

**STRONG BRANCH PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS...**



**A GAME BY ALEX KINGSLEY BASED ON
THE MAGNUS ARCHIVES BY RUSTY QUILL**

Writer's Note

Hi there! My name is Alex Kingsley and I wrote this game. I am an independent writer, comedian, game designer and co-founder of media company Strong Branch Productions. I just want to clarify that I am not associated with Rusty Quill in any way. This game is a fan work created via the collaboration of many artists across the world (Seriously, participation in this project ranges from the UK to the US to Spain to France to Germany) that is not formally affiliated in any way with *The Magnus Archives*.

This is a non-commercial product and all of the creators who worked on it will make no profit from it. If you enjoy this game, please consider looking at all of our other work. More information about each creator is included in the Credits section at the end of this rulebook. We would all really appreciate it if you would check out our other work, and maybe even give us all a follow.

If you are interested in more by Strong Branch Productions, check out our website strongbranchproductions.com, look at the rest of our games at alexquest.itch.io, and consider supporting us on Patreon.

Thanks for downloading.
Now enjoy the game!



DANCE THE WORLD

NEW

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This game contains spoilers up through MAG 160

INTRODUCTION

“These things, these forces, they are our fears. Deep fears. Primordial. Always looking for ways to grow and spread.”

-Gerry Keay

MAG 111, “Family Business”

...

Fear entities from another dimension have found their way into our reality, feeding off our terror. But they are hungry for more. Each of these entities desires to bring about a new form of reality, an end-of-days, where their fear supply is limitless. However, in order to do this, they need a bit of power from all of the OTHER entities. Before they can perform their Ritual that would bring about the apocalypse, they must collect artifacts that have been marked by each of the other powers.

...

Will normalcy be restored, warring powers maintaining the precarious balance of our reality? Or will the world as we know it evolve into a fear hellscape? That’s up to you!

...

This game does not require that you are familiar with The Magnus Archives universe, but I imagine it will make it more fun.

...

OVERVIEW OF THE GAME

What's the objective of the game? Well, that depends on what side you're playing for. If you're an Avatar, you want to bring about the end-of-days with your entity as the sovereign god. If you're playing as Archive Staff you want...not that.

...

This game is played in thirteen Phases-- one for each entity (The Eye, The Extinction, and the entity of the Avatar team excluded), and one final Phase for The Ritual. During each stage, the Avatar team must successfully procure something marked by one of the entities in order to successfully pull off their ritual. The Avatar team has the upper hand, but if during ANY stage they are defeated by the Archive Staff, they need to try again or they can't do their Ritual.

...

Between each phase is a period of Downtime. This is the time allotted for roleplay, story development, and general scheming. The Avatar team decides when the next phase begins, and they may choose to add phases (See Special Actions.)

...

When selecting your character you can play as an avatar, a member of the archive staff, or a collector. Each character type comes with different skills and actions.

...

AVATARS

You may choose to play as an Avatar of the entity of your choice. The options are:

...

The Corruption

The Vast

The Stranger

The Buried

The Dark

The Slaughter

The End

The Desolation

The Hunt

The Flesh

The Lonely

The Web

The Spiral

The Extinction

...

The Avatars must play on a team together, so it would make sense to play as Avatars of the same entity as one united team. However, you are welcome to represent different entities united under the communal goal of completing your respective rituals.

...

Homebrew Supernatural Abilities are allowed and encouraged. The few that are listed under each entity are starting points, and should be interpreted however the GM and players choose.

...

Avatars must roll a d20 for each Action. They must roll at or over the Action's Threshold (the number in parentheses) in order for the Action to succeed.

The relevant stat is Eldritch Power.

...

THE CORRUPTION

The Corruption is the entity of rot, decay, and sickness.

Associated images:
flies, worms, puss,
corpses

Canon Avatars: Jane
Prentiss, John Amherst



2

Skills

Infestation (10)

Call up a swarm of the insect of your choice. On your following turns, you may move the swarm to attack a target for 1d6 of damage.

Mold (5)

Summon spores at your will to produce a nasty little fungus. If you target a character and succeed, they take -1 damage, but you can also target objects to obscure them and cover them in fungal fuzz.

Infection (15)

Infect the target of your choice with the disease of your choice. At the beginning each Phase, they must take 1d6 of damage unless they can succeed rolling 2d6 against you. This should also affect their roleplaying during downtime as well.

Rot (8)

The object of your choice begins to age and fester.



T

The Vast is the entity of the void, open spaces, and emptiness.

Associated images: deep sea, space, the sky

Canon Avatars: Simon Fairchild, Mike Crew

H

Skills

The Void (18)

Throw the target of your choice into an endless freefall. They get out when they successfully roll against you.

Fly (4)

This one is pretty simple. You can fly.

Falling (12)

The character of your choice is struck with the nauseating sensation that they are falling from a great height. It doesn't actually do any damage, but it makes them miss their next turn. It also might make them pretty dizzy.

Abyss (10)

Give the character of your choice a momentary glimpse into endless nothingness. It doesn't do any physical damage, but it definitely does psychological damage. That kind of thing changes a person.

Vacuum (7)

Temporarily create a complete vacuum. Everything around it is pulled towards it, and any person caught in cannot breathe and loses a turn. They may also take damage depending on whether or not anything hits them. The vacuum is spherical, up to five feet in diameter, and must originate from somewhere within a ten foot radius of you.

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THE STRANGER

The Stranger is the entity of the unknown and the uncanny.

Associated images: masks, dolls, mannequins, clowns

Canon Avatars: Nikola Orsinov, Sarah Baldwin

Skills

Replace (20)

Replace a player of your choice with one of the Not!Them. The Not!Character is still played by the original player, but is now an avatar of the Stranger. Archives Staff roll a d20. Only players who roll a natural twenty can spot the difference.

Disguise (6)

Disguise yourself as someone else. Players must roll 1d6 against you to see if their character recognizes you.

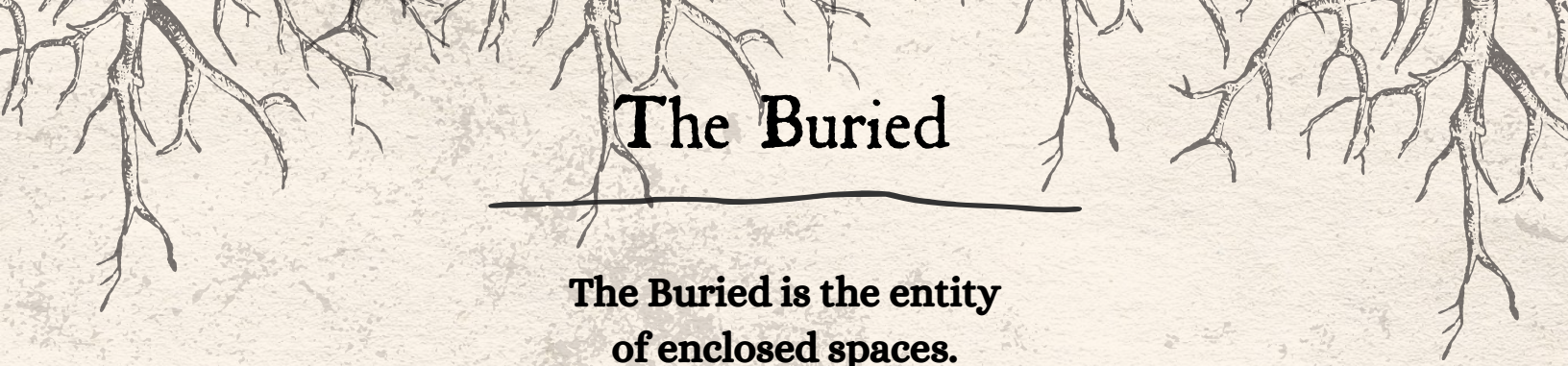
Dance (7)

You mesmerizing dance confuses and disorients the player of your choice. They miss their next turn.

Steal Skin (17)

Steal someone's skin. Not all of it, naturally. Body part of your choice. If you succeed, they take 1d6 damage and they have to deal with the narrative implication of having their skin stolen.





The Buried

**The Buried is the entity
of enclosed spaces.**

**Associated images: dirt, graves,
coffins**

Canon Avatars: Hezekiah Wakely

Skills

Bury (14)

The target of your choice suddenly finds themselves in a coffin six feet underground. They're stuck there until they roll against you or until another character spends three turns forfeiting their Action to dig them up.

Claustrophobia (5)

The character of your choice is hit with the sensation that the walls are closing in on them.

Choke (14)

Your target is struck with the sensation of choking on dirt. It only lasts momentarily, but they take 1d6 of damage and miss a turn.

Drown (15)

The character of your choice experiences the sensation of drowning. Their lungs begin to burn as they gasp for air. They take 1d6 damage only once, but continue to stay in this state until they can roll against you.

THE DARK

The Dark is the entity of the dark. Obviously.

Associated images: darkness, obviously

Canon Avatars: Maxwell Rayner, Manuela Dominguez

Skills

Blind (14)

Temporarily blind the target of your choice. One moment they can see, and then the next the world is engulfed in darkness. They take disadvantage on any Action that involves sight. It only lasts for this Phase.

Shroud (8)

A shroud of darkness falls over your surroundings. All characters caught in the cloud of darkness roll with disadvantage for any Action involving sight.

Nightmares (5)

The character of your choice will suffer from terrifying nightmares each night. Though it doesn't change anything in the course of battle, they take -1 damage at the beginning of each Downtime until they successfully roll against you at the beginning of the phase. The content of the nightmares are up to the GM, but it should affect the player's roleplaying.

Sandman (19)

That night, the player of your choice will be visited by the Sandman. They will be awoken to see a figure shrouded in darkness, carrying a bag of sand, and will have no choice but to use that sand to put out their own eyes. That character is blind for the rest of the game.



THE SLAUGHTER

The Slaughter is the entity of senseless violence and war.

Associated images: war, battlefields, knives, guns, axes, musical instruments

Canon Avatars: Grifter's Bone, Melanie King (briefly)

Skills

Frenzy (14)

Send the character of your choice into a killing frenzy. A wave of unslakable bloodlust hits the character, and they begin attacking the character closest to them, regardless of their relationship.

Music (8)

Play a rousing battle tune upon the instrument of your choice. The Avatar of your choice gets an extra turn this round.

Battlecry (10)

You shriek a horrid battlecry that comes from deep within you, something primal, tearing itself free from your throat. It makes your opponents' ears bleed. Every opponent takes 1 damage.

Gun (15)

You have a gun.

Rage (7)

The target if your choice is filled with unfettered fury. This should affect their role playing until they are able to roll against you at the beginning of another phase.



THE END.

The End is the entity of death.

Associated images: veins, shrouds, cemeteries

Canon Avatars: Oliver Banks

Make A Deal (16)

Agree to grant another character immortality...but at a cost. This may not be a member of your own team.

Revive (19)

Bring someone back to life. You may only attempt this Action once per game (not just per Phase.)

Kill (20)

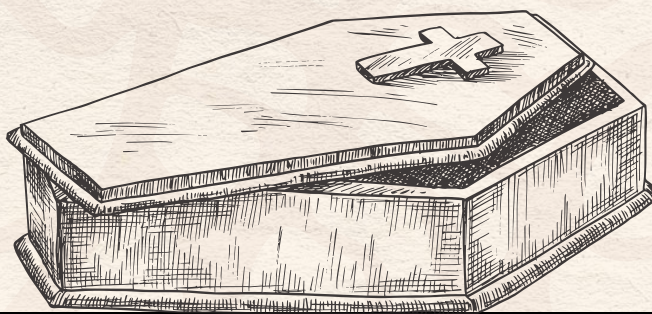
Kill someone instantly.

Prediction (4)

Accurately predict the circumstances of someone's death. It won't do any damage but it will freak them out.

Fearless (11)

Soothe another player's worries. They may add +2 to their next three rolls.



THE DESOLATION

The Desolation is the entity of burning, destruction, and loss.

Associated images: fire

Canon Avatars: Agnes Montague, Jude Perry

Skills

Burn (8)

You grab onto the character of your choice and your scalding touch burns their flesh. They take 1d6 damage.

Melt (8)

The object of your choice begins to bubble and liquify.

Pray (17)

Send a plea to your god for some assistance. Maybe you'll get a little divine intervention.

Fire (8)

Do arson.

THE HUNT

The Hunt is the entity of predator and prey, survival instincts, and pack dynamics.

Associated images: fangs, claws, animals

Canon Avatars: Alice “Daisy” Tonner, Trevor Herbert, Julia Montauk

Skills

Vampire (14)

Create a vampire NPC that you can control on your turn.

Werewolf (14)

Create a werewolf NPC that you can control on your turn.

Prey (8)

You can smell fear. You can tell which characters are most vulnerable, and which are most hurt.

Pack (8)

You and your pack are a tight knit group. The teammate of your choice gets to take an extra Action during this Phase whenever they desire.



The Flesh



The Flesh is the entity of the body, the visceral, and the fear of being consumed

Associated images: meat, bone, blood, gore

Canon Avatars: Jared Hoppworth, Tom Han

Skills

Steal bones (15)

Pick a character. Their bones are now yours. Some of them anyway. Choose a body part. You reach into that character's skin effortlessly and yank out the bone of your fancy. Just a little keepsake. They take 1d6 damage.

Meat (4)

At your whim, you manifest piles of raw meat around you. It doesn't do much, but it's really nasty and it smells terrible.

Contort (9)

Twist your flesh into any form you chose.

Consume (14)

Eat someone. If it's an NPC you can eat them completely but if it's a player you can only eat one part of them and they'll take 1d6 damage.



THE LONELY

The Lonely is the entity of isolation

Associated images: fog, sea, boats

Canon Avatars: Peter Lukas, Martin Blackwood (briefly)

Skills

Isolate (6)

Choose a target. If you succeed, the character is suddenly convinced that they are completely alone. From their perspective, all of their allies have disappeared. As far as they are concerned, they are fighting alone.

Disillusion (7)

Choose a target. If you succeed, that character is suddenly hit with a wave of hopelessness. In combat, they are now last in the order of turns. However, the Action should also affect their roleplay during downtime. At the beginning of each Phase, this player may roll two d6 against you to try and overcome the effects.

Fog (8)

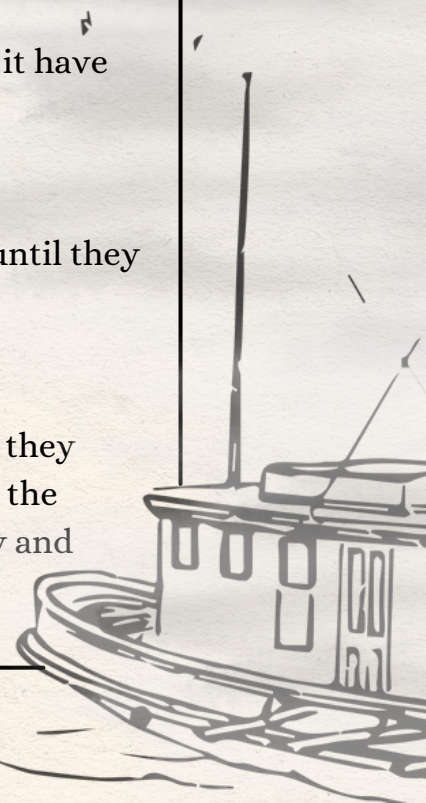
A thick layer of fog descends upon the scene. All players caught up in it have difficulty seeing and have disadvantage on all rolls that involve sight.

Lost At Sea (16)

Cast the target of your choice into the Lonely. They are trapped here until they succeed on a roll against you.

Illiteracy (19)

Choose a target. If you succeed, they are no longer able to read. Try as they may, letters just seem to scramble the moment they look at a page. At the beginning of each Phase, this player may roll two d6 against you to try and overcome the effects.



The Web

The Web is the entity of manipulation, secret plans, and subtle control.

Associated images: spiders, puppets, the internet

Canon Avatars: Annabelle Cain

Skills

Puppet (16)

Control an NPC to do your bidding. That MPC is now part of the turn rotation, but you get to choose their actions.

Bind (12)

Bind any character to a physical item. Until they succeed on a roll against you, they are unable to move away from that item.

Spiders (5)

Manifest some spiders. They bite. Each bite takes 1 damage.

Persuade (9)

Convince someone to do your bidding, just once.



THE SPIRAL



The Spiral is the entity of doubting one's own sanity.

Associated images: doors, spirals, mirrors, twisting hallways, optical illusions

Canon Avatars: Michael Shelley, Helen Richardson

Skills

Doors (4)

Manifest a door into the Distortion.

Disorient (6)

The character of your choice is suddenly befuddled. How did they get here? What are they doing here? What's going on? They miss a turn.

Doubt (8)

Your target begins to doubt everything in their life. The loyalty of their friends, the love of their family, even the materiality of their own body. They stay in this state of confusion and fear until they succeed on a roll against you at the beginning of a phase. This should affect their roleplaying as well.

Distort (10)

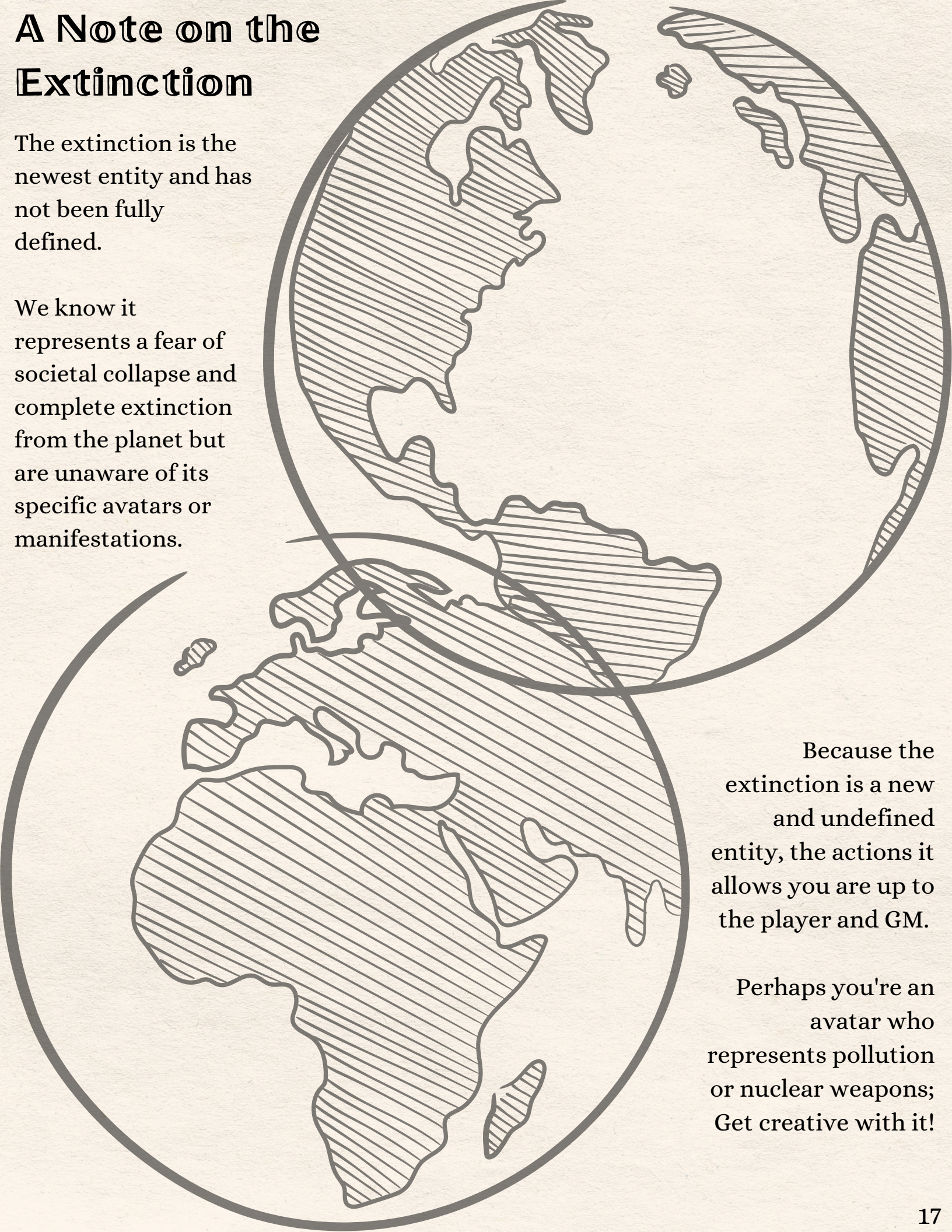
Everything is not what it seems, especially when you intentionally make it look like something different. Create an illusion. All players must roll against you to see if they see through it or not.



A Note on the Extinction

The extinction is the newest entity and has not been fully defined.

We know it represents a fear of societal collapse and complete extinction from the planet but are unaware of its specific avatars or manifestations.



Because the extinction is a new and undefined entity, the actions it allows you are up to the player and GM.

Perhaps you're an avatar who represents pollution or nuclear weapons; Get creative with it!

HUMANS

HUMANS MUST ROLL A D6 FOR EACH ACTION. THE HEAD ARCHIVIST USES A D6 FOR HUMAN ACTIONS AND A D20 FOR SUPERNATURAL ACTIONS.



ARCHIVE STAFF

The Archive team is made up of the Head Archivist and their Archival Assistants.

...

Note: If you so choose, you do not need to be tethered to the Magnus Institute. You can create your own institution, connect yourself to a canon one, or even use a real one. Perhaps you're researchers from the Usher Foundation or the Supernatural Branch of the Smithsonian. It's up to you.

...

Archival Assistants

You're a regular old human! Well, you are working for The Eye to foil the rituals of other entities, so that's not super regular, but other than that, you're a pretty much a regular human.

Canon Examples: Martin Blackwood, Sasha James, Tim Stoker, Basira Hussain, Melanie King

Roll with a d6

These are Actions that you may choose from to add to your CV in addition to the Basic Actions.

Convince (4, Personality)

If fighting is not exactly your strong suit, you may be able to persuade an enemy to, well...probably not to STOP fighting you but they might be convinced to reconsider some life choices.

Defend (4, Readiness)

Jump in front of your friend to protect them from a blow. This is the only Action that you are allowed to take out of turn, though it does mean that you forfeit your upcoming turn.

Distract (4, Personality)

If you can successfully distract another character, their next Action (if it's a targeted Action) must be directed at you. This can be useful if one of your friends is trying to do something particularly sneaky.

Hide (2, Readiness)

Duck out of the way so your enemies can't see you. If you successfully hide, no one can target an Action at you until you are no longer hiding.

Find (2, Research)

Find what you are looking for.

Heal Better (3, Research)

Heal yourself or a friend 2d6.

Do some Digging (5, Research)

Found a specific piece of information about a given topic.

Sneak (6, Readiness)

If you successfully sneak, no one notices your next Action. If it's an attack, then you have advantage on the attack roll AND the damage roll.



Marked

If you choose, you may build a character who has been marked by an entity prior to the start of the game. This gives you access to ONE Supernatural Action belonging to whatever entity marked you. Since you are resisting the pull of that entity (unless you are claimed as an avatar) you do NOT get additional Supernatural Actions as the game progresses.

Characters who are not marked at the start of the game may be marked during the course of the game, but that is a narrative choice under the GM's control. Characters marked during play as opposed to prior still get their supernatural action, and it can appear whenever the GM wills it.



Head Archivist

As the Head Archivist, you straddle the line between monster and human. You're harder to kill and you have more power than the average human, but you rely on eating Statements to survive.

Roll with a d6

These are Actions that you may choose from to add to your Repertoire in addition to the basic actions.

Convince (4, Personality)

If fighting is not exactly your strong suit, you may be able to persuade an enemy to, well...probably not to STOP fighting you but they might be convinced to reconsider some life choices.

Do some Digging (5, Research)

Found a specific piece of information about a given topic.

Hide (2, Readiness)

Duck out of the way so your enemies can't see you. If you successfully hide, no one can target an Action at you until you are no longer hiding.

Find (2, Research)

Find what you are looking for.

Defend (4, Readiness)

Jump in front of your friend to protect them from a blow. This is the only Action that you are allowed to take out of turn, though it does mean that you forfeit your upcoming turn.

Heal Better (3, Research)

Heal yourself or a friend 2d6.

Distract (4, Personality)

If you can successfully distract another character, their next Action (if it's a targeted Action) must be directed at you. This can be useful if one of your friends is trying to do something particularly sneaky.

Sneak (6, Readiness)

If you successfully sneak, no one notices your next Action. If it's an attack, then you have advantage on the attack roll AND the damage roll.

Roll with a d20 (Eldritch Powers)

Know (14)

Obtain any piece of knowledge you wish.

Extract (16)

Extract any piece of knowledge from someone else's mind. If you're extracting a tale of trauma, then this counts as a statement and your Health is completely restored.

Feed (2)

Consume the fear of another character to gain +1 Health.

Smite (20)

Draw down the power of the Eye to eliminate an Avatar. You may only attempt to Smite once per Phase.

Note: The Head Archivist cannot be healed with a Healing Action. They can only be healed by reading statements during Downtime or Extracting statements from unwilling characters.





Collector



Some people don't pick a side. They try to harness the power of the entities without actually being aligned with one. You may choose to play one of these characters: a Collector. Unlike the other players, you get to choose your objective-- perhaps you DO want to prevent the apocalypse, perhaps you DO want to assist a particular entity, perhaps you have a completely different ulterior motive. That's up to you.

For the sake of optimizing roleplay, choose to be with the Archives Staff or the Avatars team. This doesn't necessarily mean that your motives have to align with theirs, but you do need your Downtime to be played with either one team or the other.

Canon Examples: Mary Keay, Mikale Salesa, Jurgen Leitner, Robert Smirke

Roll with a d6

These are Actions that you may choose from to add to your Repertoire in addition to the Basic Actions.

Convince (4, Personality)

If fighting is not exactly your strong suit, you may be able to persuade an enemy to, well...probably not to STOP fighting you but they might be convinced to reconsider some life choices.

Do some Digging (5, Research)

Found a specific piece of information about a given topic.

Hide (2, Readiness)

Duck out of the way so your enemies can't see you. If you successfully hide, no one can target an Action at you until you are no longer hiding.

Find (2, Research)

Find what you are looking for.

Defend (4, Readiness)

Jump in front of your friend to protect them from a blow. This is the only Action that you are allowed to take out of turn, though it does mean that you forfeit your upcoming turn.

Heal Better (3, Research)

Heal yourself or a friend 2d6.

Distract (4, Personality)

If you can successfully distract another character, their next Action (if it's a targeted Action) must be directed at you. This can be useful if one of your friends is trying to do something particularly sneaky.

Sneak (6, Readiness)

If you successfully sneak, no one notices your next Action. If it's an attack, then you have advantage on the attack roll AND the damage roll.

Curate (5, Research)

If used in Downtime, you find a marked item that could give you some helpful powers. If used in combat, you USE an item that you already have with you.

Resist (5, Readiness)

You're used to dealing with entities, so it's a little harder for them to get to you. Once per phase you may try to resist an action taken against you. On a successful roll, you take no negative consequences.

STRUCTURE OF PLAY.

DOWNTIME

...

This is the time to really focus on story, character, and strategizing. It's part of this role playing game.

Each Downtime period is split into two parts: a time for the Avatar team and a time for the Archives team (and maybe a third part if you have a Collector player who has decided NOT to be situated with either side.)

...

Unlike the Phases, the Downtime period is not turn-based. You can do whatever you want whenever you want. If you want to do something that may fail, you still need to roll for it, but likely all of your Actions during Downtime will be Freeform Actions.

...

Downtime is also a great time to give narrative justification to your new abilities. Let's say you just gained the Action Heal Better. Maybe your character just took a first aid course. Or maybe you increase your Readiness stat. Maybe your character started working out.

...

During downtime, all characters will return to full health.

...

PHASES

...

The Phases are periods of direct conflict between the two teams. These parts of the game are structured as turn-based combat. In each phase, the Avatars are trying to take an artifact and the Archive staff are trying to prevent that.

...

First, roll for turn order. (Yes, the Avatars will likely go first because they roll with a d20 and the Humans roll with a d6.)

...

Each player can take one Action per turn. The GM decides which Actions are reasonable to try (for instance, if the target of your Action has just taken the Run Action to get away from you, then it doesn't make sense for you to try and Attack them.)

...

A Phase ends after one group retreats (which might be a good idea if you're getting dangerously close to dying). Whoever is in possession of the artifact at hand is victorious during that Phase.

...

If your team is the first to surrender at the end of a phase, there will be consequences. The GM will give the winning team a Reward and the Losing a team a Punishment. You can come up with your own, or choose something from the Appendices. The GM is not required to tell you what your Punishment or Reward is. Sample Punishments and Rewards can be found in the Appendices.

...

You only get to add a new skill and add to your stats if you win the phase.

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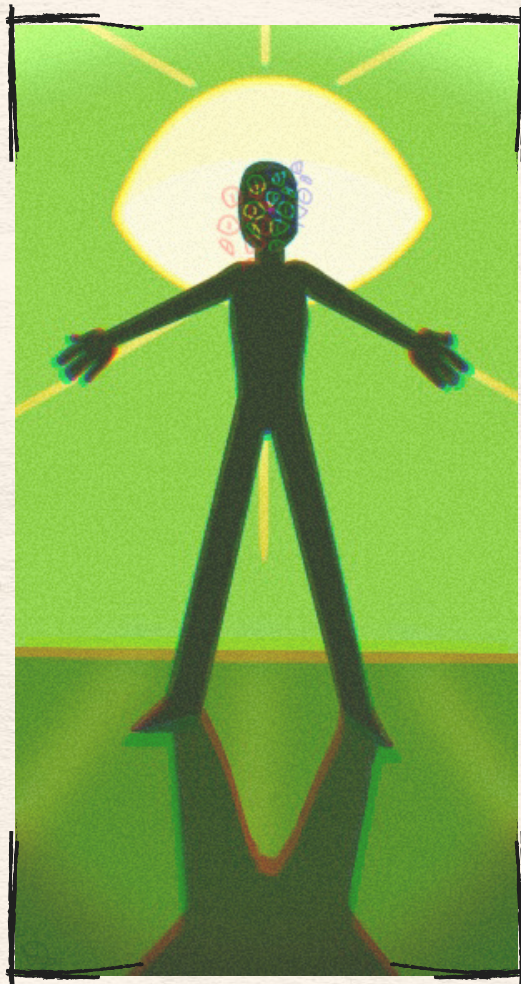
In addition, players must deal with the narrative consequences of losing. How does it affect character relationships? How does it affect the story?

...

TYPES OF ACTION

Anything you do in the game that has a possibility of failing is an Action. For instance, you don't need to roll to ask someone what time it is (it's 12:10, btw) but you DO need to roll to, say, do a sick backflip.

You can add to your roll if you have an applicable stat. For instance, if you want to know if your character knows about a specific artifact and you have +1 for Research, add that to your roll.



FREEFORM ACTIONS

...

Something you make up yourself.

...

Since Freeform Actions have no formal Threshold, the player must roll for them and the GM is free to interpret that roll as they will. Freeform Actions can succeed, fail, or somewhere in between, all depending on what the GM decides.

...

The GM also determines which stats, if any, are relevant for your chosen Action.

...

Examples of Freeform Actions you might use during Downtime include:

Flirt

Persuade

Hack up table with an ax

Cry

Contact family

Comfort

Research

Explore

...

BASIC ACTIONS

...

Basic Actions are those that anyone can take. All characters begin with these basic actions. They must roll (d6 for Humans, d20 for Avatars) above the Threshold (number in parentheses) to succeed

...

- Run (2, Readiness/Physical Power)
 - Run away! Or the opposite! Run towards danger! Just run!
- Attack (3, Readiness/Physical Power)
 - Attack an enemy in a normal, physical, non-supernatural way. (see list of damage in Running The Game)
- Heal (2, Research/Psychological Power)
 - Heal yourself or another player 1d6.
- Swipe (3, Readiness/Physical Power)
 - When it comes to trying to keep an artifact out of the wrong hands, literally taking that artifact out of peoples' hands is pretty important. Swipe that sucker!
- Investigate (3, Research/Psychological Power)
 - Search your surroundings.

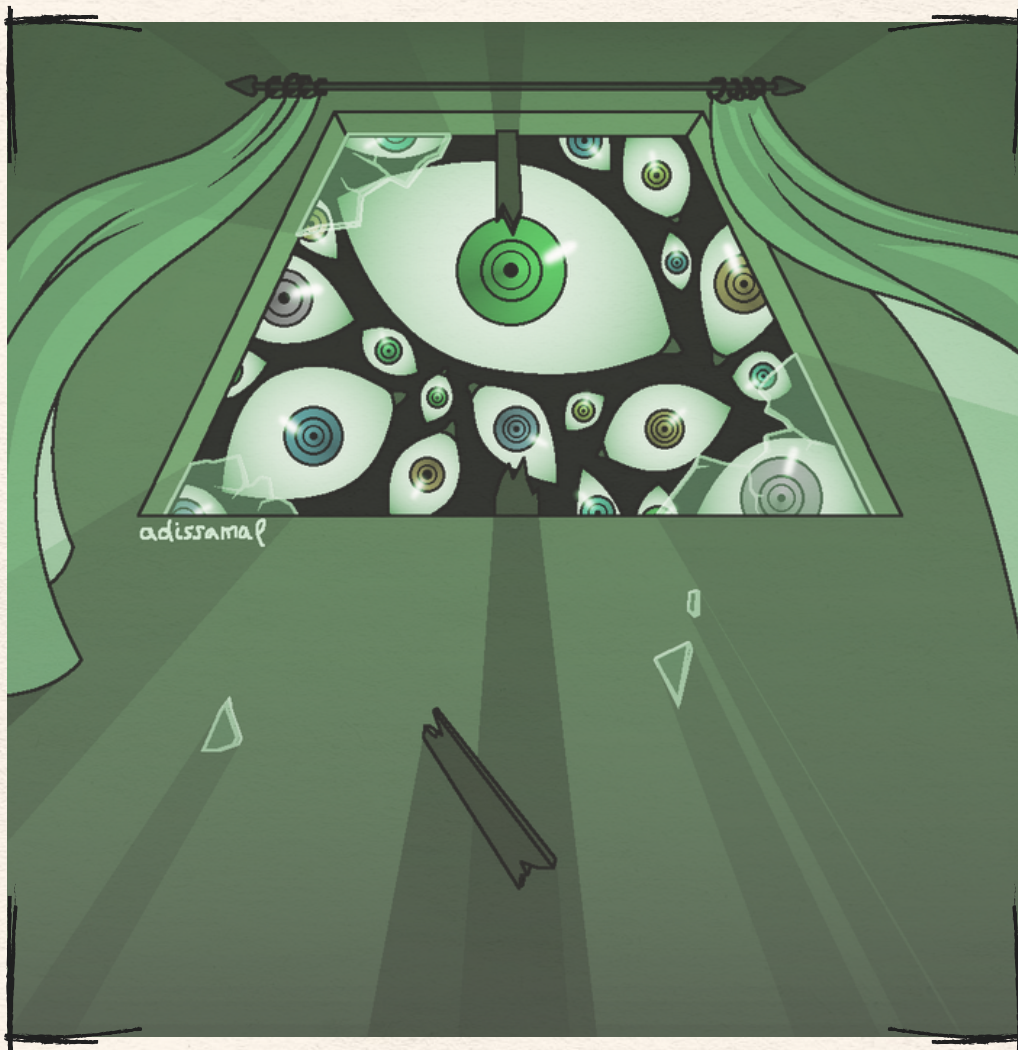
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SUPERNATURAL ACTIONS

Supernatural Actions are those listed under each individual entity. The more you play, the more Actions you will gain. Use a d20 to roll for Supernatural Actions, and the relevant stat is Eldritch Power.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

The Avatar team can strategically choose to take Special Actions during the game. Each of these may only be attempted once per game (unless you have a GM who wants to bend the rules just to see the Archives staff suffer.)



CLAIMING

...

The Avatar team can attempt to Claim one of the humans during the game, turning them to their side. They must announce their intent and the target of their choice.

...

To claim a regular human (Archival Assistant or Collector):

One member of the Avatar team rolls against their intended target. If the numbers matched, the target has been claimed.

...

To claim the Head Archivist:

ALL members of the Avatar team must roll to match the roll of their intended target and ALL numbers must match. Claiming the Head Archivist means that the Avatar team wins automatically, but they still get to move forward with their ritual because victory is no fun without an eldritch ritual, right?

...

INVASION

...

Once during the game, the Avatar team may choose to attempt to invade the Archives. This will allow you to:

Potentially skips some phases if you successfully steal multiple items from Artifact Storage
Allow you to kidnap someone more easily (lowers the Threshold)

...

KIDNAPPING

...

Once per phase the Avatar team may attempt to abduct a human (as one of the player's Actions.) The normal Threshold is 18, but it lowers to 15 during an Invasion.

...

GIVE A STATEMENT

...

Giving a Statement is the only Special Action that humans can take. Once per game, you can choose to give your Statement to the Head Archivist. You do not need to roll for this Action, but you DO need to actually give a Statement. Tell the other players your backstory. What happened to bring you here? Have you been marked by an entity? Do your characters THINK they were marked by an entity? This is your monologue moment. Make it count.

...

In terms of actual effects, Giving a Statement restores the Head Archivist's Health completely, and also increases it permanently by 1d6.

...

DEATH

...

If you die, you can continue to play by being added as a page in the Book of the Dead. You can longer affect the physical world, but you can still talk to the other players.

...



THE RITUAL

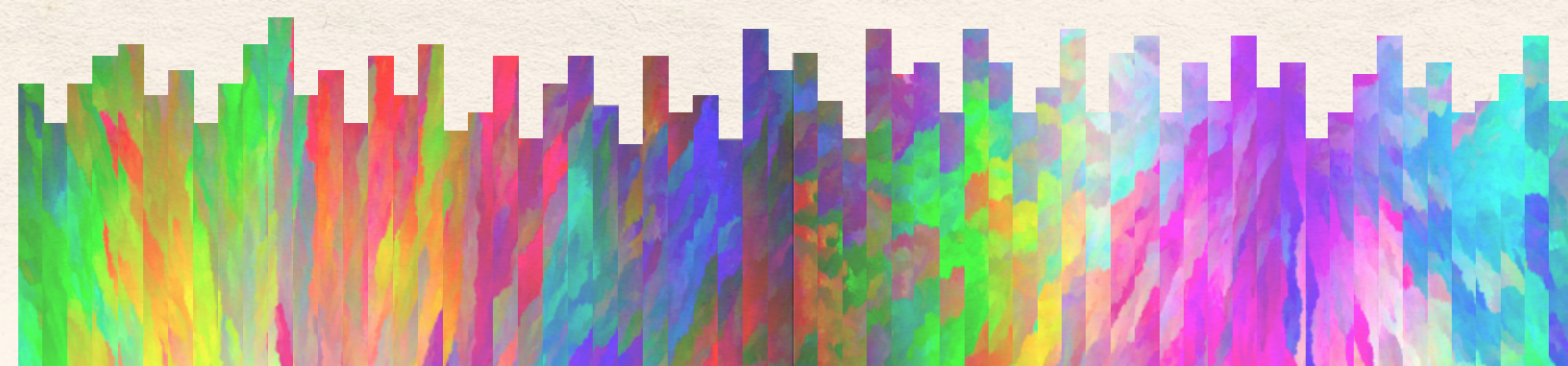
If the Avatars make it through every Phase, then they may perform The Ritual. The Avatar teams decide throughout the course of the game what form they want The Ritual to take. For example, a Vast team might try to drop some victims into the Marianas Trench, and a Corruption team might try to summon a ton of flies, and a Lonely team might play Minecraft. Get creative with it. Similarly, the Archival Staff gets to decide their strategy for stopping it, whether it's making a call out post in the newspaper or just using a ton of C4.

WHAT ARE THE MECHANICS FOR THE RITUAL?

...

There aren't any. Since this is the moment where reality as we know it might completely shift, the way that big climax goes down is entirely up to the players, and whether or not The Ritual succeeds is entirely up to the GM.

...



WINNING THE GAME.

Most RPGs don't have a way to win or lose, but when it comes to maintaining the fabric of reality as we know it, knowing who's the winner and who's the loser is pretty damn important.

THE AVATARS WIN IF:

The Ritual succeeds

They manage to Claim the Head
Archivist

They kill the Archival Staff

THE ARCHIVAL STAFF WIN IF:

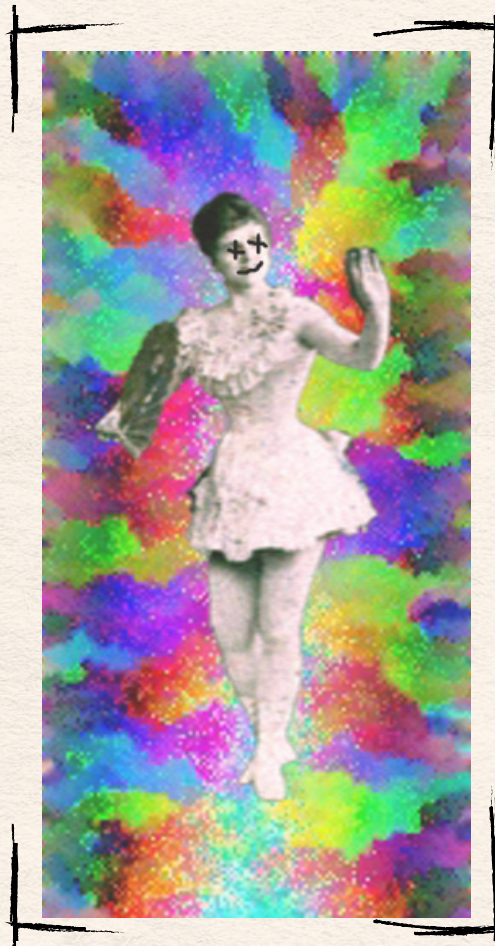
They successfully stop The Ritual

They kill the the Avatars by
diminishing their Health Pool to zero



EPILOGUE

What comes next? If the world has been rewritten, what does our new reality look like? If not, who survived? What is the new order of things? Play out one last Downtime period to tie together the narrative.



GM PREP



RUNNING THE GAME

...

Running this game is essentially similar to GMing any other fantasy tabletop RPG. The main task is deciding what should happen in each of the phases. What artifact are the Avatars looking for? Where is it? Which challenges do they face in getting it?

...

Additionally, you are responsible for deciding the outcomes of the rolls. Actions are fairly simple-- if the player rolls below the Action's Threshold (stat bonuses included) then the Action fails. For Freeform Actions, it is your job to decide what happens as a result of the players' choices. (See Freeform Actions for more information)

...

It is also up to you to decide when players get Advantage or Disadvantage. When a player takes an Action that they are particularly well suited for, they get to roll for it twice and choose the higher dice roll. Similarly, if they try something that they are not well positioned for, then they roll twice and take the lower of the two.

...

When a player "rolls against" another, this simply means that the two players roll their respective dice and see who rolls higher (Avatars will generally have the advantage here.) You decide what stats (if any) are relevant, and whether or not any of the players would have Advantage or Disadvantage.

...

When one character attacks another, you also get to decide what amount of damage you think is appropriate, based on these categories:

Unarmed - 2

Falling - 2

Knife - 3

Gun - 4

Supernatural - d6

Smite - 10

If your players get creative and find other fun ways to hurt each other, you can play around with the numbers as you see fit.

...

BIASED GOD

...

In most tabletop games, the GM is neutral, like a disinterested god. But in this world, not all gods are disinterested. *You may choose to GM as an entity with a stake in the game.* Naturally you will want to keep the game decently balanced, so if you favor one team too much you might end up with a very brief and anticlimactic campaign, but this game actively encourages you to play favorites. Are you playing as The Eye? As The Web? How do you want this all to end? That's for you to know and for the players to find out.

...

KEEPING THE GAME BALANCED

...

As you may have noticed, the game is skewed towards the avatars because, naturally, the chosen proxies of eldritch horrors probably have more chance of success than some library folks. Still, the game is no fun if it sways too much in any team's direction. If you notice that one team is far ahead of the other, feel free to switch who gets the reward and who gets the punishment at your own discretion, or dole out lesser rewards and kinder punishments.

...

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are the artifacts required for each phase?
2. Where do you want each phase to take place?
3. How much information do you want each team to start out with? How much information is secret?
4. What kinds of challenges can you throw at both teams? What kinds of third parties might intervene?
5. How can you keep the game going?
6. How can you keep the story interesting during Downtime?
7. What NPCs do you want to appear? If there is no one playing as a Collector, would you like to add one? What about Avatars of other entities? What about ghost hunters on YouTube?
8. What other items with supernatural properties might exist in this world? It doesn't only have to be what your characters are fighting over. Maybe there's a necklace that makes you want to eat flesh. Maybe there's a pin that steals your memories. It's up to you.
9. How do the events of combat affect the narrative?

PLAYBOOKS



ARCHIVAL ASSISTANT PLAYBOOK

Name:	Total Health (Roll 3d6):
Pronouns:	Current Health:
Bio:	
Why You Work Here:	
	Items (Decide With Your GM): • • •
CV (The Actions You Have Available) • Run • Attack • Heal • Swipe • Investigate • • • • • • •	Stats • Start with +1 in the stat of your choice. As you go through the Phases, your stats will increase. • Readiness () ◦ Physical abilities • Research () ◦ Pre-existing knowledge and observational skills • Personality () ◦ Likeability

ARCHIVAL ASSISTANT UPGRADES

Phase 1:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your CV.

Phase 2:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 3:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 4:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your CV.

Phase 5:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 6:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 7:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your CV.

Phase 8:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 9:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 10:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your CV.

Phase 11:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 12:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

HEAD ARCHIVIST PLAYBOOK

Name:	Total Health (Roll 1d20 and 1d6):
Pronouns:	Current Health:
Bio:	
Why You Work Here:	
	Items (Decide With Your GM): • • •
CV (The Actions You Have Available) • Run • Attack • Heal • Swipe • Investigate • • • • • • • •	Stats • Start with +2 in the stat of your choice. As you go through the Phases, your stats will increase. • Readiness () ◦ Physical abilities • Research () ◦ Pre-existing knowledge and observational skills • Personality () ◦ Likeability • Eldritch Power ()

HEAD ARCHIVIST UPGRADES

Phase 1:

Choose one additional Human Action OR Supernatural Action to add to your CV.

Phase 2:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 3:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 4:

Choose one additional Human Action OR Supernatural Action to add to your CV.

Phase 5:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 6:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 7:

Choose one additional Human Action OR Supernatural Action to add to your CV.

Phase 8:

Add 1d20 to your Health

Phase 9:

Add 2 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 10:

Choose one additional Human Action OR Supernatural Action to add to your CV.

Phase 11:

Add 1d20 to your Health

Phase 12:

Add 2 to the Stat of your choice.

COLLECTOR PLAYBOOK

Name:	Total Health (Roll 3d6):
Pronouns:	Current Health:
Bio:	Why You Became a Collector:
Your First Artifact: • Artifacts You Have Now: • • • •	Other Items • • • •
Repertoire (The Actions You Have Available) • Run • Attack • Heal • Swipe • Investigate • • • • • •	Stats • Start with +1 in the stat of your choice. As you go through the Phases, your stats will increase. • Readiness () ◦ Physical abilities • Research () ◦ Pre-existing knowledge and observational skills • Personality () ◦ Likeability

COLLECTOR UPGRADES

Phase 1:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your Repertoire.

Phase 2:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 3:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 4:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your Repertoire.

Phase 5:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 6:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 7:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your Repertoire.

Phase 8:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 9:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

Phase 10:

Choose one additional Human Action to add to your Repertoire.

Phase 11:

Add 1d6 to your Health

Phase 12:

Add 1 to the Stat of your choice.

AVATAR PLAYBOOK

Name: Pronouns:	Total Health (Roll 1d20): Total Health Pool: Current Health Pool:
Entity:	How You Were Claimed:
Bio:	
Abilities (start with ONE supernatural action) • Run • Attack • Heal • Swipe • Investigate • • • • • •	Items: • • • Stats • Start with +1 in the stat of your choice. As you go through the Phases, your stats will increase. • Physical Power () ◦ Ability to manipulate the material world • Eldritch Power () ◦ Strength of your connection to your entity • Psychological Power () ◦ Ability to emotionally and psychologically manipulate others

AVATAR UPGRADES

After Phase 1:

Choose one of the following Supernatural Actions to add

After Phase 2:

Add 1d20 to your group's health

After Phase 3:

Add 3 to one stat of your choice

After Phase 4:

Choose one of the following Supernatural Actions to add

After Phase 5:

Add 1d20 to your group's health

After Phase 6:

Add 3 to one stat of your choice

After Phase 7:

Choose one of the following Supernatural Actions to add

After Phase 8:

Add 1d20 to your group's health

After Phase 9:

Add 3 to one stat of your choice

After Phase 10:

Choose one of the following Supernatural Actions to add

After Phase 11:

Add 1d20 to your group's health

After Phase 12:

Add 3 to one stat of your choice

APPENDICES



SAMPLE CHARACTER PLAYBOOK

Name: Scruggles McGee	Total Health (Roll 3d6): 6
Pronouns: He/Him	Current Health: 6
Bio: Scruggles used to go to Arby's to order raw meat, then one day he woke up in the tunnels drinking a Capri-Sun. He chooses not to question this.	
Why You Work Here: Scruggles lives in the tunnels under the Institute. Technically he is not an Archival Assistant, just an acid dealer.	
Items (Decide With Your GM): • Capri Sun • Hunk of raw meat • Warrior Cats book	
CV (The Actions You Have Available) • Run • Attack • Heal • Swipe • Investigate • (Add more here as you go through phases) • • • •	Stats • Start with +1 in the stat of your choice. As you go through the Phases, your stats will increase. • Readiness (0) ◦ Physical abilities • Research (0) ◦ Pre-existing knowledge and observational skills • Personality (+1) ◦ Likeability

ITEMS	LOCATIONS
This is not an exhaustive list, but a list of ideas for artifacts to help you get started. Roll a d20 for an item. 1. Painting 2. Mirror 3. Vase 4. Needle 5. Pliers 6. Photograph 7. Scalpel 8. Spoon 9. Gown 10. Mask 11. Doll 12. Music Box 13. Book 14. Map 15. Necklace 16. Typewriter 17. Record 18. Globe 19. Saw 20. Coin	This is not an exhaustive list, but a list of ideas for locations to help you get started. Roll a d20 for an item. 1. Library 2. Docks 3. Beach 4. Warehouse 5. Abandoned house 6. Church 7. Amusement Park 8. Hospital 9. Cemetery 10. Forest 11. Train station 12. Denny's Parking Lot 13. Abandoned school 14. Hotel 15. Elevator 16. Antique Shop 17. Candy Store 18. Orchard 19. Playground 20. Bridge

REWARDS

1. A new NPC joins your team.
2. You get possession of an artifact that allows you to skip a phase.
3. You get possession of an artifact that adds to your health pool/the individual help of one character.
4. You get possession of a new weapon (not supernatural.)
5. You get possession of a new supernatural weapon.
6. Someone tells you a secret.
7. You get to the next location early. You get to go first no matter what.
8. An NPC helps you.
9. You convince a member of the other team to give you something you want.
10. You have a nice Downtime period where your whole team gets to bond and there are no supernatural interruptions. Maybe go out for ice cream or something?
11. Your team gets a cool pet.
12. Your team gets a cool supernatural pet.
13. Your team gets a new resource for information.
14. Your team meets an important person.
15. Your team discovers that the opposition has an unexpected weakness.
16. Another entity decides to help your team out.
17. One of your team members receives great personal news.
18. Your team has a nice tea party.
19. One of your team members gets a sick new outfit.
20. Your team gets a cool new meeting spot.

PUNISHMENTS

1. An NPC that is important to your team dies.
2. Someone tells one of your secrets.
3. You lose a possession.
4. One of your characters becomes severely injured.
5. One of your characters gets separated from the group and cannot be a part of the next phases.
6. You get misinformation and you believe it.
7. An NPC betrays you.
8. One of your characters has a family member show up. Now there's a new person to protect.
9. Your team acquires a cursed object that you don't realize is cursed.
10. Your team encounters an ethical quandary.
11. One of your team member's is arrested.
12. One of your team members loses a loved one.
13. Another entity decides to work against you.
14. One of your team members receives horrible personal news.
15. Your team gets kicked out of your old meeting spot.
16. One of your team members gets evicted.
17. One of your team members gets a divorce.
18. Your whole team gets lice.
19. Your team has to babysit.
20. Someone on your team discovers they are lactose intolerant.

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