

In-Speckers



an InSpectres mini-supplement by Tim Boser

A word from the Club Prez

"Hi! I'm Billy Wilson, and I'm the boss of the original In-Speckers Club that was started at Buddy Holly Memorial Elementary School. In-Speckers is those guys who fight the Boogeyman and stuff all over the place. Well, me and Tommy S. started our own In-Speckers at the school, and we've been stopping the Boogeyman and his scary friends from getting us kids. Well, we had like ten people in In-Speckers, and then Bobby Smith and Donny moved away, but I got a phone call from Donny and he said that they started being In-Speckers there too. And I heard on my AOL that other kids was starting In-Speckers at their schools.

"So like us In-Speckers are all over the place at every school, just like the real In-Speckers are everywhere else. And some kids who go to a smart kids school made this book, and asked me to write stuff for the beginning, like the boring parts we don't ever have to read in the school books, that stuff like close to the contents section. So I wrote this paragraph. Um, I read the stuff the other kids put here, and it's important. You should be able to be In-Speckers at your school if you read this stuff.

"And remember the first big rule of In-Speckers: don't talk about the In-Speckers to adults like your parents and teachers. They won't understand...they may even ground you."

About the Supplement

In-Speckers is a supplement for the InSpectres role-playing game by Jared A. Sorensen. With this supplement, you'll be able to run In-Speckers: a series of adventures where grade-schoolers across the country fight the Forces of Darkness in their homes, schools and neighborhoods.

The setting is a bit more defined than InSpectres because the young In-Speckers can only do stuff before school, during recess and after school (well, and whenever they happen to be able to sneak out of class). Not only do they have to deal with monsters and creepy stuff, they also have teachers, parents, bullies and homework to worry about.

The game is also different from InSpectres in some other ways. Much of the terminology of InSpectres has been changed and rules have been added or modified to reflect the In-Speckers setting.

I hope you enjoy playing In-Speckers as much as I enjoyed writing it.

The World of In-Speckers

The world of In-Speckers is much the same as the world of InSpectres – a modern, urban, supernaturally oriented setting with the possibility for comedy and terror in equal amounts. In In-Speckers, however, the scariness and gore is toned down and the satiric business elements are all gone. Instead, the game focuses on childhood adventure, weird after-school clubs and the trials and tribulations of grade school. In this setting, “things that go bump in the night” are trying to scare the stuffing out of kids. At the same time, unexplained phenomena (like dimensional portals appearing in the middle of a playground slide) is happening all over the place...causing the kids to become scared of their own shadows.

That’s when some kids decided to start fighting back.

One of these kids (young Billy Wilson) got the idea for his In-Speckers Club from an InSpectres ad he saw on a local TV station. Word spread like wildfire and soon, other clubs starting popping up in schools all over the country.

The players' characters represent one such group of children, a ragtag band of kids who just don't want to be afraid of the dark anymore. You can find a more fleshed-out description of the setting below, but the rest of the details of the setting are rather largely up to the GM and players. The game can be set in a small suburban neighborhood, or any one of many busy city blocks. The one connecting aspect to all In-Speckers games is that the majority of the action takes place in and around an elementary school. The rest of the story has yet to be told...

Club Members

The members of the In-Speckers Club are all children who attend the same elementary school. These particular kids are upset with the fact that they and their fellow schoolmates are tormented and scared stiff by really creepy monsters, so they decide to follow Billy Wilson’s lead and start an In-Speckers Club in their own school.

Usually, these kids just use the club as a cool meeting place to do normal kids stuff, like swinging on the swings, playing ball, finger painting, riding bikes, and jumping rope. But they stop playing around every once in a while when a monster starts scaring kids in the neighborhood, or some weird phenomenon occurs in a way that only kids would know about it.

Club members are all normal kids...but they’re kids who are willing to fight the good fight and make things safe for kids everywhere.

Your First Day of School

First off, you'll need to write down some basic information about your character:

- What is your character's name?
- How old/what grade is your character?
- What does your character look like?
- How would you describe your character’s personality?

Remember that In-Speckers are fairly well adjusted grade school students (most likely between seven and twelve years old) who possess some quality (good or bad) enabling them to face scary stuff without wetting their pants. Few adults can do this! Next, we'll need to assign your character's skill dice. The InSpectres character creation rules apply, but the names of the skills have changed, as seen below:

- The Academics skill becomes the Science & Social Studies skill.
- Athletics is called Phys. Ed (short for Physical Education).
- Your character's Technology skill is called Arts & Crafts.
- Contact is changed to Lunch (where most of the socializing takes place).

Your character also has one Talent. However, talents like "Gun Bunny" or "Ninja Master" aren't appropriate for this setting (your average ten-year old isn't going to have access to big guns or martial arts weapons...well, let's hope not).

There are also three special talents included in this setting: *Monster Friend*, *InSpectres Brat* and *Annoying Brother/Sister*. Players are highly encouraged to have at least one character with one of these new talents instead of the more typical ones. Trust me on this one. The In-Speckers talents are covered in more detail later in this supplement.

School Supplies

Now, it's time for the players to get together and decide what kind of school they go to. The more specialized the school is, the more school supply dice it gets. A public school gets between five and ten dice, while a private school for gifted children gets as many as twenty dice to spend on supplies. School Supplies work the same as the Cards from InSpectres except that they can only be used when the characters are in school. The School Supplies are:

Library Books (adds dice to Science & Social Studies skill rolls)

These allow the In-Speckers to do research on almost any subject that would be covered in an elementary school library. A NORMAL elementary school library (although this is a stranger world than the one we live in...so normal is relative!).

Gym Equipment (adds dice to Phys. Ed skill rolls)

Not just kick-balls and jump ropes, this also represents the quality of the school's gymnasium and playground. A school with a lot of Gym Equipment dice might have access to a swimming pool. The In-Speckers can utilize Gym Equipment to train for the hard fight ahead. That is, if you can call playing dodge-ball "training."

Janitor's Closet (adds dice to Arts & Crafts skill rolls)

The Janitor's Closet is where the kids can find cool junk, tools, weapons (like mops?) and cleaning supplies. The Janitor's Closet also serves as a mini-trading post where deals between the kids go down. Whether it's junk food, trading cards or action figures, this is where the In-Speckers can get access to almost anything a kid could ever want. InSpectres Brats, the kids whose parents work for the real InSpectres agents, have access to the *coolest* toys of all. More on this in the New Talents section.

The Locker

If you decide not to distribute all of your dice, the remaining dice go into the Locker. The Locker is just like the Bank – its dice can be used to augment any roll or to restore skill dice during Recess. The downside is that the Locker is a bit of a mess so it's possible to lose stuff (the same way the Bank works). The upside is that because it's so cluttered, there's a chance that you'll find something you need that you didn't even know you had!

Club Rules

Each In-Speckers club has a bunch of rules that must be followed. Two of these rules are universal among all chapters: "Never talk to adults about In-Speckers" and "If a monster is too scary, it's okay to run away." Clubs should have at least three additional rules (these can be anything, provided that all the members approve them). They don't serve much purpose as far as the game system, but they are fun.

New Talents

Here are two new talents: Monster Friend and InSpectres Brat. Although they were developed especially for this supplement, they can be used quite easily in a normal game of InSpectres. The one restriction is that there can be no more than one Monster Friend and one InSpectres Brat in the club. These are supposed to be special talents, after all.

Monster Friend

A character with this talent has befriended a monster that now resides somewhere in the character's neighborhood. Monster Friends have a special set of rules to handle them during play:

- The monster is always willing to help its friend, especially in time of need.
- The monster starts with three Cool dice if it's rarely around and hard to contact.
- If it's easy to contact but rarely around, it starts with two Cool dice.
- If it's always around the kids, it starts with one Cool die.
- Monster Friends are not limited to a maximum number of Cool Dice.
- When the monster is around (and helping the kids), any of the kids may use its Cool dice as their own when making a Boo-Boo roll or boosting a skill roll.
- If the monster's existence is made known to an adult, the monster will lose any Cool dice it has acquired. Naturally, it will attempt to flee the area as well.
- A discovered Monster Friend will not return until one of the characters "feeds" it at least one Cool Die. Characters may give their Cool dice to the monster at any time.

InSpectres Brat

This kid has one or both parents who are actual InSpectres agents. Whenever the InSpectres Brat makes a Science & Social Studies or Arts & Crafts skill roll at home, she gains two bonus dice (she has access to real InSpectres equipment).

If both of these dice come up as 6's, the character has found something really cool (like night-vision goggles or a dusty spell-book). But if she rolls double 1's on these dice, her parents discover that she's using their equipment and she is Grounded (see Being Grounded for more details).

Annoying Brother/Sister

The kid has a brother or sister (of around the same age, give or take a few years) who can take the blame when disaster strikes. In game terms, the character may ignore the effects of Being Grounded (Being Grounded is described later in the game), but only once per session. The downsides to this talent are that it doesn't provide the character with bonus dice but it *does* provide him or her with an obnoxious sibling.

BOO-BOOS

Boo-Boo rolls are more or less the same as stress rolls in InSpectres (but not quite as harsh, as this is more of a light-hearted game).

Some Example Boo-Boo Rolls

Your In-Specker...

Gets shoved on the playground
Falls down on the playground
Gets caught running in the halls
Gets detention for running in the halls
Is the first to see a new monster
Is chased by a monster
Gets picked on by a bully
Gets beat up by a bully
Gets kidnapped by a monster
Sees a friend turned into a mouse (!)

You need to roll...

1 Boo-Boo Die
2 Boo-Boo Dice
1 Boo-Boo Die
2 Boo-Boo Dice
1 Boo-Boo Dice
2 Boo-Boo Dice
2 Boo-Boo Dice
3 Boo-Boo Dice
4 Boo-Boo Dice
5 Boo-Boo Dice

Characters in this game won't be suffering from horrible physical and emotional scarring due to boo-boos. Your character may suffer a skinned knee, nightmares or a nervous stutter...nothing life-threatening or sanity-devouring. Of course, this means that having a character die is also inappropriate. Instead, maybe your character needs lots of therapy or something, which explains his or her extended absence.

Weird Kids

If they do exist, they wouldn't be allowed in the In-Speckers Club. If you want to have a weird kid hang around your Club, have a character take the Monster Friend Talent.

Taking Cases

The play structure in In-Speckers (getting cases, investigating them, solving them and earning School Supply dice) is much the same as the play structure of InSpectres. The difference here is that our intrepid heroes can get into big trouble at home or at school just for going on a case.

The In-Speckers will have to find ways to sneak out of class, avoid the surly janitor, and get into places where kids aren't normally allowed. Sometimes, the case may end with the principal of the school catching the kids in the basement or boiler room just *after* they've gotten rid of the monster. Other times, the kids will be able to keep things secret (and become heroes to the other kids!).

Recess

InSpectres go on Vacation between cases to recover from stress. In-Speckers go to Recess. The end result is the same...School Supply dice are spent to recover lost skill dice and added to the three types of School Supplies. But unlike the InSpectres, kids aren't always able to go to Recess.

Being Grounded

Being Grounded results from the children being caught by their parents or other responsible adults. They can't play outside, they can't meet with their friends after school and everyone keeps a close eye on their every move. What a bummer!

If the In-Speckers are ever caught breaking rules or being where they're not supposed to be, they're Grounded and cannot go to Recess until the end of their next case. This means that if their skills have been affected by Boo-Boos, they cannot be restored with School Supply dice (these dice aren't lost, they're just unavailable for this purpose). Cool dice may be spent to restore lost skill dice.

If the InSpectres Brat is the only one Grounded, then she alone will suffer this dire fate (unless the other characters end up Grounded as well!).

Club Operations

The In-Speckers setting is exactly like the InSpectres setting – our world, but with the addition of supernatural creatures and strange phenomena. The children, inspired by the InSpectres they see in the commercials on TV, have created their own "organization" called In-Speckers. This group is a kind of "members-only club" (like many of us created or joined when we were kids) created in the spring of 2000 by a student named Billy Wilson (aka, the In-Speckers' Head Boss Guy). The club quickly gained members and numbered ten students by that summer.

Unfortunately, two of the first members moved away to other schools. But they kept in touch with Billy via telephone and email and created new chapters of the In-Speckers at their new schools. Within a year, nearly every state in the US had at least one In-Specters club, with other chapters springing up at other schools. As of right now, there are 462 chapters across the country, all linked together by a special website created by several students at the Southern Illinois School for Exceptional Children.

A Taste for Squish

The Forces of Darkness have always enjoyed menacing young children all over the world, especially in suburban America. Frightened humans contain a sort of "fear residue" called Squish that monsters use to spice up their meals (like putting hot sauce on a burrito). The Forces of Darkness don't actually kill anyone (although they will sometimes scratch or bite a kid to get a better reaction) but they are scary, annoying and highly unwelcome in this nation's centers of education.

The Boogeyman

It's currently unknown whether the Forces of Darkness are formally organized, but several In-Speckers have encountered a creature all *other* monsters seem to fear, a thing called "The Boogeyman."

In-Specker members that have encountered the Boogeyman were so scared that many of them quit the club altogether. Others would suffer from nightmares and phobias because of their experiences. One mysterious fact about the Boogeyman is that no two descriptions of him are ever the same. Whenever the Boogeyman is reported to be in the area, the local In-Speckers chapter goes on full alert and contacts nearby clubs for information on the creature's activity.

The Boogeyman has several confirmed abilities, along with others that are just rumors. Those that have been seen include the ability to travel through shadows, the ability to change its appearance and the power to command lesser monsters. Because it's so fearsome and formidable, an In-Specker's Cool dice cannot affect Boo-Boo rolls involving the Boogeyman. Monster Friends are still able to lend Cool dice to their friends (don't forget that the Boogeyman can control other monsters...).

Grown-Ups

The adults in this setting are rather oblivious to the fact that their children are fighting the Forces of Darkness on a daily basis. Those that do hear about it are quick to go into "protective parent" mode, not letting their kids do anything dangerous but also not doing anything themselves. Still, they're not stupid people, just a little over-protective. When adults do encounter the Forces of Darkness, they contact the InSpectres to come in and take charge of the situation. That, of course, is another game.

A Thank You Note

I'd like to thank the following people for their help with this supplement:

- Jared, for creating InSpectres and helping me write In-Speckers
- The folks at the Forge, for putting up with my sometimes inane banter
- My friends, for putting up with my craziness on a daily basis.

Recommended Movies and Books

- The Goonies
- Monster Squad
- E.T.: the Extra-Terrestrial
- *Goosebumps*, by R.L. Stein
- *Little Fears*, by Jason Blair / Key20 Publishing
- The work of Richard Matheson, HP Lovecraft and George Romero

I Did This!

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