

100 HORROR ADVENTURE SEEDS



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Credits

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100 Horror Adventure Seeds – 20/08/2004

Dedication

I dedicate this book to all the friends I left behind when I quit The Camarilla LARP society. It's just a shame the way the society worked always caused more horror and reaction than the way it was played. I hope you continue to have fun with it against the odds.

Peace.

Introduction

Foreword

There are masses and masses of role-playing books. Simply tons of them and, with the latest d20 boom, the sheer volume of volumes has become ridiculous. There are books about places, about people, about things about technology. If you want to play a giant purple flying squid called Harold there is probably a specialised player's handbook out there written just for you. If you go a bit further and delve into the murky world of PDF publishing you'll find even more books on even more obscure subjects as well as 'reprints' of old material dating back to the Stone Age of role-playing where we only had the 'd1' and Live-Action consisted of endless games of 'rock'. Yet, amazingly, in this plethora of material you won't actually find a great deal on the Games Master's role, on how to craft these wonderful adventures that everyone is supposed to participate in.

Oh, sure there are Games Master's guides and manuals but most of them are just short little ideas, more detail on things like creatures, special powers or traps that the Games Master needs to know about and the player's shouldn't see. There isn't a great deal of what I'd consider practical ideas or aids in writing or running games and even less in the way, usually, of inspirations.

To me the most useful parts of any book are the, sometimes one-line, adventure ideas or hooks. These can spark the imagination and provide you with enough for a game, sometimes even a whole campaign. These sparks are often more useful than pages and pages of text describing the habits, religion and leading figures of well-described fantasy lands and they're a lot more useful to me than your standard adventure modules.

This book is an expansion on that idea. Not a single book filled up with detailed endless dungeon passages and traps and not a railroading module that doesn't account for player creativity and stubbornness. Not just one line adventure ideas either but 100 separate, developed adventure ideas along with a few hints on how to get some inspiration of **your own**.

I hope it proves useful to you!

Postmortem Studios

Postmortem Studios is the name of a small role-playing game studio belonging to James 'Grim' Desborough. The business has two sides. On the one side is a small, non-profit venture producing semi-professional fan-based material & on the other side more professional material produced by Grim himself.

Postmortem Studios was fully established in January 2004 for both freelancing for other companies and for the production of professional works both in PDF, which we support as a concept, & in print.

A Word about Piracy

Hello there. Odds are, unfortunately, that the majority of people reading this will have downloaded this file as a PDF file through P2P networks or from a website without paying for it. Here is how it breaks down. For the last couple of years I have been fruitlessly searching for full time employment with the skills I have been trained in. This year I have finally given up, scraped together a little cash and am now seeking to turn the thing I love, writing, into a full time career. This is not an easy thing to do and PDF publishing does not make a great deal of money at the best of times. On this product I can expect to make, at the most, about \$800 USD over the year. After the exchange rate to British pounds that does not leave much.

Odds are you do not really give that much of a crap but it is not like I am actually charging that much for what I do is it? Do me a favour, help me eat and produce more work. I am trying to support and expose other artists, writers and people of talent as well as myself and that takes money. If you are not going to give me any cash by buying this book please support my other work by going to www.postmort.demon.co.uk and donating at least a single dollar to Postmortem Studios to help keep us running.

Thank you.

100 Horror Adventure Seeds

Creating 100 Horror Adventure Seeds has, perhaps, been the most difficult 100 Seeds book to produce so far. Horror is a much more restricted genre than Sci-Fi or Fantasy. While Sci-Fi and Fantasy can include horror elements in them it is much more difficult to include those elements in horror without, stylistically, becoming entirely one of the other genres.

Because of this a lot of horror adventures end up becoming like Buffy the Vampire Slayer's 'Monster of the week' where you just have to hope the monster is different or interesting enough to hold people's attention. Because of this difficulty the adventure seeds contained in this book are not so wide ranging or as inspirational as the seeds in the other books, for which I apologise.

Horror has also been mined out a great deal, there are fewer and fewer new ideas and the field of horror re-treads old ground with slightly new twists over and over again. It is no wonder that successful horror franchises like Freddy Krueger or Jason are trotted out again and again and again. Even the pulp horror of HP Lovecraft or the fleshy horrors of Clive Barker become rote after a while.

Much like the horror writers and film makers I found I was repeating myself in these seeds but with slightly different riffs on the material each time. There's only so many ways you can present 'chased by cannibalistic hillbillies' but I hope I have managed to create a wide enough range and some new ideas along the way as well.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the book and that it sparks your imagination at least a little. With the release of the new World of Darkness by White Wolf there may well be a resurgence of interest in the horror genre, especially with their new emphasis on the mortal, normal world.

Happy gaming, scare the bejeezus out of those players!



Creating Adventures

The Usefulness of Modules

A traditional adventure module consists of the following...

1. A brief overview of the adventure including, if you're lucky, a way to get the characters involved and/or interested in it.
2. The role-play hook and scene that draws the adventure to the character's attention, possibly some details on the town or village where they hear about this as well.
3. Some details on how to get to the site of the adventure.
4. Endless pages of maps, numbered rooms, traps and monster descriptions.
5. Some non-player-character statistics.
6. Maybe some sample characters.

A slightly more advanced module might have the following...

1. A brief overview of the adventure.
2. The social situation and circumstances at the start of the adventure between various NPC power groups.
3. Events as they proceed, effectively railroading the players into their involvement.
4. Several interlinked scenes, locations and trails of clues that lead the players between one event, group or location and another piecing together what happens.
5. A massive conclusion of some sort.
6. Some non-player-character statistics.

The traditional module might appeal to those of us who are still playing dungeon bashes with miniatures and are looking for nothing more in depth than that and the more advanced modules are typical for more social games like Vampire or the later Cyberpunk materials but they suffer from the fact that they often don't suit the groups of player-characters that get formed to play and that it becomes a game of being swept up in events rather than making them.

Ultimately, traditional modules are most useful for when you first start out running a game. They show you what the writers were intending, show their

world in operation and provide some useful pre-generated non-player-characters that you can use in your own adventures. Otherwise they suffer from the same problems that continue to separate computer role-playing games from tabletop role-playing games, linear story without much in the way of capacity to accommodate unexpected actions.

Those Damn Players

Games Master's who set up their own games in a similar way to bought modules will soon find themselves in trouble. Even the most finely crafted and beautifully written adventures fail to fully take into account the full scope and range of the damage that players can do to derail the plot, obsess over unimportant details or find a new and unexpected way to solve the goals of the adventure within the first five minutes.

While I certainly wouldn't deny that an amount of scripting and preparation is very useful scripting out a whole adventure step by step is blatantly asking for trouble. No plan survives contact with the enemy and no game idea survives contact with the players. A much better plan is to have a rough outline of what you want to happen, the details you actually need (treasure, statistics, basic thumbnail plans if any dungeons, mazes or sites are involved) and then to improvise once play starts.

An improvisational Games Master doesn't have a completely set plan and so is free to alter details, adapt to the player's actions and even to completely change the goals of the adventure all on the sly. This is something like building a playing field that can be used for various different sports rather than just, say, football. You give yourself a little more scope.

Finding Inspiration

Something an author is almost always asked, whether a game designer or a novelist is...

'Where do you get your ideas?'

This is likely to produce a strangled groan of annoyance from the author in question who will then give some trite answer or mumble incomprehensibly for half an

hour about nothing consequential.

Some of us can come up with a basic adventure idea within about thirty seconds to a minute, especially when the games are inherently mission based such as a military or police based campaign. Other people need a bit of help.

Nobody gets ideas the same way, what one person finds inspiring another might find draining or irritating. Here are a few ideas you might find helpful to bring about a touch of inspiration for your own adventures.

- **Compact Discs:** The title of an album or the name of a song might inspire you to come up with an adventure. Read the lyrics in the sleeve notes for more possibilities and listen to the song and album while you're writing up the notes. This works best with music that is lyric heavy and concerns itself with subjects other than teen romance but inspiration can come from the strangest places.

- **Novels:** There's no shame in plagiarising for your games provided that you change things enough that your players who have read the books don't recognise it and solve everything right away.

- **TV:** Various TV shows can give inspiration for plots though you should change things around a little so that players who watch the show don't recognise it too easily. You could also try mixing and matching elements from different shows and episodes to muddy things up a little more.

- **Keep a Notebook:** You never know when inspiration will strike. You could be on the loo, you could wake up after a dream or you could be riding the bus. When you get an idea make a note and develop it later.

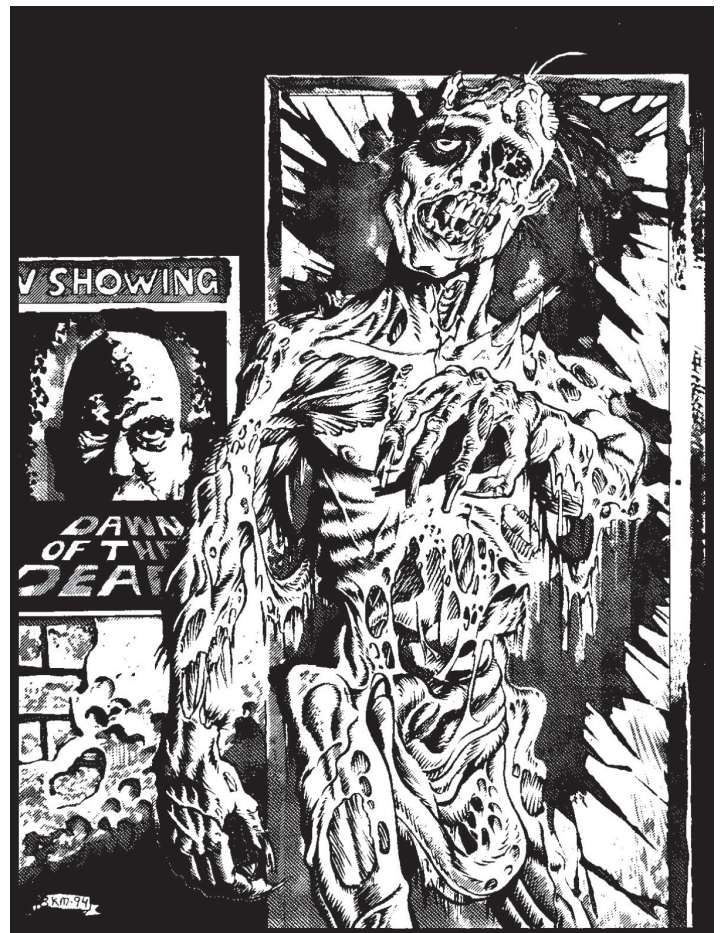
- **Your Players:** Each player has things they like to play best, different styles, different things that they enjoy. Really useful players will also have written character backgrounds and will have goals for their characters that you can mine for an adventure with a pre-existing motivation for them to get involved.

- **Pictures:** Just looking at a fantasy picture, a photo, a cityscape, these things can give you plenty of ideas.

- **Take Some Time Out:** Go for a walk, have a bath, relax, think and something may well come to you.

- **Embrace the Cheese:** Not every adventure has to be an inspired epic, sometimes everyone just likes to charge into a tunnel and kill things, rescue the princess or slay the dragon. If you're out of ideas go for something simple and then embellish it as you go along.

- **The Games Master's Secret Weapon:** Don't write an adventure at all. Just set the player's up in a town or city and let them pootle around for the whole session doing whatever they want. Something might come up while you're improvising.



The Adventures

The following pages contain one-hundred adventure seed ideas for you to use in your Sci Fi based games. Each adventure consists of the basic idea, three twists and an epilogue which, in effect, means you're actually getting closer to 900 different combinations and possible adventures!

Feel free to add your own embellishments or to combine or string together the adventures in any way you please and, if you have particular success with any of them we'd love to hear about it.

Format

Each adventure presented in this book is roughly a page long and follows a standard format which is presented below. Every adventure is numbered for easy reference if you think you will need to refer back to the seed information.

Adventure Number

Each adventure is numbered, in order, so that you only have to remember the number in order to look it up quite easily.

Adventure Title

Each adventure also has a, sometimes cheesy, title which gives some clue as to the nature of the adventure and its content.

Description

A few paragraphs describe the adventure and the general background and idea behind it. This description gives the basic idea for the plot arc, the set-up and the payoff.

Twists

Each adventure has three twists that can be dropped into the basic idea to add levels of complexity, intrigue or difficulty for the players. Twists can completely change the nature of the adventure.

Epilogue

If the session goes well or has left you with loose ends and ideas you may want to run a sequel to it. The epilogue provides one possible sequel to the events of the adventure though, depending on the twists you have incorporated, it may not be able to be run precisely as it has been laid out.

Idea Boxes

Grey boxes like this contain any supplementary ideas, notes or hints regarding the adventure presented.



Adventure 1

Rise of the Zombies

Description

Over night the dead begin to rise from the grave, digging their way free, escaping the morgues, rising from where they fall like a tidal wave of undead flesh, coming forth and seeking to overwhelm the living. The rotting corpses of friends, relatives and familiar faces are suddenly everywhere, banging on windows, smashing against doors, seeking entry to anywhere the living are hiding with only murder in mind.

Survivors are holed up in defensible buildings, secure houses, isolated farms, secure shops and malls, churches, underground stations and tall buildings with narrow stairwells. The sheer weight of the living dead numbers and the lack of food and water slowly turn the world into a living hell for those who live.

Is there a solution to the plague of undead killers? Is anywhere truly safe and for how long? Is the whole world overrun or just this town? Where can you go to escape death? Is there a point in living any longer? Can civilisation be rekindled and is it worth bringing back?

Hey, they've got to rot away sometime... haven't they?

Twist

The zombies are being raised by an insane necromancer who has somehow opened a gate to hell. Insane damned souls are coming through the howling abyss and possessing the bodies of the dead, seeking to kill the living in order to replace their countless number in hell, the greater to prolong their second chance at existence – however foul. If such a thing can be halted the necromancer and the soul-gate are the key.

Twist

The military seizes power in order to deal effectively with the threat to the country, or the world. Civilian institutions are torn down and troops and reserves are on the streets everywhere wiping out the living dead

in an organised fashion. Are the troops any better than the zombies though? Can they resist the temptation to loot, to rape to kill? Can they give up the power given to them by the situation and might they prolong the crisis in order to keep that control?

Twist

One of the players is immune to the zombie plague and can be bitten with impunity without being turned into one of the lurching undead. If they can be gotten to civilisation, to a medical facility, to scientists, then perhaps a vaccine might be engineered to protect troops and regular people. Without the infection risk the undead plague might be a lot easier to eradicate.

Epilogue

Even with the plague stopped or safety found how do you rebuild civilisation? There is no power and even without zombies the survivors are scattered, starving and driven to ever more desperate acts. With no central control former military units ravage the land taking what they want or need from the weak around them. What, really, is the difference between a ravening zombie and a starving person driven to cannibalism and madness?

Idea

People expect certain things from zombies. Generally the classic Romero idea is the thing people have in their heads and they often want to recreate scenes from the films they love. Using this desire and putting a new spin on it can create a very fun and engaging game with elements of surprise and fulfilled expectation.

Adventure 2

Residence of the Deceased

Description

Belucci Manor was once a monastery, a long time ago, then the residence of a rich noble family. Now it is largely a derelict, ruined place of tattered majesty, its past showing through like the bones on a dried-out corpse.

Various stories and local legends tell of both ghosts and treasure associated with the Belucci Manor, of monks and headless nobles, of gold, of demons and other strangeness. Still it has been cut off by a rock fall for the longest time and only recently has another slip made the manor accessible again.

It is important archaeologically, historically and architecturally and so the characters have been despatched, assigned or otherwise engaged to explore the ruined old house and uncover what truths they can about its past and any treasure that might be there.

Of course, there's no such thing as ghosts, or worse...

Twist

The Manor exists at a conjunction of ley-lines and the rock upon which it is built is heavy with metal deposits and magnetite. The presence of ghosts here has a semi-scientific explanation, the magnetic fields here are complex, deep and powerful, trapping the electrochemical essence of personality from the patterns of the brains of the dying within the fields at the site. Everyone who has ever died here has remained as a ghost, a shadow of their former self able to exert their will to create minor electromagnetic effects and powerful hallucinations in those who trespass in their home.

Twist

When the Germans were in Italy in WWII they occupied the manor and conducted occult and scientific experiments in the area since it was so renowned for

occult activity. The remnants of the Nazi experiments in increasing the power of ghosts, of calling up spirits of past Germanic heroes and of other bizarre ideas remain spread throughout the Manor, dangerous and many of them still working. Occult traps and problems for the unwary, along with a lot of skeletal corpses in tattered SS uniforms...

Twist

A storm rolls in while they are investigating the Manor, causing yet another rockslide and cutting off the Manor once again. They are going to be stuck here a while with whatever food they have brought with them or can scavenge from the local wildlife. Plus there are 'things' here with them, things that shouldn't be here, that shouldn't exist and yet that have made their home here in this forgotten place in the dank and the dark. Strange things, perhaps once human...

Epilogue

The ghosts of the place have latched on to the investigators, perhaps finding themselves able to ride along in their electronic equipment or even possessing their bodies. Escaping the lonely confines of the Manor the ghosts grow stronger and more powerful, moving with the investigators to haunt new, urban locations or to interfere with things such as aeroplane controls or the operation of cars. For disturbing their rest they turn upon and do their level best to drive insane or harm the ones who came to them, transplanting the horrors of their home to the urban setting of the character's homes.

Adventure 3

Dangerous Mutations

Description

Bio-weapons take on a new twist with genetic research and the application of nanotechnology and other innovations. The newest generations of weapons don't just kill but turn people and nature against the enemy, remaking them into something hostile and dangerous to life itself.

A corporation acting under contract to the government has been investigating the potential of these mutagenic weapons and their effects on plant, animal and human life with varying results. One unexpected result was the release of the weapon into their research plant, killing or mutating everyone and everything within the complex despite their strict safety protocols.

Now the weapon and the mutated creatures have leaked beyond the compound, slowly spreading through the wilderness towards the nearby town. When the infected creatures reach there it will be carnage. Already some hikers and others have gone missing in the space between the lab and the city and the characters can be hikers or those sent to discover what happened to those out in the wilderness.

Twist

The leak is no accident but rather a deliberate test. The town has been cut off and isolated from radio, cable, telephone, internet and all other considerations as well as being surrounded by a cordon of troops with strict shoot to kill policies. They will wait until the whole infection incident is played out and then move in to assess the total amount of damage and, thusly, the worth of the weapon.

Twist

The mutagen was released by a double agent working for a foreign power or a terrorist cell. Now he has samples of the weapon but has become trapped in the

town, the infection spreading far more quickly than he'd anticipated. If they can find him the sample might be used to work out some manner of counter agent, but that would mean finding an enemy who doesn't want to be found in a city where everything is going to hell.

Twist

One of the lead scientists on the project took a dose of a modified version of his own weapon; mutating himself in several ways that he considers to be superior and to give him domination over the lesser mutated creatures. Now he moves at the head of the wave of creatures, a more advanced and superior mutation, directing those of his army of creatures that can be ordered like a general leading an army, seeking to mutate or control everyone within the city as quickly as possible.

Epilogue

This seed could be played as a series of adventures, even a series from different viewpoints. One could take the part of a team sent to lock down the research facility and prevent any more contamination. Another could be a group of innocent hikers or similar out in the wilds, another an emergency team or armed police outfit trying to contain problems in the city itself.

As to a full epilogue the mutagenic agent could spread outside the city, be carried to other locations and cities further afield without being contained and leading to another apocalyptic scenario as all the life on earth is slowly infected and replaced with warlike and horrific mutations.

Adventure 4

Transylvania High

Description

The local high school is having some problems with absenteeism, strange incidents, anaemia and strange deaths amongst the student and teacher body. The police are baffled and unable to solve the problem and the students are growing more and more paranoid and upset.

The trouble is down to a clique of vampires operating out of the high school, all attendees themselves they are not so worried by the sun, simply a little weaker while it is in the sky, needing only to avoid the rays of the dawn sun.

This group, the ultimate 'in crowd' are preying upon their fellow students, taking revenge on teachers they don't like and slaking their thirst on those who don't live up to their standards. Unless they can be stopped they will have complete control over the school and will begin to take on things in the wider community.

Players in this game could take on the part of pupils, parents, teachers, private investigators hired by the parents or even the school support staff who are there at night and see more of what is going on...

Twist

The one who created the little clique of vampires is one of the faculty, a more powerful vampire who prefers the taste of young blood, a parable for inappropriate teacher/student relationships perhaps. This 'Master Vampire' is at the heart of it all, worshipped by his little cadre and using them now and again to help further his career within the school, intending to become the head of the school and then to turn the children of the town against it.

Twist

The goth clique in the school has cottoned onto the vampirism of the 'in crowd' and is desperate to get the

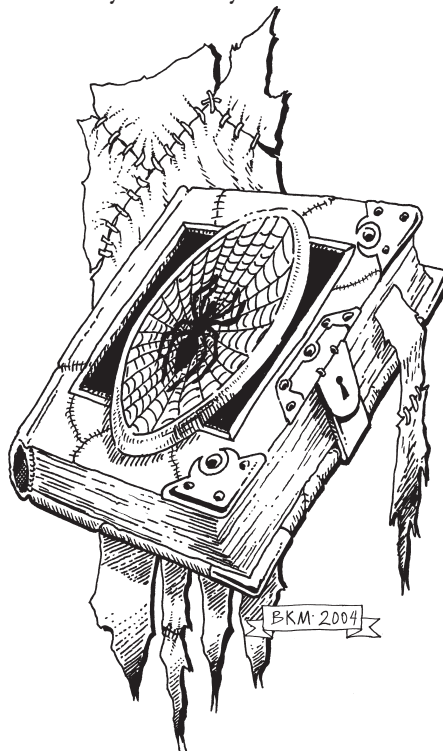
'dark kiss' from those they believe to be unworthy of it. More knowledgeable in vampire lore and armed with appropriate gear they intend to catch one of the vamps and force them to make them all vampires. At an appropriate moment the white-painted vampire hunters can burst into a scene and complicate matters.

Twist

The vampire circle isn't alone. Their hangers on and admirers are thralls to their will and blood following them around like good little puppies and serving their whim. A good number of the innocent staff and pupils are slaves to the vampire clique and, while innocent, will do all they can to defend and protect them – without a will of their own.

Epilogue

Once you have encountered the undead you begin to become attuned to picking up on their influence. The school is not the only place to have suffered the attentions of the lords of the undead; the college may well also be infected by their presence. In fact a whole fraternity and sorority house have been overcome by the agents of darkness and even now work within the college to bring across or to enslave the future captains of industry and great minds that will shape the world in the coming years. After all, vampires live for a very long time and they like, very much, to think ahead.



Adventure 5

Genitator

Description

People in the area are acting strangely. Leaving their wives, husbands, families and going out, being promiscuous when they never were before rape is on the increase in the area and many broken hearts and broken families are left behind as well as children whose parents have both vanished, seemingly without trace. Someone needs to get to the bottom of what is going on rather than simply blaming the modern era.

What is actually happening is that a strange, possibly demonic creature has attached itself to the affected people, a crab or spider-like being it reproduces and spreads by inducing its host to sleep with as many people as possible, controlling their emotions and lusts via its stinger and implanting eggs in their sexual partners during the act.

Now they are spreading from person to person, increasing their numbers and their infection rate exponentially, able to induce blinding passion or blinding rage in a moment in their host and able to detach, run and skitter threateningly with their stinger if somehow removed.

Twist

The creatures are alien body-snatchers and they intend to take over from humanity using humanity's own bodies in order to do so. They also gain pleasure from what they do through the nervous system of the host that they are attached to and so, while not on active duty, they may well gratuitously indulge in human vice potentially harming themselves.

Twist

The creatures pass singly from person to person via the sting but, if they spend a long time on a host they riddle them with eggs until the body bursts asunder with their birth, the young creatures scattering in all directions seeking a host upon which to attach themselves. After this burst and spread the process repeats itself cycle after cycle.

Twist

For an extra special twist have one of the players be infected by a particularly clever and wily one of the parasites able to keep its urges in check in order to be safe and to spread all the further as well as to pick up on all the things the players are doing and subtly counter them – until they get discovered.

Epilogue

This outbreak may not be the only one and, having settled the creature's hash in one town or city they may pass on to discover that most, or all, other places have fallen to the peculiar spider-like menace and that the world at large is now a very dangerous place to be. The horror then comes from having only one, fragile, refuge and existing in a world that has become an alien and dangerous place for normal humans to be.

Idea

Sexual tension is important in this sort of game, as is the slow build up. The threat shouldn't be immediately obvious and should be built up slowly. The slow build up is a very, very effective way of creating tension and expectation in almost any horror game.

Idea

The spider creatures could be demons, the truth behind the succubus and incubus myths that abounded in medieval culture.

Adventure 6

Killer Return

Description

Some time ago a serial killer stalked the nearby streets, creeping into houses and killing children silently in their beds, arranging them in strange tableaux and then leaving again, taking a soft toy or a lock of their hair as a memento.

The 'Sandman' killer, Christian Seagle, was duly captured, tried and, eventually executed for his crimes when it emerged that whatever mental problems he had were not sufficient to excuse his responsibility for his 'art' and he was put to sleep with a lethal injection.

A frustrated artist, Seagle had deluded himself into thinking that shock art, along the lines of Damien Hurst's pieces or Bodyworks were what could inspire people and get them talking about art once more. He set out deliberately to create an urban legend and a memorable serial killer 'personality' that people would notice and discuss.

It has been a year or two since his death and, strangely, the murders have started up again, following the exact same methodology. Seagle is dead and buried for certain, so who is doing the killings?

Twist

Seagle didn't die. He was preserved by an appreciator of his art who has kept him hidden in the intervening period, equipping and training him to be better able to continue his work anew. Now the rich collector and his bleeding-edge art friends are in rapture, observing and sponsoring Seagle's continued work and even supplying the addresses of suitable victims that they think will make a good 'canvas'.

Twist

Seagle died but his death-art made waves in the stranger ends of the artistic community as well as the tabloids and the morass of urban myth. A group of artists has taken up his torch and intend to continue his work and build upon it, commencing with an homage to his previous work before moving on into other fields such as art terrorism, mass murder or other classics such as the 'sniper in the tower'. Over the next few months they will begin to stage their 'performances'.

Twist

Seagle has returned as a spirit and it is the constant belief and 'worship' in the form of urban myth and the legend of the Sandman that has loaned him power and made him strong enough, after a year, to return on his anniversary and continue his art. Death has not changed him, nor has it deterred him but he can no longer take his souvenirs with him when the piece is complete. How do you stop a malevolent poltergeist?

Epilogue

Any one of the twists makes a good epilogue to whichever story you run first, enabling you to avoid the standard hackneyed plots of films like Jason or Maniac Cop where they have to return as undead. The human factor can be just as horrifying as any supernatural creature and without the excuse of 'I was made into a monster'.

Another possible epilogue is for more, similar cases to spring up as the legend of the Sandman spreads and spreads from person to person with more and more copycats springing up across the country.

Adventure 7

Wild Child

Description

Cottingly Newtown is one of a series of new villages that are being built out in the country, intended to develop – eventually – into proper towns. For the meantime though they are a clash of odd looking modern housing with no shops and no services. Still, people move there because of the promise of the future development, the countryside and the relative cheapness of the housing.

This also means that many of the families that are moving into Cottingly are young families with children, children of the run-about-and-stick-your-nose-into-things age. Cottingly is also next to quite old and quite deep woods, overgrown and relatively unmanaged and verging on the status of the appellation ‘forest’.

A child playing in the outskirts of the forest has been bitten, in the face, attacked by what people think is some kind of wild dog or other creature eking out a living out there. The kid says he was bitten by a monkey though he isn't believed. When the wound is examined though, it looks human...

Twist

The child in the woods is a descendent of a primitive group who survived in a hidden community deep in the woods at the time of the black-death. Insular and more and more primitive their hidey-hole has somehow remained unfound in all this time and they have become all but animals. Still, they instinctively fear the world beyond the forest and will react violently to anything coming into the woods after them.

Twist

The child and an accomplice are starved of attention and want more. They have made up their stories and one bit the other in order to create a fuss and for them to be fawned over and treated well. Now they are slowly, slowly going to increase their fakery and the depths of their mutilations and other activities to get more and more attention, possibly culminating in the slaying of pets and other children, all the while talking about dogs or ape-boys.

Twist

The child-like creature in the woods is some manner of ghoul, stalking the old plague pits out there to gnaw on bones, attacking animals and anything else that comes to the deep forest. With the establishment of the village the activity has drawn it, or them, to the edges of the forest and has lead to the attack. Other attacks may follow as the ghoulish creatures grow bolder and their bite may well be infectious, turning any who die from the ghoulish disease into one of them.

Epilogue

While the creatures, that have attacked the village have been dealt with there are tunnels and an underground river riddling the forest nearby that house many, many more of the ghoulish creatures and that, sooner or later, will be attracted by the activity of the village, breaking out of their hidey holes by night and terrorising people, killing them.

Idea

This sort of epilogue is the Aliens to the Alien, re-using a successful antagonist by changing the situation and the premise and shifting to a more ‘splatter’ setting from the initial investigative and unnerving tack.

Adventure 8

Monstrous Tribes

Description

The supernatural, or rather the hidden, the secret and the 'occult', have lived amongst us for centuries unseen and hidden from the light of day. They have been glimpsed, occasionally, in the weak bloodlines that still permeate human ancestry in the form of Siamese twins and other deformed and unusual persons who at many points in history would have been destined only for the freak show.

Now the hidden people, the tribes of the true freaks, hidden for so long are taking risks, coming out into the light of day, killing and unsettling people and being discovered for what they are by normal folk, putting themselves and the communities that they attack into jeopardy.

What drives them to come out, to kill, to fight, to take such risks? How horrific are they? Who are the real monsters in this situation?

Twist

The attacks have been on doctors, medical researchers. Many of their notes have been destroyed or have gone missing. The doctors are involved in retroviral research, specifically a way to cure congenital deformities and diseases that are passed on genetically from parent to child. The tribes are born out of these same 'deficiencies' in a very few cases and so an end to these infirm and crippled children would also mean an end to them, forevermore.

Twist

A 'messiah' has risen amongst the hidden people as told of in their great prophecies. It is said that at the time of his coming they shall be able to rise against the light folk and to be victorious over them unmolested. Many believe the old prophecies, many do not. Those that do have decided to rise up, starting with individual attacks but slowly building to greater and greater atrocities the more they get away with it, hidden from conventional investigation by their strange abilities and physiques.

Twist

The attacks are in retaliation. For some time now 'Monster hunters' have been actively preying on the night people who have finally taken up arms, their patience having run out when a wolfen den mother and her cubs were slaughtered with silver shot. Content most times to live in peace the slaughter of innocent children has made them mad with anger and the places they are attacking harbour the hunters. Many are horrific with horrific tastes and needs, but do they deserve this?

Epilogue

The night people are hard to kill and many of them may well live forever. Whatever occurs during the adventure some survive and they remember. So long as children are born there will be new night people, born of man or made by others of the night. The elders remember and in a few short, formative years hate and a lust for revenge can be instilled in the young. Some of the night people grow up very fast.

Idea

Vary the night people as much as possible and give them as much of a background as you can. Clive Barker's *Nightbreed* or the book *Cabal* are inspiration for this seed and can be inspiration for you, but you can develop the ideas more than they have been developed in the novel. Include a few classic monsters as well as those of your own devising so that players do not know the legendary ways to deal with them.

Adventure 9

Serial Kilowatt

Description

The internet has many dark corners, places where people trade snuff and rape material, both real and fake, places where people act out their darkest fantasies safe behind the anonymity of the screen, whether they long to be victim or victimiser. Every taste, every darkest fetish is catered for in graphic detail the group sharing and supporting each others perversity. In the net, anyone can find people who feel the same way.

Now people from one of these more extreme groups are being picked off one by one in their own homes, fulfilling their 'special' fetish for being stalked, mutilated and killed. Like many people with peculiar turn-ons being confronted by the actual reality of the circumstance has turned out to be less than arousing, the needs and desires of the subconscious overruled by the thoughts of the higher consciousness.

Each of the murders is gratuitous and foul, committed with items from the victim's own homes with no sign of forced entry and acts so foul only the truly depraved would ever consider committing them. Psychologists and forensic doctors are amazed at the clean, confident precision of the cuts, the force with which blows are struck and the sheer depravity of the assailant.

Twist

The assailant is a 'golem'. The constructed depravity and desires of everyone from the group made manifest, a perfect killer and mutilator that they put together from their fantasies to role-play out their own deaths and mutilations in their IRC channels and web chats. Unnamed he is simply 'the killer' and each of them took it in turns to play out his depredations on other members of the group. Now it seems to have taken on a life and force of its own, an electro-kinetic being from their collective desire and unconscious, stalking those who created it.

Twist

The group has met, once, in person to play out some of their milder fantasies. One member of the group, a girl, was taken too far, tortured and killed by a member of the group. Someone she never actually saw. Now here vengeful spirit is passing through the net, through the ether, seeking revenge on all of them for her death, unable to rest until she is properly avenged.

Twist

The killer is one of the members of the group, who is actually a fundamentalist Christian masquerading in order to root out the sick and perverted and to punish them in a bizarre version of eye-for-an-eye philosophy. They find out a great deal about their targets from tracing them or engaging in webcam play before making a 'visitation'. Because of their faith an insanity they are very strong and very meticulous, creating the illusion that there was no break in.

Epilogue

The killer was not acting alone, there is a group of these 'punishers for god' insinuating themselves into many different places of sin from casinos to brothels to pornography companies. These others will soon begin to act and they believe they have a divine mandate to seek retribution and to cleanse sin from the world. They all claim to have seen an angel who inspired them to do the Lord's work on earth. What is more disturbing are the reports of angel sightings in the places this group originate from and the fact they had no prior relationship, or in some cases, were not even Christian...

Adventure 10

What's For Desert?

Description

On a long trip across the desert from one city to another their car breaks down near the old ghost town of Dishwater. Dried up in the late 1930's most of the buildings have collapsed and only lizards and tumbleweed make any sort of home there now, the sands long ago having reclaimed the streets.

The rescue phones are broken down, it is in a dip that forms a mobile phone blackout zone and as they try to work out what is wrong with the car a sandstorm begins to blow in, whipping up dust and grit with some violence and scouring anyone who fails to take cover.

When the storm subsides the road cannot be seen and the drifts and landmarks seem to have changed, the car is in an even worse state and they begin to become aware of things, or people, moving around in the nearby desert and the town. Who could be all the way out here and what do they want? Is there any way to contact a garage and how long will it be before someone else comes along this road?

Twist

The area of the town plays host to a jinn, a desert spirit transplanted far from its home, once held in the home of the mayor of the town – now a wreck – before it was left behind when the town died. The jinn was freed in a sandstorm that wrecked the house and shattered the clay pot it had been imprisoned in but still it found itself in a strange land. A desert devil with nowhere to go and the only way it can feed, it can live, is to take the bounty the road and desert provide in the form of people and animals, their life taken to provide its sustenance.

Twist

The town was used as a testing ground for new psychological weapons in the 50's and 60's, repopulated at that time with a selected 'representative' group of people upon whom the weapon could be tested. The weapon was a fine hallucinogenic dust and it resulted in the insanity and death of many from the test town, quietly shut down, covered up and left. The chemicals in the dust have begun to break down and to release their contaminants into the area affecting the group that has stopped. There is nothing going on, it is just their imaginations taking them into dark and dangerous places.

Twist

The breakdown man who eventually arrives is a killer, though he seems like a nice enough man at first sight. His garage is even more remote, replete with wrecked cars but seemingly in working order. He offers them a place to stay while he works on the car, his rates virtually nothing. The truth is he has trapped them there, behind his high fences and his home-made booby-traps, trapped them with him, slowly becoming more and more creepy as time moves on...

Epilogue

The jinn bottle was just one of a shipment brought over from a site in Baghdad just before the Second World War. There are said to be forty of these bottles spread throughout various collections both private and public and there may even be one or two left at the original site.

Idea

When dealing with the imagination based scenario a good way to play is with the feedback of the players. Whatever they think is out there should form the hallucinations and clues you provide them, constantly feeding back and forth with ideas without them ever knowing.

Adventure 11

Angry Spirits

Description

Strange goings on are halting production at the Glenmiddich distillery in Scotland and causing financial and, in some cases, personal hurt to the company. Objects are being flung around, puddles of whisky are appearing and running down walls, people are getting drunk without touching a drop and the whole place is filled with strange gurgling noises.

The poltergeist seems determined to halt production and to punish anyone in the building, destroying the place systematically from the offices to the work floor, even hurling people around and shattering bottles, fixated on bringing the distillery to its knees.

What is this angry spirit? Why is it so fixated upon the distillery? What makes it so angry as to destroy the place or drive it out of business?

Twist

There is no spirit; the poltergeist is being caused by one of the workers whose wife is pressuring him to become teetotal. The clash between his job, his religious convictions and the demands of his wife have placed him under incredible stress and now a latent telekinetic power is manifesting to act out that stress, strain and anger upon the world, even when he is not present. As the stress of the problems at the distillery begin to act upon him and increase his tension other manifestations begin to appear at his home.

Twist

The poltergeist is the unquiet spirit of the founder of the distillery. Buried beneath his beloved whisky factory on the site of the original stills McTaggart's spirit is said to watch over the distillery and ensure its good fortune. Now however the spirit has caught wind of a plan by an American company to buy out the whisky producer and he would rather see his beloved distillery ruined than sold away into the hands of the US. Now, emanating from his body with his full wrath he seeks to spoil the plans and ruin the company as best he can rather than allow it to befall a fate worse than death.

Twist

A long while back one of the workers fell into a vat during an inspection. Rather than do anything about it, which could have harmed production, the overseer in charge at the time left his body there. The man had no family and would not be missed so what was the point of halting production and wasting so much good whisky? Any badness from the corpse would be killed by the process and nobody should be harmed. The dead man's soul was content to rest in his beloved whisky for so long but now the bottles are being sold and drunk. Pieces of him swallowed along with the sips of whisky and that causes him pain. Now he lashes out seeking peace.

Epilogue

Once the spirit is put to rest at the distillery peace appears to descend. However, many bottles have been spiritually contaminated and, once they finish properly aging and are sent out strange occurrences begin to occur around those who drink the whisky or who collect it in large quantities.

Idea

There are plenty of wild goose chases you can send players on when there is whisky involved, legend to do with the spring water or to do with a battlefield amongst the peat that filters the water are just two.

Adventure 12

Après Apocalypse

Description

The total collapse of society has happened either from war, comet strike, zombies or some other source. Whatever happened, the disaster itself is actually over now and the characters are amongst the survivors of the terrible catastrophe.

The challenge now is to survive in a ruined world where everything takes second place to survival, where disease run rife, where food is lacking and starvation is the norm, where all normal societal conventions have broken down and life has become brutally Darwinian once again.

Amongst the ruins of the world the character have to emerge, eke out a living, deal with whatever it was that destroyed the world, deal with the new problems that have arisen as a result of the disaster and, perhaps, to try and rekindle civilisation.

Twist

A former army unit is out of control and is marauding through what remains of civilisation in the area. They eat and ravage with no thought for the future and have engaged in cannibalism when times have been too tough. They have weapons, ammunition, even a vehicle or two; though they are squandering the resources they have in their raids. The chances of the area are much reduced by their presence and sooner or later they will come to where the characters are, looking for more food or recruits.

Twist

Traumatised and mentally scarred people abound, many of them completely unable to cope with civilisation being stripped away from them in such a cruel and sudden fashion. Many of them are worse than useless and simply numbly sit, pantomiming out actions, refusing to take care of themselves or slipping into catatonia. What should be done? Human decency says to stay and look after them, survival says they should be left, yet without help their deaths will be slow and terrible. What should be done with these damaged men, women and children?

Twist

No matter what they try, what they do things slowly go wrong. Attempts to rekindle civilisation fail and they are raided, hit by disease and all manner of other horrors until they are reduced to rags, hunger and no food. All they have left is each other and that is also the only food that they have...

Epilogue

The ruins of the previous civilisation form the backdrop to the rise of something new, feudal towns running as loose cooperatives or outright dictatorships. Ruins where the chance discovery of a working gun can create a king from a nobody, where a sharp winter reduces people to the level of animals in their starvation. Just when they have dragged themselves up out of the mire of mere survival and have begun to rebuild some form of life for themselves, that is when new horrors can occur, crime and punishment, travelling raiders, disease or a new occurrence or outbreak of whatever disaster caused the breakdown in the first place.

Idea

This type of horror can be all the more effective for the making of the familiar into the unfamiliar. You could consider running such survival horror with the players playing themselves and setting it in your local area. This can allow greater immersion into the game which increases the horror of it.

Adventure 13

Total Madness

Description

The characters live in or around or all work in or are inmates in an Asylum (though this could also work as an investigatory style adventure). The inmates there range from the self-admitted to the dangerous types of insane who must be locked away for their own, and the general public's, safety.

Of late strange things have begun to happen in the asylum. Several inmates and one orderly have died in mysterious circumstances, staff have begun hallucinating – seeing things that simply cannot be real or getting lost in corridors that they have known for years, disappearing for hours at a time.

One by one the inmates' neuroses and madness' are coming to life. Claustrophobia, agoraphobia, dreams of nightmarish insects or ogre-like parent figures, you name it, all are being brought to life by some mysterious effect and stalking and warping the corridors, spreading from one inmate to another and even to the staff as the stress begins to take effect upon them.

Twist

A new drug to control insanity was being tested at this hospital on the hush since it was not supposed to be ready for human testing just yet. The pharmaceutical company insinuated a tester into the hospital as a self-admitted patient and he has been supplying the drug to the patients and working it into the food and wherever else he can to monitor the effects. Unfortunately stopping him will not stop the effects immediately (either hallucinatory or real – if they are real) since the drug takes some time to build up and then take effect. Even after they stop it the worst is yet to come.

Twist

One of the inmates has, in his insanity, come up with an infectious, viral meme that increases insanity and also unlocks certain psychic abilities in an uncontrollable way for those who hear it. The meme seems like babble but preoccupies and involves those that hear it for some time, worming its way into their unconscious mind and settling there. It can transmit through writing or speech and has been slowly spreading around the inmates and medical staff and will soon reach a critical level where it cannot be turned around.

Twist

Amongst the staff of the mental hospital there is a cult of those who worship the creatures of the outer darkness. Not all the staff are members, turned to this cult but enough of them are to slow down any investigation. They serve the many-angled creature of madness and seek to bring him to earth by aggravating the conditions of such a concentrated group of the insane enough to allow him to manifest. So far their efforts through various means seem to be working...

Epilogue

The madness and insanity begins to spread beyond the confines of the asylum, changing minds outside the hospital and taking with it the hallucinatory changes to the landscape, people and 'wildlife'. The hospital was not the only focus and now things are leaking through the borders between the subconscious and reality, bringing ruin and strangeness to the world. Now they have to escape, ahead of the wave of insanity to find help and find a way to turn the tide. Unless they have already been affected by whatever it is...

Idea

Research as many types of insanity as you can find and imagine how they would manifest in reality.

Adventure 14

Breeding Evil

Description

Several mysterious pregnancies have occurred, all throughout the same area of the city – a rundown and under funded area occupied by students, the unemployed and criminals. All appear to show roughly the same time of conception and yet the, distressed, mothers have no real idea who the father is – assuming that they have become pregnant from their regular partners, from a one-night stand or by Jesus according to their own particular beliefs. Some have no explanation at all and things only become worse when the first one tries to have an abortion and dies mysteriously, the second woman to try this also has the same problem. As the pregnancies continue somebody needs to discover what the hell has happened.

Twist

The women are all pregnant as the result of a less-than-divine intervention. They are to give birth to not just one, but many iterations of the antichrist and all were impregnated in their sleep by incubi carrying Satan's seed to them. Now they are pregnant with the devil's children who are desperate to be born to spread their hate and destruction upon the world. Once born they will develop quickly, frighteningly fast before spreading outwards from where they have been birthed to herald the beginning of the apocalypse, unless they can be stopped.

Twist

The location of the pregnancies, the buildings that the people live on, is atop the last resting place of a long dead primitive culture, wiped out long ago. These simple people worshipped a being called 'The Mother of us All' who could become pregnant, but could not birth, sending her children out to the wombs of women to be born into the world. The tribe was killed long ago but something of their deity remains deep in the pits and tunnels beneath the buildings, finally disturbed after so long The Mother of us All is birthing monsters to her new tribe to punish them for their desecration, each child an individual and warped horror built from centuries of hate.

Twist

There is no explanation for the multiple pregnancies, or the deaths, perhaps it is just chance. The reactions of the media, religious groups and lone nutcases is, however, no less strong. Some believe the women to have been visited by angels, others devils, others still aliens. The media wants to use them for everything from news on a slow day to the selling of baby products. Some want to use them as a cause for abortion, others against. Nutcases of every stripe come crawling out of the woodwork, some wanting to kill them, others wanting to spirit them away. They need protection and, even if the cause is strange and cannot be discovered, the horrific reactions of people to such an occurrence can be stranger.

Epilogue

Without the deaths of all the mothers the children are going to be born... strange and horrific monsters birthed to normal parents the deformed imaginings of the forgotten goddess slither and slaughter their way out into the city to engage in perversity and destruction in their true mother's name, every host mother killed by the horrific child she carried.

Now these creatures are insinuated into the fabric of the city, those that escaped the hospital in any case, squirreled away in the hidden places, ready to fight and kill and die and to find suitable vessels to bear more children of their mother, to supplant this tribe that has usurped the proper place of the originals, having slain them out of hand.

Adventure 15

Mirror, Mirror

Description

An aristocratic English family is down on its fortunes and is being forced to sell a great many artefacts and treasures from its more affluent past in order to maintain their lifestyle and their house. Since they began clearing out their items though there have been problems, strange noises and occurrences, culminating in the disappearance of a removals man in one of the rooms of the house. The police have investigated and discovered nothing and so the room has finally been reopened. However the strange occurrences have continued to happen and so the family has pulled some favours and called in people privately to try and discover what is going on. All that there is in the room that isn't covered by a dust sheet is a large and ornate mirror...

Twist

The mirror is a gateway to a nightmarish mirror realm, something akin to that of Alice Through the Looking Glass, the more contemporary and horrific. Elements of that story can be found within from Jabberwocks to deadly games of chess as well as strange and peculiar doubles of the characters and other people that they know. A surreal nightmare realm that is, perhaps, beginning to leak back through the mirror to the other side, after all the characters passed through into this world without realising simply by looking at the mirror.

Twist

The mirror creates perverse and dangerous doppelgangers of those who are seen within it. The police that investigated have all been replaced and the missing removals man will turn up soon, having killed his real version, lessening the haste of the investigation. Sooner or later some of these doubles are going to be found doing unpleasant things and it is just as likely that the originals will carry the can.

Twist

There is a powerful ghost associated with the mirror, a poltergeist that resides within it, able to use its powers and the mirror to create powerful illusions, ectoplasmic doubles and many other effects that would normally be beyond the power of a normal ghost. Once a vain lady who sat before the mirror making herself beautiful the ghost is now a spiteful and hateful creature jealous of the living, their youth their beauty and the sensations they can feel through their body.

Epilogue

The mirror world is a dark echo of our world, a reflection of the strangest and poorest of what goes on in reality. Spending time in the mirror world, lurking behind the reflections in houses and in windows the characters may see and observe things that people might have preferred stayed hidden from view. Though they will be exaggerated and distorted they can see things that people have kept quiet, dark secrets, or even perceive the way that these people see themselves, the distorted self image of the anorexic and the bloodied hands of the guilt-ridden murderer. The mirror is not a camera, people see what they want to see and that is often imperfection.

Idea

Creating an evil double is more complicated than simply sticking a goatee beard on them and giving them cooler clothes. Examine the characters and the ways that they have been played and then imagine a darker more exaggerated version of them with their deeds and darker thoughts reflected in their physical shape.

Idea

With a little research you could tie this in to Alice Liddell and the stories of Carroll more closely.

Adventure 16

The Unpronounceable

Description

Many occult theorists and pulp novelists alike posit the existence of strange, otherworldly creatures beyond our comprehension, powerful dark and alien intelligences beyond the ken of mere mortal man. These things are alleged to be known by cults, glimpsed by the insane and named by those with a more glib tongue than most men. Call them Great Old Ones, call them Many Angled Ones call them The Lords of the Outer Dark but whatever you call them they remain, vast, squatting and evil.

Elements of one of the more 'popular' mythos have been appearing in a small, New England town, a place that is old for America and seems to actually feel the weight of that age in its streets and houses. Here the walls between realities seem to have been worn thin allowing these creatures and their servitors to manifest in this world in some way. The town is overrun by strange creatures and events and nobody is able to cope or to even comprehend half of what is occurring.

Cue the players...

Twist

The portal is being opened by a particularly obsessive writer and fan of the mythos who bought up a house once belonging to a famous pulp-horror writer in the area. Now he slaves day and night on his own novel, a hideous derivative work but one that he believes in very strongly, one he obsesses over to an insane degree. Fuelled by amphetamine and imported absinthe he slaves away over his novel day and night without cease. If he can be found and stopped or cured, the events may stop.

Twist

The town is a nexus for strange and tragic events. Even a cursory trawl through the town paper shows a confluence of bad luck, witch trials, forteen events and other peculiarities culminating in the current spate of supernatural activity. This has been known and manipulated by a secretive conspiracy of senior townspeople since the town was founded. The cult made up of those who manipulate the otherworldly keystone in the catacombs beneath the village to their own benefit and to the detriment of others. The catacombs beneath the town still house the remains of a long dead Indian tribe as well as the ghoulish creatures that guard the stone from interlopers.

Twist

The town and the investigation thereof is a dream, a nightmare of the character's constructed from their thoughts and suspicions, bringing the group together in the dream world to experience the same horrors as each other. None can die, unless you choose to make it so, but when killed they do wake up in their own beds in a cold sweat. This, obviously, is best run in an ongoing horror campaign.

Epilogue

The town and its surroundings act as a microcosm of the history and influence of the creatures beyond this dimension. Every event, every building, every landmark is steeped in historical significance and awash with the lore of the demonic creatures who wish to devour this entire reality. From the ghosts of witches said to live in the woods to the ghouls that gnaw on bones in the graveyard all is hidden, yet in plain sight for those with will to look. Investigating every occurrence, every piece of history and every rumour would be a time consuming but rewarding task, offering much about every aspect of the mythos.

Adventure 17

This Isn't Over...

Description

Horrific events themselves are rarely the true end of the matter. Trauma can have long term effects on the mental and physical health of a person causing them great debilitation. Deaths affect families greatly, as do rapes, not merely affecting the victim but everyone around them for a long time to come. Children grow up without a parent, resentful and lacking an important role model. The very fabric and identity of a person can be torn to shreds. These things don't vanish when the killer is defeated or the horror put to rest, they live with people far longer.

Horror needn't consist of monsters and murders all the time, merely coming to terms with or finding a way to deal with mind-numbing day to day problems and horrors can be horrific in and of itself whether through drink, debauchery or ceasing to care. Echoes of past discoveries can always come back to haunt someone who has seen the true horror of the world and this is one of those times...

Twist

A member of the group ends up with a loved family member turning up dead, murdered, in their home, apparently by their hand. Did they do it? Did things finally get so bad for them that they acted out the actions of the very thing they have fought for so long? Is it some elaborate revenge plot, taking advantage of their mental fragility? The evidence appears damning and they can't be sure themselves where they were or what they were doing. The situation appears grave.

Twist

The behaviour of one, or more, characters has attracted the attention of concerned relatives who believe that the character is suffering from some dangerous mental delusion. Sectioned and taken away they find themselves in the madhouse, nobody believes them about the things they have seen and done and the hypnotherapy and drugs that the hospital's revolutionary doctor uses bring the real truth of the world out of them. This information is, of course, treated as pure insanity resulting in more and more drugs and treatments from the doctor in an attempt to cure the condition.

Twist

Knowing their fragile states of mind a cult of a dark god has chosen to take revenge against some of the more successful of those who have faced the darkness and won. Their intention is to drive the characters to insanity through incessant tests of their patience and reminders of the horrors they have faced. This campaign of terror and insanity will follow the character's twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week until they either snap, or figure out what is going on.

Epilogue

Insanity and trauma can seize a character at any time after the event that caused it, triggered by reminders. Using what has been discovered about a character's weaknesses, phobias and trauma in the adventure can provide many avenues for later exploration, as well as giving good justifications for things that complicate any future adventure such as freezing in terror, going catatonic or having hallucinations about the worst horror they have ever encountered. Of course, just one time they may not be hallucinations...

Idea

Insanity is not a light subject and players may have post traumatic stress, depression or other problems of their own. It is a good idea to check if your players are comfortable with the subject matter before playing.

Adventure 18

London Fog

Description

Real fogs of the Victorian variety haven't been seen in London since the burning of coal and other fuels was stopped within the limits of the capital. Now only a thinner, cleaner natural fog is occasionally seen, other than smog from the traffic.

As of this autumn however the fog has begun to rise again, as thick as it ever was. A thick choking fog that reduces visibility to a few metres at most, even with modern lighting and that has reached in through windows and caused hell to asthmatics and others with breathing problems.

Now the thick fog has taken up a new and more sinister twist with several dismembering attacks going on in the back alleys and streets of the capital. The papers are full of hysterical headlines and it is only a matter of time before someone runs into whatever sinister force is taking advantage of the fog.

Twist

The fog is a natural occurrence, very rare and peculiar weather conditions have trapped the smog that normally escapes from London as well as causing an unusually thick and low-lying fog to gather around the city near to the river. The killer is simply that, a killer, obsessed over the ripper murders he plays on people's superstitions and the hysteria of the media to make himself feel important, taking on the role of the ripper he stalks the freakish fog killing wherever the opportunity presents itself.

Twist

The fog grows stronger and spreads further with each slaying and the world out in the fog becomes more and more surreal as it spreads and grows thicker, strange hallucinations, noises and glimpses of shapes out in the mist. The fog is an extension of the creature that a London based cult worships, the fog spreading with the sacrificial murders to its cause is bringing larger and larger sections of the city closer and closer to its hell realm and the hungry mouths of its servitors.

Twist

The fog is the result of a mutation in the algae in the Thames, illegal dumping by a fly-by-night firm has caused the algae to change, giving off vapours and heat that are raising the fog as the algae clogs the river. The spreading fog causes madness, differing levels of hallucinations and night terrors as well as aggravating and possibly even causing breathing problems. As it spreads the madness spreads turning the streets of London into a fog-filled labyrinth of nightmarish events that must be escaped.

Epilogue

After the fog is lifted many of the horrors that went on while it was in place remain to be discovered and dealt with, from the desperate actions of those who believed it was the end of the world to those dealing with things they did while out of their minds. In the Lovecraftian scenario creatures and other strangeness may have been left behind after the fog and, in the case of the murderer he may not have been alone in his infatuation with the ripper and his 'den' is yet to be discovered...

Idea

A London A-Z and a little research into landmarks, streets and other features of the capital will lend much more authenticity to the game, especially if people are trying to navigate by landmarks and muddled descriptions due to the fog.

Adventure 19

Devil Children

Description

Depending who you talk to children are presented in two very different ways. There is the school of thought that children are innocent darlings that must be protected lest they become corrupted and tainted by the world and there are those that believe children are the purest form of human animal, relatively untainted by the limits of civilisation or expectations of behaviour. The Lord of the Flies illustrates very well the logical extent of the second example.

In Tackleford there have been a couple of unusual killings, a child and an adult. The child new to the area had been enrolled in the local school and had been there barely a week before the killing; the other to die was a substitute teacher at the same school. The child's death appeared accidental but the teacher's death was anything but, gutted with a steak knife.

The children of Tackleford tell a tale about a dark figure, a 'bad man' who they had seen near the school on several occasions but the police are drawing a blank. Enter the characters...

Twist

The children are the murderers; the teacher in the primary class is an anarchistic and experimental teacher who believes in creating the 'true human animal' as an experiment in morality, to see if it is truly subjective or objective. His methods have created conscienceless monsters who removed an 'alien' in their midst and the substitute teacher who had begun to suspect. Still they are sweet as pie to any who ask them questions and stick resolutely to their story about the 'bad man'.

Twist

The primary school class at Tackleford Primary are the result of the demonic visitations of an incubus over the course of a year. Each child is part devil and, as they grow, their heritage becomes more obvious in both their appearance and their behaviour. As investigations continue their demon aspect and the extremities of their behaviour become more and more obvious.

Twist

Tackleford Primary has a problem with various childhood psychological problems, hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder being the most marked problems. To raise funds for the struggling school the PTA along with the parents of the afflicted children has agreed to be part of a secret medical trail with a large pharmaceutical company. The kids with the problems are being treated with a single broad-spectrum pill. The drugs has, however, awakened mild sixth sense characteristics in the children that are normally dormant. Shown a video by the local police about 'Stranger Danger' the children became afraid and their fears have manifested as the 'bad man' stalking the town.

Epilogue

Tackleford is not the only school where the new drug is being tested. It is being tested in at least two other schools elsewhere in the country and what is even more interesting is that the researchers responsible for the development and the tests knew full well what sort of side effects the drug might create. Military involvement in the project is also heavily implicated and those sorts of people will do almost anything to protect their secrets, especially given the potential political impact of it being discovered that weapon trials were being conducted on children.

Adventure 20

Frankenstein Family

Description

Citizens of a small German town have been distressed by a sudden outbreak of graverobbing in their cemeteries with several newly buried bodies being disinterred and, apparently stolen. This has been curtailed by the installation of security cameras and the appointment of a security guard to watch the graveyard at night.

This would have seemed to have been an end to things but at least one of the townsfolk claims to have seen their deceased relative fleetingly since they were dug out of their grave by the unknown miscreant. This places matters firmly in the 'strange' camp.

Matters have now become worse with the abduction of a fatally ill young woman from a hospice in the town. Despite an extensive search of the town she has not been found and without her medicines it is thought that she is now dead.

Again, some claim she has been seen since...

Twist

Dr Nies is a newly qualified doctor who aimed to become a general practitioner in the town. Unfortunately he suffered a breakdown when his young wife died and lapsed into a deep depression. He has not been seen and most believe he left the town. In fact he became obsessed with the question of death and why it should ever even occur, determined to prevent anyone else suffering the terrible loss he had had to endure. To that end he has been experimenting with revitalising the bodies of the dead and meeting with limited success through a combination of chemical, viral and resuscitation techniques. Unfortunately for him brain damage remains a problem as well as the creatures he was reanimated retaining their own will, if not their own faculties. He grows more and more desperate in his search, hence the kidnapping, the freshest death he could find.

Twist

The bodies are being taken by an unscrupulous artist to use in his sculpting and other works of modern shock art. He is developing in new and even more shocking ways now, his taking of the terminally ill girl being one step towards his final indignities, murder as art. The sightings that people have had are glimpses of his 'work' offered fleetingly in a passing van or truck, cruel torment that forms part of his overall artistic 'vision'.

Twist

A long, long time ago in this area the events that eventually inspired Mary Shelley took place. A brilliant doctor using carefully controlled electricity to revitalise the processes of life. The monster he created did not, however, die but rather lived and grew and learned, like a child learns, eventually becoming a near equal to the long dead doctor himself, undying with hundreds of years to learn. Now the child is lonely and seeking to make companions for itself who will understand and sympathise with its plight...

Epilogue

The method of reanimation is of great interest to science, the military and transhumanists. Seeking the secret of undeath and immortality for their own ends the military has confiscated the notes and the bodies and samples of the reborn. They have succeeded in replicating the techniques and have begun to field a unit of resurrected alongside regular troops in police actions where the government is involved around the world. They are fearless and cannot truly die, making them perfect. Or are they?

Adventure 21

Croc of Shit

Description

The idea of there being crocodiles, or alligators, in the sewers is a particularly persistent urban legend that refuses to go away no matter how many bad films or scientific reports are made about it. Most of these reports seem to be associated with New York, which as an old city has old sewers and with its proximity to water makes it a likely suspect for the ongoing presence of such creatures. Still it has always been thought a myth, but a fun one to explore.

A noted academic is working on a paper about urban legends and has paid a group (the player characters) to investigate stories, sightings and other details about the sewer-gator legend. Once they venture below the city into the warren of sewers is when things go wrong, they find out the legends are not only very, very true but that they are hungry.

Twist

The croc in the sewers is enormous, grown fat on the leavings of a low grade slaughterhouse and the growth hormones of the slaughtered cattle. Enormous and powerful as a result of its diet it is beginning to range further, hungry due to the shutting down of the slaughterhouse. Homeless bums and sewage workers, as well as groups of foolish investigators looking into urban legends, would all make appealing snacks.

Twist

The croc attacks aren't limited to the sewers, the subway tunnels and storage cellars link up here and there giving the croc access to all sorts of places, especially when its strength is taken into account. Rather than the deaths taking place in the watery sewers, the place the creature retreats to, they are taking place in subway stations late at night and amongst the homeless population that lives underground.

Twist

The croc isn't the result of a discarded pet but rather the result of some deliberate experimentation by a rogue scientist. This is not the least of his gigantic and feral creations that remain under his control. He has also created nightmarish rats, feral dogs of great size and other urban creatures as monsters while he perfects his ability to alter and augment such creatures. The croc is just the guardian of his hidden workshop, an urban legend he felt everyone would dismiss, even as it protected his laboratory. The effects of his techniques on humans are yet to be tested...

Epilogue

If this urban legend has a substantial and toothy grain of truth to it then how many urban legends also do? What about The Mothman, The Jersey Devil? What about the multitude of killers, witches, ghosts and other entities associated with various places? Does this investigation reveal a hidden, secret truth to urban society that so many have sought to dismiss? The academic that hired them is in receipt of funding now that one truth has been found and wishes to keep the characters on retainer to investigate the truth of other horrors and myths across the country.

Idea

This would make a great start to a campaign that could investigate so many different tales with good justification, at least until the academic publishes his paper. For a good take on this sort of thing read, don't watch, Clive Barker's Candyman.

Adventure 22

Sink Estate

Description

There are certain areas where the slowly vanishing amounts of publicly available housing and the need to have somewhere to dump troublesome residents coincide. These are called 'sink estates' and are cesspools of crime, disorder, vandalism and other sundry nastiness. The closest US equivalent would be some of the worst Housing Projects.

Mercy Grove and Hope Place are two such sink estates, existing very close to each other in one of the rotting areas of the city, a dumping ground for feral children, manipulative single mothers and neighbours from hell that have been slung out of every other area in the city before finally being settled here. Barely a window is unsmashed, needles litter the playgroup and kids as young as eight regularly get drunk hanging around outside the twenty-four hour garage or the otherwise ignored youth club. Of late however things have grown even worse than normal, the two estates seem to have gone at loggerheads in a series of unrelated incidents. There has been targeted vandalism, sabotage, beatings and one murder, all seemingly random occurrences but all perpetrated by the residents of one estate upon the other.

Twist

There is an 'otherworld', a dark reflection of this one, a spiritual mirror in which life is played out amongst strange constructs and beings in reaction to what occurs in this world. Though it may be the other way around... In the spirit world the two estates are giant flailing creatures of brick, tar and cable, lashing at each other as they fight for dominance. Every scar, every break, every torn limb or shattered brick is reflected in the damage the estates inflict on each other in the real world.

Twist

Rather than having the estates attack each other but keeping the 'otherworld' concept from above a new family has been moved into the estate, these are simply poor, hit upon hard times and left with no choice but to occupy a house here. Unlike the rest of the criminal, inbred tribe that occupies the estate these are reasonably decent people who want to better themselves and the estate. To the estate as it exists they are like a disease, a threatening infection that could weaken the estate's ruthless and wolf-like strength. Unconsciously the estate begins to react like a real body, antibodies rushing to try and remove the infection with violence and other problems for the family.

Twist

The people in the estates have been written off; they create a crushing expense for the local council and, more widely, the government. Covert means have been sought to lessen the problem and this place is to be the testing ground. Chemicals, subsonics and rumour mongering memes have been used to aggravate people's tempers and set the two estates against each other, the aim being to turn them into brutal savages who will remove each other as problems for anyone else.

Epilogue

The malaise that affected the sink estates begins to spread outwards into the city setting neighbour against neighbour in stranger places. High rise blocks of luxury apartments find themselves antagonised against each other, businesses in the same park begin to look upon each other with hate and the city begins to tear itself apart in a war with itself, every part of society corrupted from the police to the fire service and all things in between.

Adventure 23

The Haunted House

Description

Dudley House is not as old as some, but it 'feels' old. Built in late Victorian times it has the weight of solid red brick and a design and layout like something out of a madhouse. Built and added to many times since the room are placed seemingly at random once you enter through the sturdy door. Thin corridors wind between multiple bedrooms, studies, bathrooms and other areas. The cellar is expansive and the grimy-windowed conservatory large with an extensive attic space also apparent at the top of the house.

The house itself has been left alone some thirty or forty years since the departure of the last tenant without even squatters paying much attention to the building. Now, as brownfield sites are redeveloped in the cities to ease the housing pressure the area has come under attention with new homes being built either side of the strange house. Now the tenants in these new buildings are complaining of strange sounds and lights coming from the building disturbing their peace and lowering property values. Someone needs to investigate at the behest of the developers.

Twist

The house is classically haunted. Trapped in the crawlspace of the wall are the skeletal remains of a child, lost there while playing hide and seek, stuck forever and never found, their unquiet spirit manifesting in the house, twisting dimensions, creating hot and cold, patches of blood, lights and mournful wailing. The house and the spirit are starved of attention and, given the presence of people for the first time in an age will do almost anything to keep them around, to keep them inside and to provoke them for emotion and attention.

Twist

The house has been rigged by radical students seeking to preserve the older areas of the city from development, or 'desecration' as they call it. The whole

house has been rigged with hidden micro-cameras and all sorts of dry ice and other effect machines designed to simulate the typical effects of a haunting. They hope this will discredit the development company or raise difficulty in building and selling homes in the area enough to ward off similar projects. One or two of the students are even more radical than the others however and have installed additional devices to more forcefully project their anger at the development, with deadly force.

Twist

The house itself is a ghost. Laden with so many emotions and so much significant resonance from the large families that inhabited the house as well as the trauma of its destruction the entire house is an ectoplasmic representation of what it once was. Its entire form is malleable and changeable and though very strange and spooky it is desperate for tenants, a family to make it whole once again. Lord knows what effect an exorcism would have on it...

Epilogue

With the haunting solved the house is demolished and a new set of apartments built in its stead. However it appears the haunting was merely made dormant for a few years, not wiped out. Now the entity is back, spreading through the new structure and making it its own, a bizarre amalgam of old brick and new concrete with several tenants missing or trapped in their apartments. Having experience of the original hauntings the characters are obvious choices to investigate this new turn of events.

Idea

A little research into 'genuine' haunting will give you a good deal of effects you can work into yours.

Adventure 24

Tastes like Chicken

Description

There have been a few disappearances in the downtown area. At first this was limited to homeless people and nobody gave that much of a toss for the loss of a few street bums. Then a couple of prostitutes went missing and people became a little more interested as the local newspapers took up the story bemoaning the police lack of response. Now a talented young dancer from an unconventional theatre in the area has gone missing and suddenly everyone is interested to know what is happening.

As things have been investigated some bones have been turned up, buried beneath the cracked concrete and dirt floor of a disused warehouse. The bones are chipped and scored as though the flesh was cut from the bone, some of them appear to have been cracked as though to get at the marrow. Two or three bodies have been found in this spot, identified from dental records as best they could be.

Someone or something is stalking the area and disposing of people in the most sinister way.

Twist

Those who are taking these people are an elite clique of highly educated, jaded and bored rich people addicted to the thrill of murder and culinary cannibalism. They are experimenting with human cuisine and, as they grow more bold and seek different tastes so their victims change. A single body lasts the group some time but their dinners grow more and more frequent and their demand for human flesh grows as they grow more and more debauched and daring. The police interest may curtail their activity for a short while but they are addicted and all too soon they will be seeking out new victims for their larder.

Twist

Those who are taking the bodies are members of an obscure religious cult, one of the many marriages of Christianity and native beliefs similar in ways to Santería and Voodoo. Stemming from a strong Catholic thread to their beliefs they take their communions very seriously. All men are made in the form of God and so when they partake of flesh they more literally take of the body and blood of Christ than most. Their cannibalistic communion also binds their community together in shame, thrill and exultation making them loyal to each other for fear of exposure.

Twist

This police are harbouring amongst their number an ancient militaristic warrior cult, renewed amongst their number as a self-affirming cult to bolster their confidence and camaraderie. To begin with this was simply a brotherhood but the leader of the group has been delving more and more into the spirituality and the roots of the cult that dates far, far back, evolving down the ages. The ritualistic devouring of one's enemies is considered to give insight into their methods and to impart their strengths to the warrior. The girl was dealing drugs to her troupe and the bums and whores have been a consistent problem in the area. The next targets are the gangs and there may be some truth to the cult's behaviour...

Epilogue

The group of cannibals is far more influential and widespread than they first appeared. Evidence goes missing and at trial they are cleared of the charges on what may have seemed an iron-bound case against them. Now the group and their powerful allies turn their attentions to revenge upon the characters as well as acting far more openly, no longer fearing prison.

Adventure 25

Going Underground

Description

The Underground (or if you want to transfer to another city the Metro or other underground rail system) consists of a massive network of tunnels burrowing beneath the city, many of the stations and tunnels fallen into misuse, crossing through older tunnels and workings, sewers and the other interesting architectures of the underground world.

One thing the tunnels also are is claustrophobic, especially when the lights go out on the train while you are between stations. In that sudden darkness you wonder if you are going to be trapped down there and, perhaps fleetingly, also wonder what else might be down here, in the dark, besides the tube mice, the mosquitoes and the rats...

The train stops.

Twist

The blacked out train is completely pitch dark, people start by being unconcerned, save for children who might immediately wail and panic. There is literally no light, at all. As time wears on and the driver makes no more announcements people slowly begin to become concerned. Then the sounds start. First the scratching, then the banging, the whispers of concerned people trapped in the sweaty heat of the carriage, then the screaming, first far off, then closer, then the smell of blood. Finally the doors open, out into the tunnel, but something is out there, stalking in the dark, unseen, killing. Whatever it is it knows the tunnels and there is no light by which to find one's way...

Twist

A short while after the train comes to a halt a few gleaming red eyes can be seen in the pitch dark. Then the doors are thrown open and they are commanded to run. The train has been stopped by a group of thrill-seeking human-hunters who intend to hunt down their victims in the pitch dark, using night-vision goggles. That way they cannot be seen and identified yet retain an advantage over their prey whom they seek to hunt down using knives, axes and other bladed weapons, giving them perhaps a full minute before they pursue.

Twist

The City Fathers are dark-dwelling, vampire like creatures that dwell deep in the underground tunnels beneath London. They have considerable power and influence through magick, dark pacts and their own abilities and a 'deal' has been struck with them. In exchange for the continued prosperity and longevity of the city they are provided with 'food' on a regular basis, this food given up to them by the simple expediency of stopping the occasional train and letting nature take its course. Their warrens are even more complex and deep than the rest of the tunnels, having been here since before London was a swamp, dank, wet, bone filled and containing the dark secrets of the city's genesis.

Epilogue

Stumbling out of the dark into the station they may feel that their ordeal is over, taking their story to the authorities and refusing to go near the tube ever again. However, night comes again and again and with every setting of the sun they are stalked and followed by the things that dwell beneath, able to get anywhere thanks to the omnipresent tunnels, nowhere can be truly safe, not in this city. Perhaps if they survive this second encounter they can leave the city for somewhere safer.

Adventure 26

Initiates

Description

The Alpha Society is not as widespread, as famous or as compromised as the Masons but it has a chequered history of association with power all of its own. The Alpha Society has had presidents and prime ministers, royalty and business leaders, drug barons, intellectuals and artists amongst its number. Small but elite the extent of its secretive grip on modern society is not known save by its innermost circle. It is said that the Alphans merely have to call on another member in order to have their will done, though this privilege is not abused.

Entrance to the society is rigorous and demanding and is only offered to the best and the brightest students, usually while they are at university and still somewhat impressionable and more easily impressed. These people are approached by the society, rarely later in life, and then can embark on the tests required to become a full member.

The characters are a group approached by the Alpha Society for membership and they discover that the demands for membership, the tests, grow more and more debauched, dangerous and illegal as the test progresses...

Twist

The Alphans are, at their centre, a cult of shapeshifting creatures who have been working to supplant and take over the earth since they first emerged. Identifying movers and shakers early on they take over their appearance and drain their minds of knowledge and personality, moving amongst the leaders of the earth, many of whom are their members, secretly increasing their influence as time goes on. Those who join are doomed.

Twist

The Alphan's final test is the rape and murder of another person, brought ostensibly to witness the member's inauguration, before a council of other Alphans, all masked, all of whom take pictures and evidence of the act before the body is disposed of by unknown means. This secures the member's place amongst the Alphans. Those who refuse are 'disappeared'.

Twist

The Alphans serve an age old pact with a bound demon, dating back to the time of Dr John Dee. The organisation exists to provide souls to the demon to keep the original pact makers alive and powerful eternally, proof from harm. Supplicants are given access to the power and influence of the organisation but only after they have undergone the tests for ruthlessness and dependability and have given up their soul to feed the beast.

Epilogue

Once crossed the Alphans are a terrible foe. Governments, police, armies, agencies all move to the beat of their drum and they will not tolerate anyone free with their secret, even if they can keep it from being exposed or even believed. Having crossed the Alphans or even broken the crux of their power the characters will still have an angry, powerful, world-wide organisation on their heels who are not afraid to do the most disgusting and dishonourable things to destroy someone's life and world.

Idea

The Alphans, depending on which twist you care to use, might be able to introduce disturbing alien elements or historical figures out of time. Truly anyone in a position of responsibility might be one.

Adventure 27

I Kill Children

Description

There has been an unfortunate and tragic spate of child killings in the area leading to a witch hunt for paedophiles and sex offenders in the area. Police have managed to wrestle the situation back under control but the whole community lives in fear of their children being taken and, it being a fairly wealthy middle-class area, they have a fair amount of political and financial clout.

While investigations continue, not to the satisfaction of the parents, many of them club together their own money, opposed by a vocal minority, and seek help to discover what is going on and who the culprit is. Disturbingly it begins to become clear that there is a link between each of the children who has been killed...

Twist

The killer is the doctor who delivered a great many of the children in this area. He is also being driven slowly insane by the psychic talent of psychometry, every child he delivers gives him visions of their future and, seeing so many evil deeds done by these children in the future he has finally snapped, pulled their records and begun tracking down the worst ones from his remembered visions to spare the future their dark deeds.

Twist

The children are all 'designer babies', experimented on to be better, stronger, faster and more intelligent than the standard. They are genetic perfection, created in procedures that contravene a great many publicly stated regulations and laws. Now they have grown somewhat the parents have tried to all but forget what has gone on in the past and to live normal lives. Fanatical Christian extremists have discovered the existence of the project though and are now seeking out the 'devil children' to remove their unholy form from the world. Of course, there may be a slight grain of truth to their fears.

Twist

The parents of the children are all members of a movement, which borders on a cult. They believe in moving humanity from their physical shells to some other form, be it robotic, data or a form of pure mind. They are sacrificing their own children in the pursuit of one of these other forms, killing them to free them from the tyranny of the body and seeking to move them into a non-physical realm of data or mind. They believe that children's minds are sufficiently strong and adaptable to deal with the shift from one world to another and are well practiced and joined together in resisting enquiries and supporting each other.

Epilogue

Once the episode has died down and a few years have passed the children begin to manifest their true natures. In the case of the first twist they begin to act after their 'true' nature, becoming responsible for harming others, even murdering other children their own age, or younger, even siblings.

In the case of the second twist they begin to truly outstrip other children their age in all fields, even beginning to outstrip the adults. They are also beginning to gather together, recognising each other as peers and separate from the rest of humanity around them, drawing plans to usurp and subjugate their lesser.

In the case of the third twist one of the experiments could have been successful and now a disembodied child-mind exists within the information sphere of the town. Terribly alone and desperate the child begins to lash out blindly, throwing tantrums that begin to have an effect on the real world.

Adventure 28

Ghouls on Film

Description

The Black Tape Collective are makers of extremely violent snuff movies that go beyond the realms of extreme bondage and sadomasochism and into the truly, horrifically gratuitous violence and snuff that is truly beyond the pale.

Their films are made by bringing their collective together, with cameras and weapons appropriate to the 'scenario' and then stalking down their unwitting victims, recording their demise with the all the lingering voyeurism of a porno shoot.

The characters are members of one such group that falls afoul of the BTC and must fight or strive to escape with their lives.

Twist

The characters are part of a survey team exploring the deep woods and assessing the effects of environmental damage on the ancient and relatively undisturbed landscape. The woods are pure natural landscape, almost untouched by man, thick undergrowth, truly wild animals and nothing but radio to keep in touch with the outside world. The perfect hunting ground for the BTC but also the perfect hiding place for the team.

Twist

The characters are convicts who have been 'bought' from a corrupt administration away from death row to star in the BTC's latest epic. Shipped out to a ghost town in the desert and simply left by their prison guards their new found freedom is short lived as the BTC start to make their presence felt hunting them around the old, abandoned and remote town and treating them to slow, sadistic deaths on camera.

Twist

The BTC have secured a large building for their latest and greatest production, a derelict hospital that is due for demolition. They have secured the entire building for their purposes, running in cameras and lights and paying special attention to the operating rooms. The building is locked down tight, hunters and hunted sealed in together until the following day when the BTC support crew will cut through the restraints protecting the main door and assist with the clean up. The hunters are armed with non-lethal weaponry in this case, intending to hunt down their poor victims and drag them away to be operated on by 'the doctor'.

Epilogue

BTC is a larger organisation than any single one of these incidents, well paid by their distributors and private collectors world wide and by what they manage to extract through blackmail of particularly wealthy clients. They also make a reasonable amount through internet exposure via their secure server and clever anonymity software. They are always, always looking for a new ways to titillate their public and revenge always has a special frisson.

Refusing to risk any more of their hunters in a hunt scenario and unwilling to simply kill their enemies out of hand without making some kind of show of it they have had constructed an elaborate death trap in a hidden location. Designed by a madman with a sense of humour the whole thing is rigged like a recording studio, studded with cameras and filled with the most devious and gratuitous traps that could be devised.

Adventure 29

Changeling

Description

Strange things are happening around the area, odd lights are flitting around, strange and unusual things are being seen and little, slight, disturbing events are happening. Keys are going missing, broken shoes are spontaneously mending themselves and strange music is being heard emanating as though from nowhere. Then the stranger events begin to happen and the nastier things begin to happen to people, things that haven't been heard of outside of myth and legend and are still scoffed at even amongst all the strangeness.

Some talk of the 'greys' the ubiquitous little psychic aliens of modern folklore but a few of the older people recognise the fair folk for what they are though even the older generation don't believe or know like they would have in the time before.

The faeries are manifest, albeit secretive and stealthy, and something appears to have angered them. Unless they are merely behaving in the same way that they always have.

Twist

The faeries have been disturbed as their mound has been threatened with development. The field in which it resides earmarked for construction. As they have begun to grow dimly aware of what this means for them they have begun to emerge back into the real world to leave warning and to vent their wrath upon the village folk. Of course, there is little that the village folk can actually do about it and so the harassment and attacks grow worse and worse and worse.

Twist

The fairy queen beneath the mound has finally died, succumbing to the vastly slowed effects of aging that exist in the faerie otherworld. The faeries are seeking a suitable replacement from amongst the younger village children and their tricks and pranks are tests, as well as a way to distract the village adults, while they search out the perfect candidate to take the place of their leader. Not every child they take may pass muster, taken beneath the mound to be rigorously tested and the broken and smiling bodies of those that fail will be found in the woods and meadows of the village.

Twist

There are no faeries, the pranks and twisted murders are the unusually precocious and violent behaviour of several of the village children. Raised on stories of the local fairies they are living out those fantasies with a violence that is usually blamed on computer games or movies. Of course, their ringleader has an 'eccentric' mother who claims that his father was one of the village faeries, so maybe that is why he sees himself that way, or perhaps it is true...

Epilogue

Houses are built over the site of the ancient faerie mound, regardless of any protest or weirdness. Dispossessed from their ancestral home the fey begin to take a long, tortuous and sadistic revenge upon the humans who have the gall to actually settle over their home. The faeries live like rats in the walls on human leftover, stealing the odd item to make their 'nests' in the cavity walls, plotting against people. Turning on their gas, cutting electricity and stealing out at night to torture and kill pets and babies with needles and spikes taken from the human's possession. A hidden and vengeful manifestation of old world spirits hiding in the cracks in the new world.

Adventure 30

Stop Bugging Me

Description

Hayton Park is a lovely, but cheap holiday destination. A park where people can live amongst the lakes and woods without having to give up home comforts but while also being able to sample the joys of canoeing, crafts and several other such activities. Hayton has never made as much as it should because of its peak season insect problem, at such times the camp is plagued by midges and thus they have been forced, in order to keep going, to reduce the prices and make the insect problem clear.

This year however things are going to be a little more distressing than a few gnat bites. This year an illegal chemical dump into one of the lakes has had unforeseen effects on the local insect species, swelling them to greater size than is normal. Now as the first campers start arriving the first insects are cracking out of their pupae and looking to feed. Giant mosquitoes, beetles, worms, moths and other creatures all mutated and given an insane urge to eat by their greater size and muscle mass.

Twist

As well as becoming larger the insects have become more intelligent forming a communal and cross-species hive mind. They are not only larger but more intelligent, capable of laying traps and ambushes and learning about any traps or other measures that the characters may lay down to try and deal with them. This may also mean that they are open to negotiation but the insect mind is completely alien to the human one and the hive only cares about its central intelligence, the mutant queen of an ant hive.

Twist

The chemical spill was no real accident. The chemicals are a mutagenic bio-weapon being considered for surreptitious deployment in troublesome countries as an alternative to deploying troops. The Company is observing the results of the experiment via a fully equipped bio-warfare team that is ensconced in a modified cabin in the woods.

Twist

The waters here haven't only affected the insects; it is just that insects have a much quicker lifecycle. Towards the end of the adventure the plants, and perhaps some higher animals, begin to show hostile activities and growth to larger sizes. The pollution has gotten into the water table and spread over a considerable area of wilderness.

Epilogue

After the initial insect attacks and the escape from them things are quiet for the longest time, then new reports begin to emerge from the surrounding area of animal attacks and other strangeness. The mutagenic chemical has now warped and twisted the area causing strange and alien plant growth as well as twisting the native animals – and even humans – into nightmarish versions of themselves. As people sent to investigate these instances and to recommend a course of action the characters travel out into the wilds only to find the roads blocked by fresh plant growth. They must hike the rest of the way into woods that grow progressively more and more strange and hostile.

Idea

Use a park or area that the players have at least a passing familiarity with so they can picture it.

Idea

Read up on the animals, plants and insects native to the area to get some good ideas for monsters.

Adventure 31

It's Alright, You've Got another One

Description

There are urban legends about people waking up in bathtubs of ice in hotels with one of their kidneys missing since they can fetch a reasonable price on the black market. The legends tell of seductive women and men bar hopping, looking for suckers who can be lured away, drugged and deprived of their internal organs for cash.

Finding out that there is some truth to this rumour will be a shock to the characters as they investigate an unusual disappearance in the city. A disappearance with no body in the traditional sense, the evidence hiding away inside many transplant recipients amongst those in the city who could not make the top of the donor list.

The evidence slowly begins to point to a well connected and funded group put together by the wealthy but sick of the city to harvest organs for them so that they could receive their transplants ahead of the list. The evidence will be hard to find, the team good at being evaded and their backers rich.

Twist

The organ harvesters don't just take the organ, they take the whole person, storing them in a downtown facility, a converted butchers cellar. The people are kept alive and drugged, pieces of them harvested as they are needed or taken when it appears that that particular 'fruit' is becoming overripe or is about to die. This facility is a hellish cold, clean hell manned by completely dehumanised and discredited surgeons who have lost all touch with humanity.

Twist

The surgeons are not taking organs; they are taking and preparing flesh for the inner cabal of a thrillseeking group of cannibals. Properly butchered meat being far more useful in their culinary experiments and removing them from the hunt, kill and prepare part of the equation salving their consciences in some small degree.

Twist

The organ thieves are, in fact, providing the organs to the poor. Those who cannot easily afford surgery and cannot get the organs that they need to live full and productive lives. Like a sort of surgical Robin Hood these talented and idealistic medical students move in on the rich and the undeserving, relieving them of their organs and providing them to the needier. A sinister if somewhat justified approach. The only others they dispose of are those who find out too much about their operation...

Epilogue

One of those taken by the surgical syndicate was a criminal with a very tenacious will to live. Nobody mourned his loss but nobody knew he was one of the ones taken due to his newfound muteness and degree to which he had been harvested. Now his insensate body lies in a coma-like state in a special hospital while his organs lie within others throughout the city. Somehow he has learned to use the link between his body and what was once his to 'possess' those who have received his body parts and he is now engaged in a program of revenge on the surgeons, those who arrested or snitched on him and finally on those who took his organs.

Idea

It may well be a good idea to look up just how much of the human body can be given to others from corneas and skin to bone marrow, lungs, kidneys, intestines to blood and even fingers and toes.

Idea

If you're so inclined this adventure can make a fairly heavy point about private healthcare and poverty.

Adventure 32

Pact & Ready

Description

Jeremiah Holmes has been successful for the majority of his life, since his teens; rich, powerful and with beautiful women practically at his beck and call. He seemed to come out of nowhere, full of interesting ideas that went against conventional financial wisdom and yet secured his fortune.

As he aged however, Holmes became 'peculiar' and eccentric. Spending a fortune on a fortress like home in the desert and retreating into it in his mid 60's never emerging, communicating with the outside world via electronic means.

Now, however, the characters have received an unusual invitation from the man himself, asking them to attend him at his desert home. The fortress is an occult stronghold protected by the best the worlds of pseudoscience and religion can offer. Holmes made a pact in his teens for wealth and power for his three-score-and-ten. Tonight is his 70th birthday and the devil is coming to take his due.

Twist

Holmes' fort is slowly turned against those trapped inside as the anniversary of his birth comes. Sigils twist into unnatural shapes, crosses invert, walls bleed, the heating ramps up and up as time goes on, holy water boils and 'things' begin to slink through the shadowed halls and cavernous chambers hunting for Holmes and any who would protect him and deny The Devil his due.

Twist

Holmes is an insane old bastard and his home is an absolute death trap. Why? Well, either he is an insane old coot who believes he made a pact with The Devil or he did make a pact with The Devil. Either way he believes that part of the deal is that he can be spared if he can offer up souls in his place. The character's souls will do nicely and the torturous method of killing that he has chosen is simply a reflection of the tastes of hell.

Twist

The Devil is already amongst the group and is one of the characters, replaced by The Devil in their form. It amuses him to panic and fluster the group, to counter all their plans having been in on making them from the start and to get to Holmes when the opportunity presents itself. Unbeatable but easily bored The Devil will torment the group until he no longer finds them an interesting distraction and will then collect Holmes' soul and leave.

Epilogue

Having been exposed to the characters directly The Devil has some idea of their weaknesses and temptations and, given their interference in his actions, he decides to try to drag their souls down to hell. Their lives enter a time of trial, temptations and threats and supernatural activities plaguing them as imps and possessions are put before them and their lives are ruined and turned upside down. A cessation to these activities offered if they will but all sign their souls away to him, seeking to sow dissent amongst their friendships by turning them against any one of them that might hold out.

Idea

The feel of this adventure would be improved by more of an atmosphere of The Exorcist than a Hammer Horror style devil with moustache twisting, grandstanding and flowery rhetoric, a Devil who owes more to The Prophecy than to black and white silent movie villains.

Adventure 33

Heist Geist

Description

The bank job goes almost entirely according to plan with the crew breaking into the bank and disabling the alarms that they're aware of. When they approach the vault and start to crack it however things start to go wrong. An alarm that wasn't on the records or on the schematics locks down the building, trapping the crew inside where they will remain until the city comes to life again in the morning and they are discovered by the police.

While they have their safecracking tools the shutters and locks aren't all that they have to worry about. At night the bank is haunted by the vengeful entity of another bank robber, shot dead by police back in 1922. This ghost regards the bank and the vault as its own private property and sets about doing what it can to punish the interlopers on its territory. Able to manifest any number of strange things and having all the qualities of a poltergeist it grows in strength as the night progresses leaving the crew nowhere to hide and nowhere safe to be.

Twist

The wrathful ghost is kept anchored to this plane of existence by its wedding ring, knocked loose during the gun battle and lost beneath the floor of the main lobby. This may be revealed through ghostly visions or the actions of the ghost in stripping rings off of those it kills or reduces to insanity. If the ring can be found and either destroyed or returned to the ghost the haunting might end, possibly allowing the crew to escape before dawn.

Twist

The building that is now the bank building has been put to other purposes in the past and the ghostly shadows of what it once was can intrude upon reality at the urgings of the most powerful ghost. Turning a corner one of the crew may find themselves in a hotel room or a sorting office, perhaps something else formed from the memories of other, weaker spirits associated with the building. The bank becomes a twisting, changing labyrinth of forms and memories complicating any escape plans.

Twist

The ghostly visions and effects turn out to be hallucinations suffered by the crew thanks to the hallucinogenic gas employed as a security measure at the bank to incapacitate any criminals until the authorities can collect them. While no less horrifying during their ordeal the humiliating truth of the matter lends an extra sting to the shame of being thwarted.

Epilogue

A second time around the characters are the police and forensics squad sent to discover what happened to another criminal crew that had broken into the bank and all ended up dead, scattered about the bank building. With pressure from the insurers, makers of the security devices and the bank itself that wishes to re-open they have plenty to deal with without taking into account the supernatural factor which will soon begin to plague them.

Idea

Mapping out the building and considering cellars, tunnels and air conditioning ducts may well be a good idea. It is best to script the first portion of the adventure in order to ensure that all the characters are in the right position and situation for the start of the game.

Adventure 34

Where? Wolves?

Description

A pack of werewolves has descended on the city, bound by their pack mentality, gang rituals and some appropriated pseudo native-American spirituality they are preying upon the other gangs in the area enduring gunshots, stabbings and beatings with impunity, healing quickly and returning to the fray. As the gangs are gradually wiped out the police begin to take notice and the werewolves begin to look for other prey that provides the same hunting challenge though sometimes they simply need to eat.

The streets are empty where the wolves run and the various people of the poor districts describe them as devils and monsters from their home mythology. Considering the cultural diversity of the area this confuses any information that the investigating or caught-up characters might glean making the confrontation with the werewolves all the more deadly.

Twist

The city was built upon an ancient settlement belonging to the native-Americans and which was traded for and stolen away from them by settlers with guns and disease. The wolfpack are the descendents of the tribe that was displaced and have made a pact with a 'Manitou' or spirit to give them the power to take revenge and to reclaim the city for their people. Each werewolf wears a 'fetish' given to them by the spirits from which their wolf-form and terrible power derives.

Twist

A second gang is made up of supernatural creatures that oppose the werewolves and step up their actions in order to counter the threat they present. Using Vampires might be a bit hackneyed and obvious but it works. Other possibilities might be other were-creatures, especially rats, ghouls, zombies or the spectres of slain gang members.

Twist

The gang are a pack of Mexican Satanists, all brothers, who lost another brother attempting to enter the US 'under the wire'. They are hell-bent on revenge and their werewolf nature comes from a salve, created in Mexico. Their ingredients, including baby-fat, have run low though and they need to collect more in order to keep their invincible werewolf from. A vulnerability that may expose them.

Epilogue

The werewolves were so effective at reducing the gangs and so fearsome in combat that a small group of 'believers' in the local police department have formed a special unit, empowered in the same way as the werewolf gang, either by serum, salve or fetishes, to keep the gangs further under control by culling. This special unit operates at night, hidden from sight and protected somewhat by a sympathetic superior in the department. To the characters who investigated the first string of murders the tell tale signs will be there in the claw and bite marks and the mutilation of the bodies. It will fall to them to restore sanity before the special unit goes entirely feral and loses sight even of their original immoral mission.

Idea

If you use this in an independent system or as a one off try to turn traditional expectations of werewolves, or those well known in roleplaying on their head.

Idea

If werewolves exist here then there may well be others elsewhere. Tracing their origin may reveal them.

Adventure 35

Curse of the Mummy

Description

A descendent of an Egyptologist has been killed in Luxor by seemingly mysterious means that recall the mysterious death of his great grandfather by an alleged 'Mummy's Curse' so many years ago. The descendent and many other descendents of the original explorers who broke open the tomb had been gathered in Luxor as part of a special reunion to celebrate the restoration of many of the taken pieces to the government of Egypt. With the mysterious death being covered up by the organisers and other interested parties it falls to the characters to find out what is going on and get to the bottom of it before more people die.

The matter is complicated by a terrible storm that rages for days making travel difficult and closing the airports shortly after they arrive with the buildings and hotels offering the only real havens of safety from the terrible hot winds.

As time progresses strange accidents and eventually deaths continue to dog the reunion with the weather-trapped delegates growing more and more panicked and uneasy as time moves on, even growing resentful and antagonistic towards the characters.

Twist

The return to the country has empowered the curse which is said to extend many generations down the line of the tomb robbers and now the protective spirit of the buried mummy drawing power from the ancestral lands is seeking to bear out the rest of that curse. The deaths take the form of diseases, heart attacks and strange accidents but those investigating may begin to suspect the truth.

Twist

There is a thief amongst the descendants who has taken a minor but important item for themselves from the displays and kept it hidden. The authorities do not want to cause a fuss over the missing item preferring to search for it and to interrogate people behind closed doors. The vengeful mummy however has no such compunctions and searches amongst the descendents of its tomb robbers, slaying them as it searches for the piece.

Twist

With so much superstition surrounding mummies, this one especially, a group of extremists has decided to use that supernatural fascination as static while they murder and kidnap westerners from amongst the descendents and plot to steal many of the artefacts to sell them on and fund terrorism and other activities across the world. Only when it seems certain that their participation will be revealed will they step forward to the local media and proclaim what they have done.

Epilogue

As a final token of respect it is planned to return one part of the haul from the burial chamber to its original resting place as a sort of appeasement and apology. When the people are gathered for the ceremony returning the piece however, the tomb seals itself and many horrors begin to unfold in the depths of the tomb from the shambling dead to scurrying scarabs and chambers that slowly fill with sand.

Idea

Getting hold of some images of a few authentic Egyptian treasures shouldn't prove too difficult and having something to show your players may increase their immersion and participation.

Adventure 36

Insanity Now

Description

It starts with the investigation of a single murder, what appears to be an especially cruel and merciless serial killing. As the investigation begins, as normal, there is another gruesome murder in the city, similar, but not identical, the clues leading towards an entirely different type of person. The homicide department becomes stretched, trying to keep track of the two high profile cases when work is interrupted by a violent spree killing in a shopping mall.

Murderous impulses are on the rise throughout the city and new killers of all stripes, all genders, all ages are springing up. Maybe there is some central cause but people seem to be being struck at random, becoming psychopathic, sociopathic, murderous, turning on their friends, family and co-workers. Even those in enforcement begin to become affected...

Twist

The murder-plague is a natural phenomena, the population density of the city, of the Earth, has reached a critical point and a psychological trigger has been switched in a goodly number of the population, turning them into killers of their fellow man in order to thin out the population once more. The murder plague spreads at random as it triggers in different people, gathering strength from itself until the city is reduced to a stalking ground and warzone with the few unaffected forced to become killers themselves in order to survive.

Twist

The murder plague is caused by a disgruntled and vengeful chemist. A creator of many mind altering substances he has been taken to court many times, prosecuted and even imprisoned for making his chemicals and drugs which were, at the time he first made them, perfectly legal. Prison has dehumanised and traumatised him and he's turned his big brain on to more dangerous kinds of psychoactive drugs rather than those to cause euphoria or hallucinations. Now he is randomly spiking people with his latest creation, one that causes murderous impulses and that lingers in the system causing murder 'flashbacks'.

Twist

Deep in the heart of one of the ghettos lives a young boy who has never been allowed out of his apartment. Born to a junkie mother and father he was born addicted and deformed into pain and dependency. His parents, ashamed of him, locked him up in his room and kept him secret, feeding him only scraps and taking out their own pain on him with torture and beatings. He sees television though, knows about the world outside and, when he sleeps, he dreams of revenge against his parents, his violent fantasies projected out into the world where sensitive minds pick up on them and lash out. Hence there are links between the murders in their style, if not in the perpetrator.

Epilogue

If you go with the spreading natural phenomenon then the murder plague will slowly encompass the whole world, spreading outwards, turning people against each other one by one until civilisation is brought crashing down with survivors trying to exist in the rubble of the world before. A post-disaster game set in the ruins of that world could be very tense with small groups of survivors banding together, not entirely trusting each other and unsure of every stranger they meet who may, or may not have the mental disease.

Idea

People in more rural areas or with particularly strong discipline or loner tendencies may not be affected.

Adventure 37

Dream a Little Dream...

Description

When we fall asleep we enter the dream realm, a place of peculiar fancy stemming from our unconscious and, so it seems, there exists a collective dreamscape made up in part of the universal unconscious. Some people can tap into this world, the artists, the writers and so on, to gain inspiration for their works, to tap into mankind's boundless creativity.

Sometimes though, the creations of our unconscious are more powerful than we are, fears, anxieties, hatreds all un-stated in the real world but existing powerfully in our minds, taking on a life of their own, wishing we would just do something about them.

Frustrated by their dragging heels their nightmares and hatreds draw strength, becoming nightmare creatures in the dream realms and begin to stalk those who spawned them, devouring their minds and egos to become even stronger.

The characters can be entirely unconnected, save for their shared dream worlds and the attentions of the nightmare creatures who know their every intimate secret.

Twist

Avoiding sleep doesn't mean you don't enter the dream world. It means you begin to daydream and to hallucinate, bringing the land of dreams and the real world closer together. When a character gets that fatigued but refuses to sleep, even takes drugs to avoid it, then the dream creatures can make a breach, through, into this reality and continue their torment and violence here.

Twist

The characters are the more powerful dream minds that are spawning these nightmare creatures into the dream realm, this is why they can dream together and shape the dream world to a degree. Even if they destroy the creatures they will simply spawn more, unless they destroy themselves or cripple their capacity to dream.

Twist

Every moment of the adventure, both waking and dreaming is, in fact, just a dream world. The nightmare creatures have trapped the dreamers in the dreamland in order to better torment and absorb their energy, planning to move back through them into the physical plane and inhabit their bodies, doing all the things that their dark subconscious has ever wanted to do.

Epilogue

With the establishment of the dream world as an alternate reality within your games it can become the arena for many battles and for the finding of clues on various matters. The universal unconscious of humanity is, however, not a pleasant place and plenty more, and more powerful, nightmares can be spawned from man's capacity for sex and violence. There are also the dreams that can leak into the real world or the people possessed by their dark subconscious. To the scientific mind they appear to have simply gone mad but the characters know better. Or do they...

Idea

Even a cursory reading of Jung's work or some dream interpretation books will provide you with some potent symbology to throw into the dream realms.

Adventure 38

Trapped

Description

There was a rumble as the earth shook and then the building collapsed around them. Now the players are trapped beneath the earth in the potholes and areas of the building that survived the collapse. Burst water mains, live wires and the bodies of the dead are some of the more conventional threats that they face in this subterranean abyss.

Trapped for several days they will have to find food, water and heat if they are to live long enough for the rescue teams to locate them and dig them out of the rubble, if they even find them. Meanwhile something is moving through the debris and tunnels, taking things, removing bodies and creeping through the dark, watching them, preparing to make its move against them...

Twist

The earthquake was no normal quake. The building sits atop an ancient breeding ground for a subterranean species of carnivorous worm undiscovered by science. The worms are relatively intelligent, massive and have laid their eggs under this building. The mated pair have since awoken and have undermined the area with their tunnelling, looking for food and finally bringing the building crashing down, bringing with it an abundance of human flesh with which they can feed their young. Now food and bodies are being cached in the egg chamber, dug below, and they are constantly digging and searching for more, hunting, causing further cave ins and stalking the characters.

Twist

The quake has broken open an ancient plague pit beneath the building, right down into the dirt, long forgotten and long predating the existence of the city. The disease rises up as spores from the broken chamber inflicting itself on the survivors and, perhaps, the bodies of the dead. This is a good way to bring in zombies, mind altering diseases that cause hallucinations and cabin fever or slow, flesh rotting and degenerative diseases, anything that will panic the survivors. Rare fungal spores and other possibilities may also serve to terrify and horrify the characters.

Twist

The collapse is part of a far more general and enormous earthquake, perhaps the big one in Tokyo or on the West Coast of America. There is no help coming as the services are completely overwhelmed. The only way to save themselves is to tunnel under other buildings, find food and make a home for themselves in the abyss. As time wears on they may run into other survivors in the tunnels, less successful than them, reduced to animals, cannibalism or lost to insanity.

Epilogue

Assuming you use the tunnelling worms there may well be other broods under other buildings in other cities. The hibernation times of the parents will last roughly the same amount of time within a few years and, so, when these ones stir others cannot be far behind. A follow up adventure could see the survivors as special advisors to a military team, sent into a larger network of tunnels near a city to seek out and destroy the worms before their hatchlings emerge out into the world.

Idea

A little study into the nature of tunnels, rock formations, strata and collapsed buildings will lend an air of authenticity to the game as well as giving you a lot of good ideas for things to use.

Adventure 39

Tome of Horrors

Description

Liber Victus, 'The Living Book' is a much sought after tome of ancient and occult lore, rumoured to hold powerful rites and summonings for creatures from the time before man. Not dinosaurs but stranger and older things so unnatural and vile that to even look upon some of them is supposed to bring madness.

The Living Book is hunted by cults, cranks, the idle rich and serious scholars of the occult, now there are rumours that it has surfaced, briefly, in London and the various interested parties are descending upon the city intent on finding the location of the book.

Hired, or interested in and of themselves, the characters also go to the city, seeking out the book from their slender clues, clashing with the cults and others seeking it. When they find it of course, it may not be entirely what they hoped.

Twist

The Living Book is not a book at all. The elaborate leather-bound tome with its locks and chains is but a container for the true book, a squat, rippling mass of immortal tissue capable of bonding with the nervous structure of one who picks it up, imparting to them knowledge of the ancients and the forgotten dark history of the earth. Not only that but it slowly possesses the wearer, warping them through a form of biokinesis, changing their form to that of the race that built the book, twisting life around them into the shapes of the world it once knew and attempting to see it born again.

Twist

The Living Book is a prison for these demon-form creatures bound into it by some mystical agency long, long ago. When fully read the book releases its strange creatures from their binding on the page and unleashes them on the world outside. Someone gets to the book ahead of the characters and makes the mistake of reading a couple of pages unleashing uncanny beings into the city.

Twist

The book absorbs the essence of those who read it, when they turn the final page onto a blank page they are drawn into the book, reduced to an anatomical illustration rendered in blood on the parchment with notations in a long forgotten tongue. The first pages describe fantastical creatures of various stripes and the last few overly curious scholars from throughout human history.

Epilogue

The creatures bound into the book are considered to offer a great many insights and possibilities by the secretive conspiracies and agencies that now know about it. They will go to any lengths to get the book and, once they have it, intend to unleash the creatures hidden within it in a controlled fashion for study and dissection. To this end they take the book deep within the bowels of an underground, Area 51 like research base, setting up environments and holding cells, scientific study rooms and locations ready to examine the creatures as they are unleashed. Of course, something goes wrong with containment.

Idea

Clive Barker and H.P. Lovecraft can provide great inspiration for the creatures that can exist within the book as can alternate evolutionary designs by Dougal Dixon if you are going for a more credible or scientific approach. Further inspiration can be found in the fossil record.

Adventure 40

Family Farm

Description

Broken down miles from anywhere there is nowhere to stay or to seek help but an isolated farm rising in a singular fashion from the surrounding fields, its grain towers and wretched outbuildings almost looking like some ancient ruin.

The people at the farm, a fifty year old man and woman and a couple of younger children seem friendly enough if a little inbred and odd looking and on closer inspection many of the cows, chickens and other animals also share their propensity for mild deformation.

The man thinks he can fix what is wrong with their car and sets to it leaving them to 'amuse' themselves. Though they may find themselves being constantly watched by at least one member of the family, discretely, at all times as well as finding themselves being fed a gratuitous amount of food at every meal time. Is there anything strange going on?

Twist

The site of the farm is the site of alleged witchcraft rites in a long forgotten and no longer existing town that once stood on the same spot as the farm. The remnants of that town in the form of beams and stones can be found in and around some of the fields but there is little evidence to go on other than the family's own clippings and limited library. There was no 'alleged' to the rites at all, they did take place and the ground is still cursed to this very day, the farm family practitioners of the old ways to this day and seeking to use the characters as a means to appease the curse on the land somewhat.

Twist

Under the farm is a cavernous chamber in which a great fleshy 'thing' dwells, flailing pseudopods and gnashing the teeth in its many mouths, demanding food when it hungers, thrashing against its walls and causing minor tremors in the ground. The family are tortured, wanting to keep it alive with food but not wanting to give up the animals that are their livelihood and lifeline, or the people they have thrown to it before. Perhaps more disturbingly they refer to the creature as 'mother'...

Twist

The family are wary, strange and are trying to keep the characters there, by violent means if necessary, because there is something out there, something that comes back every year and preys on the animals if they stray too far from the farm. For once the scary inbred people aren't the problem.

Epilogue

A good epilogue might actually be a prologue, a flashback to the town that once existed here and the witchcraft trials and persecutions that took place all those years ago, the reasons why, the truth behind whatever it was that happened here and the genesis of whatever creature, horror or mystical malaise now lies upon the farm and its environs.

Idea

Rather than the usual 'creature in the woods' horror it might be interesting to go for a more flat, bleak landscape. The type where you can see clear to the horizon but all you can see is fields, plains and the road and not another structure for miles. This creates a different kind of agoraphobic isolation than the usual claustrophobic atmosphere created by a closed in situation.

Adventure 41

Terrorvision

Description

Several people have died fairly gratuitous deaths in front of their televisions late at night. They have been slaughtered on their couches and in their recliners as they watch the late night dross, the unemployed, the shift workers, the antisocial, those who would not normally be missed.

They haven't been missed, but the smell from more than one of the apartments has attracted notice of the neighbours enough to complain, if not to notice that their neighbour hasn't been seen or heard of in weeks. Compassion only extends so far after all, usually only as far as oneself.

There are no signs of forced entry in any of the cases and many of the causes of death are deemed by pathologists to be so excruciating or painful that the victim would have been screaming loud enough to be heard quite a way away. The fact that no neighbours heard anything makes things even more suspicious. What might become apparent from checking some of their video recordings is that they all appear to have been fans or at least watchers of the same late night horror theatre show.

Twist

A strange signal is migrating through the television late at night, drawing unwary viewers into the nightmarish world of the b-movie horror flicks. What seemed so amusing and postmodern on the other side of the glass is suddenly all too real and terrifying when you are living amongst it. Killed by the villains of the very films they were watching, their bodies ejected from the screens, the victims have given up their lives to this strange televisual phantom. The phantom was once one of their own kind, killed by burglars in front of his own television set, lashing out in mindless anger through the signals, replaying out his own death in them.

Twist

Late Night Horror Theatre shows a double-bill of horror every night and is syndicated across the country most of the time. Over the last few weeks when the more noticeable death cluster has taken place its syndication has been reduced to the area serving the city. One of the double bill is always a low budget horror film produced by Deptford Studios, an old English film company. Long ago the owner made a pact with a devil that his films would always be shown and seen ever after. Now the owner has been made guardian of his own promise, claiming souls through the films in order to pay Satan to keep the films on the air.

Twist

The killer is a gestalt entity formed of those souls who have died in front of the television, drawn into it and existing as electronic ghosts in the static between the channels. Now they seek more souls to draw into them, to increase their power further, desperate for the sensation and dull reality of the real world. Striving to break free completely from the electric world in which they are trapped.

Epilogue

In the gestalt entity scenario the ghosts of static might be weakened but not destroyed, biding their time and building up their power more slowly before passing through the screens into the real world, bringing the TV world with them, altering reality, seeking revenge on those that killed them or – now more powerful – becoming addicted to the killing and the rush of power it gives them. Taking over televisions throughout the city and creating panic as the ever-present boob-tube becomes a source of disquiet and terror rather than entertainment.

Adventure 42

Plagued

Description

From out of nowhere a terrible plague descends upon the land, killing people left and right, reducing the population to panic, mass exodus from the cities and rampant looting, rape and murder. The adventure passes through three stages...

Outbreak – The disease hits, it is something horrific like necrotising fasciitis or ebola causing violent, obvious and horrible effects upon the carrier's body. Society begins to break down as the disease spreads and the horror here is vested in the breakdown of everything that someone might hold dear or normal and their need to defend themselves, possibly going against lifelong held principles.

Survival – The authorities are no more, reduced to a few scattered remnants more intent on their own survival than anything else. In the wreckage of civilisation they must find a way to survive, to get food and to live constantly under threat from other survivors and the dwindling number of disease carriers. The horror here is in the extremes people will need to go to in order survive.

Aftermath – Everything is gone, they have only what they can make or build for themselves. Scavenging in the ruined buildings is dangerous and things they may have once thought harmless can now be killers from house pets to simple illnesses that are no longer quite so simple.

Twist

Once man's best friend the dogs have gone entirely feral forming mixed packs of breeds and scavenging the cities for food and bodies, starting to relearn how to hunt and forgetting any kinship they might have once felt for man. What appear to be normal, loyal pooches can now turn in an instant on their would-be owners.

Twist

The rich amount of pickings for scavengers leads to plagues of those creatures. Flies so thick the air is black with them, massive flocks of crows who, as the food runs out, will become desperate and starving enough to attack people en masse, urban foxes and other creatures all out of control in the abundance and turning on what the characters may have managed to scrape together.

Twist

The plague is actually limited just to their city, having been brought under control or contained elsewhere. At a sizeable boundary from the city a military blockade exists and the troops there have orders to shoot on sight and to shoot to kill. Contained thus and treated as carriers their options are limited and, eventually, people will come in to cleanse and reclaim the city.

Epilogue

The plague never escaped the character's country and it was only their land that was devastated. The epilogue game might pick up with their descendents exploring the shattered remnants of the civilisation before for things that their settlement needs. While they are exploring some of the ruins and discovering some of the 'magical' devices from the time before they witness some men in strange suits with strange weapons. New military explorers and settlers from Europe (or America) come to check out the once plague-ridden continent.

Idea

Bordering on science fiction this game can be made more horrific by concentrating on horror elements.

Adventure 43

Drive, She Said

Description

The town is being plagued by ‘accidents’ with several deaths and injuries amongst the town’s young people of high school age attributed to a mysterious hit and run driver. The kids are being terrorised, afraid to go out or to drive anywhere themselves for fear of being hit or run off the road by this maniac. The police have been unable to catch the car as of yet and some reports seem to indicate that there is no driver in the car though that may just be students being fanciful.

Twist

The mystery car is a car belonging to another student. A while ago he was in an accident, his car salvageable but his girlfriend killed in the crash, her seatbelt being faulty. Much as he wanted to he could not afford to replace the car and simply had it fixed, gradually growing accustomed to the thought of driving around the vehicle that had cost him so much. Now his social group has moved on but his girlfriend’s spirit remains in the car, attacking those who slight him or malign her memory, jealously pursuing any girl who shows the slightest interest in him.

Twist

The car is the secret project and secret love of a retarded kid from the school, reinforced and made into a supercharged death-machine with all the obsessive love only a mentally damaged individual can give to a project he uses it to delight in taking terrible revenge upon those classmates who have maligned him and picked on him taking his hidden project out at night to show them what someone with hate and a car can accomplish.

Twist

The car is a ghost of a car, an image left behind from the 1970’s, an old muscle car that was the pride and joy of a man who was run off the road and killed by students from the local high school. Much like a dog pining over the grave of its master the car, into which he poured so much effort and love, remains. It takes simplistic and childish revenge upon those who destroyed its owner with barely even the ‘intelligence’ of an animal. Finding and putting to rest the soul of a bloodthirsty car should prove more challenging than a normal haunting.

Epilogue

The possessed car might end up destroyed but the spirit may well live on, freed from the crushed car, freed to wander and possess other vehicles causing them to crash or otherwise kill their occupants to continue her jealous and protective guardianship of her former boyfriend.

The retarded kid with the car fixation may have been ‘killed’ when his vehicle was pursued. A follow up can easily be made by having no body be found and having him hide away working on a variety of other machines, having the added horror bonus of him being scarred and burned. When his projects are complete, bigger and better than before then his reign of terror may recommence.

Exorcised or otherwise dealt with the ghost car might be ‘exhumed’ by parties interested in the occult and the bizarre for a proper scientific examination. Disturbing the car acts as a trigger for the spirit of it to reappear, this time seeking out those who have disturbed it for its violent retribution.

Idea

Killer cars, while scary, are not necessarily horrifying. There needs to be more to it than the car itself to bring the horror factor in. Concentrating on the personality or drive behind the car may supply that factor.

Adventure 44

Scary Neighbour Lady

Description

Her house is the dark and shadowed one at the end of the street, her lawn is overgrown and a playground for cats, her curtains are perpetually drawn and she is only glimpsed occasionally, peering from behind a curtain or on her rare excursions to the shops. A high fence surrounds her house and a padlocked gate leads to the winding path that goes to her door. Neighbourhood children dare each other to scale the gate and ring her doorbell before running away. Balls kicked into her garden are never retrieved and she figures largely in the pantheon of the local children. Every child can tell the story of a friend of a friend who crept into her garden and was never seen again. Nobody can ever remember the kid's name or quite what they looked like though. Still, she is just a scary old lady really, isn't she?

Twist

There has been a scary old lady living in that house at the end of the street for as long as any kid can remember, even the older children. Even some adults recollect there being a scary old lady living there back when they were children, though it couldn't be the same woman. Or could it? The old woman really is a witch, her house full of strange things and patrolled by her cats who are her familiars. To keep herself alive for her long life she uses her magic to drain the youth from children who stray onto her land, using magic to eradicate them from the memories of people out in the real world. Some of these children who survive the process live out their artificial dotage in the upper rooms of the house, confused and crying, not understanding what has happened to them.

Twist

The house itself is some strange kind of nightmarish supernatural predator, the old woman merely its 'eyes'. Children drawn into the yard are taken into the house and their lives are 'digested' in its dank halls as they slowly fade away into shades, forgotten and lost, their energy given up to keep the house-creature alive. is a twisted psychotic who takes in vagrants and locks them up in various rooms of her house, subjecting them to bizarre humiliations and tortures, aided by her large deaf-mute son who, in his devotion will do anything for her. Every room is a new horror of disfigured or humiliated men, rendered mad by her tender mercies which she somehow manages to extract from the pages of her family bible. Children are merely hated by her, kept out of her house but should they discover what goes on within she will have to consider dealing with them.

Epilogue

With the horrors of the house dealt with it goes onto the open market for sale, unsurprisingly at a cheap price. Those people who settle on the house and start to do it up begin to run into problems though. Strange happenings, uneasy feelings and the reputation of the house weighing down on them as things get stranger and stranger, eventually finding themselves barred into their own house with no obvious way out.

Idea

Have the players play a group of children sneaking into the house out of curiosity as a break from playing the usual more powerful and strong adult characters.

Idea

For the epilogue you can continue the theme by having the characters play the family, the mother, father, teenager and child, even the family dog.

Adventure 45

Murky Shadows

Description

Many people are afraid of the dark. The shadows reduce our vision and make us see things that aren't there. Things are quieter at night, more lonely and the mind can play tricks on us, stories tell of all sorts of creatures that do not like the light and that only come out at night to feed or prey upon mankind. For the most part these fears are unfounded though, the worst to be found out in the dark being the criminals and human predators that use it to cover their various, nefarious activities.

As a storm hits the apartment building that they are in the dark and the shadows begin to take on a sinister life of their own, reaching out to engulf anything they can in the absence of the light, lending truth to that primal fear of the darkness and stalking them one by one.

To survive they will have to hold out until the morning when the light of the sun may banish whatever it is that is forming out of shadow-stuff and stalking them from room to room in the dark.

Twist

At the start of the storm the electric lights are still working, as are the phones. Police can be called, lights can be switched on to banish the darkness from the main areas of the rooms, though it can still lurk beneath beds or in dark corners, able to reach out into the light just long enough to snatch people into the dark. If they try to escape the building or to weather things in a well lit room then the power cuts out, cutting the lights plunging them into a suddenly terror-filled darkness.

Twist

The shadows manifest vague shapes and sensations of the fears of the characters, recalling things that terrified them in their youth, shapes from horror films that upset them or things that suggest phobias of snakes, spiders or even other more esoteric fears. They are born from the fear and anxiety of the people in the block and grow stronger as they grow more and more fearful.

Twist

The shadows all stem from one child somewhere in the block who is mortally terrified of the dark and is projecting their fears into the shadows around the building lending them power subconsciously in much the same way as some poltergeist activity is blamed on latent telekinetics, if the child can overcome their fear or be neutralised somehow then the shadows can be brought under control.

Epilogue

The dark around the characters is no longer safe, no longer comforting, it will always feel like something is there, watching them, brooding, waiting and biding its time. In time they will be dragged through into the shadow world by the things that dwell on the other side, finding themselves in a cold and monochrome distorted reflection of the real world, trying to navigate through the terrifying strangeness to find a way back to their own world.

Idea

Playing in low light or by candlelight will give the game the right ambience of intimacy and darkness.

Idea

Before you start running the game take the time to spend a while with a thesaurus looking up many different words for darkness and shadows in order to give you a bit more linguistic ammunition.

Adventure 46

Wrong Side of the Tracks

Description

There are quite a few stories about haunted trains, ghostly images that pull into stations and then vanish. Remnants of the trains that carried young men away to die in WWI, famous trains of the past, trains that crashed and killed the people aboard them, trains that carry people away to hell.

The train that the character's have caught appears to be a normal train at first but as it travels the tracks without stopping at any stations and as things grow stranger and stranger on board the train it becomes apparent that this is no normal ride.

The tracks get eaten up beneath the train, the countryside flashes past the windows and the characters are trapped on board unless they can find some way to resolve their situation or to get the train to halt, the emergency brakes appearing not to work...

Twist

The characters are dead and the train is their passage into the afterlife. There is no way off, normally, because there is not intended to be any way off. As the train passes onwards it slowly shifts becoming a steam powered locomotive, its furnishings and lighting shifting to become those of a Victorian era train. If they can get the train to stop they may get a second chance at life.

Twist

The train is an ectoplasmic replica of a train that derailed on this line many years ago killing most of the passengers and wrecking the train. There is only a certain amount of time remaining until the ghost train reaches the point of its previous accident. The people on the train are acting out the roles of the last moments of their lives though the players can disrupt them and ask them questions they will not stray too far from their assigned roles. How can they stop the train?

Twist

The train becomes slowly more nightmarish and twisted as it travels on, picking up speed and rocking on the rails as it corners. The ticket collector becomes a monstrous pursuer when it turns out that they have no tickets and the carpets soak with blood, shattered windows gnashing like mouths, hungry for their flesh. When they are finally killed either by the creatures or a crash they snap to in their own bodies just as their real train pulls in. Do they take the train or not?

Epilogue

A repeatable and quantifiable haunting is the holy grail of parapsychology, hearing of the train haunting and seeking it out for study a small team of parapsychologists boards the train with their equipment and gear seeking to study and quantify the haunting. The train, however, does not care for being poked, prodded, measured and scanned and grows proportionally more terrifying and dangerous with the impositions of the study group.

Idea

Try to get a real feel for a train of the right period, buffet cards, private areas, smoking on board, low lights, leather or velvet upholstery and thick glass windows.

Idea

Create a cast of ghostly NPCs for the train, especially the staff who should be fully imagined.

Adventure 47

Fear Itself

Description

Fear is similar to fire, it almost lives but doesn't quite. It feeds on situations and on smaller fears that are roused in us, it can spread from person to person infectiously and it can grow to such a height that it spawns other, lesser fears in us, phobias deriving from our main fear. What if fear was alive? What if that creeping, crawling panic sensation was alive in the same way that memes and other mind virii can be said to be alive, only more alive, more cunning, stronger and developing into something stronger still?

Isolated and vulnerable the characters begin to get preyed upon by their fears, every horrific imagining and phobia increasing and increasing until they are driven utterly insane by their own panic. Every fear that the player's suggest their characters might be feeling should be played up and enhanced, every horrific imagining that they vocalise should start to take place driving their characters further and further down the spiral of fear.

Twist

The fear in one of the character's minds has achieved a primitive and predatory sentience of its own, reaching out to trigger the fears in the others around them. That player becomes strengthened and empowered by absorbing the fear of the other characters, spawns no smaller fears and is immune to everything save their own fears which will not form at the whim of their own fear-creature. If the characters can work this out they can bring an end to the horror by disabling that character.

Twist

The site where they are isolated has an overgrown meteor crater and no animals around it. The meteor was some manner of star-spawned creature that has recently begun to stir in its shell, reaching out to feed on the fears of those around it. The characters are the only people or animals that haven't fled in a long time and are feeding it well with their terrors. Not long after they work out that their fears are hallucinatory and unfounded the creature will have absorbed enough energy to hunt and will come looking for them, just when they might think it is not real...

Twist

The fear is being enhanced by subsonics in the area caused by earth tremors and rumblings underground. The subsonics have a profound psychological effect on those exposed to them heightening their fears and causing compelling hallucinations after prolonged exposure. The characters may find a scientific station near where they are where this phenomenon was being examined which may give them enough information to get away.

Epilogue

Going with the subsonics theory, the horror being in the way people react, the frequency has now been thoroughly studied and used in short doses in labs. The technicians believe it may be a good alternative to storming buildings in hostage situations or of dispersing crowds. The first true test will be against some native American activists who have seized hostages at a government building. The characters will, of course, be some of the people trapped in that building when the gun toting activists begin to see their fears and terrors made manifest.

Ideas

This game will be hard to run without a system that makes a big deal of psychological issues or some preparation that takes into account the fears of the characters even if there is no real mechanic for them. Some background to the characters will also give plenty of hooks that are relevant to them.

Adventure 48

Technozombies

Description

Science is always moving ever onwards with new discoveries and new applications of old technology. Robotics is a difficult science to move forwards since it is limited by electrical and computing power and cracking the science of a lot of movement problems that humans deal with instinctively. Robotic soldiers or similar applications of walking, talking problem solving robotics are extremely unlikely in even the medium term future.

However, there are resources that exist already reprogrammed with all instincts that are needed, which need minimal power to run and which could make useful suicide troops.

That resource is the dead.

Muscles need little energy compared to motors, brains require the tiniest current to work and already contain all the necessary knowledge to walk, talk and perform other tasks. Resuscitating the bodies of the dead with mechanical hearts, computer chips, filaments and artificial blood nutrients appears to have accomplished the desired resurrection but what if they remember some of what they were?

Twist

The subjects used were three members of a brutal gang, shot dead by federal agents during a foiled drug deal. They had been betrayed by the opposing gang to the FBI in exchange for immunity from prosecution. The technozombies slowly begin to remember who and what they were and what happened to them, breaking out and seeking revenge which leads to a seemingly unstoppable string of murders zeroing in on their betrayers.

Twist

The revived criminals prove uncontrollable and their filament networks seem capable of limited, intuitive interface with the facility's computer networks. They use this to initiate a lockdown and to turn upon the staff of the facility, even those unwitting of what went on within, dubbing them all 'Frankensteins' who don't deserve to live for what they have done.

Twist

One of the researchers is obsessed by the idea of bringing back his dead wife, currently stored in a cryonics facility, or rather, just her head being stored in a cryonics facility. He sends the technozombies out to kill, trying to patch together a perfect body for her before he aims to reattach the head and perform the process on her, bringing her back to him.

Epilogue

While there have been problems, the process works and is developed to its conclusion. The characters in the epilogue are insurgents or other opposing forces to the latest overseas expedition of the US Military. Always sensitive to the loss of US troops the zombie project is being used to clean up certain troublesome areas, sold to the media and to unknowing commanders as simply a new brand of Special Forces. The characters find themselves up against an unstoppable 'undead' threat that can shrug off heavy bullet wounds and that does not mind dying in order to kill some of their number.

Idea

Universal Soldier while a rather crap film can give a few ideas on deployment of these troops.

Adventure 49

Off the Beaten Track

Description

It is a classic staple of horror cinema, the backwoods hillbilly family with strange ideas about bloodline purity and entertaining guests with chainsaws, this has entertained in everything from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* to *House of 1000 Corpses*. So, when characters in a horror game break down, are stranded or are sent out for some reason into a remote wilderness and run into people wearing denim overalls who look like they'd be at home driving the General Lee they know the sort of thing that they're in for. Adding a new spin to the expected splatter horror while fulfilling expectations can be tricky but is also what should be aimed for in this adventure.

Twist

The location is a run down and forgotten amusement park, a sort of swampy Disneyland that never really made it. Some sections are kept in good repair and, frighteningly parts of it seem to be open for business, staffed by a dishevelled group of inbreds in tattered carnival clothing. The rides are not all what they seem however and each building turns out, after a more gentle introduction, to be full of death traps and sick exhibits, the clown-painted hillbillies hunting and stalking the characters through the maze of the park, driving them into buildings and hunting them down.

Twist

The location is the mountains, plenty of sudden precipices, caves and rockfalls. The hillbillies here are paranoid 'mountain men' squirreled away up here since the Cuban missile crisis, believing the world outside destroyed and interpreting any modern, liberal values as communist, regarding anyone that expresses those views as dangerous commies. The characters will end up hunted down through the mountains by the crazed loons, their butchery and hatred made all the more strange by their old values and ways of speaking.

Twist

In an unusual twist the 'hillbillies' are urban, the only ones living in an old apartment block that is replete with rats, cockroaches and the inbred offspring of an unconventional and incestuous pairing that live high up in the building. The youngest scavenge the surrounding streets for food and junk, bringing it back to the apartment in offering to their parents. Now the city wants to demolish the building as it is a stinking eyesore and guess who has the unenviable task of entering the deathtrap building to serve notice on the registered occupants? Guess how much they like visitors?

Epilogue

An epilogue or follow up can be difficult to make for these types of scenarios unless the characters all die and the hillbillies survive, which can actually be an enjoyable outcome for this sort of setup. In that case you simply redesign and expand on your original idea and unleash another unfortunate set of lost innocents upon the site of the hillbilly death trap, much like a real movie sequel.

Other epilogues can have surviving hillbillies pursuing the successfully escaped characters to their homes and terrorising them there with some good ole' down-home murder just like they have back home.

Idea

Spend a bit of time working on the hillbillies and have grotesque descriptions ready of their deformities and remember to touch on the areas of description that are often overlooked, sound and smell.

Idea

Fantasy adventures can be mined for cool trap ideas to inflict on unsuspecting characters.

Adventure 50

I'm a Trauma Victim, Get Me out Of Here!

Description

In a twisted and experimental turn on the whole Big Brother concept the characters, whoever they are, wake up in a stark and functional room with corridors leading from it. They are dressed in identical white jumpsuits and have never seen each other before. There is no sign of anyone else in the small complex of rooms, nor does there appear to be any way out of them, there are just a few irregularly shaped chambers. There is no food, no water and no toilet facilities.

The first day they are simply left alone, to their own devices, the lights in the chambers staying constant twenty-four hours a day, making it hard to sleep or gauge the passage of time. When they do rest, either at their own instigation or through the introduction of sleeping gas into the chambers, things change, rooms moves around and a series of challenges and tortures begin, unspoken and the only way to get food or water.

Twist

The characters have been abducted by aliens, not anything cutesy or enlightened such as one might see in most films depicting such events but cruel and inhuman creatures that are interested in examining the psychological and physical limits of human endurance and sociability. Their tests will be based around examining human endurance in many areas, pressure, endurance, loss, being crammed together, being kept apart, having one of their number killed and dissected in front of them, everything noted and no real hope for escape unless the creatures show themselves and make themselves vulnerable.

Twist

The chambers are a scientific experiment to test the social, mental and physical parameters of humanity to their absolute limit. A black operation funded in secret by the government to test the ability of ordinary people to cope under the most stressful of conditions, the data gleaned to be of great help in mars missions and in sociology, predicting the actions of groups during disasters and other high stress situations. The loss of a few people who will never be heard of again is deemed to be worth it. Fortunately for the imprisoned one of the observing scientists forms an unhealthy obsession with their little drama and might be manipulated into helping them somehow.

Twist

The chambers have been secured and paid for as part of an exclusive entertainment show for the jaded and idle rich with exotic tastes as well as the more sadistic parts of the underground. It will later be sold on to the main public as a well done art/horror film. In the meantime the underground group watches, places bets on who will snap or die next and fixate over the chamber. The winner might gain their freedom, but only to a limited extent, shut away in a private asylum diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and left to rot.

Epilogue

The chamber experiment may well be repeated but as with any successful concept it will be made better, larger and more complex whether its cause be aliens or the jaded rich. Larger chambers with more participants and more stringent tests and tasks, more gratuitous deaths, more, more, more. Another follow up might be investigators seeking out some of the missing people and finding one of the chambers, only to end up locked inside it and trapped, needing to wait until help comes, surviving against the automated process of the chamber.

Adventure 51

Twisted Firestarter

Description

Several cases of spontaneous human consumption grab a few headlines in even the serious papers. The people involved seem a peculiar scattering though their age group seems fairly consistent, every victim being between the ages of 25 and 30.

In most cases of SHC there is some fairly obvious source of heat or fire involved somewhere near the body from an electric bar fire to a candle. In some of these cases, by chance, there are such sources but, in a significant couple of the cases there is no such source. This seems to suggest that these cases of SHC are more genuine and, thusly, they are gaining the attention of a few fortune investigators and cranks.

What is the real link between the victims and what is actually causing their deaths? Is SHC contagious somehow and what was the contact between the victims if it was, how was it caused?

Twist

The burning cases have been caused by a pyrokinetic psychic who was under study and training as part of a government experiment into the utilisation of psychic powers in counterterrorist operations. So much funding has not been poured into this area of research since the cold war remote-viewing programs. They were lucky enough to find a talented individual but stupid enough to think they could control them with threats, drugs and intimidation. The project was wound up six months ago when the subject escaped and the staff were scattered and given new identities and jobs. You can't keep secrets from a torturer who can burn your nerve endings inside your body though and Subject Zero is out for revenge.

Twist

The SHC is caused by medical trials of a new antidepressant that the victims once took part in a drug trial for. One by one the specific toxins in their bodies released by these drugs are turning them into human fireworks. In some the contamination has leaked from their skin, passing on to those they touch, even those who might try to help them, like the characters.

Twist

The victims are all scattered members of a secret society that, in college several years ago, engaged in ritualistic occult activities designed to call something from 'the outer dark' of space. Nothing ever occurred while they engaged in their ritualistic follies and they decided that it had not worked and then moved on with their lives. What they didn't account for was the time it might take something, say a burning energy based being, to cross the gulf of space to reach them and what it might do when it got here.

Epilogue

The occult society to which the students belonged may persist within a fraternity with their occult fumbblings continuing along the same lines as their predecessors. With the call to the fiery realms coming constantly now they may achieve 'greater' success than those who went before them, accomplishing a complete summoning while they are still at college and part of the society. This does not mean that the creature will in any way be under their control or that its burning rampages will be controlled.

Idea

There are any number of pyrokinetic movies and books, many of them rather poor but full of juicy inspiration. For creatures from beyond space and time Star Vampires and The Colour Out of Space work well.

Adventure 52

Man's Best Friend

Description

The call of the wild is a strong one, humans can suddenly turn on each other and become like animals. House pets can go feral and savage becoming the hunting and killing predators that their genes and instincts still insist that they are. To the animals the call is a lot stronger than to men though and they feel it far more keenly, even if it usually only manifests in play behaviours.

Something is calling to the dogs, from the pampered poodles to the filthy strays ever dog is turning against man, running in packs, savaging their owners and prowling the streets looking for trouble, killing other animals and attacking man, without fear, in frenzied, rabid attacks.

What is compelling such a loyal beast to turn against its master and to threaten him with fangs and nails? Can any solution be found before the dogs are shot and put down en masse, if they can even be found and dealt with?

Twist

The dogs are being driven mad by faint chemical spills from a factory in town. The gaseous residue is far too faint for humans to pick up on but to a dog's sense of smell it acts in the same way certain wavelengths of infrasound can impact on human psychology, in this case triggering and heightening feral instincts in the animals that overcome any level of training or threat and turn the pets against their owners.

Twist

The dogs are in the sway of a powerful South American artefact brought to the local museum not so long ago. Carved from the bones of a dog the stick is associated with several of the tribes that had knowledge of Sirius, The Dog Star, previous to astronomy. The bone depicts a wolf above the twisted and stylised bodies of men and is exerting some manner of spiritual pull on the animals within the city.

Twist

The location of the story has become something of a centre for dog fighting. The cruel sport sets dog against dog, or against feral rats. A lot of money is being made betting on the dog fights and the cruelty and savagery of the owners is reaching greater and greater heights. Even dogs have spirits though and not all of them go to dog heaven. In some places where the fights have been taking place the barrier between the spirit world and this world is worn thin and some vengeful dog spirits have returned from beyond, savage and brutal, stirring up their brothers and sisters to extract revenge from the traitorous masters.

Epilogue

Whatever is affecting the dogs can begin to slowly build up, beginning to affect other, slightly less susceptible animals, starting with the predators and slowly making its way up the scale of provocation beginning to affect scavengers, then omnivores – like humans. With feelings of aggression and violence building, as well as feral animal attacks can anyone really find the source, especially when the initial outbreak was considered dealt with?

Idea

Feral dogs will work in packs, like wolves, which makes them far more dangerous than any individual animal. They are still vicious and feral though so, if you need to give a player more of a chance to get away you can have the pack fall into dominance fights over rights to their 'prey' which can give a quick character a chance to get away.

Adventure 53

Help the Aged

Description

Shady Acres is a rest home, the sort of place where families deposit their embarrassing or infirm relatives and never visit, salving their conscience by believing that their grandmother or grandfather will be well cared for and looked after by the professional staff.

All too often what they abandon them to is to live out the last of their days to degradation, humiliation, trite entertainments, being patronised and the constant depression of seeing the people around them die off one by one.

Shady Acres is such an establishment, but it also has some other, less conventional problems. Someone or something is preying upon the elderly and vulnerable residents for some sinister purpose or other...

Twist

Old Mr Winthrop in the west wing of the home has clung onto life persistently for over 100 years as best people can guess. His records aren't the most complete in existence. He just sits smiling to himself most of the time which everyone agrees is a tragedy as he once had a very keen mind. Once a con artist, once a salesman, always an inventor and tinkerer Winthrop still has one of his own inventions, a device that drains the life energy from one person into another and, at night, he shuffles out of his room and creeps around the home with surprising vitality as he seeks another person's life to prolong his own.

Twist

One of the medical staff is a frustrated medical technician who is sure he is on the cusp of some sort of medical breakthrough. What he feels he needs is to be able to conduct human trials of the drugs, treatments and processes he devises. Many of these experiments would seem 'sadistic' to the uninitiated and not being fully qualified he has been unable to proceed until now. These elderly people die all the time and are rarely autopsied. Almost perfect test beds for his strange treatments.

Twist

One of the patients suffers from a type of intermittent Alzheimer's disease, in his lifetime though he was a travelling and fairly prolific serial killer. A secret he has managed to keep for his entire lifetime and that he barely remembers even now. When rationality comes to him in limited bouts he remembers who he is and what he did and the need to kill comes back to him. Still relatively hearty in body if not in mind the other residents can do little to resist his murderous attentions.

Epilogue

After the initial problems at the home are dealt with the place can become a locus for local urban legends and for peculiar activities of all sorts. Other strange predators and exploiters can turn up at the same home making for a subtly humorous turn to the adventures and turning them into a 'series'. Vampires, demons, zombies and other supernatural threats can all be given a little bit of an interesting spin by being put into the old folk's home atmosphere.

Idea

The film *Bubba Ho-Tep*, while in large part a comedy, gives a good feel for this type of setting.

Idea

In the same way that playing children can present a challenge so would playing residents of the home.

Adventure 54

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Description

Concern over the plump, unhealthy and monitor-tanned state of teenagers in modern times has risen and risen and along with other specialised summer camps we now find ourselves gifted with the latest innovation 'Geek Camp'. This camp aims to take today's computer and console oriented youth and show them the joys of the outdoors with kayaking, long walks in the countryside and a near complete deprivation of technology, not so much a cell phone.

The characters are amongst some of the first residents and staff to be assigned to the camp which one particularly witty teen on the coach has already labelled 'Lake Phear'. However, this being a coach load of teenagers that are getting dumped in the wilderness, things are not going to go according to plan. Whatever you do, don't go anywhere alone and don't have sex.

Twist

The mystery killer is the caretaker of the old camp from before the renovation. Living alone in the wilderness for so long he has become territorial and unhinged. He did not dare to attack the construction workers who renovated the buildings but a few youth counsellors and some teenagers are another matter entirely. His clothes are old and weather-beaten, his appearance unkempt and he has an unhealthy obsession with taxidermy...

Twist

The killer is one of the instructors. A paedophile who was outed by 'hackers' he has faked and engineered his records and situation so that he can be assigned to this camp where he will have the opportunity to live out every sordid revenge fantasy he has ever had. First the other counsellors need to be dealt with though, then the teenagers will be all his and subject to his tender mercies.

Twist

One of the other kids, or even one of the characters, is more than a little unhinged. He's every book burner, D&D hater and computer game busybody's wet dream, the kid who can't differentiate between fantasy and reality. He takes everything he reads or plays literally and dreams about acting out what he has done on the screen with gun and knife. He associates with his characters more than himself and smells more than a little of cat piss. Unfortunately for everyone else he also has an amount of manic strength and a vicious will to harm that is about to make itself noticed in a bloodbath somewhat akin to his favourite game Fetish Kill 2.

Epilogue

The thing about the villains in slasher movies is that they always, always come back, even if they have been killed. Your killer can come back thanks to a voodoo priest, to not actually being dead, becoming a ghost or a whole host of other ways to return. As with most 'sequels' they should be better, stronger but retain their signature look and preferred weapon or style either facing a new batch of fresh-faced teenagers or the survivors of their previous rampage in a new setting, like the city.

Idea

Psychology and the way serial killers really operate has absolutely nothing to do with slashers. They are a law unto themselves and the genre has its own rules which your game will be improved by following.

Idea

Spend a good part of your time building your psycho, the more memorable they are the better.

Adventure 55

Transfusion Vamp

Description

Being fully exsanguinated is a long, slow and drawn out death. As your blood is drained you grow weak, fitful, faint and have hallucinations, the oxygen flow to your brain being slowly cut off, leading you to a dreamlike sleep and death, something akin to asphyxiation.

Killing someone this way is not an easy thing to accomplish, given that you have to capture the person, make them stay still, wait while the blood drains and, probably, remove the evidence, all without being discovered. Not an easy prospect. It is also not, necessarily, a painful death and so would not, you would have thought, have been the choice for a sadistic murderer or an example killing.

That leaves fetishistic serial killers and vampires, vampires have their own method of getting blood from their victims. So, when a few of these strange exsanguinations cases begin to show up it is decided that it is your common or garden serial killer at work. It may be, but it also might be something else...

Twist

The killer is a desperate man, an experimenter in cutting edge nanotechnology and a man mortally afraid of death he experimented on himself with an experimental anti-aging treatment he was developing, long before it was ready. The protein machines act in a very similar fashion to virii, rewriting DNA to repair damage and deleting the aging triggers as well as dealing with the cancers that eventually, inevitably result from extensive retroviral treatment. The problem being that the nanofactories settled in his bone marrow, severely depleting his ability to make blood though they do let him metabolise other peoples. He needs massive transfusions on a periodic basis and is desperate to live. The nanobots may have had other unexpected side effects...

Twist

The killer is a conventional vampire of the 'old school' but they have settled on using transfusions as a way of getting much more blood all in one go and of deterring the suspicions of the usual occult and hunter groups as well as annoying gothic hangers on. This way he needs to feed far less often, able to store the greater quantity of blood to sustain him for several nights. No risk of raising hungry children either...

Twist

The local hospitals are desperate for blood, really desperate. The blood van is only ever visited by those in search of dollars for blood or a free biscuit and cup of coffee. Their numbers are not enough and many people need to be turned away. In desperation one of the technicians has become a sort of blood-leeching vigilante, searching out the city's assholes and taking their blood to make sure they give something back to the city they take so much from.

Epilogue

The nanotechnological breakthrough of the scientist might be incomplete but it does what it is supposed to do well enough, preserves and prolongs life, perhaps indefinitely. That is more than enough motivation for the wealthy and elderly to look into his treatment and put their wealth behind his cause. Of course, a group of newly healthy and revitalised people will need a lot of blood to stay healthy, coming – perhaps – to regard those below them who are not 'immortal' as their herd. A predatory attitude thought to exist in traditional vampires.

Ideas

Desperation and need for what others have is a theme in all these interpretations and worth playing up.

Adventure 56

(((Hypnotic)))

Description

People are committing the most horrific acts upon each other, upon the public and upon themselves without any realisation or memory of what they have done when they are snapped out of their fugue state and confronted with their actions, many of them refusing outright to believe it.

Each of the perpetrators remembers precisely nothing about the rape, murder, torture or self mutilation and they are all deeply, deeply traumatised by what they have done to themselves or to others. It seems as though they have been deeply hypnotised and abused by whoever did this to them on a deep, subconscious level, each of their acts triggered by some particular word or phrase that has turned up and set them on their violent path.

None remember who or what did this to them though there may be other ways to get a few clues, such as more hypnosis...

Twist

The killer is simply a sick and twisted hypnotist using his talents to make people act out his sadomasochistic and murderous fantasies by proxy believing he cannot be prosecuted for the murders, suicides or mutilations since he did nothing but suggest to these people that they do these things. He has also hidden suicide triggers in his subjects in case anyone else tries to hypnotise them and, perhaps more scarily he has already visited one of the players, not that they remember. In his arrogance the trigger words that he has used have spelled out a clue to his identity that particularly thorough investigators might discover.

Twist

The hypnosis is not conventional but rather the influence of a psychic parasite, existing on the astral plane and feeding on the pain, fear, self-loathing and fear of those it controls. The creature cannot be combated from this world requiring those who wish to confront it to make the 'trip' into the astral through one means or another, fighting the well-fed parasite on its own turf.

Twist

The hypnotist is a performance artist of sorts, the hypnosis and the deaths are part of his sick understanding of art as a way to shock and entertain. The general public scorn shock art, scorn the modern and that is if they even have the cultural wherewithal to so much as enter an art gallery. He is taking his art, his 'shock of the new' out into the world, into people's lives and into their papers, giving them sensation and involving them in his great work obsessed by the cultural relevance of what he believes he is accomplishing.

Epilogue

A hypnotist of such calibre cannot be conventionally imprisoned or put on trial, their gifts of mesmerism giving them far too much control over a judge, jury or prison guards. If they were taken alive, or close thereto, then they will easily be able to escape custody, recovering before they begin anew, focussed on those who brought them down the first time. They will set their friends against them, make them wanted, change the beliefs of those around them until they are hated and isolated and then try to turn them against each other all for ruining their original plan.

Idea

The power of suggestion is strong and a lot of stage acts use it from stage magicians to 'mediums', not just hypnotists. The idea of someone violating your mind in such a way is a perfect tool for horror.

Adventure 57

Robotomised

Description

Our lives are full of machines, the televisions that entertain us, the machines in the kitchen to prepare our food and save us labour, the car that takes us to work and the computers and mechanisms that handle so much of our work there once we are there. Machines are everywhere, making our life easier as all good little automations should.

Something has changed now though, the machines that we once thought were simply dumb mechanisms have taken on some sort of life of their own and are turning on us with murderous intent, determined to wipe us out by any means that they have from running us over to electrocuting us and slicing us to pieces.

Everything is turned on its head and nothing above a simple non-electric mechanism can be trusted reducing man to himself, guns and medieval weapons against the best he has ever been able to produce...

Twist

The characters are workers or visitors trapped inside a factory when it goes crazy. The doors lock down and the robot arms and vehicles begin to go on the rampage, every security camera is an eye for the killing machine that the factory has become as it hunts them down with forklifts, robot arms, fire suppression systems and anything else at its disposal. This can be a closed scenario which means the cause could be something more conventional such as malicious and murderous hackers.

Twist

The characters are on a motorway when the effect hits, whatever it is. Their car is no longer under their control and the cars all over the road are swerving to deliberately crash or to run down people who have escaped from their murderous vehicles. If the car can be wrestled back under control they have a chance of surviving but the whole world seems to have been struck and they are miles from anywhere significant without a working car.

Twist

No cause is ever explained or quantifiable, no science or examination can find the cause of the animation or the attitude of the machines. Even trying to talk to ones capable of communication is doomed to repetitious threats and entreaties to 'Die, die, die!' The effect seems, however, to be limited to a certain area in which the characters have fallen and humanity is fighting back from outside that area, smashing the rogue machines and doing what they can to rescue survivors. It becomes a race to get to help before the machines get to them.

Epilogue

Whatever the effect was that caused the problem it dies away, or seemingly so. No longer affecting machines and trust is slowly built back up in devices with extra safeguards built into newer machines that everyone hopes will stop the problem. The entity, whatever it is, still exists however, hidden away in wires and radio and brooding on the internet waiting for the chance to lash out more subtly at its enemies. The characters are caught up when such a situation arises, perhaps on board a plane that is making its way across the Atlantic until the hateful entity begins trying to wrest control and crash them into the ground.

Idea

Maximum Overdrive is perhaps the most famous but least effective horror film in this genre but you can find many others from which inspiration can be torn.

Adventure 58

Medium Rare

Description

A lot of so-called 'mediums' are heartless and exploitative creatures who prey on people's grief and hopes for the existence of 'the other side' by claiming to put people in touch with their loved ones or to pass on messages that they receive from the lands of the dead, for a fee of course. More unscrupulous than the worst ambulance chaser lawyer they pry the inheritances from dead widows and feed them a line of bullshit drawn from subtly probing questions and extremely open statements.

Now, imagine someone who could contact the place the dead end up, who could communicate with them, hear what they say, even bend them to their will. Imagine if they were just as unscrupulous and foul of thought and deed as the charlatans and imagine that they put what they knew or could extract from the dead to use...

Twist

The medium does not truly control the spirits, they control him, stringing him along with promises of wealth and knowledge from the other side, browbeating him and tormenting him until he does what they require of him whether it is offering consoling words to their widow or killing those responsible for their deaths who evaded justice. The ghosts do not have a lot of sway or ability to interact with the real world but they will use it to protect their tormented puppet.

Twist

The medium uses the knowledge that he is given to prey on young widows for sex, taking the knowledge he needs to seduce them from the memories of their dead husbands. He uses other knowledge to raid bank accounts, to find hidden treasures or to buy leftover antiques at ridiculously low prices, knowing their true worth from the dead that he twists to his will. All of this is merely unpleasant but when he is discovered he can exercise the power of the dead and form ectoplasm

and other foul substances from beyond to his defence horrifying and destroying any who might prevent him living out his wishes.

Twist

The medium barter for the knowledge of the dead by providing them with more company, their temporary limbo being devoid of sensation and feeling all they have are memories and conversation. At their direction and with their help he slaughters people in such a way as to almost ensure that they remain in limbo as a confused shade able to provide conversation and thought to satisfy their cravings for company. In exchange they make him rich and give him knowledge from beyond the grave, until they pass on.

Epilogue

Killed the medium will become a powerful ghost, far more knowledge in the ways of the dead than the living and already a conduit between the two worlds he becomes able to possess or to manifest in the real world almost as strongly as though he were really here, even able to tear a hole between the two worlds and to bring other ghosts across with him, seeking revenge and the sensations they are denied in limbo.

Arrested he can use the knowledge the ghosts give him as well as his persuasive tongue and other abilities to serve him well at trial or in prison and once he is out the old patterns will start once again, only more carefully.

Idea

If you can get hold of a few videos or clips of mediums at work you can get a good feel for how the 'villain' should come across in this scenario, sceptics notes on mediums can also teach you a few of their tricks.

Adventure 59

Golem

Description

A historical setting, though it could be translated to a more modern setting with a bit of creative thought. The scene is a death camp towards the end of the Second World War. The Jews are being systematically exterminated where they have no useful skills and the characters are SS guards assigned to one of these camps. Their job is to ensure everything runs smoothly, to prevent any escapes and to conduct executions. Terrible, dehumanising behaviour takes place every day, discipline is slackening as the war goes badly and morale and alcoholism are at an all time high amongst the guards and staff.

Then the strange deaths begin.

First one guard is found beaten to death by something with unnatural strength, mashed into an almost unrecognisable pulp. Then two of the guard dogs are heard barking their heads off until they are cut off with panicked yelps, their heads practically twisted off.

Something, a golem made by the jews, is stalking the guards, something powerful and terrifying, something far more horrifying than the approaching allies.

Twist

The surviving elders of the camp have revived some old and near forgotten magic and crafted a golem from the blood soaked mud of the camp, its chem hidden in the clods of sodden, clay-like earth instructing it to kill their tormentors. This creature is made of the very earth of the camp and can move through it bringing sudden death to the vulnerable and the alone amongst the guards, avenging its people in the name of god.

Twist

The golem is constructed from clay, taken from one of the crafting halls where the labour slaves are put to work creating all manner of goods to be shipped back to Germany. Three of the elders are required to bring it to life and to put it back to its sleep. More clay is being spirited away out of the workroom for the construction of a second one and meantime the first is sent out to stalk and kill at night, hidden as simple clay during the day.

Twist

The golem is made from the rotting flesh and bone of the slaughtered Jews who have been cast into several great burial pits dug near the camp, the incinerators having run out of oil. They rise at the behest of the elders and hiss accusations at their tormentors as they take their revenge. Killing the elders will not end this undead golem's rampage and will only empower it.

Epilogue

The allies arrive at the camp only to find it devoid of life, Jews and Germans alike all slaughtered. A small unit is left behind to investigate what happened and to secure the camp. Night by night they start to become aware of 'something' there in the camp, on top of the aura of death and the distinctly spooky atmosphere to the place. The golem survives and without instruction it believes all soldiers to be the enemy, American, British or Russian.

Idea

Playing the SS guards could be too much for some players to handle, be sensitive to your players.

Adventure 60

It's Always Meme, Meme, Meme!

Description

A series of books are taking the public by storm. Outselling Harry Potter and putting lifetime sales of The Lord of the Rings at risk the horror novels of Sain Cutter are lauded as 'A more accessible H.P. Lovecraft for the modern age' amongst other accolades. Cutter is a reclusive man rarely seen in public and seems modest for someone making so much money.

The books have had the usual shouts of panic from those religious authorities that haven't even read them, describing them as the work of Satan, worrying that they will lead children down the dark path of the occult and that they are morally bankrupt. As ever these protestations appear to have only helped sales.

Everyone who reads them seems to become a Cutter evangelist, telling everyone how wonderful the books are, lending them to them and trying to get them to read them. The author's cult around his books grows stronger every day and 'addicts' wait breathlessly for the release of his new book.

Twist

The books are populist 'manuals' on the occult, summonings that genuinely work and do call to things from beyond human understanding. As teenagers toy with the information in the books as well as older people and occultists who should know better various 'things' are drawn to the earth, more and more all the time, preying on man and weakening the gap between the worlds until other, greater things may be able to step through from the other side.

Twist

The script of the books contains secret writings and phrases from an ancient occult scroll. Cutter is, or rather was a fairly accomplished researcher into ancient languages and the occult and, from this scroll, gleaned ways of making people fanatical about his – actually – rather mediocre books. With the release of the last in his series the spell is unintentionally complete and the ancient spell begins to take effect, driving people mad and thinning the wall between the worlds on a massive scale. Unless it is stopped while only those who have read the previews are affected.

Twist

Cutter puts himself in his own fiction and some individuals find themselves in his fiction as well, living out his stories. This is how he creates them, some manner of ritual or control that allows him to project people into the world from which his book stems. It is their lives, their reactions, their words giving him what he needs to give his books that genuine feeling of reality. The characters find themselves in one of his novels somehow, about to live out his next bestseller in all its gory glory.

Epilogue

Cutter is dealt with somehow but his world still exists, his manuscripts taken from his home in whatever forms survive and bandied about on e-bay for large quantities of money. Wherever these 'lost books' turn up there will be trouble, creatures from his books emerging from the dark to try and make inroads into this world. Unless, that is, those in the know can stop them.

Idea

The film In the Mouth of Madness and any stories or Call of Cthulu adventures about The King in Yellow will provide greatly for any games run on these sorts of themes.

Adventure 61

Stone the Crows

Description

Crows feed on carrion, dead meat, for preference. They will hunt and kill smaller, weaker, helpless prey but, by and large, they are scavengers taking what they can from road-kill or other sources of flesh. The village that the characters call home is about to see a different side of the scavenging birds.

The village has always been home to large communities of the birds, even named after their presence, Crowthorpe. The village church houses one great rookery of the cawing, raucous creatures and several other stands of trees in the area also play host to them. They've been considered a curiosity, even a tourist attraction and a lot of local myth is associated with them.

The crows seem to be taking their collective noun far more seriously now, attacking anything that comes into sight en masse with special and focussed attention being given to human beings.

Twist

The village was once the site of a Celtic settlement with a holy place and a burial ground dedicated to The Morrigan, the warlike part of the triple-goddess associated with the crow as a scavenger of the field of battle. This supernatural imprint has accounted for the interest and presence of the crows down the many years since but now a farmer, pushed by the need to make up losses and turn a profit, has ploughed through the once-holy ground and roused the wrath of the ancient goddess.

Twist

A landfill site not far from the village, and a favourite feeding place of crows, has mistakenly received a load of human medical waste, much of it originating from examinations and autopsies resulting from a chemical spill on the other side of the country. The concentration of chemicals in the human flesh has had a profound effect on the crows and awakened in them a thirst for that flesh that can only be quenched in one way, by attacking people and killing them to get at the flesh.

Twist

A strange old woman from the village, the type that people would whisper was 'a bit peculiar' would feed the crows every day with bacon rinds and other leftovers, tossing them out on her lawn for the scavengers to partake of. The entire village regarded her as a freak and she was tormented and ignored throughout her entire retirement in the village. Her only friends were the crows and now, through some sort of communal intelligence they have 'decided' to take revenge upon those that tormented her, perhaps spurred on by her spirit.

Epilogue

Through fair means or foul (no pun intended) the attacking crows can be dealt with, Crowthorne losing its most famous and appropriate 'landmarks'. However there are many more crows in the country and, perhaps next season crows from all over the country will flock in upon the sleepy village, seeking to teach the defiant villagers a lesson for standing against nature.

Ideas

The Birds is an obvious source of material for this sort of story. The various versions may also benefit from some research into Celtic history and beliefs and some reading into the behaviour and proclivities of crows, rooks and magpies.

Adventure 62

Bloody Hands

Description

There have been a few strangulation murders in and around the area, people grasped and throttled by a pair of powerful hands, their throats completely crushed in some cases. There are no known motives and no real suspects in any of the slayings, they appear to be random and motiveless save for being thrill kills.

The only living witness has provided a description that seems completely at odds with any possible perpetrator, skinny, thin arms, not the sort of powerhouse that would be necessary to inflict the kind of wounds that have been found on the bodies.

Either the witness is misremembering or lying, or there is something very strange going on. Either way, this isn't going to be a normal case and those who think differently may be able to find out quite what is going on...

Twist

The killer is a man whose own body is rebelling against him. The constituent parts of his flesh have entrapped his brain and have taken on a life of their own. Their murderous actions are attempts to kill tyrannical brains in other bodies and to free them from the dominance of the ego. Not every body is as freakish and independent of segment as his though and the attempts have gone awry. Occasionally he can force control of his own mouth to speak but that is all. If he is harmed the parts of his body can live on independently.

Twist

The killer's hands were badly burned in an industrial accident some time ago and he received grafts made from the skin of a dead man, an unpleasant dead man. The skin grafts have somehow imprinted on the man's hands the ego and murderous desires of the deceased and, at night, he enters a fugue state in which the hands lead him around to undertake the strangulation murders that used to give their old owner such joy.

Twist

Ghostly, disembodied hands have been reported as hauntings before. There are roads where ghostly hands are said to try and grab car wheels and turn the drivers off the roads. These hands are somewhat more sinister, invisible and bent on some sort of revenge on the man who is associated with them, harming those in his vicinity to try and get him convicted of wrong doing and to send him mad. Their true source, someone he has wronged in this life who has passed on, someone strong...

Epilogue

The victim of his 'busy hands' is unlikely to be believed by any conventional courts or is likely to end up dead or maimed as a result of what has happened to them. If they are executed or their hands are cut away, if they end up in prison then those very hands may well excavate themselves from his grave or separate themselves in a prison 'accident' seeking their independent freedom from his body and to continue their reign of terror. Those involved before may recognise the pattern and be able to do something about it.

Idea

Numerous stories deal with rebelling body parts or the transplanted parts of murderers exist. Perhaps the best is the short story by Clive Barker *The Body Politic* which is in *Books of Blood* and was made into a TV show.

Adventure 63

Picture This

Description

The gallery is holding an exhibition of ancient religious paintings and the crowning jewel in their collection is a recently found masterwork from an old Italian master originally painted at the behest of the Vatican. The painting is a fantastically detailed depiction of hell in which the examiners and documenters seem to be constantly finding new details and depth.

The exhibition is due to open tomorrow with many important personages from the city and further afield in attendance to offer their blessing and to try and leach popularity from one of the city's more important cultural coups.

As security guards, restorers or museum staff the characters have noticed a few odd things about the painting though. It has a strange and disheartening feeling to it and many of the details in it appear to have changed between times they have looked at it, almost as though the image were slowly moving and changing.

Twist

The artist who painted the picture was famous for taking studies of every aspect of his works from life. The scene of hell he was commissioned to paint was hard for him to complete without witnessing devils and the pit of hell for himself. In desperation to complete the project and gain the favour of the pope he consorted with diabolists so that he could study a demon for himself. This condemned his soul to hell for eternity, his blasphemous picture the prison for his body and a gateway into hell itself that tries to reach out and snare those who view it.

Twist

The hellish picture is haunted by its previous owners most of whom went insane while they owned the picture. Their shades now stalk the museum powerful in their insanity and in the resonance of the museum's historic chambers. As night falls and the museum clears their power waxes and a powerful and dangerous haunting overtakes the museum, the characters trapped within to suffer the insane depredations of capricious ghosts.

Twist

The painting is a mystic locus for an animating power, bringing the contents of itself and other nearby paintings to life. Historical figures, devils, strange animals and other peculiar things begin to prowl the dimly lit halls of the museum empowered by the painting, stalking the characters.

Epilogue

The painting is dangerous but it is still rare and expensive. Most will not believe any story about what it is, what it does or the disastrous effects that it can have. Restored and repaired it is bought or stolen away from the storage area of the museum by a wealthy art collector. The collector has a large country house and, unveiling their new pride and joy, they throw a huge party of all their rich and influential friends, hanging many of their paintings around their home, pride of place given to the new acquisition. Then it starts to play up.

Idea

Other items besides paintings could become animated by the statue or ghosts. Statues are an obvious choice but stained glass windows, carvings and bas relief work are all other possibilities.

Idea

Coming up with a back story for the painting will pay dividends and give a mystery angle to the story.

Adventure 64

Teen Witch

Description

Every school has them, the disaffected, the different and the loners. Outcast for not 'looking right' for being more intelligent, for having niche interests or for being disinterested in sport or fashion the outcast subcultures form their own little gangs for self-support and protection. The goths, the pot smokers the geeks, all form their own little cliques to feel special and to not be alone.

One little foible that has attracted and increasing number of teenage girls is witchcraft or, inaccurately, Wicca. Book stores carry faux spell books on their shelves there are innumerable websites belonging to these disaffected and desperate teens filled with a mish-mash of cobbled together mysticism and too-hopeful thoughts.

What if one of them genuinely had some talent though? What if they could make this potpourri magic work for them? What if they genuinely were a witch?

To think, they worry about kids bringing guns into schools...

Twist

Pushed too far by her more preppy schoolmates one of the school's goth-pagan wannabes has snapped, plunging her 'ritual dagger' into the girl and killing her outright. This shock has awakened the dormant power inside of her and she is wreaking havoc in the closed down school, taking horrific and painful revenge on all her tormentors, taking everything she has ever wanted. The characters are students or staff at the school or perhaps the police trying to negotiate an end to the 'hostage crisis'.

Twist

Ritual sacrifice of pets and other 'satanic' activity has been on the increase in the town and the local goth crowd are carrying the blame. In actuality a few of the teenage girls at the local school, of the more ambitious and fashionable set, have been gently led into magick by one of the teachers who is a powerful black magician in her own right. The power they have been shown is far stronger and more genuine than the silly little charms in their Barbie spell books and they are slowly losing themselves to the teacher's power.

Twist

The girl's mothers are the true witches and they have exerted a strong control over the town since they were in high school. Now they are imparting power and teaching their daughters the same tricks and spells they have used to bewitch and control the local community. In investigating the characters may well find the whole community slowly turning against them under ensorcellment.

Epilogue

However this ends up unless they are killed you can never truly take their power away from them. Spells can be worked from behind prison gates on people far distant. Older witches from the same family can gather to exercise revenge or their spell books and enchantments can be found by other young impressionable girls who may then seek, again, to use the spells to further their own popularity and revenge.

Idea

Watching *The Craft* does not really count as research unless you are intending a very simplistic and skin-deep game. Otherwise to lend some authenticity it is well worth looking into real-world magickal beliefs.

Adventure 65

Gone to Pieces

Description

Bell Creek is a small; out of the way place, barely a handful of houses, a farm and a small river surrounded by hills and woodland, the road down to it little more than a track, a good place to get away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. Of the small number of houses one is a guest house, the perfect place for the characters to gather for their break from the rest of the world. Here they can partake of long country walks, peace and quiet and few, if any, distractions.

Then something happens. Screams pierce the night and are cut off, then the unnatural laughing begins, the shouts, the oaths, the chanting in a strange and gibbering tongue. Then more screams. Suddenly the house they are staying in is under assault by a strangely twisted looking one of the locals, bile dripping from their mouth, white eyes and grey skin, hammering like crazy to break the glass.

What is worse, when they defend themselves they find that the altered people don't seem to be able to be killed. Even worse than that, parts of them that are cut away seem to remain animated and murderous.

Twist

One of the houses in Bell Creek was the retreat of an antiquarian and occult scholar. Now in retirement he still occasionally works on translations and studies of texts and scrolls he is sent. One of these artefacts he has been sent to have a look at in his spare time is a stone tablet of ancient make, the reading of which has unleashed a Candarian demon. Manic and infectious the demon possessed the old man who then turned upon his wife, raised in death by the demon's influence she and her husband have turned on the rest of the tiny community who have now in turn gone after the characters.

Twist

The farmer has been testing new fertilisers and other farm chemicals, the only way he can turn a decent profit with the relatively poor and difficult land that he owns. These chemicals, either one of them singly, or the cocktail thereof, seems to have had a reanimatory effect on him after a fatal farm accident. With only the primitive, killer, lizard brain still functioning he has been reduced to an animalistic state, desiring only to kill, his body parts continuing his wishes, much like a decapitated chicken.

Twist

The entire scenario is the nightmare of one of the characters allowing for improbable and stranger events to slowly creep in to the basic terror scenario of the dead and their parts returning from the grave to kill them. To add an extra little twist when they wake up have everyone have had the same dream. On reflection watching Night of the Living Dead before going to bed was probably a mistake.

Epilogue

Once a passage is opened for such a demon then that passage proves more difficult to close than simply somehow disposing of the chopped up parts or rendering them too small and helpless to do anything. The curse lingers, even following the characters to whatever part of whatever town or city they conventionally live in, waiting for the chance to pass into someone who dies close to those who defied them.

Idea

The Evil Dead trilogy will give ample ideas on how the 'undead' should move in this scenario as well as giving some other evil ideas. A low budget flick called *Demons* may show how things could go in an urban area.

Adventure 66

Queasy Coat

Description

A rich investor and venture capitalist is found in his office, gagged and strung to his desk, his heart cut from his chest with what appears to be, from the flakes found in the wound, an obsidian dagger. This is merely the first of these ritual slayings, the hearts taken away by whoever is perpetrating the deeds.

The investor and all the other victims have or have had dealings with companies involved in South America, most especially in mining and cattle farms the two industries that impact most strongly on the environment of the jungle and impact on the indigenous peoples.

How is the killer able to circumvent security to get to his targets? Why is he collecting the hearts? Is it purely as some kind of grisly trophy taking or are they being collected towards some sort of rite, ritual or other sinister purpose?

How can the slayings be stopped?

Twist

The killer is a priest of an old Aztec religion, keeping the old ways alive hidden amongst the peoples of the forest and interested parties in the cities. He has some artefacts from the ancient times such as his obsidian knife and the fetishes that allow him to become a bird, a great cat and a serpent. These are what he uses to get access to his victims. The hearts being taken as a symbolic taking of strength to return it to the land that they have plundered and exploited.

Twist

Various cultures in South America had fairly advanced astrology and calendars and predicted times that would be the end of the world that creep nearer and nearer to the current year. Our murderer is a talented shaman and magician and is collecting the hearts to take back to the heart of the jungle, to a forgotten temple to offer them up to bring back and empower a warrior god of the time before to dispense justice, revenge and to bring about the end of the destruction and exploitation that has continued since Cortez.

Twist

The recent cuttings into the jungle, clearing land for mining and for cattle uncovered an old settlement of great archaeological worth but this was covered up and taken apart in order for the land to be repurposed without any problems. The spirits awakened by the disruption have taken offence to this and are manifesting in all their ancient glory, starting with the men in charge and working their way down taking their due in sacrifices.

Epilogue

Tracing back the root of the cause of the murders, the people the assassin comes from can lead investigators, police or interested parties into the Amazon where they are more than likely to find themselves stalked by a people with a several hundred year grudge against the white man, some forgotten skills and a tradition of cruel and casual brutality and death that is just waiting to be reinstated against new people.

Idea

The Aztec civilisation was but one of the South American civilisations and to make your version of the story a little more individual you could choose a different culture or mix and match facts and stylistic notes from several of the different civilisations.

Adventure 67

Empty Vessel

Description

The characters are a lifeboat crew sent to respond to a distress call coming from a ship out at sea. As they sail up to it they hear nothing but static on the radio, the power appears to be off and the ship is drifting with the current, not making its own way through the waves. Getting on board they find the ship appears to be silent and abandoned, no immediate sign of the crew or what has occurred to the vessel.

As the investigation of the ship continues and they search more thoroughly for the crew strange things start to be noticed and the atmosphere becomes more and more unsettling and heavy with dread. Finally they discover that their own boat has drifted away somehow, the navigator and boat lost from the ship, leaving them alone on board to deal with whatever it is that has emptied the ship.

Twist

The crew are dead, killed by a chemical leak on board the ship from a containment canister on the main cargo deck. The material being transported is an experimental chemical or virus, possibly extracted from an earlier zombie adventure, which is now beginning to raise them as zombies. Throw in a zombie ship's cat and the captain's now-undead dog and the pursuit around the ship becomes a lot more interesting.

Twist

The ship drifts, eerily empty and outside the mist begins to thicken, the waves lessening and lessening until if they listen very carefully they can hear the waves lapping against the shore. With a grinding sound the ship runs aground on a dank, grey and muddy sandbank, rocks looming up from it and piles of foulness from the deep ocean. The bank continues 'inland' for some way and exploring they will find the moonlit filth infested with fang-toothed fishlike creatures sacrificing the lost crew by drowning them in a pool before a great monolith.

Twist

Occasional ghostly glimpses of the crew are seen, walking the corridors, going about their business. These are intermittently interspersed with violent visions of great crashing waves of water and cries of terror. Still the ship doesn't appear damaged though the radio and other devices cannot be made to work. It is the characters who are dead and gone, ghosts completely their mission with devotion while the agents of death begin to close in to take them to the other side one way or the other.

Epilogue

The ghost ship and whatever has happened aboard it comes floating close to shore and tugs bring it in to the docks to have it examined and considered for salvage. The salvage team first sent aboard discovers and has to deal with whatever remaining problems are left as well as the fate of the lost lifeboat team.

Idea

Lend authenticity to your setting by getting hold of some ship deck plans through the internet and reading up on the RNLI or the coastguard.

Idea

Ships make good settings for any 'lock in' type horror games as they are truly isolated and claustrophobic interior settings, self contained with little need for excuse making as to why people cannot get help.

Adventure 68

The Grey Lady

Description

The Hearn Memorial Hospital is, and always has been, a place of mercy and compassion for the afflicted.

Originally a charity hospital founded just before the great war it was originally associated with the poor and with the influx of soldiers that came back wounded from 1914-1918 and again in the 1940's. Now it looks after the elderly, cancer patients and those with rare and fatal disorders.

Within the last few months there have been several suspicious deaths at the hospital though a police investigation found none of the staff or patients could have committed any murders and so they were put down to misdiagnosis on the pathologist's part.

People are still dying in the hospital and some have reported seeing a female figure stalking the halls that does not resemble any of the staff or patients. Perhaps something strange is occurring after all.

Twist

One of the patients is in a persistent vegetative state despite the pleas of their living will not to be allowed to persist in such a state and to be allowed to die. She is still conscious within her blankly staring body in a prison of her own flesh. Somehow she has managed to project a mental image beyond her body and, unable to kill herself since the projection fades along with what remains of her consciousness she instead brings mercy to the other hopeless cases on the ward.

Twist

Many hopeless cases and gratuitous injuries from the Second World War persisted in the hospital into the 1950's and fifty years ago a nurse was hung for murder after assisting many of the veterans to die, some who – arguably – still had some quality of life. This year, on her anniversary her shade has returned to bring her brand of mercy to the current inhabitants of the wards, men, women and children.

Twist

The Grey Lady is one of the patients. Locked in an immobile and uncommunicative state they exist in a dream world, locked in their own imaginings and unable to communicate. They appear grey only because of their pallor and the weak moonlight that enters the building through the window blinds at night. Her dreams are impinged on by the morphine fuelled dreams of certain other patients and at night she sleepwalks to cut off the source of the disturbance to her rest without even truly being aware of it.

Epilogue

Slaughtering someone who is an unconscious cripple may well prove too much for even a group of RPG characters to stomach and so, going from the last twist, The Grey Lady may well end up simply strapped down rather than anything else. This may work for a while and then the deaths should start again, she has learned to project herself into the offending dreams and to terrify those who encroach on her world to death, her presence in dreams being reported by survivors. To get to the bottom of the problem they will have to enter her sleeping mind and explore the nightmares, dreams and strangeness there. Doing this can be accomplished with pseudoscience or simply sleeping near her.

Idea

Good fiction and good, cerebral horror will examine issues in strange ways such as deforestation, man's abuse of things he should not meddle in and so on. The issue here is euthanasia and is worth reading up on.

Adventure 69

The Filthy Monkey...It Plans

Description

Dr Haslock runs The Haslock Institute for Primate Studies in a large, government owned house on a nature reserve island off the coast. Here he works, mostly with chimpanzees, teaching them sign language, basic mathematics and trying, as much as he can, through stimulation, drugs and hard work, to bridge the gap between man and ape.

Haslock has several staff to help him around the house, mostly students looking for some practical work experience or looking at what he does to fill out their own papers on the subject. None are as committed as Haslock is and nor do they know the subject remotely as well as him.

Disturbingly one of the students has been beaten to death in her room, one of the other students has been arrested for it and charged but certain parties do not believe him to be responsible, preferring to think that one of the apes has gotten out of hand and escaped, despite the evidence against the boy.

So what is the truth?

Twist

Bobo, one of Haslock's less successful chimps is actually his most successful subject. A bit of a chimp Einstein Bobo's naturally high intelligence has responded very well to Haslock's experiments, well enough to work out that he and his fellows are being exploited and experimented on and to resent it. Bobo has an elaborate plan of revenge and the intelligence to get free of his cage, turning the staff against each other with implacable will and cruelty all the while acting the dumb chimp, even setting up one of the more stupid animals to take the fall for him, should he be found out.

Twist

Haslock allows certain, trustworthy apes out of their 'cells' to wander the compound and to socialise with the humans. Given his devotion to them it is unsurprising that one of his favoured experimental apes should latch onto him emotionally. This ape, Mindy, is more than just attached, she is devoted. The girl who was beaten to death was conducting an affair with the doctor who covered up Mindy's involvement, believing this action to be an important breakthrough. That doesn't mean Mindy is done killing by a long shot.

Twist

Apes are unusually strong given their size, stronger than men, their muscle mass extremely dense and efficient and very little fat on their bodies. Haslock's main thrust of research has been into the mental and social side of apes but he has also examined the physical side of things, with surprising success. A serum he has concocted confers ape-like muscle and tone to human musculature, unfortunately it has also made him wilder...

Epilogue

One or two of the intelligent apes may have escaped from the conclusion of the adventure, escaping into the countryside of the island, even making their way to shore by boat (apes can't swim). Once there they may break brother's and sisters out of zoos and private menageries, gathering together a breeding tribe deep in the new forest or somewhere similar, forming a community of intelligent apes that, over the next few years, may start to make their presence felt.

Adventure 70

The Stalking Curse

Description

A group of people, perhaps the characters themselves, are being stalked by some manner of supernatural effect or influence. Singled out by it one by one the force manifests as runs of bad luck, peculiar accidents and near accidents, bad dreams and other tension heightening situations.

The force seems almost conscious, vindictive, setting up terrifying situations and ordeals for those targeted by its power. Every road crossing is a dice with death, every wire or pipe potential death, no rest without nightmares and visions of death and, apparently, no way to escape.

There must be some way out of this curse, this pursuit if they can crack what the cause of it is then perhaps they will have a fighting chance to remove the curse and to preserve their lives.

Twist

The game commences when the characters, sharing a car, accidentally, partially through negligence, hit an old woman on the road. She curses them in Romany before expiring and that night their troubles begin to start. If they can survive long enough, find out who she is, track down her family and make proper amends then the curse may be lifted. Otherwise they are doomed as the curse grows more powerful and more intrusive night after night.

Twist

The curse stems from some artefact that the character's ancestors, fathers or grandfathers, disinterred from its proper burial place in years past. The curse crept up on their grandparents and their parents and now it is coming for them. The one who figured this out called them together to break the news but is, already, dead himself from a bizarre accident. They have what he has managed to glean about the artefact and what happened all those years ago and, with luck, that shall be enough information to put it right.

Twist

The characters are caught up in a situation where they are in a position to save lives. Doing so they spare an equal number of people from a horrible end, say at the hands of a fire. Congratulated and lauded as heroes they, rightly, feel good about themselves until they begin to feel the presence of the curse. The people they saved were intended to die, destined to die, by saving them they have interfered with the cosmic balance and now the universe is determined to take them instead, in lieu of the people they rescued.

Epilogue

Any curse that appears to be gone, that appears to be solved can still pop up again later on. Perhaps they didn't do something right, perhaps the cause of the curse doesn't care about their attempts to mollify it or to repent their sins or the sins of their fathers. It is best to come up with some reason why they did not stop the curse before or a reason for it to come back but the main thing, as with any sequel, is to build it up to be better, bigger, stronger and more wide ranging. Perhaps the curse begins to affect a larger area around them now, laying waste to the town or wherever they are staying, causing larger and more inescapable disasters in its increasingly desperate attempts to get them.

Idea

Final Destination is a good source of inspiration for the feel of the 'creeping doom' that stalks. Donnie Darko is also a good source of ideas regarding inevitability and the attempted defiance of fate.

Adventure 71

The Soulless Child

Description

A child born to a family in the big city is a little... strange, strange enough to concern the parents and to baffle conventional doctors who have finally thrown their hands up at the whole affair. Not strange enough for the parents to ignore though and so they turn to less traditional methods of looking into problems.

The child is unresponsive, barely communicative, has to be cajoled into doing anything and seems content to simply stare at the wall, considering only survival activities such as eating, sleeping, drinking and basic cleanliness as important. They refuse to play with other children and just seem to regard them with a sort of confused malice.

Many things have been suggested about what is wrong with the child from autism to some other manner of trauma but, while quiet, the child didn't arouse any real suspicion until they reached the usual age of independent running around and getting into things.

The truth of their problem is somewhat more sinister, the child has no soul.

Twist

The parents are members of a cult and the child has been specifically engineered through rites to be an empty vessel. Their attempts to get the child 'fixed' by psychology, medicine or other means have been a cover to present the proper image of concerned parents. The decision to go as far as parapsychology and other more outré ideas was one of arrogance that may lead to their downfall before the empty vessel is filled with their master.

Twist

There are only so many souls in the world and humanity's population has taken them all. The child has been born without a soul, without art, without compassion, without mercy, without any human qualities or fellow feeling. It is only a matter of time until they kill on reflex or some alien motivation that cannot be understood by normal humans. Plus, if the souls have run out, many more of these soulless children are born every minute.

Twist

By all reports the child used to be a perfectly normal infant, laughing, giggling and playing. The new behaviour only started once they began socialising with other children. Something has clearly happened in their exposure to other people at playschool. Someone or something there is some manner of soul-eater...

Epilogue

If there are only so many souls what if it is not so many souls at one time but so many souls ever? Every new birth from now, every new child as the last of the souls peter out will be a soulless husk devoid of fellow feeling and with a robotic, inhuman mentality that the dying race of soul-owning humans cannot comprehend. Played out over several games set several years apart this could create a horror campaign of a slowly decaying world becoming alien and dangerous around the characters in a far more insidious way than any zombie infestation could hope to touch.

Idea

Psychopathic and sociopathic behaviour is a good base to start describing the soulless from.

Adventure 72

Dance (Music) of Death

Description

An underground rave is being held in an abandoned building in one of the redevelopment areas of the city; completely free and, so far, not leaked to the police it promises to be a harkening back to the old days of illegal parties on a massive scale that challenged the status quo.

As the party-goers arrive the old brick warehouse is already lit up with lights and filled with the deafening beat, the DJ locked inside an improvised booth spinning the discs with skill, lights flashing, strobes filling the room with staccato light, the sound almost painful in its volume. Drugs seem to be everywhere, even being given away free. There are pills and tabs and less psychoactive substances all available to the enterprising drug connoisseur.

Then, after about enough time for the drugs to start to take effect the old, heavy doors of the building are closed, the music creeps higher and higher, louder and louder and bad things start to happen...

Twist

Many of the party goers are suddenly revealed to be other than they appeared to be, supernatural predators, killers, vampires or werewolves or something akin to those creatures. As the doors slam shut and the music intensifies they bare their teeth and claws and turn on the human party-goers in an orgy of destruction and feasting. The building is big though it is sealed, there are plenty of places for a scared person to hide and be stalked, trying to hold out until either the police arrives or the predators give up the scent.

Twist

There are always scare stories put out about drugs with some ridiculous claims, all designed to keep kids away from potentially dangerous substances, so long as they don't provide revenue for the government anyway. Some of the most idiotic talk about 'reefer madness' or people on LSD throwing themselves out of windows thinking they can fly. Unfortunately for our streetwise party-goers in this case some of the bullshit talked about certain drugs turns out to be true. A bad synthesis of whatever designer drug they're giving away has created something that induces violent and psychotic behaviour and hallucinations. A lot of people have been taking those pills. Oops.

Twist

Instead of a building the rave is being held deep in the countryside on some land claimed by new-age travellers. The dancers are really going all out but someone is moving amongst the crowd, all dressed in scarlet with UV make-up in the shape of a skull. Charming and yet unsettling they seem to know everything about everyone. Then people start to get ill, very ill, even dying and yet something is stopping the cars from starting or the ambulances from arriving...

Epilogue

The psychotic drug will eventually wear off but the trauma of what people have done under its influence will live with them forever. Something else that will live with them forever are minute amounts of the powerful substance locked into their body fat and brain chemistry causing 'flashbacks' of hallucinations and violent behaviour even years later. To make matters worse someone might be looking to recreate the drug and look who has it in their system with no easy way to get it out of them again...

Adventure 73

Voodoo That You Do So Well

Description

A chance encounter with a voodoo houngan downtown leads to upset on their part, jostled in the crowd and unknown by the players, not feared or respected by them he takes umbrage at their clumsiness, insulting them and escalating the situation growing more and more insulted at everything they say or do, be it ignoring him, apologising insincerely or anything else.

Once they are out of the area of the crazy and agitated houngan they can continue their life as normal, at least until strange things begin to happen to them, a single chance encounter changing the direction of their lives in a horrifying way they couldn't have expected.

Perhaps the only solution is to find the houngan and to make amends, but who knows what he might demand?

Twist

Within a day after the encounter with the houngan the pain begins, the wounds start appearing. Stabbing pains rushing right through them, blood welling from sudden wounds, searing heat painning their body leaving them sobbing and wracked with agony. They have fallen victim to the traditional voodoo doll, miniature replicas of them being tormented and agonised by the houngan over and over, day after day, exacting retribution for the slight he feels that they have done him.

Twist

The houngan is accomplished and respected in the downtown community which gives him access to all sorts of things that one might not otherwise be able to procure. With some effort he has managed to concoct, for his revenge, the infamous 'zombie' powder. With this he intends to poison these people who have crossed and disrespected him, appearing to kill them, digging them up once they are buried and putting them to work for him, trapped inside their own bodies, performing the most awful deeds in his name, unless they can break free.

Twist

The houngan is a powerful man with a great deal of control over the spirit world. The form of his revenge is the forced possession of the characters by several of the voodoo loa, a different loa and a different character each night. Each loa is powerful in a different way, capable of strange feats or of having strange knowledge, some dangerous to be possessed by and each quieted and sated by different things from a bottle of drink to a handful of grass.

Epilogue

The only way to lift the curse laid upon them by the houngan is to effectively apologise to him and make up their slight or insult to him, assuming they can find him. Should they find him they may well find that his price for lifting the curse that he has laid upon them is steep indeed. He has a rival houngan also operating in the downtown area, opposed to much that he does and he wants their operation, their respect and their power diminished slowly before his rival is finished off. If they can do such a thing, weathering curses from both sides and being pushed into evil acts to secure their freedom then, perhaps they will be freed, if he no longer finds them useful enough to keep.

Idea

A good web-search will turn up the names, associations, powers, histories and appearances of the various loa which can be used to great effect in one of the twists or simply to add some depth.

Adventure 74

Run Rabbit, Run

Description

The last thing you remember is having a drink in a bar or pub, then everything seems sort of hazy, right up until now when you awaken. The characters wake up in a derelict building, laid out on mattresses and straw, heads thrumming from whatever was used to drug them. Strangely, and perhaps humiliatingly they also seem to have been dressed up in fun-fur rabbit suits, the zippers glued shut and a tough layer of fabric underneath to stop them easily cutting or tearing at the fabric.

None of them seem to know each other and there doesn't seem to be any real connection between them but they are not given long to get to know each other before a hunting horn sounds and a pursuit begins, dogs, huntsmen, they are hounded across the urban landscape, hunted down to be killed...

Twist

The hunt takes place across the city, through the crowds and the buildings which carry on as though the people in the bunny suits do not even exist. They are ignored, no matter what they do, nobody will help them, talk to them, aid or deny them in any way and it is as though they are not even there. The hunt, however, can see them perfectly well and is in hot pursuit, tearing through the crowds and crushing anyone who gets in their way, also without being noticed.

Twist

The hunters are never seen, invisible killers that are not so much as glimpsed by the hunted though their horns can be heard blaring and the mutilated remains of those killed and dragged away by the dogs are found, evidence that they are there. Only the huge, spectral hounds of evil aspect are seen, claws scraping concrete and huge muscled bodies flexing as they pound after the 'rabbits'.

Twist

The whole town is in on the hunt, a holdover from pagan days long ago, a ritual intended to keep the town wealthy and to ensure good crops and healthy animals. The people are raised, isolated here, steeped in superstition and the fear of the influential people of the town who enjoy these hunts. People are harvested from across the country and brought to the town for the yearly hunt. The people of the town do their best to ignore the 'rabbits', interfering in the hunt is a grave affront to the hunters, however you interfere.

Epilogue

Survivors, 'winners', are kept in the town and feted by the huntsmen who reward them with everything they could desire for their ability in escaping their clutches. For a year they are wined, dined and rewarded though they are kept under a sort of 'town arrest' by the people of the town, not allowed to leave, for a year so they say. This is because in a year another hunt is formed and this time the survivors have earned their place in it. Their participation in the practice is intended to ensure their silence when they are allowed to leave the town since they have participated in the slaughter.

Idea

This scenario may well run best as a stand-alone with no rhyme or reason behind the hunt or the costumes. It's surreal quality only enhanced by having no explanation and creating a perfectly alien atmosphere of surrealism.

Idea

Research a little on the dress and methods of real hunts, especially hunting with dogs.

Adventure 75

Evolutionary

Description

A meteorite falls from the sky containing strange goo. It falls not so far from the homes of the characters and as it breaks free of the meteor and drools against the grass it begins to undergo a change, drawing on the genetic material of the grass and altering itself, adapting to this planet's ecosphere and growing.

Before too long incidents start to be reported of missing pets, missing people and peculiar things seen at the edge of town. The town is about to be laid siege to by altered and absorbed creatures as well as amalgams of the missing animals and people, their own familiar friends and family turned into nightmarish hybrids that seek only to wipe out any opposing organisms.

Twist

The substance was unintelligent until it absorbed a human intellect and now it acts with all the precision, cunning and vindictiveness of the human psyche. It contains the memories and thoughts of those it has absorbed but not their conscience or restraint and aspects of the creature begin to act out the petty revenges of those it has taken into it in what may well seem like random destructive behaviour. Strange mutations of man, plant and animal mixed together are spawned constantly from the meteor site, metabolising quickly, growing strong and moving outwards, spreading the influence of the goo and bringing back new genetic samples for it to grow its knowledge.

Twist

The goo is capable of deliberately re-encoding the DNA of its creations, spawning new creatures adapted to whatever is thrown against it by the panicked townsfolk. Fire will lead to thick, heat-resistant hide, physical attacks to thick bone plates and leathery armour. Every attack makes the horrific mutations stronger and more capable of taking on the human race, no matter what they throw at it.

Twist

The goo is a terraformer, a tool, designed to reconfigure the earth into a more suitable habitat for whoever sent it. Having absorbed a critical mass of earthlife DNA it begins to alter it, creating plants and animals designed to alter the atmosphere and makeup of the planet. The meteor impact point becomes poisonous to earthlife and its area of effect begins to spread. Close in to the impact point strange alien creatures are being birthed to populate the 'landing site' with familiar organisms, many of which will appear horrific to humans.

Epilogue

The meteor that landed near the home of the characters needn't be the only meteor that has landed and the fight back may not have gone so well everywhere else. Using the same, or new characters the action can shift to an infested cityscape, slowly growing more alien as the extraterrestrial encrustations appear, warping the buildings, covering them like kudzu, strange and alien beings stalking the streets picking off the human survivors and whatever resistance shows itself. Abandoned and cordoned off as a lost cause the survivors in the city are tracked and picked off one by one unless they can counterattack somehow.

Idea

The computer games *Half-Life* and *Half-Life 2* can provide some good ideas for the atmosphere of such a game as well as some effective ideas for the imagery of any alien monstrosities.

Idea

Symbiotic and parasitical creatures in nature provide inspiration for some of the most alien creatures.

Adventure 76

Vengeful Ghosts

Description

Prominent gangsters are being killed off one by one in what appear to be executions and gangland revenge murders. What makes the case unusual for the team of investigators (the players) is that there are no signs of forced entry and there is no physical evidence. Not a hair, not a skin scraping, not even a bullet or a casing though several of those executed appear to have been shot.

As the murders progress pressure is applied upon the team to get to the bottom of whatever is going on swiftly and quickly before the police department is made to look completely incompetent or the criminal fraternity gets too jumpy and out of hand.

What is really behind the murders, is it the ghosts of the dead, of past indiscretions as some of the underworld gangsters are beginning to believe?

Twist

The executioners are a small group of ghosts, the unquiet spirits of gangsters betrayed and shot dead by those they are now systematically killing. They might be wraiths, able to walk through walls and cause ghostly manifestations, but when they manifest physically they have strength and substance, albeit it pale and translucent. Their guns will fire and will kill as surely as any bullet but they are mere extensions of the vengeful spirit's soul. Any solution will not be found in the physical, only the spiritual world can truly hold any answers to ending the rampage.

Twist

The vengeful ghost is a possessor, taking over the host's body and struggling with them for control until they manage to force the victim to kill themselves with their own weapons or by throwing themselves to their doom. The ghost has become bitter and deeply cynical, empowered to stay by its own hatred and obsession. The spirit may well try to exact more of its revenge by taking over one of the team and using them to perform the remaining murders.

Twist

There are no ghosts, just a group of stone cold, very efficient killers who take time and pains to clean up every scrap of evidence. They are a cold hearted group of sociopaths, hired posthumously by one of the dead in their will to take revenge for them. To retain a supernatural and horrific twist you can have them have been actually hired by the spectral voice of the dead over the phone. Something that will come up as the investigation is 'concluded'.

Epilogue

Something causes at least one of the ghosts to persist in this world. Its body, its link to the land of the living retained and controlled by one of the gang bosses who maintained an interest in the supernatural. Now that singular ghost is under his control, the perfect, undetectable hit man, operating for him against his rivals, bound by control of the corpse. The characters can be either the same police squad, brought in again to examine this fresh case or members of another criminal syndicate, suffering the attentions of the wraithly hit man.

Idea

Steeping the story in the history and culture of one of the ethnic organised crime syndicates will increase the power of the story, especially if oriental or Jamaican culture is used.

Adventure 77

Groovy Baby, Just Groovy

Description

It is the late 1960's and the characters are guests at a ritzy party in the Hollywood hills. Rich, successful and soft they are actors and actresses, directors, politicians, musicians, they and their fellow party-goers sucking down the rich rewards of their wealth and influence in caviar and champagne form.

The house is large, all but a mansion with large grounds and endless rooms as well as a private security guard and his dog. The house appears secure, safe and the party is as lively and free as any at this time. Something dark is about to happen though.

The vanguard of the darker side of the counterculture revolution is about to come calling, a gang of scraggly and wild-eyed hippies and bikers, hopped up on drugs and fired up by their cult leaders inspiring speeches to them, telling them how the world will change. Now they have been told to make it change and what better way to start than by cutting out the cancer that is 'The Man'.

Twist

The hippy guru walks amongst his armed followers making pronouncements as the great and the good are hauled before him and executed. Overhearing some of what he is spouting the players can be treated to his semi-accurate predictions of the coming decades while the characters should dismiss it all. He has determined that the people in this house must die to safeguard the revolution, but who are the other guests and what are their secrets?

Twist

The hippy cult are occultists of some sort and have some minor magickal gifts up their sleeves which can come into play before the disbelieving glitterati witnesses. The leader especially appears to have some sort of mesmeric power over the others, his every word hung on by them and obeyed without question. Perhaps he is the key to securing an escape from what has become a slaughterhouse.

Twist

The aim of the killers is to awaken something primal deep down inside those rich and privileged trapped inside the building at the cost of their own lives if necessary. By reminding these people of their fragility and humanity the cult hopes to influence people in power. To that end they intend to subject them to the worst horrors, rape, murder, torture, to make them fight for their survival and to remind them what it means to strive, to struggle, to be human.

Epilogue

Many, many years later, even in modern times, a repeat of the slaying takes place this time mixed up with more modern countercultural ideas and styles. Nonetheless something attracts the attentions of the now-aging survivors of the original atrocity and it would appear that the same cult leader is somehow behind these new slayings though that is impossible with him rotting in prison or dead, isn't it?

Idea

Charles Manson and The Family are obvious inspiration for this scenario, albeit given different twists. An examination of the how and why of what they did and Manson's charisma will improve the scenario.

Idea

To mix in a bit of *Scanners* the cult can be 'psychic Aquarians', power awakened by LSD and meditation.

Adventure 78

Puppet on a String

Description

Old Mr Castle was an entertainer and a puppeteer for years. He crafted his own toys, sold his designs and put on shows year in year out, made monster effects for Hollywood and was known and liked by any who met him. Long into his retirement he continued to work on his puppets, lacking children of his own he put more and more effort into his personal creations, delighting in them and performing with them right up until the day he died.

Mr Castle harboured a secret though. He hated children, he obsessed over his dolls, never marrying, never having kids of his own, no family, just puppets and dolls and creature workshops. He loathed them even though he put on a happy face and did what was needed to entertain them and then, at home, back in his workshop he built toys of his darker fantasies, twisted mannequins and dolls that looked like death.

Now he is dead, leaving no real will. His house, full of his toys has been bought by a family, they and their friends being the characters. The house is still filled with his old puppets, dolls and personal effects though, some of them more sinister than others...

Twist

The house was his greatest creation, altered over the many years he was there with all his puppeteering and special effects knowledge. It is riddled with secrets and tricks and other unusual things that would go unnoticed to most people. The whole house is a 'puppet' of sorts and now possessed by one of the greatest puppeteers who, now he is beyond the veil, has no reason to hold back on his hatreds and ambitions. Now he controls the house and the family will be his new puppets, physically or emotionally.

Twist

The puppeteer's spirit remains sunken into the house that was his only secure retreat for so long. His rest disturbed by the arrival of the new family and... children. The grotesque menagerie of vile, imaginary, killer puppets that he created as his release over his lifetime still remain in the house though, hidden. Animated by his wraithly will they could be an instrument to drive the family from his house or to kill them.

Twist

The puppets have gained a twisted sort of life of their own, missing their master who gave them such devotion. Hiding away in the hidden areas of the house and the attic they set about 'repairing' him. They exhume the body and restore it to the house, in the attic, and set about fixing him with primitive devotion. If he is broken then he needs fixing with new parts, like when a puppet or toy breaks and where can they find replacement parts? Even worse, what if they succeed?

Epilogue

The puppets that he made have been collected and used by others over the years and exist in private collections, prop vaults and all manner of other places. Any one of these could provide a refuge for him once the problems or puppets at the house have been taken care of. Seeking a fresh haven for his mind and spirit he gravitates to another collection of his puppets, continuing where he left off.

Idea

Collections of puppets or dolls are always sinister, even in and of themselves. This provides a good backdrop and hiding place for the killer puppets who should, perhaps, be themed on their weapons and style.

Adventure 79

The Closet

Description

Little Timmy Coppen is an altogether unremarkable child apart from his night terrors and his overactive imagination. He sees wonder and monsters everywhere and in everything but nothing grabs and holds the power of his imagination more than the closet or under the bed when it is time to go asleep. Timmy is scared to sleep because the bogeyman might get him.

This is normally cured easily enough with a nightlight, leaving the door ajar, extra soft toys or a comfort blanket. Not for Timmy though, none of this worked and he was left still in mortal terror of the bogeyman who he just knew was waiting for the right moment to strike.

Where things take a nastier turn is at the point where Timmy's father decided to spend a night in Timmy's room just so that they could both get a decent night's sleep. Mr Coppen is now missing, presumed dead from the amount of his blood found around the door of the closet...

Twist

Timmy is a latent psychic of some power, similar to the poltergeist phenomena often associated with young girls. His fears are manifesting from his imagination and his night terrors, powerful and strong and able to harm others while only being able to hurt Timmy by scaring him. Now traumatised by seeing the death of his own father at the hands of something he imagined Timmy has gone somewhat catatonic, his imaginings and terrors growing stronger, 'infecting' the world around him and slowly growing stronger.

Twist

Timmy's bogeymen are real, creatures hiding in the shadows and the corners waiting to strike at exactly the right moment, known only to them. They can sense interlopers and can normally only be seen or felt by children, animals or those with some small empathic talent. Timmy's father could sense them, crudely, and was an impediment to their 'harvesting' of Timmy, the time for which grows nearer and nearer as his terror reaches fever pitch night after night.

Twist

The real reasons for Timmy's terrors are the abuses of his parents, his father being the worst physical abuser, his mother being more of a psychological abuser. At kindergarten he is bullied by the other children and in all ways he appears to be one of life's natural born victims. Timmy however has a guardian to look after him. Be it a force, a creature or something deep within himself it is starting to lash out at those who have hurt or tormented him, starting with his father and spreading to the others who have done him wrong or evil...

Epilogue

Timmy grows up, puts the past behind him, even changes his name as he is moved away and settled in with a nice foster family somewhere. Still bullied and picked on he keeps himself under control and applies himself to his studies right up until he reaches puberty. Within a couple of years girls suddenly seem important and putting up with the daily humiliations and bullying doesn't seem like a good way to get a girl's attention. The problems start again, this time with him willing them on and things have gotten far more deadly and sophisticated.

Idea

Mix and match the last twist with another one to make a grey area so far as the true evil is concerned.

Adventure 80

In Perpetuity

Description

A select group of people have become immortal through one means or another. In exchange for this immortality they have made a 'devil's deal' of some sort, keeping the organisation and its members secret and performing certain unsavoury tasks for the cabal of immortals from time to time.

The only thing that can kill the immortals is one of their own or the source of their immortality. Otherwise they can be grotesquely harmed in any of a vast number of ways and still come back. Still, the destruction of one of their number, a traitor to the rest, has been performed somewhat more publicly than some of their other executions with the pursued suffering a number of mass traumas in their attempt to escape before being felled quite easily by one of their own number.

The cabal has a considerable amount of temporal power, enough to get these events all but squashed in the news and in official eyes. For one reason or another, the characters retain their own interest and determination to get to the bottom of it.

Twist

The immortals stem from a single progenitor, a man who was simply born immortal and whose blood contains whatever factor it is that enables him to regenerate, to live without corruption of the information in his cells. This blood can be used in a small transfusion to awaken the same ability in others and, if they have already been transfused it can then cause that new protection to break down once again, killing them suddenly and unpleasantly like rapid aging. The original immortal appears to have no weaknesses himself though the blood of any transformed immortal can be used to kill each other...

Twist

The immortality stems from a genuine devil's pact made with a real devil. The cabal recruit and maintain their own organisation but in exchange for their immortality they must pay a tithe in souls and suffering of humanity. As captains of industry, software magnates, influential media figures and powerful economists they advise world leaders and influence policy and economics to bring more and more unfairness and pain into the world as well as a more traditional tithe of souls, all to retain their own permanence.

Twist

The immortality stems from a traditional occult source such as vampirism, mystical embalming or sorcery. It is not that members of the cabal are the only ones that can destroy each other; it is more simply that only other members of the cabal know the proper methods of destruction. The cabal are tight knit and well practised at destroying any threat to their existence. That includes the players.

Epilogue

Any cabal that they destroy or expose might be just one from a worldwide conspiracy. Any initial breakthrough will soon turn to ashes and then the attentions of the larger, stronger and more international cabal will be turned upon them.

Idea

The horror in this scenario is in the lengths that people will go to in order to get and keep something they really want, even at the expense of others. The more visceral horror comes in the ability of the immortals to keep on going regardless what is attempted to destroy them, however grievous the wounds.

Adventure 81

Possession Is 9/10ths of the Law

Description

Maria Delray is not as she should be, the doctors believe it to be a mental illness and have prescribed drugs, drugs that don't seem to be working. She is blank eyed, twisted by convulsions, sickly and her skin has an unhealthy pallor. What is even worse are some of the things she is saying, strange, insulting or terrible things uttered in voices and languages which aren't hers.

In desperation her parents have turned to the characters for help, be they religious figures, parapsychologists or friends of the family. The parents have nowhere else to turn and Maria needs help. Perhaps they can discover what is truly wrong with her and make amends.

If they can end the possession.

Twist

The force possessing Maria Delray is a traditional Judeo-Christian demon. A force or imp from the depths of hell, risen up to take her body and her soul for its own ends, to use and abuse it as it sees fit. As a denizen of hell it has access to the lost souls of the pit and their knowledge, friends and family of those who might try to help Maria as well as the knowledge and power of the hierarchy of hell. The creature exists to spread misery, violence and to corrupt and twist Maria's body through it's possession, causing her harm and causing her family to lose hope.

Twist

The possessing force in Maria is a ghost, or rather a host of ghosts. Maria is a natural medium, witchery runs in her family though it has skipped her mother, and she has not yet learned any control over her talents. Ghosts however have discovered that she is an open channel to sensation, to existence and to communication and are flooding her, tussling with each other for control of her body. To release her the ghosts must be driven away and she must learn control.

Twist

Maria and family only recently moved to this area and Maria never wanted to. She misses her friends, hates the kids of her new neighbourhood and feels lost and alone, keeping all her unhappiness bottled up and pushed down inside to avoid upsetting her mother and father. All that pent up teenage emotion needs some outlet though and she also craves attention. All of this pent up energy has found its release in a 'fake' possession, a manifestation of latent psychokinetic power and talent ripping through her body in an attempt to let out all the hurt and loneliness and to be the centre of attention once more.

Epilogue

Possession can reoccur later in life, the person rendered vulnerable by their previous exposure to it though the demon need not be the same one that possessed the person the first time around and shall be wise to any tricks that were used before. A second manifestation is likely to be more powerful, more deadly and more terrifying than the first with the possessing creature being far more likely to manifest a greater degree of power.

Idea

The Exorcist is an obvious source to draw upon for inspiration and mood as are similar works of film and several novels. Reading up on 'genuine' cases of possession where the Catholic church has become involved can provide useful insights as can investigations into mediums and voodoo loa.

Adventure 82

The 8th Sin

Description

People who can get anything they want rapidly become bored and jaded. There is no challenge to their lives, they can engage in almost any depravity and get away with it, nothing tests them, nothing is denied, anything is possible to the super-rich and powerful.

A particularly powerful and jaded group has formed a little club called '8'. Their purpose to find new vistas of experimentation and depravity that tantalises their jaded senses and their retarded morality, something to provide a new thrill.

Experimenting with the outer limits of foul behaviour and deep sexual and moral perversity leaves victims, victims of rape, of murder, of cannibalism and even of extreme body modification surgery. The perpetrators are protected by money, social convention, power and a massive array of lawyers. There is no recourse in the courts, any revenge or justice will have to come from elsewhere.

Twist

In order to get close to '8' the characters will have to prove their worth, faking their wealth or taking donations and money from the families of the victims to make it more convincing and living the role of jaded and cynical successful individuals seeking a new thrill. To get into the inner circle they will have to indulge in the sickening depravities that this insane cult delves into becoming what they are seeking to destroy in some, small part.

Twist

As they close in upon the cult and discover more and more disturbing truths about what they get up to the characters discover the true extent of their membership. They discover that '8' has a member of the British royal family and several important politicians amongst their number. If they fall from public grace then the effect on countries, on the world will be considerable. Is personal vengeance for evil deeds worth the greater cost to many?

Twist

The sin, the thing, the act of depravity that gives this group their unique frisson of excitement is the corruption of others, the damning of the innocent. The circumstances, the investigations all of it has been carefully constructed and put together in order to lead the characters down the dark spiral into their world, to corrupt them and to force them to indulge in the dark.

Epilogue

'8' can have many chapters and groups, even within the same city made up of the same sort of jaded rich playboys and society girls looking for thrills. The encounter with one group can have left the characters dark and corrupted and a second story involving the group can involve an attempted redemption by the tainted characters against a backdrop of deeper corruption provided by '8'.

Idea

Truly exploring the dark and depraved depths of '8's' behaviour can require some distasteful research into the areas of extreme fetish and depravity. Don't be afraid to use 'fade to black' if scenes become too much to stomach.

Idea

If running games based in a *Hellraiser* type setting '8' are a perfect group to get mixed up with the box.

Adventure 83

As The Wyrms Turns

Description

To the far north of Britain, only really nominally part of the United Kingdom, lies the island of Killian. With a culture half derived from the Scots and half from the Vikings the only industries on Killian are sheep farming and fishing. The population of only a few hundred all work in these industries or in Killian's small school.

Now something is threatening this cold, bleak and wind-lashed island and both its industries and its people. Sheep are going missing; the fishing yield is down somewhat and not only that, two fishing boats have gone missing without trace.

All of this is relayed by a fisherman despatched by the island to take their grievances to the mainland and to seek help, Killian lacking both an army or police presence. The fisherman also makes a few guarded references to some sort of creature in the sea.

The characters are investigators and representatives of the authorities sent to investigate, or cryptozoologists intent on investigating the truth behind any rumours about the 'beastie'.

Twist

The beast and the incidents have been falsified by the islanders to draw attention to the other plight of their island, the ravages of climate change which are slowly but surely killing off the native plant life, making the weather worse, eroding the shore and driving away the fish. They intend to use the publicity to make people see these problems and then help them with them or, at the very least, to get some kind of government or insurance based aid for the problems they have lied about. If they are found out they could get murderous to protect their secret.

Twist

Warming in the area has warmed the seas just enough for some prehistoric sea creatures who floated in suspended animation near the island for an age to reanimate and wake up, though the still-cold (to them) water means that they need to devour a disproportionate amount of food in order to stay active. These creatures, which could be plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs or other, similar creatures have depleted the fish stocks and dragged down the fishing boats, even snatching sheep from the shore when they stray too close.

Twist

The islanders are cultists, still worshipping dark, ancient gods of the sea. The problem is merely a ruse to bring suitable sacrifices that they can prepare, corrupt, mislead and finally offer up in sacrifice to the grotesque fish god that dwells in the icy depths near the rocky island, guaranteeing their fishing and prosperity and granting them blessings.

Epilogue

If one creature, god or monstrosity exists beneath the waves near Killian then why not others? Any proof of such creatures will be rigorously questioned and more evidence will be required. Sufficient evidence to start with will bring enough funding to investigate however and those who sink beneath the waves with searchlights seeking out the truth of the creatures of the sea around this island may find more than they bargained on.

Idea

Good dinosaur books will have a section on sea life which you can mercilessly raid for ideas.

Adventure 84

Get a Job

Description

Some people are out on the street because they have run away from their families, either because of stupid dreams of success in the city that don't work out or because of abusive family situations. Others are on the street because of out of control addiction and the havoc that that wreaks on a normal life and existence. Still others are homeless because they lack any skills, any way to get money and have been bankrupted or otherwise rendered incapable of financially looking after themselves.

Others however are on the street because they are hiding, because they have secrets or because they are keeping something safe. Perhaps they are so powerful they just don't care about the material world in the same way that others do. Whatever the case they are far more interesting, and dangerous, than your average hobo.

Twist

The homeless man that the characters run into is a powerful magician who no longer feels any need for connection or participation in the world. While ragged he is also an immortal of sorts, a magician who steals identities from his victims crafting them into a false image in order to fool death. Their chance encounter with this dangerous identity thief leads to strangeness, nobody remembering who the characters are, even their friends and family, with the magician stalking them, to kill them and finally free up their bound souls for him to give to a blind death in place of himself.

Twist

The homeless man is the guardian of some manner of binding that ties unnatural forces into place and safeguards them against escape. Their prison could be a box, a puzzle, a string of knots or the man's body itself. Beaten almost to death by young thugs he implores the characters who find him to recapture the escaped forces or creatures, teaching them the way in which he bound them once before and how he wandered to keep the world safe. The forces or creatures are powerful and irredeemably evil and wreak terror and havoc on the area until they are sealed away once more.

Twist

The crazy old hobo is a wandering monster hunter and he has tracked some great evil to the home town of the characters. He is too old and weak to take it on alone though so he goes about convincing and recruiting them to help him attack whatever it is he has found there. Of course, nobody else will believe him or them and he may well mysteriously disappear before the final confrontation. Perhaps he is both hunter and hunted...?

Epilogue

Any epilogue could move into an investigation of the mystical side of life on the street, the hardship, the secret places away from the public eye, the tunnels, byways and forgotten buildings of the urban landscape, a whole occult underground of the forgotten and the people and creatures that prey upon them. In investigating this new world the characters do not fully become a part of it, having lives and money as they do, though they may well immerse themselves enough to attract the attention of some powerful individuals or predatory creatures.

Idea

Neverwhere carries some obvious ideas that can be used in approaching the mystical and the homeless as does *American Gods* also by Neil Gaiman.

Idea

For an exotic feel the game can be taken to a place like Rio with a different type of homeless.

Adventure 85

Deja Vu

Description

One of the group, who should be friends, colleagues or otherwise know each other in some way, is starting to be afflicted with nightmares and hallucinations, visions. At first these seem to be merely horrid imaginings of murder, torture, fires and deaths that are disturbing, but harmless. Then one of these visions comes true in the most appalling fashion.

Faced with the sudden fact that the visions depict real and terrible events they have a choice to do something about them or to let them happen while their friend receives all the painful imagery and feelings in living Technicolor right inside their brain.

Ridicule and suspicion await them if their secret is revealed, along with other, unsavoury complications.

Twist

The visions are not visions so much as projections. Dark fantasies that the character's subconscious is now transmitting out into the real world and is making happen. This will not be immediately obvious but the evidence should slowly mount up, no reason for the killer's behaviour, no obvious source of the fire, no known terrorists involved in any bombing until the penny finally drops and the characters have to come to terms with the fact that they are not heroes after all, but the cause. Unable to stop their friend's imaginings coming true.

Twist

Most of the visions are 'transmissions' from the powerful, panicked minds of the victims or terrorised in these attacks and events. Their psychic chains smashed temporarily apart in their psychic cries for help, deliverance or assistance, somehow permeating back through time to be sensed by the one 'blessed' with the visions. After a time some different visions start to appear, transmissions from a murderer, coming out live to the seer rather than from the future. The killer even knows this and is seeking to wear down the seer, this as much of the thrill to them as the kills.

Twist

Every death and disaster they prevent fate finds a way to inflict upon them instead in some way, or to try to. The balance of the universe has to be restored and by messing with time ad saving or sparing others they are knocking the cosmic wheel off balance. These 'backlashes' of fate grow incrementally more serious and powerful until they threaten to sweep up others along with the characters.

Epilogue

A good epilogue is to reverse the role of the seer, to have them become the villain of the piece. A flamboyant serial killer who is able to predict how and where they would get caught in order to get away with as much as they can, covering up for themselves perfectly. Only those with some suspicion of the true nature of the perpetrator may stand any chance of capturing him.

Idea

A clairvoyant killer with clear sight can allow themselves to be captured, knowing the perfect moment to escape or how to lay the perfect ambush, to take advantage of the seemingly random events and consequences of any given action to throw people off the scent or to take the advantage.

Idea

The visions could be painful ordeals as in *Angel* or more interactive closer to those in *The Dead Zone*.

Adventure 86

What the Hell?

Description

The last thing you saw was the glaring headlights of the truck, you remember feeling the impact but now, as you awaken into the bright white light you assume you must have survived, that this is a hospital.

You're wrong.

There are other people around you, also slowly getting up and looking equally dazed. Radiant golden light fills the area, puffy white cloud and people with wings helping you up. No, not a hospital.

Unfortunately for you and for a few others, the other players, St Peter seems to think you weren't nice enough, good enough, saintly enough people in life or that you never truly accepted Jesus. Horror of horrors he hands you some Jack Chick leaflets and dispatches your little group to the express elevator, straight to hell.

What horrors await you there and don't you get a second chance? Stupid God...

Twist

The characters have all been involved in a massive car accident on a motorway; all of them are really, seriously injured and are hanging between life and death. The hell that they are in is a consensual hallucination, a near death experience that they are sharing due to the immediate proximity of the time and place of the harm that has come to them. If they can stand the trials of the hallucinatory hell and face their sins, find a way free from the horrors there then they will return to their bodies and come to. Otherwise they will die.

Twist

This is the real, genuine hell where these lost souls are set to face horrors and their worst fears over and over again for all eternity. Given the state of the world at the moment however, hell is rather crowded and the demonic staff somewhat overworked giving ample opportunity to get away, leading a merry chase across the underworld through the levels of hell and people's personal nightmares, trying to escape.

Twist

Where they are certainly appears to be the pit of Hades but the demons are specially hired and made up sadists, given license to run free with their peculiar tastes upon those in their charge. Others are masochists, still others are dupes, like the characters, brought here and subjected to it as the operators attempt to instill the belief in them that it is hell. Their remaining wounds and the slow accretion of clues may fill them in otherwise, slowly...

Epilogue

Those is hell might be brought back to the land of the living by talented occultists, forced to do their will in the world and yet pursued by the forces of hell that wish them back. Caught between their desire to experience a life without suffering again and the evil deeds they are being forced to do, as well as the forces of hell, how does their morality guide them and is this a slim hope for redemption?

Idea

A classical hell such as Dante's Inferno may no longer thrill or threaten modern, non-superstitious players or their characters. You may have to go for a more post-modern approach with more appropriate tortures, tasks or ordeals for the damned to endure.

Adventure 87

The Crows Are Scared & So Should You Be

Description

The fields go on forever and ever, the waving fronds of grain looking like ocean waves as they sway back and forth in the winds, whispering, the only sound for miles. In these massive factory fields people are only seen for planting, ploughing, harvest and spraying. Otherwise the fields stand silent and alone, nobody for miles.

The fields do have guardians though, figures put there by tradition to scare away the crows and other foul things that might affect the crops both natural and unnatural. Some of these scarecrows are still made with the old craft and still have some of the knack and power of the old ways.

Woe betide anyone who trespasses in these fields who isn't welcomed or invited because the scarecrow may well take exception to them...

Twist

The crop-duster lost power and went down in the middle of the field of maize. Wrecked and without a radio it went down so fast there was no opportunity to send out a distress call. The last spray of the day the sun is now beginning to set; you're not any taller than the stalks and cannot see over them to get your bearings. Still, the edge of the field has to be somewhere doesn't it? Whatever is moving through the field cannot really offer you any harm...

Twist

The UFO society is hosting an outing to scout for crop circles. Out deep in the empty farmland you stop your minibus and head out into the field to examine a large formation flattening crops in a large, complex geometric pattern. Having finished poking about in the field you discover that the minibus won't start again and something is interfering with phone signals. Then something starts to stalk you, attempting to take out those who have trespassed on the land...

Twist

The scarecrow is the residence of a spirit that feeds on fear, manifesting visions and apparitions of those things that scare people the most. Most of the year it survives on the little fears of crows and other animals but at harvest time it gives little frights to the crews that come to reap the corn. This year has been a bad one for birds and, if it can scare someone to death, all the better. It is that hungry, hungry enough to sabotage the harvesters and bring the farmers' worst fears to life.

Epilogue

Returning to the area at a later date with reporters to talk to about their story, even if it is just the national enquirer, they find mysterious people from the surrounding farms erecting a new scarecrow. Of course, to bond this one to the land like the previous one, to give it power they need to give it life, the life of an appropriate sacrifice so that it can protect the land again.

Idea

With the UFO sighting party coming out you could add a comedy element by having the team stumble across the crashed saucer with slain or scared to death grey aliens scattered about it, victims of the scarecrow.

Idea

There are plenty of rural legends and superstitions about scarecrows as well as the dummies that are burned on bonfires. You can round out your game by using elements from these stories.

Adventure 88

Claiming Asylum

Description

The Dawes House is a private mental institution catering to the rich and the noble whose actions and peculiarities have finally taken them beyond the realm of eccentric and on to the status of truly mad. While secure and privately guarded the facility boasts great leisure facilities and the best medical care money, or privilege can buy.

From washed up rock stars to politicians, from lords and ladies to the neurotic children of the idle rich, not everyone here is actually insane, many just want to pay for the attention. Others who are locked up in here are placed here by their families, either in the hopes they'll get better or act more civilly, or to hide them away from the public gaze behind bars and guards and an army of lawyers, not to mention doctor/patient confidentiality.

What happens in The Dawes House stays in The Dawes House, that's an unwritten rule of proceedings here, but sometimes things happen that cannot be so easily contained by conventional means...

Twist

The Dawes House is where people are sent to be quietly 'disappeared', either by their parents, their husbands or wives or their sons and daughters. Here inconvenient impediments to succession, inheritance and other issues can be shut out of the way and, after a suitable build up and intermission, disposed of. The doctors and nurses here take on a sinister aspect late at night, stalking the corridors and seeking out the next readied victim to be quietly killed or to be lead into a contrived accident.

Twist

One of the tenants is a disturbed boy of noble blood. He is kept in solitary, always, his violent and dangerous hallucinations mean he needs to be force fed and kept in a straitjacket. No treatment, no drug seems to work. He is locked up inside himself unable to get free. The characters are aspects of his psyche; The Dawes House is his mind. If they can escape from its increasingly nightmarish interior, then he will be sane.

Twist

The founder of The Dawes House was a visionary and a Mason, the building built according to strict principles of sacred geometry. No mind that has died here has ever escaped The Dawes House; all become one part of the house's over-mind. This mind is a conglomerated bedlam of voices and insanities, a psychic vortex that has grown in power as the founder of the house wished. Fearing the end of the world as predicted by ancient civilisations in 2010 and wishing to live forever himself he died here, he collected these minds and now the bedlam is collecting the rest, ready for the final push into a new, safe reality.

Epilogue

Perhaps absorbed by the bedlam over-mind the characters find themselves locked in a crazy, Alice-In-Wonderland world made up of the delusions of all of those poor madmen and neurotics who have died in The Dawes House over the last century-and-a-half. An ever shifting haven of madness everything is mutable here reduced to a contest of wills, full of horror and wonders and things that make no sense whatsoever but there might, perhaps be some way out of it.

Idea

The film *The Cell* while lacking in many aspects contains some good ideas and images to use for mindscapes or the interior of bedlam.

Adventure 89

A Wicked Child?

Description

James Royce is a child born into privilege with not a care, want or problem in the world aside from being somewhat spoiled. Until recently that is. Over the past few weeks he has, at his parent's estate, been receiving hate mail of the most threatening kind along with strange occult and religious rantings about the child about which the police and the family can make neither head nor tail.

The characters are experts or members of the police assigned to protect the boy and investigate what these strange rantings mean, whether the people sending them are likely to do more and to protect the boy from any interference or harm. Given that the people that they are up against are fanatics their odds do not look particularly good.

As time wears on the threats become pleas and the pleas then become dangerous, leading up to attacks. Who are these people, why do they hate James so much and how far will they go to harm him?

Twist

Those after James believe him to be the Antichrist, born onto earth to bring the destruction of man, born into a wealthy family of power and influence once he comes of age he will be able to broker that influence into more and greater temporal power, enough to ruin the world. The fanatics who are after him are a coalition of the convinced, recipients of strange visions of his terrible future or who have been convinced by those who have seen. A strange alliance of many different sects of the Christian faith, all determined to see him destroyed before he brings an end to all. If, indeed, they are anything more than delusional fanatics.

Twist

Those who are arranged against the child are a loose affiliation of the darker end of the occult community, though, in some games, they may have access to actual powers of some description. They believe, through their workings and the words of spirits they have manifested, that James is Christ, reborn again to the earth in preparation for Judgement. Attached to the mortal, temporal world they seek to destroy the child before he awakens to who and what he is to avert Judgement and to serve whatever devils and demons they call master.

Twist

James' family were members of a dark cult at one point in their past. A cult where members offered up their first born as sacrifices to the entity they were worshipping in exchange for power. Receiving the power from the sacrifice of others the Royce family made their fortune but, when Mrs Royce fell pregnant they fled and built themselves a fortified home to protect their son. Now the cult has come calling for their due...

Epilogue

Surviving these attempts on his life James will grow and develop into whatever he is supposed to be, be it heaven or hell's emissary. As he awakens to his nature stranger events will begin to unfold around him and his enemies will turn upon him once again. The same characters could be called upon to interpret the attacks and to defend him and they could be the final chance to help him survive, or to destroy him and spare the world.

Idea

The Omen provides obvious inspiration and ideas for such a game but there are subtexts to the premise that can be interesting. Is someone born inherently evil or can they be redeemed? What is the difference between Christ and the Antichrist if the presence of either brings about the end of the world?

Adventure 90

Spiders-A-Go-Go

Description

Obrash Agriculture is a leading company in the race for non-toxic solutions for pest control in farming and has successfully marketed many predatory bugs for completely organic control of pests in gardens and parks. As yet they haven't managed to crack the real money maker of a cheap, mass produced bug for use in protecting larger agricultural fields from various blights and problems.

They had been working on genetically engineering spiders that could be bred up, the second generation sterile, and then released en masse to protect a crop right up to the harvest season, however anti GM hysteria and shortsighted government restriction put paid to their genetic experimentation. They were forced to fall back on older, cruder methods. Namely bombarding spider eggs with small amounts of radiation and breeding the most promising looking specimens in an attempt to find what they were after.

This combination of methods appeared to work and they are now performing their first full field trial of their spiders. The problem is that where GM controls are more precise, randomly mutating organisms can have unpredictable results...

Twist

The spiders can breed and adapt and they do it fast, many generations in a single season. First they wipe out the bugs. In theory this would mean that they would die off from starvation and not being able to breed. These spiders however have already bred, adapting to larger prey, the birds. The next generation is large enough and toxic enough to go after even larger prey and now the fields are clear...

Twist

The spiders continue to breed and to mutate under the strange mix of things that have been done to them. They form into a hive, queen, soldier and worker spiders, all specialised, festooning the fields with webs and acting with a strange sort of intelligence, spreading the hive and colony into the surrounding land.

Twist

One spider is stronger and more vicious than the others, its system peculiar this spider has lungs and a much denser exoskeleton. It eats the bugs, it eats its brothers and sisters and it grows larger, shucking off its outer skin as it grows. Bigger and bigger and bigger taking larger and larger prey with no sign of it slowing its growth until it is a true monster.

Epilogue

The geneered spiders may almost be all destroyed by whatever measures the characters, or the army, take but it will be hard to get them all. New colonies or groups can turn up anywhere around the original site or even further away requiring the expertise and experience of those who have run into them before. Given the nature of their creation they can continue to develop and mutate over time becoming slightly different creatures each and every time they are encountered.

Idea

Giant spiders tend to be the stuff of kitsch, B-movie cinema. Playing up this angle can make a game more fun than horrifying.

Idea

Real spiders have all sorts of tactics and abilities which could make them terrifying if scaled up.

Adventure 91

Hurticulture

Description

Obrash Agriculture makes all manner of agricultural items, new seeds, new pesticides and herbicides, new fertilisers with more efficient means of delivery to the plants. They sling nitrates, mix chemicals and produce new breeds of familiar old plants all the time. Their board is concerned with opening up the profitability of marginal land especially, creating crops that will grow in colder or hotter climates than usual. As well as all this they do work to improve their image with environmentalists, working on non-chemical ways to control weeds and bugs and on crops that can coexist with endangered environments such as the jungles.

Many of these experiments are carried out at Obrash Agriculture's main research facility in South America where the controls on their work are a little more lax and they can proceed more quickly. Unfortunately discipline in the facility is not all it could be and many experiments end up being run simultaneously on the same crop.

Something has gone wrong with a combined fertiliser and symbiotic crop experiment and the facility is now cut off with little power. The characters are those trapped inside who do not know what has happened, only that they must get out of the dark building and seek help.

Twist

The plants around the building have come alive in the most hostile way imaginable. Vines now animate and snare victims, beating and crushing them, depositing the bodies at their roots to provide nutrients. Flowers now give off scents that smell like food or form alluring shapes to draw people in and poison them. Everyone gets the killer hay fever as the pollen becomes more toxic to man and everyone becomes light headed as the plants produce an over abundance of oxygen. Some may even begin to walk and move and hunt.

Twist

One of the scientists involved intended this 'accident' to happen. He has been working on a parapsychological experiment alongside the more conventional experiments, a sort of plant-empathy. This experiment has worked more strongly than he dreamed and, instead of wires, vines now connect him to the joined biomass around the facility. It has also detached him from the people around him and he acts without conscience. The plants themselves respond to his thoughts in their development so there is no need for a lab, he is the most brilliant scientist, so there is no need for any others. Without conscience that means destruction and death of the irrelevancies.

Twist

The experiments here have disturbed an ancient and malevolent spirit of the forest, weakened and driven mad by clearances and farming it finally snaps and manifests with its remaining power, turning the forest into a crazed maze of deadly plants and Aztec imagery, plant-made men armed with shards of obsidian stalking the forest for any survivors from the base.

Epilogue

Whatever twisted the forest here can be replicated, recreated or reproduced elsewhere or in a different environment such as under the sea, wherever life proliferates. More disturbingly the change may well spread, move, shift across the landscape until the altered plants threaten a town or a city, vines choking the life out of the citizens as the plants move and shift to reclaim what was taken from them.

Adventure 92

Nature Bites

Description

Nature bites back in various guises at the world of man, disease, extreme weather, failed crops but, sometimes it takes a more visceral route to remind man of his true weakness in the face of the planet and its life. Sometimes a true monster is born a large, intelligent predatory animal that gets a taste for human flesh and blood and runs wild, terrorising people and somehow surviving most of the things that humanity can throw at it to try and tame or kill it.

Whatever the beast is it is a giant of its species, stronger, tougher, more intelligent and more vicious than such a beast has any right to be and, for whatever reason, it has a craving to kill humans. The characters are a task force, brought in to fell the beast but may well find themselves to be the ones that are hunted when the creature sets its sights on them.

Twist

The creature is a shark and a massive one. Ripping through the water at speed the creature is capable of smashing smaller boats into splinters, denting or destroying dive cages and of taking terrible wounds and surviving. It seems to consider itself king of the sea locally and even comes into the shallows to hunt swimmers. The beast is cunning and uses the sea to its advantage as well as humanity's stupidity.

Twist

The creature is a bear, a massive bear from deep in the forest that has been attacking homes, ranger stations and mobile homes. It seems unafraid of anything and one of its forepaws is grown and rusted into a toothed metal trap that is apparently what drove it crazy. It appears in every way like some sort of frenzied prehistoric cave bear, insensible to pain and rabid in its desire to kill and eat all of those who caused it this agony. Removing the trap will not make it your friend...

Twist

The creature in question is a tiger; a man-eating tiger such has been relegated to myth in all but the most rural areas of India. The creature is stalking the villages and hunting parties have failed entirely to capture or kill it, now it is moving in towards the towns, hiding in the derelict and lost places, emerging to hunt under the cover of night, a great beast, blinded in one eye that some say is a reincarnation of a vengeful soul, seeking out specific enemies from his life before.

Epilogue

Killer animals are the masters of the 'comeback', appearing to be dead but not being, coming back time after time more and more cunning and monstrous. Another approach is to have them had young, offspring that carry, genetically, their father or mother's propensity for violence. A clutch or group of such beasts offers an alternative to playing out the same creature over and over, increasing the stakes and the difficulty slightly more logically.

Idea

Jaws is the classic movie of this type while the long defunct Action Comics ran two similar stories, *Hookjaw* – about a murderous shark and *Shako* about a killer polar bear. These can be raided for ideas if you can find them.

Idea

Packs of smaller creatures and plagues of insects can form other alternatives to the single beast.

Adventure 93

Not Quite Hogwarts

Description

The Marmsworth School for Boys is an honoured establishment that brings up young men from age of eleven to the age of eighteen aiming to turn them out into the world with a classical education and a respect for order and authority. The methods the school uses to achieve these ends are rather old fashioned and involve strict discipline, dormitories that go lights-out at 9pm and no real contact with the outside world except on holidays. Televisions and other such devices are banned and the pupils wear the same restrictive uniforms that they have at the school since it was founded.

For the kids that attend, the school is something of a living hell. Being sent there is like being thrown back over a century into the past. No mollycoddling, no Playstation and little if any sympathy from anyone other than the other students.

As students at the school, or perhaps new tutors, the characters gradually become aware that something more sinister is occurring at the school than the odd caning or torrent of mental abuse, something that warrants investigation so that the proper authorities might be informed.

Twist

The pupils that attend the school are often destined for government positions. The forces in charge of the school use the students to take control via proxy, breaking their spirits and taking 'something' from them that makes them drones in service to the masters of the school, whoever they are. This thing, this fragment of spirit taken from the promising boys is kept in a dark room behind the headmaster's study in rack upon rack of little, labelled jars. The headmaster himself may not be entirely human...

Twist

The boarding school makes a good, captive, feeding ground for the members of the staff who are more than they appear to be. Founded as a retreat away from the world all those years ago the school was opened to bring 'dinner' in to the vampires that now dwell there. Careful not to kill, for the most part, they use the school's isolationist attitude and wealthy contacts to ensure scandals never escapes while continuing to feed on their weakening young charges.

Twist

The school closes for the summer holidays and everyone leaves. Only a few children without homes to go or whose families don't care to take them in remain over the summer, along with the caretaker and his wife. Unfortunately for the children the caretaker has gone slightly mad, killing his wife and is now stalking the corridors of the school determined to destroy anyone else living, especially 'mucky little pups' who undo all his good work.

Epilogue

Whatever events unfold at the school leave their psychic mark upon the brick even long after they are over. The school building becomes haunted with the spirits and echoes of the terrible events that have occurred. Years later the school is to be re-tasked, perhaps as a military base, perhaps as a country house. Whichever it is to be the unquiet spirits of the school will not let such happen without something of a show.

Idea

Setting the game in the past the game loses some strangeness but could increase interest in the setting.

Adventure 94

Blood & Iron

Description

War is an unpleasant business whether it is fought with sword and shield or laser guided bombs. People still die, others are made orphaned or refugees. Nobody really wins a military conflict per se, even the side that is victorious in the battles loses strength, troops and some measure of faith from their citizens.

Battlefields carry the taint of what occurred in them for generations afterwards and mines, bodies and unexploded munitions can claim lives even decades after the conflict is over. Wars are a stain on the human soul made all the more terrible by the fact that man is as willing to fight and kill other men over something so abstract as an idea, let alone anything more practical such as resources or land.

War is already hard, painful, stressful, reducing men to madness and maiming them with the most terrible injuries. Even hardened and trained men become faithful when faced with death, angels are often seen over great battlefields but the horror of war can be made so much darker by something unnatural joining in the fray...

Twist

The trenches have been cut off from supply lines for days under the heavy bombardment of the Kaiser's artillery and food, clean water and ammunition are in short supply. As the bombardment finally comes to a halt the last few shells are mustard gas. Scrambling for their masks the soldiers begin to see shambling bodies, moving through the yellow fog, seemingly unaffected, devouring the bodies of the dead and moving with evil intent. Ghouls.

Twist

In Vietnam the characters' platoon is in the thick of the jungle working a sweep and clear operation, burning out Viet Cong camps and setting ambushes when their radio goes dead. Not long after stragglers or point men begin to get picked off. Mistakes are made in war but the dead are unforgiving and the hungry ghosts of those killed by mistake by overenthusiastic marines have come back to take revenge.

Twist

The characters' unit has been left behind the main thrust into Iraq due to 'technical difficulties' and has been redirected to secure a small town suspected of harbouring some troops that remain loyal to Saddam. They found nothing there though the townsfolk are mutely hostile. Then one of their men is found, apparently sandblasted to death, the hate of the townsfolk becoming more palpable. What manner of dust devil is now picking off the unit and what is its source?

Epilogue

An epilogue can find the characters later in the war discovering the true source of what it was they had faced, that the undead or spiritual being that they fought was, in fact, an engineered weapon – albeit supernatural – engineered especially for the conflict. Discovering the base of operations from whence such things come the characters are faced with the task of destroying the source of the evil forever. Not an easy job.

Idea

Dog Soliders while semi-comedic shows a unit of soldiers fighting the unnatural, as does *The Bunker*. The British comic compilation magazine, *2000AD* ran an excellent, and recently reprinted, story about Vampires in war called *Fiends of the Eastern Front*.

Adventure 95

Plane & Simple

Description

The characters are all passengers on a long haul transatlantic flight from London to Chicago. The plane is a big, reliable aircraft and the security checks were extremely stringent. The crew and stewardesses seem nice enough and the film, while cut has been entertaining. So far the only letdown of the trip has been the food and the difficulty of eating it with a wobbly plastic fork that only gets more wobbly when it is warmed by the food.

About halfway across the Atlantic Ocean the plane begins to develop trouble, something that the passengers are assured is entirely down to turbulence. They are told to fasten their seatbelts and hold on and pills for nausea are offered to those suffering from airsickness.

Rest isn't particularly possible under these conditions, especially when the characters begin to notice what is really wrong with the plane and how unnatural it is...

Twist

Gremlins have infested the aircraft and are slowly tearing it to pieces. For some reason only the characters seem able to see them, scurrying under the seats, unscrewing screws and sawing off bolts, some can even be seen outside, clinging to the wing and examining the engine, ready to damage it. If all the engines are taken out the plane will crash and the passengers will die. To the crew the problems are inexplicable and since only the characters can see the gremlins they may well be judged insane...

Twist

The plane passes through some strange, glowing clouds and when it emerges the crew discover that they have lost radio contact and cannot get their bearings, compasses and positioning instruments of all kinds no longer working. The plane is eventually forced to make a soft, water landing near the only landmass the pilots can identify, an incongruously tropical looking island around which the wrecks of many ships can be seen. In the interior other planes of various sorts are also found, wrecked along with the skeletons of survivors from those wrecks. Where are they and what happened to the other survivors, what is this island and how will they survive?

Twist

There is something down in the cargo hold that is trying to get out. Once it does get out it slithers into the gaps in the plane's framework and lashes out at the people in the cabin who are tasty treats as far as it is concerns, starting by ripping apart and digesting someone in one of the toilets. What this whipping, thrashing thing is nobody knows but if it is not killed somehow then the plane will never reach its destination with anyone alive.

Epilogue

The gremlins take an interest in anyone who displays the ability to sense them and begin to doggedly pursue the characters, destroying their machinery, jinxing their cars and doing their best to kill them, not directly but through sabotaging the world around them. They do not appear immediately but wait for a time after the accident to show themselves and begin their campaign.

Idea

The Twilight Zone in both the original black & white version, with William Shatner and in the film version featured a story with a gremlin attacking a plane which is rich with ideas to borrow for a game.

Adventure 96

In Satan's Name

Description

Hysteria follows certain trends as it works its way through the more hysterical and credible members of the genuine populace. For a while it might be that Dungeon's & Dragons is a 'doorway to danger' and then it might shift to the idea that anal-obsessed aliens are kidnapping people and probing them aboard their ships. After that it might be blaming computer games when already crazy kids go on a rampage.

For a very long time there was a persistent myth about satanic cults operating invisibly amongst society blamed for child murders, kidnappings, cannibalism and a whole host of other perversities. Despite numerous investigations showing up nothing attention seeking people claimed to have been a part of these cults and built up the myth.

What if there was some truth to these stories and it was merely that the satanic cult was strong enough to cover themselves until the hysteria and media hype went away. What if whole groups of people are in the control of these cults and organisations providing children, animals, money and influence to these groups?

Twist

The cult's circle of initiates converges with the character's group of friends. These people truly believe but also work very hard on keeping their belief hidden and to themselves. One of the character's friends has been chosen to be a surrogate mother for one of the cult's child sacrifices and she has had second thoughts turning to the only people she thinks she can trust, the characters. Helping her flee they must contend with the fact that anyone, anywhere may be a member of the cult.

Twist

The characters are a holidaying group of friends visiting a picturesque village on the coast for their holiday. Unbeknownst to them the village is rife with members of a satanic cult who are planning a great sabbat and intend the characters to be their prize sacrifice. Before the goats and the dancing and the pyre fires however they need to find ways of making the character's stay, however they can find to do that, ready for the desecration of the coming Sunday.

Twist

The characters are assigned to assist a taskforce that has been given the job of dealing with the latest wave of hysteria. Basically just a hand wave to look into the problem and to assure the people that there isn't really one at all. They are unprepared for the evidence and testimony that they do turn up including plans for a mass human sacrifice. Of course, nobody will listen to them and if anything is to be done to prevent it or bring justice to the culprits then it will be up to the characters.

Epilogue

The cult that exists in this scenario is the worst nightmare of the most credulous and hysterical person or most evangelical Christian. They are everywhere with influence in every place, all linked like The Masons turned up to eleven. No matter how well they do in the initial scenario the cult will remain in place and begin to start looking for revenge, turning to the devil for powers and ways to get at their hated enemy.

Idea

Combining elements of *The Wicker Man* with *Rosemary's Baby* can create an effective atmosphere for the game keeping the extent of the cult and its power secret until the characters run up against it.

Adventure 97

Oh, Rats

Description

As the statistic says, you're never more than twenty feet away from a rat. Alright, it assumes that the rats are somehow evenly spaced across the whole country, which they are not, but still, that is a lot of rats to be considered. Rats are everywhere, feeding on human waste and growing sleek and fat, breeding in great numbers and spreading disease wherever they go, shy for the most part of man but not of taking the spoils from his civilisation.

The characters are residents of a high-rise apartment block that suffers from a disgusting, but so far unthreatening, rat problem. Droppings are found area and often, in the basement level, raw sewage can be smelled, giving a clue as to where the rats are getting in.

One day however, the rat problem changes, going from relatively harmless to extremely harmful requiring the characters to find a way to survive against the torrent of furry death.

Twist

A terrier smuggled across the channel from France by one of the more elderly residents of the flats contracted a form of rabies while over there and has brought it back with them. Hunting rats in the basement the terrier caused one of the rats to contract the disease which has since spread like wildfire through the rat population in the sewers. Now a plague of rabid rats are going to pour up through the building to escape the water of the sewers, biting and attacking everything in their path. It is just a pity the fire escape still hasn't been repaired...

Twist

The military has been experimenting with a new form of biological warfare called 'ratwar'. The creation of aggressive and intelligent rats that can be delivered into an enemy country or city and used to spread disease amongst the populace as a more effective and long term vector than gas or particles. The experiment, as with so many experiments, has gone horribly wrong and its results have been unleashed on the public, large, geneered, intelligent rats whose instinct is to kill.

Twist

Under the city The King of the Rats has arrived from wherever it is he comes from, gathering his people in the great red brick cathedrals of the undercity he speaks to them about the glories of the rats, the Black Death, of times when grain was theirs for the taking and he incites them to uprising. Provoked by the latest pest control methods the local government is trying to introduce and pushed on by The King of the Rats the rat army takes to the streets to exact retribution.

Epilogue

The ratwar rats are intended to breed in the wild and to keep doing their task, a self replenishing bio weapon to be used against the most deserving targets. In theory the scientists have a control, a retrovirus to sterilise them and inoculations against the lovely new diseases that the rats carry. However no virus has an infection rate of 100% and some rats may well have survived and retained their ability to breed. Those rats can spread and grow in number and intelligence, even surprising their creators.

Idea

King Rat by China Miéville provides both a spiritual side to rats and a good impression of London which would make a good setting. James Herbert's *The Rats* is the classic of this type of horror.

Adventure 98

Time & Again

Description

The characters are members of the family, or friends of the family, of a child who is having powerful, recurring nightmares. In every one of these nightmares they see themselves dying over and over and over again often in painful and horrifying ways. The child has become so traumatised that they are afraid to sleep and are growing more and more weak and exhausted until the doctors fear for their long term health and even their life.

What has finally, really spooked the parents though is that the child has pointed out someone when they were out at the shops saying simply 'That is one of the men that killed me.' Since then they have seen the same man several times and it appears that whoever he is, he is shadowing them and watching the child. Scared for him now both mentally and physically they turn to their friends, or the experts to protect and help their child.

Twist

The child is a reincarnation of an important Buddhist leader from Tibet. Originally executed when the Chinese invaded and took over the country they have since been tracked through every reincarnation and killed as a child before they can recall their past or be found by others seeking them. The man that has been seen is a Chinese assassin and he does not operate alone. Various strange events may begin to accumulate around the child the longer they survive and the more they remember adding to the mystery/occult feel.

Twist

The child is the second coming of Christ. Well, perhaps not the second but perhaps the fiftieth. The powers that be on Earth like their positions and power a great deal and do not want to lose them in some religious upsurge or with the end of the world as we know it. A special organisation tracks the birth of the Christ Child and dispatches a 'Herod' to see that they do not come of age and into their full understanding and grace.

Twist

The child is not seeing their past but rather their future deaths. The person that is stalking them is not a person at all but rather a creature that feeds on the anguish of a dying soul. It follows the same soul from incarnation to incarnation, destroying it in each lifetime to increase the torment released as the soul realises its nemesis is the same each time. This creature can become like a wraith, a ghost, a great maw of needled teeth used to suck down the pain as the soul is sent to return once again, unless the characters can stop it this time.

Epilogue

The child is not the only reincarnate that exists, there are others. As the child awakens to the memories of the past souls they are able to discern who and where these other souls are. The characters could make a real difference in foiling other attempts to destroy these souls, rescuing people from the same fate as their other past lives.

Idea

Indian and oriental traditions have strong beliefs in reincarnation and there are many records of examples of memories and experiences being passed on in the new incarnation. The nature of these beliefs and other aspects of those religions can also provide a rational and inspiration for the monsters.

Idea

Aside from the villain of the piece others could be seeking the reincarnated child for more wholesome reasons in much the same way as the reborn Dalai Lama is sought out. Discerning the good searchers from the bad searchers may prove difficult however.

Adventure 99

Earthwrath

Description

Cardford is an old mining town though the veins of ore, whatever the metal, dried up a long time ago. Now the only legacys of the mining past are the names of a few of the streets and an active caving club that explores a lot of the old tunnels. Occasionally someone will fall into an old hole that leads down into the mines and have to be rescued but that is really the extent of it.

Lately however the town is being reminded of its past, the earth has rumbled, earthlights have been seen flashing at night and subsidence in several places has lightly damaged a few houses. This is just the beginning though, soon the earth itself is going to convulse and spasm and begin wrecking the town, chasms opening up, lava flows burning down houses and rock spikes crashing up out of the ground as the earth begins to try and destroy the parasites upon its surface.

Twist

The caving club from the town has disturbed the earth and something within it. Resting underneath the town was an earth spirit, ancient and worshipped by the tribes that used to frequent the area. The spirit also made the earth rich for crops and full of the minerals that latter attracted the settlement that was to become the town. Weakened by the mining and the disbelief of the new Christian settlers it sank deep into the earth and rested, shrunk down to what it is now. Now disturbed and awakened it sees what has been wrought and grows angry.

Twist

Some prospecting companies don't believe that the area is completely mined out. With modern techniques it is possible to earn a profit from lower grade ores and they think some of the more inaccessible areas may still contain ore of some kind. The very ground here has had enough abuse though and, when they start prospecting it comes alive, destroying the mining equipment and running wild with geological chaos unless the earth can somehow be spoken to and talked down.

Twist

The area is quite stable now; a good place to run scientific tests and, so, a massive rig has been set up near the area. The intention? To dig deeper than anyone ever has before and to bring back samples from very, very deep into the earth. As the drill digs deeper and deeper and deeper a strange fluid comes back up the pipe and, as it gushes the ground itself convulses. The drillers have succeeded in wounding mother earth and, like a dog scratching a flea bite the area is about to be devastated.

Epilogue

While the disaster, the convulsing and vengeance of the ground might seem to be limited to their mining town the truth is far worse. As the dust settles there it slowly becomes apparent that the Earth is at war with humanity everywhere, cracking bedrock, erupting volcanoes, chasing people with chasms that crack open in the earth. There is nowhere that is completely safe from the geological wrath and the game becomes a fight for survival in a massively hostile environment where the whole planet is against them.

Idea

Numerous films and TV shows have covered volcanoes and how they can affect the landscape and the lives of people near them as well as earthquakes. Any of these can be raided for terrifying effects.

Idea

Do not limit yourself to plausible geological phenomena, steal ideas from fantasy as well.

Adventure 100

Sauce of Inspiration

Description

Bodies are being found in various places around the city, disturbingly with their skulls broken open and their brains mostly missing; mostly missing because they appear to have been bitten into, devoured. They are missing from the scene and are considered to have been eaten. The teeth marks are tentatively being confirmed as human.

Each and every person who has been killed in this way is a likeable and intelligent individual, successful in their profession with few - if any - known enemies and certainly none who would consider killing them as far as anyone knows.

The characters are police, private investigators or concerned individuals assigned to or interested in the case and drawn to it by its forteen nature.

Twist

The killer is an anthropologist who has returned from a cannibalistic jungle society that they have been studying where the practice has all but died out. What they did witness though was a ritual enacted involving the devouring of a rival tribe's shaman's brain. The enactor of the ritual did gain his knowledge and the tribe grew stronger for it. Armed with knowledge of their ritual he was tormented by his own inadequacies and took it upon himself to try it, fired with ambition. Now his mind swims with the knowledge of those he has killed, making him an expert on many subjects and successful in ways he never dreamed of. He also remains hungry for more.

Twist

The killer is a creature, a thing that has forgotten itself entirely somewhere deep in its past and survives on the thoughts and memories of others, compensating for its own loss by eating and living the lives of others. The beast takes their lives and lives them out until those new, fresh memories are forgotten as well and then it moves on again. This incongruity between the time of death of the bodies and the disappearance of the person may be the character's first clue.

Twist

The brain has not been eaten per se but rather bored out from the inside, the scraping marks looking similar to tooth marks in the jelly-like substance. The devourer of the minds is a parasite, an 'evil thought' moving from person to person, slowly devouring their mind before sliding off into the mind of another to eat their hopes and dreams and shit in their subconscious. The person becoming more and more erratic until the parasite has eaten everything good inside them and needs to move on to another.

Epilogue

Creatures can be killed but you can't kill an idea. Whatever the source of the mind devouring, the idea of it remains and can germinate like a seed in a fertile mind, giving birth to the horror once again. This is especially true of the parasite in the last twist which could have originated from a complex thought in the first place, corrupting the cells containing it's matrix like a cancer, giving it physical form and the ability to move from one to another.

Ideas

No matter how far or how fast you run you can never escape yourself. Wherever you go, there you are.

Designers Notes

The only real guide any writer can have when working is the conceit ‘Would I find this useful?’ and ‘Would I read this?’ We have to rely on our own perceptions and ideas when writing as going by what other people think and say is not only difficult but can feel ‘wrong’, throwing off your conviction in what you’re doing and affecting your writing adversely.

Two types of gaming books have always frustrated me and have always left me feeling cheated, adventure supplements and Games Master guides. Adventure books never seemed to cover what my group wanted to do or what I wanted to do and Games Master guides always seemed full of useless information that didn’t actually help with the problems me and my group would experience. There was nothing there about how to dry out your notes when someone spilled coke or the etiquette of eating and gaming, how to get a session started, to find players, techniques for evoking mood or help in being descriptive.

I gave up on adventure modules and ever since then I’ve been practically improvising my way through every game. That suits me better. What I sometimes lack is inspiration, ideas, something to spark off a few thoughts and get me started. What I always liked were the little ideas and hooks and rumours, something that I remember seeing in Land of the Free, Unknown Armies and the back of Baron Munchausen. These I found useful but I felt that they could be more useful, a little more fleshing out than a single line, perhaps a paragraph, perhaps a page.

This book is born out of those thoughts and hopefully, hopefully you’ll be able to pick it up, flip through the pages and find something in at least one of these one-hundred ideas that will give you enough of an idea to run a game.

Thanks for buying it and good luck!

Grim

Author’s Biography

James ‘Grim’ Desborough is 28 and lives in Hampshire with his wife and mother (No, those are two separate people – no banjos please) while waiting for his own house to be gutted and redecorated, occasionally harassed by his brother and his brother’s fiancée and his mothers utterly neurotic cat. Living with mum fulfils his sad-geek quota so much that he is utterly cool in every other regard and woe betide anyone who says otherwise.

Grim won an Origins award for his and Steve Mortimer’s Munchkin’s Guide to Powergaming which, being his first work was not bad.

Works by Grim include...

Munchkin’s Guide to Powergaming (Steve Jackson Games)

Slayer’s Guide to Female Gamers (Mongoose Publishing)

Slayer’s Guide to Rules Lawyers (Mongoose Publishing)

Macho Women With Guns d20 (Mongoose Publishing)

Arcane Encyclopaedia: Nymphology (Mongoose Publishing)

The Quintessential Temptress (Mongoose Publishing)

Neverwhere (Official game, available for free at the Postmortem Studios website)

Cannibal Sector One (Cubicle 7/Nightfall Games – Coming soon)

LiveSRD (Postmortem Studios)

Urban Faerie (Postmortem Studios)

Cloak of Steel (Postmortem Studios)

100 Fantasy Adventure Seeds (Postmortem Studios)

100 Sci-Fi Adventure Seeds (Postmortem Studios)

Hentacle (Postmortem Studios)

Coming Soon

All These Worlds.....Not As We Know It

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All These Worlds.....Indistinguishable From Magic

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