentation of the Threat. In order to make this work, certain things may have to be summarized or outright confirmed for the players during the presentation of the Threat. For example, in *The St. James's Street Ghost*, the legitimacy of the haunting is confirmed by the establishing question ("Hargrave House has some experience with ghosts, and a particular detail in this story confirms that this is a legitimate haunting. What is it?"). The players can immediately focus on how to get rid of the ghost because of that confirmation.

Alternatively, in the above example, if the legitimacy of the haunting hadn't been confirmed in the presentation of the Threat, there might be a threshold Question the players have to answer first, such as "Is this a legitimate haunting?" The threshold Question in this example is important because, without it, the gameplay doesn't work. Consider the situation where the legitimacy of the haunting is not confirmed during the presentation of the Threat, and the Questions go straight to: "How do we get rid of this ghost?" Players might want to investigate whether the ghost is real or not, and that's a major problem for the gameplay because the Threat doesn't support that. Part of the Big Sync is that the presentation leads directly to the investigation; the other part is that there are no logical gaps between how the information is presented and what the player characters do.

RESOLVING THE THREAT: The investigation must lead to a way of resolving, or neutralizing, the Threat. This is the Opportunities portion of Questions & Opportunities. At least one of those Opportunities must be a way to resolve the Threat, and that Opportunity must logically connect to the Question it's attached to. In *The St. James's Street Ghost*, the Question, "How can we get this ghost to pass on to the next world?" leads to the Opportunity, "Resolve the Threat by performing a quieting ritual." In *Sally No-Face*, there are three different ways to neutralize the Threat, each with their own Question.

Threat Sections

TITLE & PRESENTATION: We've talked about presenting the Threat sufficiently in *The Big Sync*, above, so here we'll focus on the title. You can title your Threat however you wish, but the default approach is to use the name or nickname of the Threat. The title is known to the players at the start, so be careful to avoid spoiling any twists or reveals.

QUESTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES: You should have two or three Question & Opportunity pairs. The key here is variety. Your Questions & Opportunities should provide multiple ways of resolving the Threat (see: *Sally No-Face*) or should present a way of resolving the Threat plus some other activity the player characters can pursue (see: *The St. James's Street Ghost*). In the latter case, a Question that unlocks a custom move or a powerful artifact is a great approach (see Appendix B for advice on how to write custom moves). You can also have a threshold Question, meaning there is a Question that has to be answered before the player characters can even begin investigating how to stop the Threat (see: *The Creature of Cremorne Gardens* and *The Limehouse Lurker*).

Finally, it's possible to have a Threat where all of the Question & Opportunity pairs have to be tackled before the Threat is considered resolved (see: Figg's Piggs).

Each Question will have a Complexity. Complexity is an even number between 2 and 8. If your Threat can be resolved in multiple ways, the more dangerous options should have lower Complexity than the "safer" options. In Sally No-Face, for example, the most dangerous way of stopping Sally is to try to catch them in their lair, but it's also the easiest Opportunity to unlock because it has the lowest Complexity. The safest way to stop Sally is to essentially build a profile of them—to try to understand them—but it's also the most complex. If your Threat has a threshold Question, the threshold Complexity should be comparatively low. Finally, the total Complexity to resolve a Threat should not exceed 8. For example, if your Threat has a threshold Question, the Complexity of the Threshold Question and the Complexity of the Question that leads to a resolution should not exceed 8 when added together. If all of the Questions have to be answered in order to resolve the Threat, such as in Figg's Piggs, the total Complexity should not exceed 8 when all the Complexities are added together.

THE JANUS MASK: This is optional, but it's a fun way for people playing your Threat to explore a theme. See the official Threats for examples of what these look like.

THE MONSTER/KILLER/ETC: This section is where we learn some details about the principal antagonist in your Threat. It should include a physical description as well as some ways the principal antagonist is dangerous, such as any powers or skills they possess. You should also include a quote if the monster or killer has a personality.

This section also contains a subsection about what will happen if Hargrave House ignores the monster/killer/etc. Project your thoughts into the future: in the absence of the player characters, how does this antagonist behave? What's at stake for Hargrave House if the player characters don't stop this terror? What's at stake for the city of London?

MOMENTS: You should write six Moments. Moments have no direct connection to any mechanic or procedure in the game—they exist solely as color for the Keeper to use where they see fit. When writing them: go big. Aim for maximum atmosphere. The goal here is to paint an evocative picture and to inspire. Think expansively about your Threat, as if it was a novel rather than a collection of elements for a roleplaying game. What are some cool scenes you'd like to see? What would make your reader shudder in terror? How can you connect to your themes?

DANGERS: You should write between two and four Dangers. Dangers are people and things connected to the Threat that could harm the player characters in some way. It could be the Threat's henchmen, a particularly annoying investigator from Scotland Yard, a magical power associated with a person or place, an especially dangerous environment, and more. These can be fairly short—a line or two will do for most non-character Dangers. If the Danger is a character, you should write them like a Side Character (see Side Characters, below). Importantly, you don't have to write down every possible Danger you can think of—just enough for the Keeper to have something to grab onto, if needed.

LOCATIONS: You should write four to six Locations. Locations are places that might figure prominently in the investigation. Think about where the main part of the action is taking place during your Threat. Some Threats, like Sally No-Face, can take place all over the city, and feature Locations that are somewhat generic; others, like The Limehouse Lurker, are confined to a single district and feature specific, named Locations. A Threat can even take place inside a single building, such as in The St. James's Street Ghost.

A Location consists of a name, three descriptive details, and a Paint the Scene question. Paint the Scene questions are questions the Keeper poses to the players in order to explore an idea associated with a place. Each player gives an answer, and the collective answers of the group help build up the scene in the minds of everyone playing. When writing a Paint the Scene question, focus on the idea you want to explore; don't ask for mere set dressing, and don't ask for information that would be important to the investigation. The goal of Paint the Scene is to explore a place thematically, not just aesthetically.

Let's work through an example: a mortuary. A very poor Paint the Scene question would be: "What do you see as you walk inside?" It isn't exploring an idea specifically associated with the mortuary. A better (but still quite bad) question would be: "How do you feel when you walk inside?" This is at least exploring something more interesting—the character's feelings—but it lacks specificity and punch (and might not be doing enough work to actually help us visualize the scene). The best kind of Paint the Scene question is strong and leading, such as: "There is a certain beauty in death. What do you see in the mortuary that confirms this?"

SIDE CHARACTERS: You should write between four and ten Side Characters. Side Characters are people the player characters might interact with during the investigation. Side Characters consist of a name and their role in the story; three short, descriptive details; a sentence or two explaining the character's motivations; and a quote. The quote is the best opportunity to show the Keeper how to portray the Side Character, so think hard about what the character would say before writing it.

CLUES: You should write twenty Clues. Generally-speaking, they should be a single sentence. Unlike in traditional mystery TTRPGs, Clues aren't tied to specific people or places—they can be found wherever the player characters are looking. As such, they should be written to be flexible in use; don't get too specific when it comes to people and places.

Remember a few key things when writing Clues: 1) don't have any preconceived ideas about the answer to a Question when writing the Clues, 2) the Clues don't have to make sense with each other, 3) an individual Clue shouldn't be able to answer a Question by itself, and 4) be sure you include a variety of Clue types. Regarding the last point, you want a good mix of discarded objects, documents, rumors, supernatural weirdness, substances, tools, clothing, hastily-scrawled messages, sights, sounds, and smells. There's no right or wrong mix—just make sure the Keeper has options. You can also write Clues that have options embedded in them, such as: "An unusual substance smeared on a surface (pick one: slime/oil/bile/something else)."

When writing a Clue, make sure it's something that would stand out to the player characters. "A pair of old boots" is a poor Clue because a pair of old boots wouldn't stand out to anyone. "A pair of old boots in an unusual place" is much better. Even better: "A pair of old boots, one of which has a severed foot inside."

Finally, you don't need to "match up" Clues with Questions. That said, the Keeper will find it helpful to have a few Clues on the list that are more obviously connected to some Questions than others.

REWARDS: You should write five Rewards. Two or three of those can be the generic "A memento from the investigation; ask another hunter what it is and then add it to your Personal Quarters." The others should be objects (and, more ambitiously, custom moves and abilities) specifically tailored to the Threat.

Miscellaneous Topics

SPECIAL RULES: You may want to include some special rules that only apply to your Threat, either because the existing rules don't quite cover the situation you're presenting, or because you want to highlight something special in your scenario. We encourage that, but we advise you not to tinker too much with the core gameplay loop of finding Clues, answering Questions, and resolving Threats.

THE EFFECT OF PLAYBOOK ELEMENTS: Many of the published Threats have aspects that occur differently depending on which elements the players have marked on their playbooks. For example, in *The Creature of Cremorne Gardens*, the psychic boy will seek out any characters who have *The Cosmic Passage* marked. D.I. Pettigrew, a recurring Side Character, is always suspicious of anyone who has *The Darkened Threshold* marked. Certain Threats become obsessed with the character who is *Most-Beloved*. Consider how your Threat reacts to certain characters or to certain elements of the playbooks; it's a fun, simple way of making your Threat feel special to players.

A THREAT "SERIES": You may find it enjoyable to write a series of Threats that are connected in some way, such as a group of evil artifacts, a sequential series about the fae realm, or a cycle about hunting down individual members of a vampire nest. Writing new Masterminds is beyond the scope of this text, but you could certainly do it and connect it to your themed series (you could even write a new, connected playbook if you're feeling ambitious). This is a purely theoretical topic as of this writing, but putting together a collection like this could be really rewarding, and we encourage it.



Appendix B: Custom Moves

You may find yourself writing your own moves, either because you're a player and you chose an advancement that allows you to write a custom move, or because you're writing an original Threat and you want to include a custom move with it. There are likely some good resources on the internet with advice on how to write moves for Powered by the Apocalypse games. This appendix will focus on how to write moves for **THE BETWEEN**.

Four Types of Moves

Broadly-speaking, **THE BETWEEN** has four different types of moves: moves that automatically do a thing, moves that give you something for Personal Quarters, moves that are "gangs" or organizations, and moves that have die rolls. Some of the more complex playbook moves combine two or three of these types into one move.

Moves that automatically do a thing usually have a trigger, followed by a description of something that occurs without fail when that trigger is pulled. Examples of this type of move include *Beneath the Skin* from *The Mother*, *Unquenchable Thirst* from *The Undeniable*, and *My Person Friday* from *The Factotum*.

Moves that give you something for Personal Quarters can be structured in a number of different ways, but the important thing is that they give a character one or more objects to add to their Personal Quarters. Examples of this type of move include *Witch's Cupboard* from *The Vessel*, *Ghost of Hargrave House* from *The Factotum*, and *The Collection* from *The Undeniable*.

Moves that are “gangs” or organizations give a hunter Side Character allies. Examples of this type of move include The Royal Explorers Club from The Explorer, The Hargrave House Informals from The Factotum, and The Resurrectionists from The Mother.

Moves that have die rolls are the most common (and complex), and will be addressed in the remaining sections.

Levels of Fictional Specificity

One way to think about moves is that they have levels of fictional specificity. The first, most generic level are the moves found on the Reference Sheet: The Day Move, The Night Move, The Information Move, etc. The second level of moves—those found on the playbooks—are more specialized, more specific. The final, most fictionally-specific level of moves are those found on the Threat sheets.

If you really think about it, the entire game can be run with just the basic moves. You don’t even need playbooks—you could simply make up the name of a character, write a couple of lines of description, and then rely on those basic moves to actually play. Why, then, are there other moves? Why are there detailed playbooks? Answer: because those things tell us why these characters are special and how to embody them—they are roleplaying goal posts.

This is important to understand when writing custom moves

because if the actions you want your custom move to resolve could easily be resolved by an existing move, then you need to justify the existence of your custom move. Your custom move should either resolve the action in a more defined, fictionally-specific way, or it should show how something in the scene is special and worthy of being highlighted with its own move.

Consider Old Bones from The St. James’s Street Ghost:

When you have the Cosmic Passage marked and touch, listen to, or otherwise attune to a building’s architectural details, roll with Sensitivity.

On a hit, a ghost will appear and answer a single question you pose to it or perform a small task, your choice; any answers it gives can be in the form of a Clue, at the Keeper’s discretion.

On a 10+, as above, and the ghost will not ask for anything in return.

The action of trying to contact a spirit could absolutely be handled by the Night Move or one of The Vessel’s moves. What Old Bones does is add much more fictional specificity—it tells us exactly what happens on each result, rather than relying on Keeper reactions—and it highlights the act of connecting with a place’s architecture as something special in the game.

Writing a Custom Move That Has a Die Roll

The easiest way to write such a move is to do a more fictionally-specific version of the Night Move, one that has a detailed miss result and that disregards the player-Keeper negotiation. Here is a basic framework:

When you [do the thing that triggers the move], roll with [Ability].

On a 10+, *you [succeed at whatever you were trying to do]. Describe it.*

On a 7–9, *[you succeed at what you were trying to do] but [very specific complication or cost]. The Keeper describes it.*

On a miss, *[very strong, specific cost]. The Keeper describes it.*

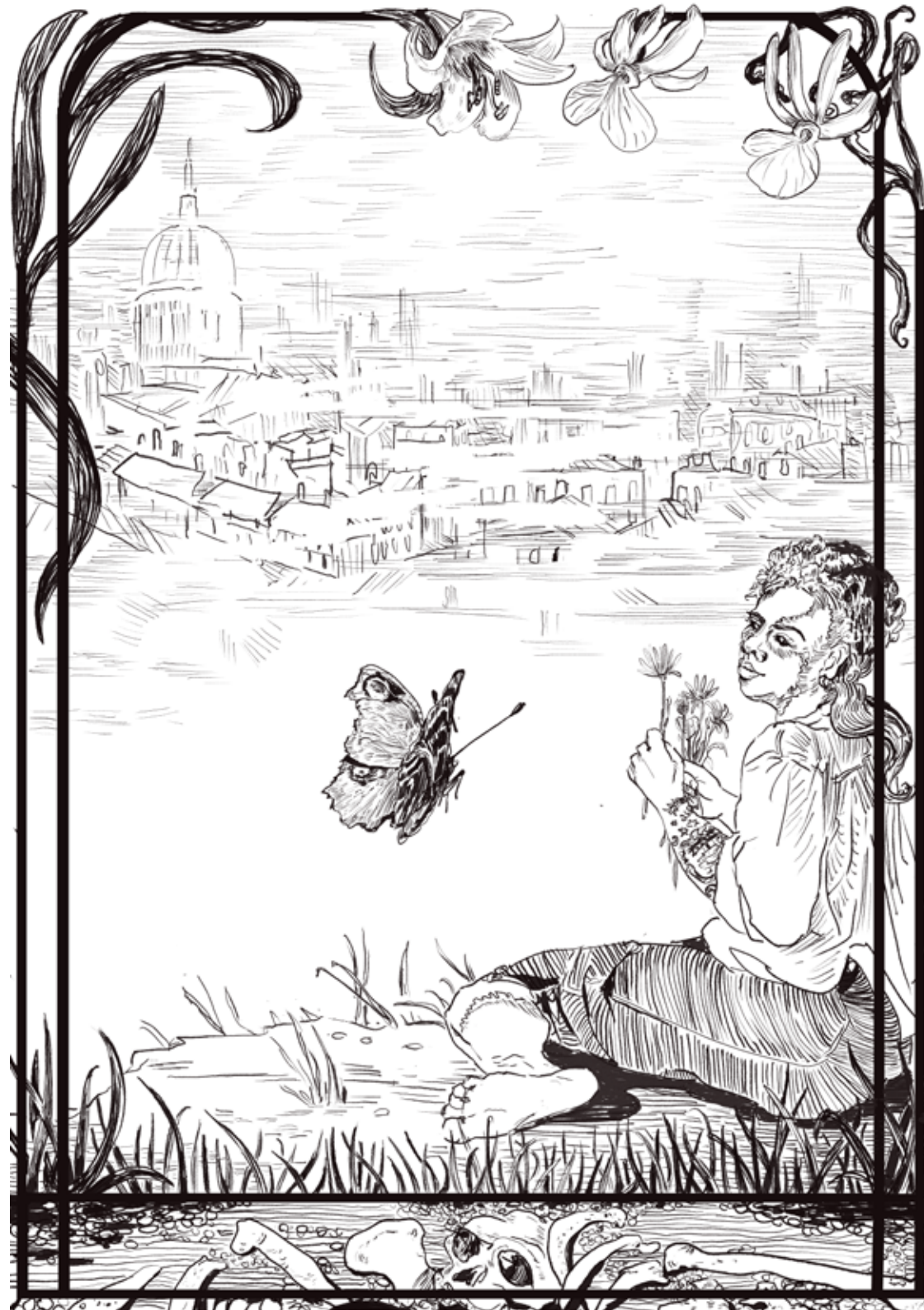
Here's an example of that framework in action:

When you attempt to summon a demon servitor to your side, roll with Sensitivity.

On a 10+, *the demon appears and will serve you for a time. Describe it.*

On a 7–9, *the demon appears and will serve you for a time, but will require a blood sacrifice as payment for its services.*

On a miss, *the demon appears but is not bound to you.*



Appendix C: Odds & Ends

These are gameplay concerns that occurred to the author after the bulk of the text was already laid out.

“TELL THE KEEPER WHAT THE CLUE IS...”

Some moves instruct players to tell the Keeper what Clue their hunter finds. This means the player creates their own Clue. It does not mean they pick a Clue from the Keeper’s Threat sheet. The Clue they create cannot definitively answer a Question by itself.

CLUES AS A GAME TERM

An uppercase-C Clue is a game term that means a specific piece of information, usually from a Threat sheet, that can be accounted for mechanically during the Answer a Question move. Everything the hunters experience is context for understanding a Threat and Answering a Question—you might even say some of those things are “clues.” But only Clues are mechanically relevant when it comes to the die roll.

THRESHOLD QUESTIONS

Some Threats have Threshold Questions that have to be answered before other Questions can be posed. Threshold Questions always have binary results; if the players get a miss on Answer a Question, the actual answer is the option they did not pick and you then move on to the next relevant Question.

CAN PLAYERS MAKE ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT ANSWERING A QUESTION IF THEY GET IT WRONG THE FIRST TIME?

It depends. If the Question unlocks an Opportunity to resolve the Threat and there are other Questions that unlock a similar Opportunity, they have to move on to the other Questions. If the Question is their only chance to resolve the Threat, they can attempt it again by coming up with a different theory (after the Keeper has made their lives tough with some strong Keeper reactions, of course). For Threshold Questions, see the note above.

CAN YOU REUSE CLUES ON THE SAME THREAT?

Clues are “used up” on a successful Answer a Question. They can be reused if Answer a Question is unsuccessful.

FRAMING THE ACTION AFTER A MISSED ANSWER A QUESTION ROLL

Answer a Question will frequently take place out of character, meaning there isn’t really a scene happening—it’s just the players talking. How, then, does the Keeper react on a missed roll when it’s not always clear where the hunters are even at? The best thing to do is wait for the next Night Phase: the Keeper should unleash their reaction from the missed Answer a Question while the hunters are trying to go about their business.

**“...THE MASTERMIND WILL REVEAL THEMSELVES WHILE
THE HUNTERS ARE PURSUING THE OPPORTUNITY.”**

This means the Mastermind is physically present while the hunters are pursuing the relevant Opportunity. They can be present as an antagonist, but more likely they are there simply observing or commenting on the action, depending on the nature of the Opportunity being pursued.

**CAN HUNTERS USE PERSONAL QUARTERS ITEMS
FROM ANOTHER HUNTER’S PLAYBOOK?**

Yes, so long as the players agree to it.

TALL TALES ONLY WORKS ON SIDE CHARACTERS.

The American move Tall Tales cannot be used on other hunters.

Inspirational Media

FILM & TELEVISION

Penny Dreadful (2014), especially S1: E1-E3 and all of S2.

Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1992)

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (2007)

The Others (2001)

The VVitch (2015)

Crimson Peak (2015)

COMICS/GRAPHIC NOVELS

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (1999)

From Hell (1989)

FICTION BOOKS

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818)

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890)

NONFICTION BOOKS

Victorian London: The Life of a City 1840-1870

The Invention of Murder (2011)

The Devil in the White City (2003)

ARCHIVAL

The Illustrated Police News (1864)

Varney the Vampire (1845)

Spring-Heeled Jack (1886)