

# CLOWN ★ HELSING

Clowns. we've all seen them... riding their unicycles, blowing up balloons at kid's parties, piling in garish hordes from tiny cars, waddling around in huge red shoes, passed out in a dumpster stinking of booze and regret. For what do these martyrs of mirth sacrifice themselves? The answer is of course, they do it for us. Not just to fill our need for laughter and merriment, but because what brings doom to man fears them! **Clowns** are man's only salvation against **Vampires**.

You've seen Vampires too, you just didn't know it. Maybe they were killing the mood at a party, ruining a great punchline, layering red tape onto a business, or just plain old-fashioned sucking the blood from the living. Contrary to the myths they do much of this in broad daylight, their only fear of the sun being that it might expose them to mockery. They drain humor from the world because they fear someone might dare to laugh at them. *You know the type.*

Vampires are right to be afraid, as their immortality depends on their dignity. Clowns must destroy a Vampire in a hilarious way, or their dignity will revive them. This war has gone on for ages, and unfortunately the old "**Gags**" such as garlic, crosses, and stakes barely get a chuckle nowadays. Sure, folks thought being impaled on a stake with a brick in your mouth was the acme of comedy back then, but today's Clown plays for a tough crowd. Fortunately Vampires fall into the unwitting "*Auguste*" or "*Straight man*" role so easily that it isn't impossible to set up a killer Gag.

... but do it you must, or the world will be drained of everything that makes it worth living. Setting up a killer gag and ridding the world of life-sucking undead is your sacred duty as a member of Clown Helsing!

## What You Need to Play

Get some friends together and have one be the **RingMaster (RM)**, who settles disputes and plays the enemy **Vampire** as well as the **Scenery** and **Bystanders**. The rest of you will play as Vampire-slaying **Clowns**. You can use paper and pencils to keep notes and to write down your Clown's story and abilities.

You'll also need to make some special dice for this game, but we promise you won't regret it. You can do this easily by marking up some blank six-sided dice, or you can cut out and glue the die faces below to some spare six-siders. You should also keep one or more unaltered six-siders handy.

Yes	No	No	No	And	But
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	And	But
Yes	Yes	No	No	And	But

## CHARACTER CREATION:

To start, just think up a great Vampire-hunting clown! If you're messed up like me, you think of these all the time. Either way, pick a name, which should be something light and goofy, like Bonzolio or Sporkles. *Clown Helsing* doesn't allow "normal" names and you should be ashamed of yourself for even considering one. Next, ask yourself a few questions: *Why do they hunt Vampires? What is their clown act? What are they good for? What is wrong with them?* All of this will help with later creation steps, and is vital for actual role-play.

## Traits

Every character in this game is made from **Traits**. These are free-form descriptions of what they can do. For example a Clown might have "*Unicycle stunt artist* (3d), *Sly innuendo* (2d)," and "*basket weaving* (1d)". The number in parentheses is the dice it grants, higher being better of course. To avoid dull Traits, each must have at least as many words in it as dice. A new Clown gets three Traits, at 3 dice, 2 dice, and 1 die. Split these between mental, social, and physical Traits, just so they have something to do in most scenes. You can raise them or get more later.

## Flaws

A **Flaw** is a drawback, quirk, or weakness. These grant a Clown more points to spend on Traits, but they can also be used against them. If a Flaw applies to an action, the rating of the Flaw penalizes the Trait used. To use these points to gain or raise a Trait by one, spend Flaw levels equal to the next level of the Trait. Example: raising a Trait from 2d to 3d would take 3 Flaw levels and gaining a new 1d Trait would cost 1 level.

## Props

Props may be gear needed for Gags, like a *whoopee cushion* (0d) or *squirt flower* (+1d), or they may be part of the setting, like a *rapidly approaching freight train* (+7d). Props give a die bonus or penalty to the Trait used. Some are required to do things. You can't use a squirt flower without actually having a squirt flower, for example (that would be *miming*, not clowning). For carried gear, Clowns get 4 props, at +2d, +1d, +1d, and 0d. Crummy props are free but cause a -1d penalty to the Trait they are used with. Other props may be found during play.

## PLAYING THE GAME:

You can get away without rolling dice for much of the game, but you'll need them when outcomes are uncertain and interesting. To make a Roll for an action, the acting player (**actor**), chooses a **Trait** that fits what they are doing, and the target player or RM (**foe**) chooses a Trait to resist it. The number of dice rolled is equal to the highest Trait between the two. If both Trait dice are equal, all the dice are **Blue**, which gives nearly even odds. If the actor's Trait is higher, the excess dice are **Green**, which aids the action. If the foe's Trait is higher, the excess dice are **Red**, which reduces the chance of success.

An action only fails if more No than Yes faces turn up on the roll. Even results or more Yes faces mean the action was a

success. What a failure or success means is up to how the RM and the Clown players describe it. A failure might not be so bad if it sets up a future gag.

If there are more **And**s in the roll than **But**s, it is a critical success or failure with extra punch. If there are more Buts, it is a minimal success or failure with a catch. If the Ands or Buts are equal or don't turn up at all, it is a normal Yes or No result. Every roll gives you the chance of **Yes, Yes-And, Yes-But, No, No-And, or No-But** results, and you get to work out what they mean for the situation. **And**s are vital for Clowns as they may be used to get laughs from bystanders.

### Initiative

When Clowns and Vampires enter combat or just need to know who goes when, they roll **Initiative**. Initiative is just a roll of a normal six-sided die, adding the character's current highest Trait (1-6+Trait). Characters then take their turns from highest to lowest Initiative result each round, only rolling for the first round. In case of ties, Vampires always go first. Clowns may work it out between themselves.

### Damage

Add a **Red** die to your pool for each point of **Damage** you want to inflict. If the action succeeds, the current highest Trait of the target is lowered by that amount. Any Trait lowered to zero kills the character. Every Trait will recover by one die between scenes unless dead. Vampires cheat, healing all damage on their turn unless it was aggravated by laughter. Only the final wound needs to be funny, earlier damage that round doesn't have to be.

### Bystanders

These are the Clown's audience and the Vampire's bane. They usually have Traits at around 1d. The RM should roll some normal six-sided dice to see how many there are. It's best to have more because a Vampire might try to get rid of them, kill them, or turn them against the Clown, as below.

A Vampire who gets a **Yes-And** result on a bystander will drain them of merriment and often blood. This turns them into a drone servant or "**Renfield**." These humorless saps can make a good gag flop, fight a Clown, or help the Vampire get away. They return to normal when the Vampire is slain.

### Vampires

Vampires are more powerful than lone Clowns, and will require teamwork to defeat. A young Vampire has four Traits, at 4, 3, 2, and 1. An older Vampire may have four Traits at 5, 4, 3, and 2. Each power level up just increases all four Traits by one. Their Flaws and Props can include whatever the RM thinks is right. Vampires can raise Traits with Flaws as well, costing Flaw points equal to the next level to raise a Trait by one.

### Chuckle Chips

Vampire-weakening laughter in this game comes only from mortal Bystanders. Laughter from Clowns, players, or even the RM doesn't count. However, a player who makes the group laugh should receive a **Chuckle Chip**, which is a poker chip or other token that can be traded for a full reroll. You might deal no chuckle chips if everyone plays with utter stone-faced solemnity, but if that happens you are better off with a different game.

## SAMPLE CHARACTERS:

### Perspiro (Clown)

Not crying on the inside, just neurotic. Perspiro got into clowning to overcome his phobia of children, but it didn't work. He leapt at the chance to join Clown Helsing because he found the undead less terrifying. His pratfalls are the stuff of legends.

**Traits:** *Practitioner of Perilous Pratfalls (3d), Dangerous Juggling (2d), Confronts his Fears (2d).*

**Flaws:** *Flopsweat (-1d), Scared of Children (-1d).*

**Props:** *A Lovely Bunch of Coconuts (+2d), Padded Clownsuit (+1d), Unicycle (+1d), Matches (0d), Off-brand Balloons (-1d).*

### Whoopsy (Clown)

Whoopsy is not so fond of stunts, as she damaged her innards in a tiny car accident. She wears noisy poot-shoes to cover for the resulting chronic flatulence. Inducted into Clown Helsing for her genuine clowning spirit and tactical genius.

**Traits:** *Just as I Planned (3d), Hammer Time (2d), Genuine Sincerity (2d), Wine Tasting (1d).*

**Flaws:** *Chronic Flatulence (-2d), Megalomania (-1d)*

**Props:** *Pow Hammer (+2d), Poot Shoes (+1d), Squirt Flower (+1d), Colorful Handkerchiefs (0d).*

### Vercingetorix (Old Vampire)

Lord Vercingetorix is an ancient and miserable forever-young heartthrob. He feeds from the shallow adulation of those who mistake moping for real depth of character. A challenging foe because his groupies are usually horrible goth teenagers.

**Traits:** *I've Forgotten More than You'll Ever Know (5d), My Burden is the Pain of the World (4d), Plays the Bass (3d), Tragically Hip (2d), To me, Groupies! (2d).*

**Flaws:** *Sparkles in sunlight (-1d), Forgetful (-1d), Always Looking Down (-1d).*

**Props:** *Smashable but Classic Guitar (+3d), Vincent Black Lightning Motorcycle (+5d), Dark Cloak (+1d).*

### Markov (Young Vampire)

Markov likes to pretend he is wacky and "insane," to feed off of the irritation it causes others. He acts like a grating, insincere "dark" mockery of Clowns, reflecting badly on them. A difficult foe as the Clowns must reveal his fraud before his anti-humor embitters Bystanders to true japery.

**Traits:** *Looky Me So Wacky (4d), Erroneous but Convincing Psychoanalysis (3d), Tiresome Internet Memes (2d), Fake Surrender (2d).*

**Flaws:** *Close Talker (-1d), Cartoon View of Reality (-2d)*

**Props:** *Random Axe of Scentless Violets (+4d), Can of Creamed Corn (+1d), Obnoxious Scented Body Spray (-1d).*

### Experience

Optionally, Clowns may grow with experience if they somehow survive a session. The RM asks the players for three reasons they deserve Experience Points (XP), and they get an experience point for each one they come up with. Each XP can be spent just like a Flaw point in creation, raising or gaining a Trait by spending XP equal to the next level.

**Enjoy, Be Creative, and Have Fun!** - Jake Mullins