

SOLACEBOUND



Young Monsters lost in a Human City

CW Structural Oppression and Violence

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Young Monsters lost in a human City

A GM-less storytelling Game for 3 to 5 players. Play with 2 sets of standard playing cards, index cards and at least two six sided dice

Dying leaves on the cities streets. The boundary between its realm and that of monsters thinned. Young monsters lost beyond the boundary, their curiosity having carried them too far. One week for them to find each other and a way home.

Safety & Consent

You are going to play young monsters who try to survive in a society that others them. Please use tools to ensure awareness about each others boundaries and safety during play (<https://www.bigbadcon.com/safety-mechanisms/> for examples)

Discuss which kind of music you would want to play during the game. Even if you don't plan on playing any, the discussion should let you settle on a mood for your game

0 - Game Overview

This game is made up of phases and actions.

In Creating your Monster, you answer questions to sketch out who you're playing.

In Arriving, you set up the table, describe a scene of arrival, and draw your first hand of spoon cards to be used during your first day in the city.

In Surviving the Day you spend spoon cards to perform actions and draw challenge cards for prompts in an effort to keep each other healthy, while searching for each other and clues for a way home.

After spending all spoon cards or ending the day, you enter Spending the Night. You may take a pause and reflect, before determining how many spoon cards you draw and entering the new day.

Ending the Game begins, when the week is over or enough clues are found. The game ends through describing last scenes and reflecting on the story told.

1 -Creating your Monster

In another world you were friends, rivals, partners and allies. In this one you are all you have left.

You may want to write on an index card or on the free space to your right:

- A name or the refusal to have one
- Pronouns, as many as you want or none
- An emotion that you can deal with and one that exhausts you. Choose from the box below. You may want to mark accordingly.
- A monstrous way your emotions manifest
- A monstrous feature you are proud of. Describe how it makes giving help easier
- A monstrous feature that makes you anxious. Describe how it makes receiving help harder.
- A small memory, important to your connection to another character

Anger



Excitement



Fear



Sadness



2 – Arriving

The city is vast and crowded. Nothing is like you're used to and the city is not used to you. It does not welcome you. You are lonely and you are lost. Right now, you don't even have each other.

Place a die between you, 1 facing upwards. This is the weeks die. It counts the days since arrival.

You have been thrust beyond the boundary, separated and spread throughout the city. Begin the games narration by describing the first impressions the city made on you. The youngest monster may begin.

You may want to describe:

- Your senses overwhelmed
- Humans reacting to you
- A sudden feeling of lack

Place the first deck between you. It is the challenge deck. Place the second deck on the table. It is the spoon deck.

Each player draws 5 cards from the spoon deck. You will need them as resource to perform an action. Each starts the first day separated from the rest.

3 – Surviving the Day

At the beginning of each day you must leave your hideout and will not be able to return. Describe how you disguise your monstrous features to try and pass as human.

During each day, you may choose to perform any of the following actions as often as you want or can.

You may at any time:

- Search for a way back
- Search for the others
- Search for a hideout

Inside your hideout, you may:

- Make the hideout comfortable
- Initiate a conversation
- Initiate an activity

During the day you are either separated or connected to each other monster. Any connected monsters may perform any of the first three actions together.

To perform an action follow the appropriate instruction on the following sites and narrate a short scene according to them. If multiple monsters participate in a scene, decide together which monster is the focus point and narrator.

3 – Surviving the day

When you narrate a scene, you may want to:

- Discuss Ideas with the others
- Invite questions
- Start by describing the physical space
- Color everything in feelings
- Return to places and people you've already been to
- Fill the world with touch, smell, voice
- Build up problems without clear answers
- Let others tell part of the scene
- Embrace contradictions



Inside the hideout

The Hideout is a place to sleep. Is also a chance to talk to each other in safety, create a piece of home and to be yourself. You can share it with each monster you are connected to.

To make the Hideout more comfortable discard one card. You may want to:

- Cook something
- Decorate a small part
- Talk with your hosts
- Clean the space

To initiate a conversation discard one card. You may want to:

- Discard an additional card to open up
- Discard an additional card to help the other open up
- Talk about what happened
- Talk about home
- Talk about the hideout
- Talk about each otherness

To initiate an Activity discard one card do it alone and two if you invite others. You may want to:

- Cuddle
- Dance or Sing
- Cook & Eat
- Engage in Spirituality
- Play a game

Search for a way back

Draw a card from the challenge deck. In order to overcome the challenge, all participants need to discard three cards in total. All cards need to have the same color as the challenge card.

To find a clue for the path home a discarded card must have the same number as the challenge card. The player who does may narrate finding a clue. They keep the card as a reminder.

Hearts and Diamonds count as the same color, as do Spades and Clovers.

To narrate, consult the Oracle for a prompt and the emotion that colors it.

If you overcome the challenge, you may want to describe:

- How you bash back
- How you embrace your difference
- How you deny respect
- Revealing your monstrosity

If you can't overcome the challenge, the participants are separated from non - participants and half of the participants are separated from the other half. Decide groupings together. You may want to describe:

- How you conform to society
- How you get overwhelmed
- How you get swallowed by the city
- Your monstrosity getting noticed.

Oracle

- 2 A deal with a power that hates you, at a disgusting price
 - 3 Your presence is seen as a disruption to a place of beauty
 - 4 The entrance to power is denied to you
 - 5 A reporter attempts to use you in bad faith
 - 6 Advertisement imitating you for profit
 - 7 Police gathering around a public square, preparing to strike
 - 8 A tune you recognize, shunned by most of society
 - 9 Refusal to cooperate attracts the anger of authorities
 - 10 Someone's monstrosity is revealed and a fight becomes necessary
- J A human not made from flesh stands alone
- Q A grove, once hidden
- K A building speaking in a language humans do not understand
- A A glimpse of something older than the city

Anger

Excitement

Fear

Sadness



Search for the others

Draw a card from the challenge deck. In order to overcome the challenge, all participants need to discard three cards in total. All cards need to have the same color as the challenge card.

Hearts and Diamonds count as the same color, as do Spades and Clovers.

To narrate, consult the Oracle for a prompt and the emotion that colors it.

If you overcome the challenge, you will find the smallest group of connected characters and be connected to all of them. If there are several of the same size choose yourself. To narrate your success you may want to describe:

- How you stay safe
- How you get away with something important
- How you leave your mark

If you can't overcome the challenge, the participants are separated from non-participants and half of the participants are separated from the other half. Decide groupings together. You may want to describe:

- How you conform to society
- How you get overwhelmed
- How you get swallowed by the city

Oracle

- 2 Isolated by the walls of narrowing streets
 - 3 A monument to horror
 - 4 Cruelty disguised in suits and smiles
 - 5 Among the masses, both uncaring and intrusive
 - 6 Brilliant buildings made from pain
 - 7 An honest mistake spirals into conflict
 - 8 A stranger attempts to be disastrously helpful
 - 9 Monstrous beauty left to rot
 - 10 Your choice of fashion draws attention
- J A protest sweeps you along
Q Exaggerated stories told at a train station
K The oldest part of the city
A Hidden wonder, seen in passing from a train station

Anger

Excitement

Fear

Sadness



Search for a hideout

Discard two cards of your choice. Then, draw a card from the challenge deck.

By performing Search for a hideout, you will find a hideout for each monster you are connected to. As long as they are connected to you they will return to this hideout at the end of the day.

To narrate, consult the Oracle for a prompt and the emotion that colors it.

You may want to describe:

- How you open up to help
- How they overcome suspicion
- What they give you or what you give them

Answer the following questions for your hideout:

- How do your hosts make you feel welcome?
- What of this place reminds you of home?
- Why can you only stay one night?
- How does this place make you feel the weight of the city?
- Why can you not fully relax here?

If the day ends and you have no hideout, your hideout is:

a dark gap between towering buildings
In that case, answer only the last three questions.

Oracle

- 2 A media center for youth who fear society
- 3 A community gardening project, kept alive against cooperate interest
- 4 Spirituality different then yours, but accepting nonetheless
- 5 A book store, long out of business, but still lived in
- 6 The basement in a school of a heavily segregated district
- 7 Squatters in houses abandoned by everyone but them
- 8 A cafe open to everyone willing to fight along
- 9 Kindness ripened with age and the wider space polished by it
- 10 A graveyard uniting through grief
- J A shelter for those who are denied citizenship
- Q The abandoned, living in cars and tents
- K Artists practicing an art younger then themselves
- A Fellow monsters hiding in plain sight

Anger

Excitement

Fear

Sadness



Minding Emotions

Whenever you draw a challenge card of an emotion you can deal with, draw two cards after the challenge.

Whenever you draw a challenge card of an emotion that exhausts you, discard a card with the same symbol. If you can't you get separated from anyone else. Narrate as if you couldn't overcome the challenge.

Minding Safety

Whenever you as a player do not feel comfortable narrating a scene with a drawn prompt, or hearing another player narrate a scene with a drawn prompt, say so. Draw another card from the challenge deck and determine a new prompt from the oracle. Outside the oracle, the original card is still treated as the drawn card.

Minding Yourself

If you want to leave the game and/or want your character to be safe you may want to describe how they are found by older monsters and brought home. Describe to the others what you leave behind so that they may know that you are safe.

4 – Spending the Night

When no player can or wants to perform another action, the day ends.

Before proceeding you may want to take this moment to:

- Take a pause
- Talk about your feelings about the characters and the city
- Talk about how you want the story to develop
- Mention something that hurt you
- Mention something delightful

Over night the young monsters may recover spoon cards. Discard all cards in your hand and then:

- Add a first die in your dice pool for luck
- Add a die if you had at least one spoon card left
- Add a die if you feel your monster can deal with what happened today
- Subtract a die if your monster feels unsafe
- Subtract a die if your monster doesn't feel comfortable as themselves

Shuffle all spoon cards back in, roll your dice and redraw spoon cards equal to the highest number among the dice rolled. Roll less than 1 die by rolling 2 and taking the lower result.

Before you start the new day, tick up the weeks die.

5 – Ending the Game

When you find one less clue than the number of players, you have found a way home.

Any group of monsters (even one) can return home as long as all clues are among the participants.

When you return home, pay no spoons. Any participant can decide to stay for another year. With this, the Game ends. Any non-participants need to stay in the city.

When the weeks die ticks to Seven, the way home disappears. The Game ends, and the Monsters need to stay for another year before the boundary thins again.

As the Game ends, narrate a Scene together. You may want to describe:

- A glance back
- Your hideouts and the people you've met
- The feeling of home, however close or far
- Something left behind or taken with you
- A conversation and nothing else

After the Game, you may want to take a moment to talk freely and reflect about the story you've told.

Thank you for playing

Pictures by Ömer Faruk Tokluoğlu, Evgeniy Grozev, Ramil Ugot and Suzukii Xingfu
Core Mechanic is a Hack of Takuma Okada's awesome "Alone among the Stars"