

# Roanoke



A Role-Playing Game  
By Clint Krause

Roanoke  
Copyright Clint Krause 2006  
Based on the *Wushu* game system by Daniel Bayn

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Dedicated to Amy, in hope that she will realize her potential.

# Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Introduction	2
Chapter One: Premise	3
Tone	3
Chapter Two: Setting	5
A Brief History of the Roanoke Colony	5
The Island	6
The Natives	6
Indian Magick	7
Chapter Three: Character Creation	8
Concept	8
Traits	8
Fear	9
Trappings	10
16 <sup>th</sup> Century Weapons and Armor	10
Elizabethan Names	11
Sample Characters	11
Chapter Four: Playing the Game	12
Getting Read to Play	12
Game Mechanics	15
Traits	15
The Principle of Narrative Truth	15
Conflict Resolution	15

Quick Conflicts	15
Spotlight Conflicts	16
Combat	17
Against Minions	17
Against Villains	18
The Coup de Grace	19
Doom	19
The Epilogue	20
<b>Chapter Five: Running the Game</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Foul Plots and Dark Legends</b>	<b>24</b>
The Walsingham Conspiracy	24
The Wolves of Ragnarok	26
The Hungry Regiment	27
The Wendigo	28
Jumlin the Vampire Spirit	30
Father Dagoan	32
Beasts of the Wild	33
Colony Events	34
Bibliography	37

# Foreword

*Wushu* is, above all else, a game of genre emulation. It may be most at home in the land of cinematic action, but it also enjoys visiting other genres from time to time. This Halloween, it's headed for the realms of semi-historical fantasy and horror. Clint Krause is intimately familiar with the territory. His last self-published game, *Don't Walk in Winter Wood*, was a whirlwind tour of its wild places. *Twilight Memoirs*, his Chaosium monograph, is an homage to one of its pioneers.

Roanoke raises the spirits of Tim Burton's *Sleepy Hollow* and the wire-fu masterpiece *Brotherhood of the Wolf*. It embraces Lovecraft's motif of doomed characters coming face-to-face with forces beyond their ken, but gives them license to go toe-to-toe and win . . . at least for a while. It supports extended play and one-shots with equal aplomb, thanks to its versatile Doom mechanics. It's a perfect game for All Hallow's Eve.

Roanoke also has the distinction of being the first commercial *Wushu* game not written by the esteemed Reverend Bayn (a.k.a myself). It couldn't be in better hands. Thanks to Clint for applying his talents towards this noble pursuit and, what's more, giving me a few paragraphs with which to ramble.

I'll leave you with the words of wisdom that have guided me through countless Lovecraftian tales:

"Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."  
~ Dylan Thomas

Daniel Bayn, 2006

# Introduction

Welcome to Roanoke. Like many people, I've always been fascinated by the mysterious disappearance of the Roanoke colony. I remember my teacher in grade school mentioning it and then quickly moving on to the next topic. I was disappointed she had simply glazed over one of the most eerie and interesting historical tidbits I'd encountered. Perhaps this game is an outgrowth of that early fascination. Maybe if my teacher would have filled in all the details I would have lost interest. So here I am about fifteen years later, writing about Roanoke and letting my imagination go wild with the mystery of it all. I've made no attempt to be historically accurate. You'll find that this game is just as much fantasy as it is "history" and that I've merely used the historical Roanoke incident as a starting point for my own imagined Roanoke mythology.

I've wanted to do a Wushu supplement since Dan Bayn released the open license for the game. I've been a fan of Wushu since I happened upon the *Wushu Guide to the Matrix* and Dan's work was actually what inspired me to get into independent publishing. I'm glad to finally contribute something to the Wushu community; a community that has grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years and through which I've had a great deal of fun throwing around ideas and running games. I have no doubt that Wushu will continue to attract players around the world and perhaps even gain the level of critical acclaim that it deserves.

Thanks for checking this out,

Clint

## Chapter One:

# Premise

In 1587, a small group of British colonists established a settlement on Roanoke Island. The New World held vast promise for those brave enough to undertake the journey. The leader of the colony, John White, eventually returned to England in order to secure more supplies for the fledgling colony. When he returned three years later, the inhabitants of Roanoke Colony had vanished without a trace. The village that over a hundred colonists had inhabited merely three years prior was completely abandoned with no sign of struggle or violence. The only clue was a carving in the bark of a tree that read “Croatoan.”

In this game, the players take on the roles of the members of the doomed colony of Roanoke and explore the sinister mysteries that led the colonists to disappear without a trace. They will encounter ancient secrets, combat enigmatic malefactors, and explore the terrifying truth about Roanoke Island.

## Tone

In a Wushu game, it is very important to get everyone on the same page in terms of tone and style. With so much freedom given to the players, someone who doesn't quite “get it” can easily kill the mood of the game. In order to prevent this, read or paraphrase the following to your players before the game:

## Subtle Horror

Thousands of zombies and flame-spewing demons are cool, but they don't do anything to help create a mood of horror. In this game, the supernatural should have a subtle feel. A slight shift in the wind when a shaman's spell is intoned, a veil of fog that obscures the appearance of a horrific beast, twigs snapping in the woods, all of these things contribute to the atmosphere of the game by letting your imagination do the work. There is no need to go into gratuitous detail when a horror is described. It's better to be intentionally vague.

## **Over-The-Top Action**

When it comes to action scenes, feel free to go crazy with special effects, high-flying leaps, and explosive plumes of musket smoke. Wushu really lends itself to this kind of action.

## **Wicked Style**

This isn't a history textbook. Your colonists should feel more exaggerated and stylish than their real-world counterparts. Historical settings can feel sort of limiting if you try to emulate actual events too closely. Don't let your game be this way. Go watch *Brotherhood of the Wolf* or *Sleepy Hollow* to get yourself in the mood for high-styled visuals with a strong historical texture.

## **Sinister Conspiracies**

The Roanoke Colony is brimming with dark conspiracies. Betrayals and double-crosses are par for the course. Your characters should never be sure who they can trust. This element of subtle paranoia can really help to improve the unsettling atmosphere of the game.

## **Civilization vs. Wilderness**

In this setting, civilization is a metaphor for structure and discipline, while the wilderness is a metaphor for unbridled passion and chaos. When the characters are within the walls of the colony, their interactions should be more formal and guarded. In the wilderness, the characters should feel free to unleash their passions without regard for the consequences.



## Chapter Two: **Setting**

This game takes place during the three years in which the disappearance of the Roanoke colonists took place. Most of the action will be centered on the colony itself or the untamed woodlands of Roanoke Island. Isolation is the key theme of the setting. The colonists are far from home and have absolutely no one who they can really trust. If they are to survive they will have to do it with their own wits and willpower.

### **A Brief History of the Roanoke Colony**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, England was involved in a desperate arms race with Spain. England would later develop a legendary navy, but at this time the Spanish Armada ruled the seas. England, under the rule of Queen Elizabeth I, began to seek new sources of revenue. Elizabeth herself was reluctant to invest in colonization, but the explorer Sir Walter Raleigh, a favorite in Elizabeth's court, pleaded for the queen to experiment with colonies in the "New World." By setting up farms and plantations on the virgin soil of the continent, England could gain vast new streams of income.

And so, in the year 1585 Raleigh sent a small group of settlers to Roanoke Island. The colony failed quickly—relying too much on the local Indian tribes for food and supplies. The colonists also treated the natives very badly, even killing one of their chiefs. The colony was soon retrieved by Sir Francis Drake, who had been fighting the Spanish near St. Augustine. Drake left behind a small garrison of soldiers to keep watch over the island and hold the ground for England. By the time the new colony arrived at Roanoke, the soldiers had vanished, leaving behind only a few sets of bite-ridden skeletal remains.

In 1587, a new colony was sent to Roanoke Island under the leadership of John White, an artist who had visited the island previously with the intent of cataloging the culture of the natives through his drawings. The colony consisted of several families (about a hundred men, women, and children). The colony lasted for ten months before it became obvious that they were ill-prepared to survive the New World's harsh winter (they were accustomed to the mild, maritime winters of England). After the birth of his granddaughter,

Virginia Dare, the first child of European descent to be born in the New World, White decided to return to England to gather more supplies for the colonists.

When White returned three years later, the colonists had vanished without a trace. The colony's buildings and fortifications stood empty and overgrown with weeds. There was no sign of struggle. White found only a single clue to the fate of the missing colonists. The word "CROATOAN" had been carved into one of the settlement's wooden palisades. White assumed that this message meant that the colonists had moved to nearby Croatoan Island and he quickly organized an expedition to search for the missing colonists. Unfortunately, White's attempt was thwarted by a sudden hurricane. With his ships scattered and his precious colony lost, White returned to England bereft. He was never able to gather sufficient funding to return to Roanoke and the fate of the colony has remained a mystery to this very day.

## **The Island**

Roanoke is a small island south of Chesapeake Bay on the eastern coast of the New World. It is a part of the territory of Virginia; claimed by the British and affectionately named for the purity of the unmarried Queen Elizabeth. The Queen desires this new territory to become a "little England" and a slap in the face of the Spanish who control most of the surrounding area.

Much of the island is shrouded by untouched, primeval forests. Many animal species, including several unknown to science, inhabit its groves and thickets. The Atlantic waters that surround the island are also brimming with life both strange and familiar.

Roanoke, and many of its neighboring islands, is also home to numerous Algonquin tribes. Some of these tribes are hostile and violent toward the colonists and view them as murderous invaders. Other tribes are less threatened by the presence of the colonists and attempt to peacefully co-exist with them.

## **The Natives**

The colonists on Roanoke have come into contact with a variety of Native American tribes. The most notable contact has been with the peaceful Croatoan tribe who dwell on a small island to the south of Roanoke. The Croatoan have proven to be valuable allies against more hostile tribes. In addition to trading and supplying the colonists with guides, the Croatoan have made a great effort to introduce the foreigners to their way of life.

The truce with the Croatoan is still unstable and there is some degree of mistrust on both sides. Shortly after the colony at Roanoke was founded, one of the settlers was slain by Indians. The colonists took revenge by ambushing a nearby village, but were horrified to learn that their victims were not members of the offending tribe, but Croatoan. The incident created a great deal of tension with the Croatoan. Although there is still peace between them and the colonists, it is a fragile, uneasy peace.

## Indian Magick

The Algonquin tribes that inhabit the Roanoke region follow ancient traditions of magick and shamanism. Indian conjurors channel the power of Manitou, the Great Spirit, which is one part deity, one part mystery, and one part spiritual philosophy. The power of Manitou can manifest in a variety of ways. Magicians can take on the form or attributes of an animal, embark on dream-quests to gain spiritual wisdom, or ward their flesh against bullets and arrows.

Manifestations of Manitou should be subtle, though they may have drastic effects. We're not talking about fireballs and magic missiles here. Most magic will manifest without any fireworks or blazing auras. Generally, these effects will occur quickly and quietly between the breaths of the caster. Here is a list of effects that are common among practitioners of Indian magick:

- Assume the form of an animal.
- Gain the senses or wisdom of an animal.
- Hunt without making a sound.
- Charm arrows to strike their target with great accuracy.
- Incant a blessing that deflects arrows and musket balls.
- Communicate with nature spirits (trees, rivers, etc).
- Heal the sick and wounded with special herbs and songs.

Shamans who channel the power of Manitou also protect their tribe from the darker tradition of witchcraft called "The Old Way." The Old Way is a shadowy form of magick practiced by some rogue tribes (such as the Wendigo). Legends speak of blood sacrifice, demon-calling, and death curses. Most shamans shun the Old Way and weave incantations to ward themselves against such evil.

## Chapter Three:

# Character Creation

In this game, player-characters are members of the ill-fated Roanoke Colony and their Indian allies. Through your character's eyes you will explore the mysteries of the colony and the surrounding wilderness. Character creation shouldn't take very long and it's mostly about defining your character's style and flavor. Characters in this game can run the gamut from uber-competent badass to frightened, meek commoner, since your character's level of competency is based more on narration than game statistics.

## Step One: Concept

Decide on your character's basic concept. What types of things does he or she do? What's his or her shtick? Here are some good examples of character concepts:

- Alcoholic Explorer
- Zealous Witch-Hunter
- Overconfident Constable
- Faithful Missionary
- Secretive Heretic
- Traveling Scholar
- Indian Scout
- Spanish Spy

## Step Two: Traits

Traits define your character in game terms. They rate his or her capabilities in order of importance. Your character starts with three traits: one rated 5, one rated 4, and one rated 3. You may choose anything as a trait, but it's usually a good idea to have a **combat** trait, a **social** trait, and a **profession** trait. For example, the aforementioned Zealous Witch-Hunter might have Zealous Witch-Hunter at rating 5 (a profession trait), Quote the Scripture at rating 4 (a social trait), and Cleanse by Fire at rating 3 (a combat trait).

# Step Three: Fear

Every character has a fear. This is something that absolutely terrifies your character to the point that it nearly cripples him. When your character encounters the source of his fear, he must use a trait rating of 1 for the duration of the scene.

Fears should be fairly specific, but not so narrow that they never come up in play. You may create your own fear or choose one from the list below:

## The Dark

Your character has an intense fear of the dark. This fear is triggered whenever your character is immersed in pitch black darkness. Even torch or lantern light is enough to keep this fear at bay.

## Beasts

Your character cringes at the thought of fur, fangs, and fury. This fear is triggered whenever your character encounters any creature that has at least one of the aforementioned descriptors or can reasonably be called a “beast.”

## Savages

Your character has a deep-rooted fear of Native Americans and their customs. This fear is triggered any time your character encounters hostile natives.

## Firearms

Your character is startled by the discharge of firearms. This fear is triggered any time such a weapon is used against your character.

## Betrayal

Your character mistrusts everyone, fearing betrayal at every turn. This fear is triggered whenever your character is betrayed.

## Isolation

Your character is terrified of being alone. This fear is triggered whenever your character is left completely alone.

## Step Four: Trappings

Your character starts the game with any equipment that befits his or her character concept and traits. Equipment has no effect on game statistics, but is none-the-less important in adding flavor to your narrations. Does your character fight with an elegant sword or with firearms? Both? What does your character wear? Are his trappings clean and unused or worn ragged? Deciding on your trappings does a lot to help define your character.

### 16<sup>th</sup> Century Weapons and Armor

The 16<sup>th</sup> century was the dawn of a new age of martial technology brought on by the implementation of black powder firearms. Smooth-barreled pistols and muskets of various kinds (matchlock, firelock, flintlock etc . . .) were common among infantry. These arms were unreliable and dangerous to wield. Often, a marksman would only have time for one shot with a firearm before the enemy was upon him (the weapons were notoriously difficult to reload in combat). This led to the development of many interesting combination weapons that would serve as knives or clubs once the firearm had been discharged.

Archaic weapons were also commonplace. Swords, halberds, and pikes were still standard issue in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A fighting man who didn't have access to a firearm might very well carry a crossbow or even a traditional bow and arrows.

With the introduction of firearms, heavy armor became less common. Soldiers still wore breastplates and metal helmets, which could occasionally stop a musket ball from striking home.

## Step Five: Final Details

Finish up by naming your character and fleshing out his or her motivations and background.

The following names were gathered from:  
[www.s-gabriel.org/names/christian/fairnames](http://www.s-gabriel.org/names/christian/fairnames)

## Elizabethan Names

Male Given Names	Female Given Names	Surnames
John	Elizabeth	Littlebury
Thomas	Joan	Gasper
William	Margaret	Chelsey
Richard	Anne	Church
Robert	Alice	Allen
Henry	Virginia	Clifton
Nicholas	Isabel	Seymour
Walter	Jane	Crisp
Edward	Mary	Stanley
Simon	Katherine	Barton
Francis	Margery	Hitchcock
Edmund	Clemence	Dove
Alexander	Frances	Whitewood
Barnaby	Joyce	Finch
Philip	Emma	Saintjohn
Peter	Cecily	Chase
Geoffrey	Amy	Wood
Tobias	Barbara	Rowely
Luke	Rose	Litchfield

## Sample Characters

The following are examples of what your finished character should look like. These characters could also be used as pre-gens if you wish to jump right into the action.

### Zealous Witch-Hunter

Witch-Hunter (5) Relentless in the search for heresy.

Quote the Scripture (4) Knows how to sway a crowd.

Cleanse By Fire (3) Great vengeance & furious anger.

Fear: Isolation (1) Dreads being alone among heathens.

Trappings: Several Matchlock Pistols, Hangman's Noose, Bible, Sword

The Zealous Witch-Hunter was raised by puritanical parents and grew to enjoy the power of persecution. He joined the Roanoke colony planning to convert the native tribes of the New World and break them of their heathen ways. He is extremely paranoid of witchcraft and the supernatural and will go out of his way to "purify" practitioners of such traditions.

Fatal Flaw - His crusade could galvanize the natives against the entire colony...

## Overconfident Soldier

Veteran (5) Knows one hundred ways to kill a man.

Vigilant (4) Sleeps with both eyes open.

Stubborn (3) Doesn't take orders from civilians.

Fear: Betrayal (1) If you can't trust your soldiers, you're dead.

Trappings: Musket, Sword, Helmet and Breastplate

The Overconfident Soldier has distinguished himself in battle against the Spanish and in many of the civil wars still ravaging Europe. He has been assigned by the Queen herself to ensure the safety of Roanoke colony. So impressed is he by the Croatoan's fighting skills that he plans to bring a few of them back to England when John White returns.

Fatal Flaw - His belief in his own superiority may lead him to confront forces against which the colonists have no defense...

## Secretive Heretic

Witchcraft (5) Divination, blessings & curses.

Secrets (4) Keeping them & rooting them out.

Folklore (3) Spirits, demons, etc.

Fear: The Dark (1) Knows what lies in wait...

Trappings: Ceremonial Dagger, Bell, Book, Candle

The Secretive Heretic joined the colonization effort with her husband and daughter. She has been forced to hide her pagan beliefs her whole life and hopes that exposure to the traditions of the Native Americans will result in a more tolerant English society. (It's a good idea to let the other PCs in on her secret, as her magical skills make her indispensable.)

Fatal Flaw - Her curiosity about the supernatural may draw the attention of dark forces, or tempt her to make Faustian bargains with same...

## Croatoan Scout

Brave Warrior (5) High-flyin', slow-motion Native-Fu!

The Trees Speak (4) Sensitive to magic & the spirit world.

Hunter (3) Knows how to track and trap almost anything.

Fear: Firearms (1) Cowardly weapons that kill in an instant.

Trappings: Twin Tomahawks, Pouch of Herbs

The Croatoan Scout is a native who befriended the colonists after they rescued him from a Wendigo band (They had abducted him for use in one of



their foul rituals.) He swore to stay with the colony until he had repaid his debt. Needless to say, he's learned enough English to communicate reliably.

Fatal Flaw - Not all of the colonists welcome his presence and, in a time of stress, he could become the flash point for a lynch mob.

## **Elder Statesman**

Well-Spoken (5) Inspires allies & intimidates enemies.

Politics (4) Can read people like open books.

Duelist (3) A gentleman must be able to defend himself.

Fear: Beasts (1) Words are little use against hungry wolves.

Trappings: Dagger, Coin Purse, Powdered Wig.

The Elder Statesman is in charge until John White returns . . . technically. In truth, he has neither the military nor the religious authority that carries real weight during a crisis. However, he has complete faith that civility will triumph, even in this untamed wilderness. His wife and daughters aren't so sure.

Fatal Flaw - His faith in his fellow Englishmen may lead him to ignore the signs of civil unrest until it's too late...

## **Child of the Woods**

Survivalist (5) Knows how to live in wild places.

Ruthless (4) In a fight, she's more mean than skilled.

Woman's Work (3) Sewing, cooking, being nice to people.

Fear: Savages (1) Heard too many tales of cannibalism and nocturnal rites.

The Child of the Woods never felt comfortable in civilized society. Her hermit father raised her in a remote corner of the English countryside. When he died, relatives forced her to move to London... and wear a dress. When she heard Sir Walter Raleigh was looking to colonize the New World, she jumped at the chance! Here, her skills as a woodsman are just too valuable to ignore.

Fatal Flaw - In her heart of hearts, she wants nothing more than to abandon the colony and live in the woods, but only if the other colonists come with her...

## Chapter Four:

# Playing the Game

This game could easily be played as a one-shot, with the players discovering the fate of the colony in a single session. It could also support an extended campaign in which the players explore the many mysteries of Roanoke Island and perhaps even go through a few different characters. There are three whole years during which the activity of the colony is completely unaccounted for—plenty of time for an entire campaign to blossom.

During play, your group will explore the mysteries of Roanoke Island and learn more about the dark fate of the colonists. This text presents a variety of possible answers to the mystery, from the mundane to the sinister and supernatural. I leave it to you to determine the exact fate of the colony or to leave the mystery unsolved. Know, however, that there is no right or wrong way to play and there is no “meta-plot” with a pre-determined end point. I encourage your group to play until you are satisfied and leave it at that.

### Getting Ready to Play

This game is best with four to six players. Before you sit down to begin the game there are a few things that you’ll need. *Wushu* uses standard six-sided dice. Each player will need about twelve dice (six each of two different colors). Alternately, you could put a big pile of dice in the center of the table and let everyone grab from it as needed. Each player will also need a character sheet, which can be printed or photocopied from the back of this book. Blank pieces of paper will work if you don’t have access to a photocopy machine or a printer, but they won’t be quite as handy and evocative as the “official” character sheet. Each player will also need a pencil and some way of keeping track of his lifeblood points. Poker chips and glass counters work great for this.

You can greatly increase the atmosphere of your game by putting a little thought into your playing environment. Try turning out the lights and burning some candles, light some incense, and play soft, creepy background music.

# Game Mechanics

The core mechanics of this game are a variation on the *Wushu* game system by Daniel Bayn. There are a variety of supplements and resources available to *Wushu* players and gamemasters. Check the bibliography at the end of this book for a list of useful resources.

## Traits

Characters in this game are defined by traits. During character creation, each trait is given a rating from 1-5. This rating is used to determine the outcome of conflicts involving the character. If a character needs to roll for something that doesn't fall under one of his traits, he is assumed to have a rating of 2 for the roll.

## The Principle of Narrative Truth

In this game, any narration by the GM or the players happens *exactly* as it is described. The dice either determine who gets narration rights or how far the narration advances the scene. If anyone at the table feels that a narration contradicts the desired tone and style of the game, he or she can call for a veto. When someone calls for a veto, everyone at the table should vote on whether or not the narration stands or gets thrown out.

# Conflict Resolution

Whenever the outcome of a conflict is in doubt or it would be dramatic to leave it to chance, we consult the dice. There are two types of conflict: **Quick Conflicts** and **Spotlight Conflicts**.

## Quick Conflicts

Sometimes you'll want to resolve a conflict quickly and without a lot of gratuitous detail. When this happens, the involved player rolls a single die. If the result is *equal to or less than* the character's relevant trait, the character wins the conflict and the player narrates the outcome. If the result is higher than the character's trait, the character loses the conflict and the GM narrates the outcome.

If multiple characters are involved in a quick conflict, each player rolls and the character with the lowest successful roll gets to narrate the outcome of the conflict. If everyone fails the roll, the player who rolled lowest wins the conflict. If there is a tie, simply re-roll.

## Example

The Croatoan Scout, played by Joe, wants to determine the location of a hostile group of Wendigo warriors. Joe rolls a die against his *The Trees Speak* (4) trait and gets a three. Success! Joe narrates his character meditating at the base of a tree until the location of his enemies is revealed by the wind whispering through the leaves and branches.

## Spotlight Conflicts

Whenever you come across an interesting conflict (a fight, a passionate debate, etc . . .) and want to resolve it in blow-by-blow detail, you use a spotlight conflict. This type of conflict puts a spotlight on the action at hand and gets played out in greater detail than a quick conflict.

When you're involved in a spotlight conflict, just describe your character's actions. Each **detail** you narrate adds one die to your pool (to a maximum pool of 6 dice). Details can be lines of dialogue, slow-motion stunts, environmental observations, or anything else that adds atmosphere to your description. Details don't even necessarily have to involve your character, so long as they are relevant to the conflict. The only restriction is that you cannot narrate any detail that would end the conflict before the roll.

Usually, the involved players will simply take turns describing their characters' actions. Alternately, you can go back and forth with each player describing one or two details at a time until everyone is satisfied with their dice pool. This method allows each character to react directly to the other characters' actions and is especially useful in combats against villains.

Once everyone is satisfied with their descriptions, roll the dice. Each die that comes up *equal to or less than* your character's appropriate trait counts as a success. The player who gets the most successes gets to narrate the outcome of the conflict. If there is a tie, start the process over again.

## Example

Joe's Croatoan scout is attempting to sneak up on a Wendigo camp that he recently discovered. Joe narrates his character's actions: "I climb into a nearby tree (1 die) and observe the Wendigo for a few minutes (2 dice) then drop down on one of the sentries (3 dice) and break his neck (4 dice)."

Now, it's the GM's turn to narrate the activities of the NPCs: "Another one of the Wendigo sentries happens to wander near the scene of your ambush (1 die) he thinks that he hears something (2 dice), but shrugs it off as his imagination (3 dice).

Since both sides are satisfied with their narrations, it's time to roll the dice. Joe rolls four dice against his *Hunter* (3) trait and rolls a two, two fours, and a one. Two successes! Since the NPCs were minions, the GM rolls his three dice against the default target number of 2. He rolls a three, a two, and a six. One success.

Joe wins the conflict and gets to narrate his infiltration of the Wendigo camp.

## Combat

This is an action-oriented game. As such, combat has a few extra rules to consider. Combat that involves the player characters is almost always a spotlight conflict. Describe your character's actions as normal, but before you roll the dice, split your pool into attack dice and defense dice (this is where having two different colors of dice comes in handy). Attack dice inflict damage on other characters, while defense dice protect your character from damage. "Damage" dealt by combat rolls does not have to reflect physical harm, it can represent any kind of setback. Once everyone has chosen their attack/defense distribution, roll the dice.

Each successful attack die inflicts a point of damage on your opponent and each successful defense die blocks a point of incoming damage. Each time your character takes a point of damage that isn't blocked by a successful defense die, he loses one point of Lifeblood. Player characters get three points of Lifeblood. If your character takes damage that exceeds his current Lifeblood his opponent gets to narrate a **Coup de Grace** (see below).

### Against Minions

Minions are weaker opponents who exist more to make the player-characters look cool than to threaten them. Minions are special because they do not count details or roll dice. Feel free to describe minions in whatever way you wish to pull off your cool combat stunts or to make the scene more interesting. When a group of minions comes into play, the GM assigns the group a **Threat Rating**. A minion group's Threat Rating is equal to four times the number of player-characters involved in the fight, times the number of rounds you want the fight to last (**4 x # of players x desired # of rounds**).

When you're fighting minions, each successful attack die reduces the group's threat rating by one. When the threat reaches zero, the minions are defeated (dead, unconscious, fleeing, or otherwise out of the fight).

Minions do present a small threat to the player-characters. It is assumed that anyone fighting minions will take one point of damage each time he makes a combat roll. In other words, you need at least one successful defense die to avoid taking damage from minions.

### Example

The Zealous Witch-Hunter, played by Mike, has just been ambushed by a band of hostile natives. He narrates: “As the Indians come into the clearing (1 die), I roll to the side, avoiding a volley of arrows (2 dice), then I leap to my feet with my cloak twirling behind me in slow-motion (3 dice), I fill the air with smoke (4 dice) as I fire two of my pistols into a charging savage (5 dice), sending him spiraling backwards in a violent spray of blood (6 dice).

Mike is satisfied with his narration, so he splits the six dice he earned through narration into four attack dice and two defense dice. He rolls them all against his *Cleanse by Fire* (3) trait and ends up with 3 attack successes and zero defense successes. Mike’s three attack successes lower the threat rating of the hostile natives by three points and his character loses a point of lifeblood (since he didn’t manage any defense successes). The battle will continue in this way until one side stands victorious.

## Against Villains

Villains are more powerful opponents that pose a real threat to the player-characters. Villains have traits and roll dice just like the player-characters, except that all of their actions are narrated by the GM. Villains generally have between three and nine lifeblood points.

If more than one character gangs up on a villain, the participating players must divide their descriptions so that they roll a combined maximum of six dice. Villains may always roll up to six dice. After a combat roll is made, the Villain may split his attack successes among his opponents as he sees fit.

Remember: since this is a spotlight challenge, players are free to narrate whatever they want as long as it doesn’t end the conflict (i.e. you can’t simply narrate your character decapitating a villain). The privilege of narrating the end of the conflict comes to whoever scores a **Coup de Grace** (see below).

### Example

The Overconfident Soldier, played by Aaron, is being stalked through the woods by a mysterious beast. The GM begins his narration: “As you run through the forest (1 die), completely alone (2 dice), you begin to hear

movement in the woods (3 dice) just beyond the light of your lantern (4 dice). You hear a sound behind you (5 dice) and, when you turn to face it, your lantern goes out (6 dice)!”

Now Aaron gets to narrate his actions: “I cry out in terror (1 die) as I see a vague silhouette of the creature in front of me (2 dice). Instinctively, I thrust my sword toward the silhouette (3 dice), but it is knocked out of my hand (4 dice) and I am knocked to the ground (5 dice). I scramble to my feet and begin to flee in terror (6 dice).”

Aaron assigns one die to attack and five dice to defense, then rolls against his *Soldier* (5) trait. The GM assigns four dice to attack and two to defense, then rolls against the creature’s *Prey Upon Mortals* (5) trait. Aaron ends up with 1 attack success and 3 defense successes. The creature rolls 4 attack successes and one defense success. Aaron’s character loses a point of lifeblood and his opponent comes out unscathed.

## The Coup de Grace

When your character does damage to an opponent that exceeds his or her current Lifeblood, you may narrate a **Coup de Grace**. At this point, the victim’s plot immunity has run out and you may narrate your victory in whatever manner you see fit (including cold-blooded murder, if that’s your thing).

### Example

Aaron’s character, the Overconfident Soldier, has two points of lifeblood remaining. Another exchange with the creature who is hunting him results in the woodsman taking three points of damage. Since this exceeds the two lifeblood that he has, the Woodsman is defeated and the GM gets to narrate the creature’s Coup de Grace. The GM narrates: “For a moment, you think that you’ve outrun the creature . . . but then you realize that the branches of the trees that encircle you are occupied by its many brethren. The camera fades to black as the creatures leap upon you from the trees. In the morning, the others find your mangled corpse dangling from one of those very trees.

## Doom

The Roanoke colonists are doomed to disappear into the mists of time. The following mechanics emulate this by allowing the players’ decisions to affect the colony’s ultimate fate.

Authors Note: This game's Doom mechanics were directly inspired by *Conspiracy of Shadows*, a role-playing game by Keith Senkowski ([www.bobgoat.com](http://www.bobgoat.com)). If you like games that feature doomed heroes, do yourself a favor and check it out.

If a player is not satisfied with the result of a die-roll, he may choose to invoke his **Fate**. When Fate is invoked, the character is automatically granted the highest possible level of success for the roll in question (as if he had rolled all 1s). Each time a player invokes his character's Fate, the colony gains one point of **Doom**. The GM can also invoke Fate when rolling for NPCs. Each time the GM invokes an NPC's Fate, the colony's Doom score is reduced by one.

It's best to use glass counters or poker chips to keep track of the colony's Doom (as it will shift drastically over the course of the game). The colony's Doom score should be visible to everyone. It's important that the players can see the consequences of their actions. When the game ends, the colony's final Doom score determines the premise of the **Epilogue**.

## The Epilogue

When the game ends (whether it was a one-shot session or a long-running campaign) the players and GM work together to narrate the fate of the colony.

The premise of the epilogue is dictated by the colony's final Doom score. Compare the colony's final Doom score to the table below to determine the premise of the Epilogue:

<b>Final Doom Score</b>	<b>Epilogue</b>
Equal to or less than zero	Heroic Escape
Equal to or less than the number of player-characters	Tragic Escape
Greater than the number of player-characters	Heroic Death
More than twice the number of player-characters	Terrible Death

### Heroic Escape

The colonists manage to completely escape the doomed island. The players may narrate the details of the escape and their characters' lives afterward.



## **Tragic Escape**

The colonists escape the doomed colony, but not without consequence. One character is forced to sacrifice himself to allow the others to escape. If no one volunteers for the sacrifice, have everyone roll for it. The GM narrates the fate of the sacrificed character and the other players narrate the details of the escape and their characters' lives afterward.

## **Heroic Death**

The colony goes down in a blaze of glory. The GM sets up a final conflict and each player narrates his character's death in the most heroic manner possible.

## **Terrible Death**

The colony meets the darkest of fates. The GM narrates each character's death in the most terrible way possible.

Once each character's epilogue has been narrated, the GM provides an epilogue that ties up any loose ends in the story and describes the fates of the story's antagonists.

## Chapter Five:

# Running the Game

There are a variety of ways that you can use this material to run a game. The setting lends itself well to one-shots and short convention games, but there is also a great deal of room for expansion, if you'd rather run an extended campaign. Whatever you decide to do, here are some suggestions about how exactly to do it:

### Populate the Colony

Make a list of five to ten interesting NPCs that are somehow related to the colony. These characters could be the husbands and wives of the player-characters, Indian allies, or anyone else that you can think of. After the players finish creating their characters, have them peruse this list and make two or three connections between their characters and the NPCs. This process helps to define some pre-existing relationships that you can draw on for conflicts in the game.

### Make A List of Interesting Scenes

Before the game, sit down and brainstorm ideas for interesting scenes that could appear in the game. Don't try to write a plot (the players will do that through their actions) but simply outline some scenes that you'd like to see in play. Remember, scenes without conflict are boring! The best scenes are both pregnant with conflict and evocative of the setting.

Use the players' character sheets as a tool to guide you when coming up with ideas for scenes. Try to base scenes on the characters' traits and fears whenever possible. You should try to incorporate each character's main trait at least once per session. It's also good to trigger at least one character's fear each session.

### Scene Ideas

- Strange lights are seen off the coast of the island.
- A young man is caught stealing from the colony's food supply.
- A neutral group of Indians seeks a truce with the colonists.
- A PC has a sinister dream, which is played out as a spotlight conflict.

## Start With a Bang

Go through your list of scene ideas and kick off the game with the best one. Maybe try starting the game *en media res*. If your opening scene draws the players into the fiction, they'll remain there for the rest of the session. The opening scene should be one that forces the characters to react in some way, without railroading them. Remember, there's no need to plan *how* the characters should react. Just set the scene so that the characters have no choice but to do *something*. Often times, a good opening scene can drive play for an entire session.

### Opening Scene Ideas

- Two PCs are attacked while hunting together and the attacker triggers one of the character's fears.
- A woman from the colony is accused of witchcraft. The game opens in the middle of a passionate debate to determine her fate (a spotlight conflict).
- The game opens with a flashback of the characters first day on Roanoke Island. Something happens that foreshadows an event later in the adventure.

## Let the Players Lead

Your job as gamemaster is to introduce new scenes and conflicts into the game. That's all. Don't try to pre-plan the characters' course of action. The game will be much more rewarding for everyone involved if it ends up going in unexpected directions. Build new conflicts off the players' actions and let their decisions push the narrative forward.

Try asking leading questions of players that let them have more authorship in the narrative. When a player asks what he sees when he looks down a dark hallway, try saying "Good question . . . what *do* you see?" While you don't want to overuse this technique, it can be a great way to let the players take the reins and push the game in an interesting direction.

## Villainous Vignettes

Villainous vignettes are a great way to maintain a sinister tone in your game. In these vignettes, you simply narrate a scene of a villain or his minions pursuing their dreadful interests. These scenes might give the players subtle clues about the nature of the villain, or they may be red herrings. At any rate, the player-characters cannot generally act on information gleaned from such vignettes. This technique is often used in horror movies to show the audience a couple of clues about the villain and his plans.

## Chapter Six:

# Foul Plots and Dark Legends

As gamemaster, you may advise the players against reading the following section. It serves as a sort of “buffet of ideas” from which you can develop the villains and antagonists of your game. Feel free to modify these ideas to fit your own agenda.

It’s probably not a good idea to try and work all of these antagonists into the same campaign. Pick two or three of your favorites and run with them. It’s quite possible to run several *Roanoke* campaigns with the same group of players and focus on completely separate antagonists.

## The Walsingham Conspiracy

*When I found him, he'd already set the grain on fire. "It was you," I accused, my gun leveled at the back of his head. "It was you who cut the boats from their moorings and let them drift out to sea. It was you who emptied the traps and let rats into the seed. You accused women of witchcraft, but it was you who served the devil."*

*He raised his pistol with the speed of a striking snake, but he did not fire. We circled each other while the walls ignited around us. "This colony was doomed from the start. I'm just lending God a hand." He pulled back his hammer and I did the same. "In a week's time, I'll be aboard a Spanish Brigantine . . . and you'll be deep within the Virginia soil, worms feasting on your eyes."*

Within Queen Elizabeth’s court, there are some who plot the demise of the Roanoke colony. In fact, Elizabeth’s own spymaster, Francis Walsingham, is jealous of Sir Walter Raleigh’s courtly prestige and wishes to discredit him by disrupting his pet project . . . the Roanoke Colony. This conspiracy filters all the way down to Simon Fernandez, the captain of the ship put in charge of taking the colonists to the New World. Walsingham has even placed operatives among the colonists in an attempt to disrupt and ultimately destroy the settlement at Roanoke.

If you choose to bring the Walsingham conspiracy into play, you should steep the game in a feeling of deep paranoia and mistrust. Betrayals, double-agents, and characters with shifting loyalties will help to instill this feeling. Leave the characters unsure of whom (if anyone) they can trust.

## Francis Walsingham

Royal Spymaster (5) A master of courtly deception and subterfuge.  
Manipulate from Afar (4) Commands with dark words from distant shores.  
Master of Poisons (3) His enemies never see it coming.  
Fear: Betrayal (1) Can be beaten at his own game.  
Lifeblood: 6

Walsingham is manipulating the fate of the Roanoke Colony all the way from England. His charming disposition and courtly reputation hide his sinister espionage. He is loyal only to himself and will stop at nothing to get what he wants. Even his loyalty to the Queen is a mirage. If the Queen herself were to interfere with Walsingham's agenda, she may find an unfortunate additive in her evening wine.

## Simon Fernandez

Privateering Scoundrel (5) A veteran mercenary of the sea.  
Master Swordsman (4) Leaves a wake of broken blades and bloodied foes.  
Charming (3) Handsome and sharp, he's hard to argue with.  
Fear: Betrayal (1) He has placed too much faith in his employers.  
Lifeblood: 6

Simon Fernandez was the man responsible for transporting the Roanoke colonists to the New World. Little do the settlers know that Fernandez was commanded by Spymaster Walsingham to deposit the colony on Roanoke island instead of their original destination (the Chesapeake Bay area). Fernandez was eager to take to the sea and pursue a life as a privateer, but Walsingham has paid him a handsome sum to stay behind and lead the conspiracy against the colony.

## Plot Hooks

- Simon Fernandez returns to Roanoke Island with a band of Spanish pirates in tow.
- One of the PCs was also paid off by Walsingham. Walsingham tries to use his *Manipulate from Afar* trait to force the character to betray his

fellow colonists. This internal struggle could be represented by a spotlight conflict between the PC and Walsingham as the PC struggles with his memories of the deal and his loyalty to his fellow colonists.

## The Wolves of Ragnarok

*The howling started at dusk, just as the moon rose red over the sea. At first, the people paid little attention; our colony had been beset by wolves before. Their hides adorned more than one hunter's hearth.*

*By midnight, their braying rattled in our skulls. This was no wolf pack. Their voices boomed out of the darkness from every direction, layering over each other in a bloodthirsty chorus. The full moon cast deep shadows through the forest, but we began to see the forms of men lurking therein. We were under attack.*

*Dawn found few of us left. The men had gone after the savages with hot lead and cold steel. Only their gurgling screams returned. If we do not leave before nightfall, our fates shall be the same.*

Long ago, Norse explorers were the first white men to discover and colonize the New World. One such group were members of an exiled religious sect known as the Wolves of Ragnarok. Criminals and murderers, these cultists sought to bring about Ragnarok, the death of the gods and the rebirth of the mortal world, so that they might atone for their crimes and start life anew. The sect was exiled from their homeland and began to sail the coasts of North America. Eventually, the Wolves settled near Roanoke Island. They built a secret temple in a hidden cave, and began to stalk the local Indian tribes, hunting down victims for their bizarre sacrifices. Legend has it that the Wolves of Ragnarok were stricken by the gods with the curse of undeath for attempting to meddle in divine affairs. Now, the ageless warriors roam the dark places of Virginia, searching for victims to sate their never-ending bloodlust.

### Kleykir the Exile

Undead Norse Warrior (5) Undying, unfeeling, unkillable.  
Cursed by the Gods (4) Forced to roam the land in suffering.  
Hunter of the Living (3) Tracks his prey by scent alone.  
Fear: Hostile Magick (1) Can the curse be ended?  
Lifeblood: 6

In life, Kleykir was the leader of the Wolves of Ragnarok. Now, he commands his rotting Norse minions from his subterranean lair. Fortunately

for this bloodthirsty warrior, it seems that a new set of victims has just made a home for themselves on the nearby island of Roanoke.

## Wolf Minions

The Wolves of Ragnarok make great minions. They mindlessly hunt the living with their ancient swords and rotting armor. Because they are undead, the Wolves are a bit harder for the players to deal with than normal minions. Wolf minions produce two attack successes every round instead of the normal one success.

## Plot Hooks

- The PCs find mysterious rune-stones and other evidence of Viking settlement. Eventually, the evidence leads them to the secret lair of Kleykir the Exile.
- The colony's Croatoan allies tell stories of bearded white men who have lived in the woods for centuries.
- The GM narrates a villainous vignette in which a decrepit old man somewhere on the island casts a sinister spell, calling forth a shambling horde of minions carrying rusted swords and shields. He whispers a single phrase: "Ragnarok has come . . ."

## The Hungry Regiment

*America hates us with homicidal intensity. The winter it unleashed on us was brutal beyond anything England has to offer. Its cold, spiteful winds bit deeply into our flesh, no matter how thickly we piled the blankets or how gluttonously we fed the fire. The game, which had seemed so plentiful just a month before, vanished with the autumn leaves.*

*You cannot imagine how the hunger gnaws at you, how it erodes your will and suffocates your soul. It becomes a living thing; within you, but not a part of you. Not yours to control. Eventually, it claws its way up and eats you from the inside. It wears your skin like a shroud.*

In 1585, Sir Francis Drake left a small regiment of soldiers to watch over the fledgling Roanoke territory. The regiment ran afoul of the local Indians, who deprived the soldiers of food by stealing their supplies and casting spells to rid the surrounding woods of game. When the first soldier died of starvation, the others rationed and ate the young man's corpse. Soon, the desperate men began to murder and eat their friends. Those who survived

noticed that they were beginning to gain new levels of strength and vitality. The cannibals then banded together and killed an Indian hunting party. With each bite, they felt themselves infused with their victim's strength. A few members of the Hungry Regiment still roam Roanoke Island, looking for fresh meat.

## Edward Chelsey

Demented Cannibal (5) The hunger wears your skin like a shroud.

Supernatural Strength (4) Fueled by flesh.

Keen Senses (3) Knows how to find his food.

Fear: Damnation (1) The hunger suffocates your soul.

Lifeblood: 6

Edward Chelsey was a member of Drake's lost regiment. He has risen to power among his kind because he has eaten more flesh than all of his minions combined. Chelsey is capable of incredible feats of strength and agility. He is mindless in his pursuit of human flesh. Both his hunger and his lust for power are limitless.

## Hungry Minions

The cannibal soldiers of the Hungry Regiment are ferocious combatants. They possess supernatural strength and agility, which allows them to pull off all kinds of wire-fu-style stunts. Don't forget that their main form of attack is their vicious bite.

## Plot Hooks

- After a colonist goes missing, the PCs find his or her remains in the woods near the settlement. It is disturbingly apparent that the victim was eaten alive.
- A strange white man wanders into the settlement and claims that he was sent by God to eat the sin of the colonists and spare them from God's wrath. If things are going particularly badly for the colony, some may even believe him.

## The Wendigo

*We had him surrounded, but it mattered not. He raised his tomahawks to heaven and screamed like a devil. He leaned back just as young Patterson fired, gun smoke mingling with his breath as the musket ball rocketed past his face... and straight through the elder Patterson's neck.*



*The savage was a whirlwind of blades and blood. He turned my rifle aside with one tomahawk and buried the other in Smithe's head. Then, he dropped and spun around, sweeping young Patterson's legs out from beneath him. I barely got my rifle up in time to block, but he cleaved the barrel in two and kicked me in the sternum with such force that I flew backwards into a tree twenty feet away. By the time my vision cleared, he had vanished into the moonlight.*

The Wendigo are a hostile Indian tribe, eager to drive the British colonists from their lands by capturing them and sacrificing them to the “Wendigo,” an ancient demon who roams the woods demanding tribute. The Wendigo have been at war with the Croatoan for many centuries. The Croatoan see the Wendigo as worshippers of unclean spirits. The feud between the tribes runs deep and hatred is firmly rooted on both sides.

The Wendigo tribe goes out of its way to strike fear into the settlers' hearts. They often stage moonlight raids in which they storm the colony's forts, killing and scalping those that they can and abducting others to use as human sacrifices to their dark god.

## **The Wendigo**

Demon of the Winter Wind (5) Wields an array of demonic powers.

Master of the Woods (4) The trees harken to its malevolent whims.

All-Seeing Gaze (3) It's watching you.

Fear: Fire (1) Manitou's cleansing fire is its only weakness.

Lifeflood: 8

The Wendigo is a dark spirit that haunts wintry forests throughout the land. The demon stalks the woods searching for victims, which he snatches up into the sky and devours. Several native tribes pay tribute to the demon by offering their outcasts as living sacrifices.

## **Hunts-In-Shadow**

Bloody Tomahawk (5) Has claimed the lives of many white-men.

Servant of the Wendigo (4) Serves a dark master.

Unseen, Unheard (3) Moves through the night like a shadow.

Fear: The Wendigo (1) Terrified of his master's wrath.

Lifeflood: 6

Hunts-In-Shadow is the chieftain of the Wendigo tribe. As a boy, he encountered the Wendigo in the woods one night and bargained with it to spare his life. In exchange, the Wendigo commanded the boy to build a

nation that would pay the creature tribute. All of his life Hunts-In-Shadow has been compelled to gather followers for the Wendigo and destroy anyone who opposes his dark master.

## Wendigo Minions

Wendigo braves are fierce in battle and masters of unique martial arts. The Wendigo are intended to be the setting's default "hostile natives." It is quite possible to introduce the Wendigo tribe as a fairly mundane threat with no direct link to the supernatural.

## Plot Hooks

- Members of the Croatoan tribe urge the PCs to help them in their age-old war against the Wendigo tribe.
- As winter sets in, bone-chilling howls can be heard from the woods at night. Has the Wendigo been awakened?
- After the settlers are plagued by bizarre dreams, a secret cult of Wendigo-worshippers forms among the members of the colony.

## Jumlin, The Vampire Spirit

*"Help me..."*

*Her cries echoed through the cave like a siren song, drawing me deeper into this New World. The climb was difficult; how a woman got through it, I could not imagine. By the time I reached her, my hands were bloody and my clothes caked with earth. She was pregnant. Her fevered eyes glared from behind a stomach so swollen that I feared it would burst at any moment. Getting her out the way I had come would prove impossible, but that was never her intention. It was when I heard them skittering through the cave behind me that I realized the trap was already sprung.*

*She had hungry mouths to feed.*

The natives speak of a legend in which a shaman, whose wife was barren, pleaded with Manitou to bless him with a son. When Manitou refused to answer his request, the shaman delved into the secret arts of the Old Way. He called forth a dark spirit known as Jumlin, who promised to give the shaman a legacy. In return, Jumlin asked the shaman to open a gate through which he could pass into mortal lands. The shaman agreed and performed a dark ritual that sundered the boundary between worlds. But Jumlin had deceived the shaman; he took possession of the shaman's body and turned

on his tribe. Jumlin slaughtered the tribe's warriors and fed upon their blood. Later that night Jumlin ravaged the shaman's wife and conceived a great line of blood-thirsty children. Jumlin and his vampiric brood still roam the earth, feeding on the blood of the living, and plotting against the great spirit Manitou.

## **Jumlin**

Vampire Spirit (5) A powerful and seductive blood-drinker.  
Dominate Mortals (4) Can take possession of a mortal body.  
Walk Among Shadows (3) Stalks the night with ease.  
Fear: Sunlight (1) Driven away by the light of day.  
Lifeblood: 8

Jumlin is an evil, vampiric spirit. He wanders the mortal world with a hijacked body, seeking to slake his thirst on the blood of the living. He commands a large arsenal of vampiric abilities including flight (or at least gravity-defying jumps), supernatural persuasion, and uncanny stealth.

## **The Dark Mother**

Dark Mother (5) Surrounded by her hungry children.  
Barbed Hair (4) Strangles and slashes her foes.  
Witchcraft (3) Practices the Old Way.  
Fear: Sunlight (1) Driven away by the light of day.  
Lifeblood: 6

The Dark Mother was once the wife of the desperate shaman who granted Jumlin access to the mortal world. The vampire stole her husband's body and impregnated her with its demonic spawn. The Mother's mind is now enslaved by Jumlin and she hides away in a secret lair, bloated and pregnant, filling the woods of Roanoke with her bloodthirsty children.

## **Vampire Minions**

The spawn of Jumlin and the Dark Mother possess a variety of vampiric abilities. Their actions are often at odds with gravity and they wield supernatural strength and keen senses. Fights with these creatures should be brutal, action-packed, and terrifying.

## **Plot Hooks**

- Jumlin has taken a liking to one of the colony's women. Each night, he appears at the foot of her bed and sings to her with seductive whispers. The Dark Mother has become jealous and plots to kill the poor woman.

- One morning, the colony's livestock are all found dead and completely drained of blood. This presents two problems for the colonists: How can they replace the food that would have been provided by the livestock and who or what perpetrated these gruesome killings? Paranoia runs high and tempers start to flair as the colonists struggle with this mystery.

## Father Dagoan

*I saw them. God help me, I saw them. Their spongy flesh and bulbous eyes, the flaps of skin that heaved in the cold, night air. Spines and tentacles erupted from faces most certainly not made by God's hand. Their stench lingered on the wind, announcing them to all the creatures of Eden.*

*What they were up to, I cannot say. It was all I could do to keep my trembling legs planted in the earth. They marched past me into the woods; some crawled or slithered. I could hear them warbling and squealing deep in the island's bosom.*

*When they dragged themselves past me, back into the sea, they had a woman in tow.*

Deep under the waves, there lies a deity that certain ill-bred tribes have worshipped for centuries. Father Dagoan, as he is known, is believed by these tribes to be the great spirit of the sea. By allowing their women to breed with Father Dagoan's aquatic children, these tribes ensure that they will have plentiful fish and mild weather.

As a result of this unusual bloodline, many of the Dagoan-worshipping tribes have a strange, almost fish-like appearance, which descends through the generations.

## Father Dagoan

Lord of the Deep (5) Master of the tides and waves.

Starry Wisdom (4) Blessed with the knowledge of the old ones.

Hybrid Legions (3) Children of the deep heed his call.

Fear: The Elder Sign (1) Is driven away by a secret sign.

Lifeblood: 8

Dagoan lords over countless spawn from the depths of the ocean. His bloodline is a festering parasite on humanity. Those who are "sea-blooded" have disturbingly bulbous eyes and a foul appearance that suggests an unholy union of man and fish. When the stars are right, Dagoan will rise from the depths and stride across the earth, heralding the arrival of the great old ones.

## The Children of Dagoan

Dagoan could have a variety of minions in his service. Several native tribes pay him tribute and he commands a seemingly endless school of gilled monstrosities from the depths of the ocean.

### Plot Hooks

- The colonists witness a tribe of Dagoan worshippers casting tributes into the sea. They notice that some of these “tributes” are young women.
- A strange looking Indian with bulging eyes wanders into the settlement and asks for shelter. He speaks of unseen gods beneath the waves.

## Beasts of the Wild

One of the mundane threats to life in the Roanoke Colony is the presence of a variety of natural predators, some of which are still unknown to science. If provoked, wolves, bears, snakes, and sharks can all pose a danger to the colonists. These threats can be used as a break from conflicts with the main antagonists of the game. In a game with a lot of supernatural opponents, it's good to occasionally throw in an encounter with something more mundane.

### Angry Black Bear

Tooth and Claw (5) Wields an arsenal of natural weapons.

Climb Trees (4) You're not even safe in the timbers.

Seek Food (3) Knows how to follow its nose for food.

Fear: Captivity (1) Easier to deal with when captured.

Lifeblood: 6

### Hungry Shark

Efficient Predator (5) Plenty of sharp teeth.

Drawn to Blood (4) Your wounds might be your doom.

Fast Moving (3) Escape is unlikely.

Fear: Captivity (1) Easier to deal with when captured.

Lifeblood: 3

### Wolf Packs

Aggressive wolves are best handled as minions. Their main advantage against humans would be their speed and ability to outnumber and overwhelm their prey.

## Plot Hooks

- Friendly Indians warn the colonists of a great shark who hunts in the shallow waters just off the coast of the island.
- While traveling in the woods, the PCs come across a wounded bear cub. Unfortunately, its mother is lurking nearby, ready to defend her child.

## Colony Events

Use the following table if you need to fill some down time in the story or if you get stuck for an idea. Each event is followed by several questions that should help to spark your imagination. You can use these events either to add a bit of color to the day-to-day struggles of the colony or as a launching point for a whole story-arc.

### Colony Events: Roll 2D6

Roll	Event
2	Pirate Raid
3	Indian Attack
4	Disease
5	Fire
6	Crime
7	Food Shortage
8	Storm
9	Rumors
10	Celebration/Festival
11	Friendly Visit
12	Discovery

### Pirate Raid

A crew of Spanish pirates happens upon the colony. Will they launch a raid on the settlement? Are they agents of Walsingham? Are they fleeing something that they encountered at sea?

### Indian Attack

A band of hostile Indians attacks the settlement. The attackers may be from the Wendigo or another hostile tribe. Why have the Indians attacked? Were they prodded into action by an unseen manipulator?

## **Disease**

A disease sweeps across the settlement, leaving many colonists incapacitated and dying. Can the PCs find a cure before it's too late?

## **Fire**

A fire breaks out within the settlement. Can the PCs put it out before the town is destroyed? Was the fire an accident or an act of arson?

## **Crime**

One of the colonists (or perhaps an Indian ally) is accused of a crime. Is the suspect innocent or guilty? Were they framed? What was the nature of the crime? Make the charge "witchcraft" for that ol' Salem charm.

## **Food Shortage**

The colony is quickly running out of supplies. Can the PCs find food before everyone starves to death? Why has food run out so quickly? How long until the colonists resort to cannibalism?

## **Storm**

The colony is beset by a terrible storm. Can the PCs find shelter? Does the storm leave anything in its wake: a washed-up shipwreck, one of Dagoan's children, strange artifacts from an ancient civilization?

## **Rumors**

Intriguing rumors have spread throughout the village. What are the rumors? Witchcraft? Cannibalism? Sabotage? Are the rumors true?

## **Celebration/Festival**

The colonists come together to celebrate something. Is it a marriage? A birth? The death of an enemy? Does anything disrupt the celebration?

## **Friendly Visit**

The colony is visited by a friendly group. Who is this group? Friendly natives? Lost sea travelers? What is the group's agenda?

## **Discovery**

Someone in the colony discovers something that was previously unknown to science. What was discovered? (Feel free to go wild with this one. Remember that this discovery disappears along with the colony).



# Bibliography

## Books

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*Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* by Karen Kupperman

*Roanoke: The Story of the Lost Colony* by Peter Bosco

*The Encyclopedia of Native American Shamanism* by William Lyon

## Films

*Brotherhood of the Wolf*

*The Last of the Mohicans*

*Ravenous*

*Roanoke: The Lost Colony*

*Sleepy Hollow*

*The Village*

## Games

*Wire-Fu* by Daniel Bayn

*Pulp-Fu* by Daniel Bayn

*A Wushu Guide to Cut-Fu* by Daniel Bayn

*A Wushu Guide to Gun-Fu* by Daniel Bayn

*A Wushu Guide to Wyrld-Fu* by Daniel Bayn

*Werewolves Bite* by Daniel Bayn

*Vampires Suck* by Daniel Bayn

*My Life With Master* by Paul Czege

*Conspiracy of Shadows* by Keith Senkowski

*Call of Cthulhu* by Chaosium Inc.

## Music

Opeth, *Blackwater Park*, *Deliverance*, *Damnation*, and *Ghost Reveries*

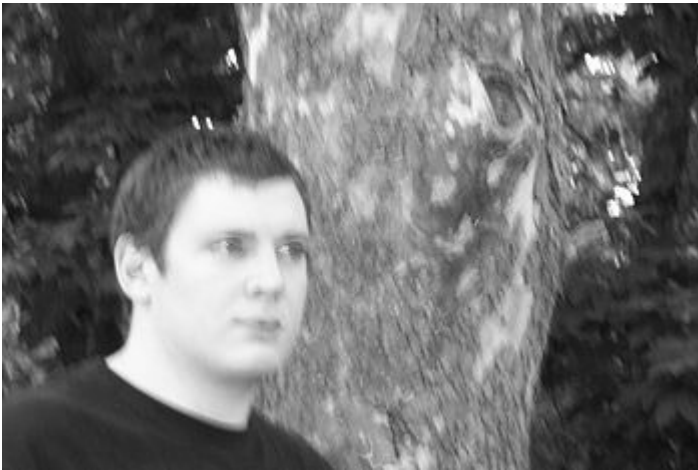
## Websites

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[www.s-gabriel.org](http://www.s-gabriel.org)

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## About the Author



Clint Krause is a freelance writer, musician, and game designer. Aside from these activities, he enjoys reading, travel, and spending time with his wife Cassie. He lives in Missouri. Visit Clint on the web at [www.clintkrause.com](http://www.clintkrause.com).

# Roanoke

Name

Traits



Concept



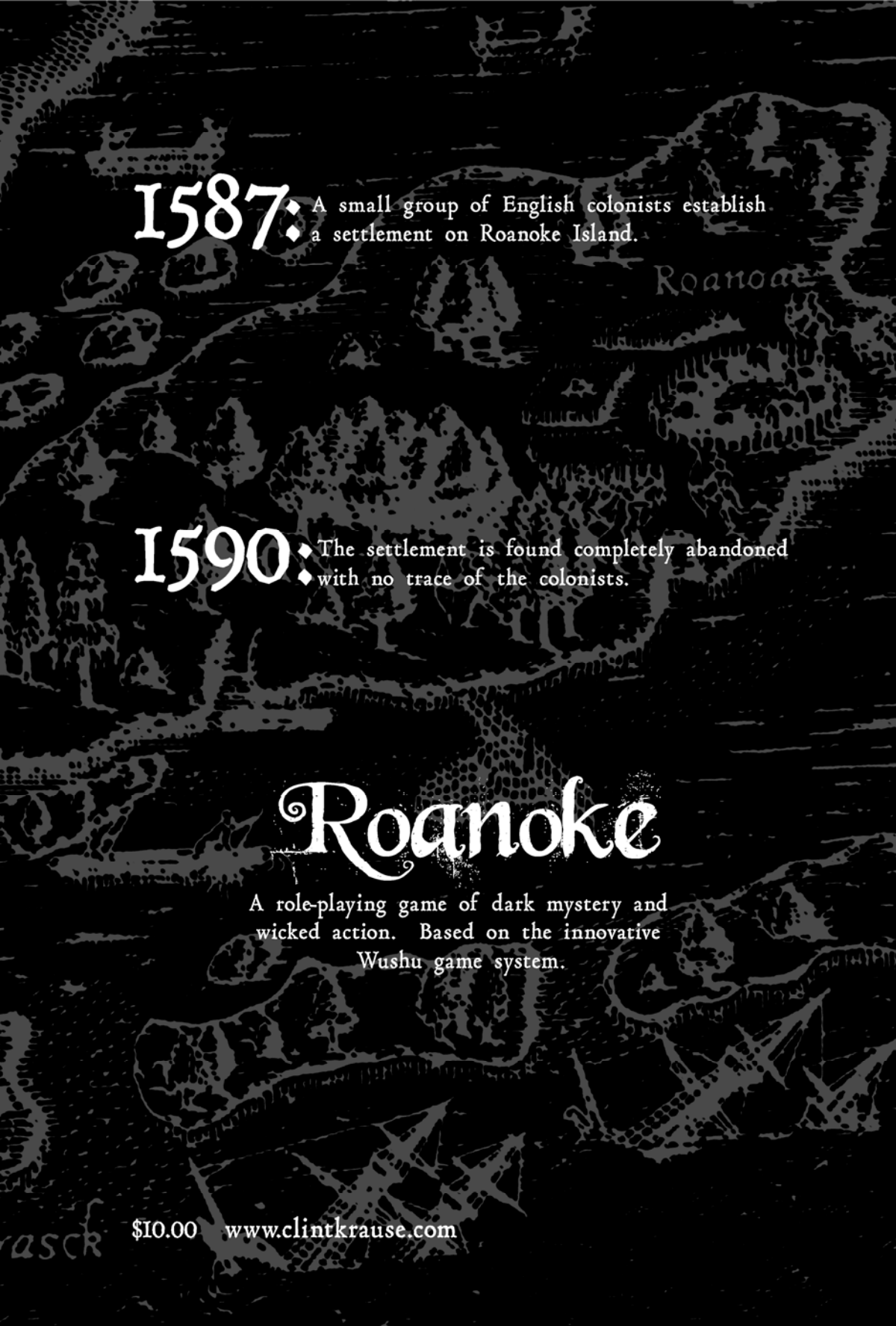
Trappings



Fear



Notes



**1587:** A small group of English colonists establish a settlement on Roanoke Island.

**1590:** The settlement is found completely abandoned with no trace of the colonists.

# Roanoke

A role-playing game of dark mystery and wicked action. Based on the innovative Wushu game system.

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