

① Create Locations

You are WATCHERS of the GATE. Select one GATE from the images on the back of these cards or invent your own. Read aloud these basic questions, then decide together your answers to them. (~5 minutes):

- What does your own GATE look like?
- What is on the other side?
- How do the 2 sides of the GATE differ?
- On which side of your GATE is home?
- Write up the answers about the GATE's home side as your 1st LOCATION index card.

Draw a map of each side of the GATE on two sheets of paper (~10 minutes):

- Draw & name the other side of the GATE, and create your 2nd LOCATION index card.
- Taking turns, each player draws & names (or draws a path off the page toward) at least 2 nearby LOCATIONS, choosing at least one Location on each side of Gate.
- Each player writes an index card with a short description of their LOCATION choice.

There are at least three acts, each of which typically contains two or three (5-10m) scenes per player. Turn all 6 RESOLUTION cards face-down in center of table at beginning of each act. Pick 3 MYSTERIES to focus on.

In **Act 1**, the player with the youngest WATCHER begins the first scene. Each player on their first scene shuffles the other WATCHER cards, draws one & draws a random card from the PLOT deck. The act ends when everyone's Act 1 WATCHER PLOT is resolved.

In **Act 2**, the player with the oldest WATCHER begins by drawing a single LOCATION card, a PLOT card and sharing the result. Remove one of the MYSTERIES from focus. The act ends when this Act 2 PLOT has been addressed at LOCATION.

In **Act 3**, the player who has been least in the spotlight begins the first act. Pick one of remaining MYSTERIES. The act ends when a clue or answer to the MYSTERY is revealed.

Repeat **Acts 2 & Act 3** as needed for future sessions with new LOCATION & MYSTERY.

② Define the Mysteries

Read aloud the following questions first, then consider & decide on the answers for some, but leave the others open as MYSTERIES. (10m)

- Who knows about the GATE? Uses it?
- Who comes through & with what?
- How do you pass through the GATE?
- Is the GATE always open? Why not?
- Is the GATE dangerous? How?
- Why are we watching? How long?
- Who or what are we watching for?
- Who built the GATE? When? How?
- Are there more GATES? Where?
- Are we only watching the GATE, or are we also guarding or defending it?
- Are we being paid to watch? How?
- Who are our enemies? Our allies?

Each player chooses at least one unanswered intriguing question as a MYSTERY & writes it up on an index card. Review the remaining answers and write them up as TRUTHS. (10m)

Taking turns, set up a short scene with the WATCHER you created. **You must...**

- Set the stage (**when, where, what**).
- Portray your WATCHER in that scene.
- **"Cut!"** Finish the scene when you're ready (*your plot does not have to be resolved yet!*).

You may...

- Ask other player's WATCHERS to join you in the spotlight.
- Ask remaining players to play any ensemble characters as needed.
- Ask **"Help me figure out...?"**—Invite the other players to come up with an answer. If no one answers, the player to your left decides the answer.
- Ask **"Do I Succeed?"** The player to your left chooses a face-down RESOLUTION card, turns card face-up & narrates the result.
- If all RESOLUTION cards are face-up, turn all face-down.

③ The Watchers

Each player plays a member of the watch. Take turns asking a fellow WATCHER a question about themselves — it is these answers that will determine the nature of the WATCHER. The answerer then asks another WATCHER the next question. Continue until each has answered at least 3 questions. (10m)

Possible questions include:

- When did you first become aware of the existence of GATES?
- When did you become a WATCHER?
- How did you once save the day?
- When have you failed? How did you survive?
- What do you lack or need?
- What is your greatest talent?
- Who is your greatest mentor?
- Who do you care about the most?

Players write the name of their WATCHER, along with 3 short phrases related to their unique answers to these questions.

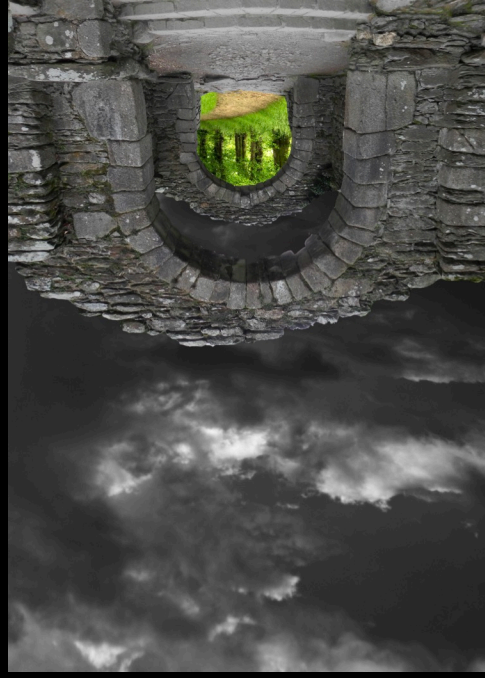
At any time **any player** may request...

- **"Focus on that!"** — Ask the speaker to offer greater detail about the scene & what is happening.
- **"Close-up!"** Ask the speaker pause so that you can add detail to a scene to support the characters in the spotlight.
- **"Rewind!"** — Ask the speaker to undo what their character is doing and do it in a different way.
- **"Fast-Forward!"** — Ask the speaker move to the next scene faster.
- **"Pause!"** — Signal to the other players that the current scene is not comfortable and intensity should be reduced.
- **"That seems risky!"** — Ask that the player speaking to *restate* what they are trying to do. A 3rd player turns over a RESOLUTION card face-up, interprets & narrates the result. (*Only once per scene.*)

④ The Three Acts

⑤ On Your Turn

⑥ On Anyone's Turn



Plot

Act One

- You must break a rule or law to deal with a personal situation. You need help or to obtain permission from WATCHER to do so. Act can end after you deal with any consequences.

Act Two

- Choose one of...*
- A traveller from LOCATION desires to pass through the GATE. Act ends when the WATCHERS allow or deny the traveller access to pass through.
 - Goods (resources, tech, magic, gifts) from other side of GATE are to be delivered to LOCATION. Act ends when the WATCHERS allow the goods to arrive at the LOCATION or refuse them.

Plot

Act One

Choose one of...

- The WATCHER has something you need or want. Act can end if you gain or are publicly denied it.
- The WATCHER has a story they are reluctant to tell. Act can end if they tell the story or publicly tell you no.

Act Two

Choose one of...

- You require help from allies or mentors at LOCATION who want your support for another goal. Act ends after the WATCHERS support them or fail at the attempt.
- You are betrayed or tricked by allies or mentors at LOCATION. Act ends after the WATCHERS confront them.

Plot

Act One

- You wish to meet the family or friend of WATCHER or for WATCHER to meet your family or friend. Act can end when the meeting occurs or WATCHER denies the meeting.

Act Two

- Choose one of...*
- There is a rumor that a clue to a MYSTERY may be found at LOCATION. Act ends when rumor is proved false or clue is found.
 - The WATCHERS are beset by an unexpected force at or denied access to LOCATION (enemies, the law, force-of-nature, an event). Act ends when the WATCHERS succeed or fail to repel the force, or when access is otherwise restored.

Plot

Act One

- You suspect WATCHER or WATCHER's ally has a hidden agenda. Act can end once you learn the agenda, or when the WATCHER denies it after you confront them publicly.

Act Two

Choose one of...

- An answer about GATES previously determined to be a TRUTH is in fact false. Act ends when the WATCHERS find it is false at LOCATION. Create a new MYSTERY card.
- The GATE closes, possibly due to the activities at LOCATION. Act ends when either the WATCHERS discover the source of the closure, or the GATE re-opens.

Plot

Act One

- The WATCHER has an exceptional skill or ability that you wish to witness or that can teach you something. Act can end when you witness it or are publicly denied by WATCHER.

Act Two

- Choose one of...*
- The control of LOCATION has unexpectedly changed hands. Act ends when the WATCHERS discover who controls it and what the consequences of that change will be.
 - There are innocents or bystanders at LOCATION that are threatened by the GATE and must be protected. Act ends after the WATCHERS have succeeded or failed in protecting them.

Plot

Act One

- At some time in the past you spied upon WATCHER or you stole something from WATCHER that they may or may not value. Act ends when you either ask for forgiveness or return what you stole.

Act Two

Choose one of...

- You must work alongside someone the WATCHERS don't like (rivals, villains, outcasts) at LOCATION. Act ends when the WATCHERS either succeed or fail in collaborating with them.
- A new GATE is rumored to have opened at LOCATION. Act ends when the WATCHERS discover if the rumor is false or when they discover where the new GATE leads to.



Resolution

Yes, but you succeed...

- ...at a minor cost
- ...with unanticipated or unintended consequences for the future
- ...by exhausting additional resources
- ...by being slower than planned
- ...at the cost of others noticing your actions in the future
- ...by being disadvantaged in resolving a different plot thread

Resolution

No, and unexpectedly...

- ...something entirely unrelated goes wrong /misses the mark
- ...others will discover you or become opposed against you
- ...something dear to you is harmed, lost or destroyed
- ...you harm yourself, a friend, ally or loved one
- ...omens of a dark future are foreshadowed or prophesied against you
- ...another plot thread accelerates to conflict

Resolution

Yes, and...

- ...you were more as successful than planned
- ...you succeed using fewer resources
- ...you succeed quickly leaving extra time
- ...you succeed quietly and without notice
- ...you succeed with style & panache
- ...you succeed perfectly & decisively

Resolution

No, but...

- ...your failure has some positive consequences
- ...you lose no time or resources
- ...your failure can help another succeed
- ...you gain insight or knowledge that will be useful in the future
- ...you gain a friend or goodwill in the process
- ...you gain insights on how to resolve a different plot thread

Resolution

Yes, and unexpectedly...

- ...something completely unrelated is a success
- ...you find or discover something or someone important
- ...you earn an ally, reward or good reputation in the process
- ...you gain insight or knowledge that will be useful in the future
- ...omens of a bright future are foreshadowed or prophesied for you
- ...you will be at an advantage in resolving another plot thread

Resolution

No, unless you still choose to succeed...

- ...at a serious cost
 - ...at the price of earning a new enemy, debt or bad reputation
 - ...by sacrificing something dear to you
 - ...at the price of harming yourself, a friend, ally or a loved one
 - ...by finding someone else more suited to the task
 - ...by significantly altering the stakes or goal
- (spotlight character chooses)*

