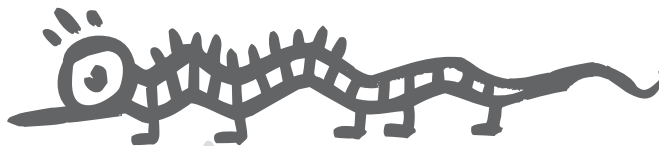


Curriculum OF CONSPIRACY

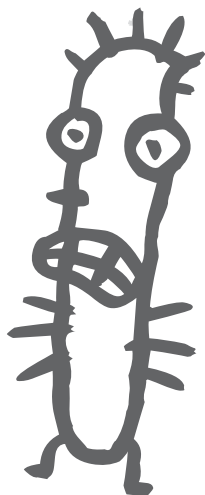


MONSTERS
AND OTHER CHILDISH THINGS



Curriculum OF CONSPIRACY

Spring Crescent Middle School



A sourcebook for the game *Monsters and Other Childish Things*. *Curriculum of Conspiracy* is written by Ross Payton, © 2008. Illustrated by Rob Mansperger, © 2008. *Monsters and Other Childish Things* is © 2008, Benjamin Baugh. The One-Roll Engine is © 2008, Greg Stolze. Published by Arc Dream Publishing. Special thanks to Fred Hicks, man among page designers, and our playtest GMs: Gary “Evilgaz” Bowerbank, Neil Ford and Dan Parke. Visit us on the Web at www.arcdream.com/monsters.

Spring Crescent Middle School

We don't need no education.

Spring Crescent Middle School is a beacon of light and knowledge in the city. Its students are renowned around the nation for high achievement in scholastics, athletics and civic duty. Families move to the school district so that their children might have a chance to attend this prestigious school. The walls of the front office are lined with photos of its successful alumni, including many famous politicians, businessmen, actors and other prodigies. Everyone in the community endlessly repeats the litany of the school's importance and each student that walks through its doors knows how vital success in the school is to their future lives.

It is a lie.

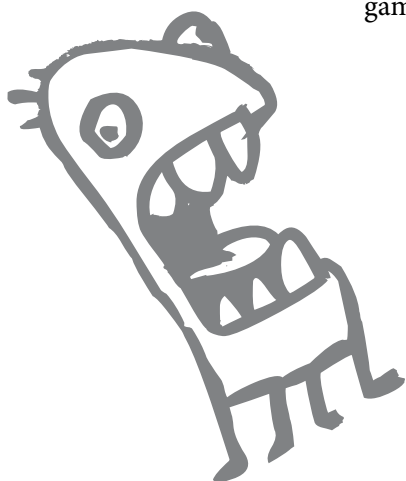
The administration ruthlessly exploits every system to gain prestige, funding and accolades it does not truly deserve. It manipulates the student body into cooperating and every freshman soon learns that everyone has a scam or an angle. That's how most of Spring Crescent's students and faculty think of the school.

But even this is a lie.

A small cadre of teachers and administrators have for years waged a war against the supernatural. Monsters in particular. Not for altruistic reasons, either. They have turned the school into the perfect trap for kids with monsters and use it to lure them and dominate or destroy them for personal profit and power. Of course, only a few know this, least of all any unwary freshman with a monster who steps inside.

Welcome to middle school.

Curriculum of Conspiracy is an adventure and campaign setting for *Monsters and Other Childish Things*, the roleplaying game by Arc Dream Publishing. You need a copy of that game to use this adventure. Find out more at www.arcdream.com/monsters.



Theme

Life sucks. Wear a helmet.

Hypocrisy, corruption and clique politics all cast a shadow over everything connected to Spring Crescent. Every kid in the school is forced to become an accomplice to the schemes of the faculty, as those who don't quickly face the wrath of the administration.

The cabal uses subtle and supernatural methods to create deniability. Who will believe stories of teachers reading minds with sorcery or binding demons to enforce their rules? Selfish and ambitious students learn how to manipulate the system for their own ends and fall into squabbling with the other cliques. Kids who want to retain their dignity and self-respect must fight a guerrilla war against the adults and most of the student body.

Then there are kids with monsters. Kids with monsters have to deal with a conspiracy all around them that aims to destroy their monster friends and corrupt their souls. The teachers have decades of experience in confusing, betraying and breaking willful adolescents and their monsters.



The History of SCMC

History is first period.

Founded in 1913, Spring Crescent Middle School was once a normal school for normal kids. Its real history begins in 1947 when the school board hired a new principal, Dr. Norman Levitt. Dr. Levitt presented himself as a bold innovator in the field of education, but in reality he was an occultist obsessed with discovering the existence of symbiotic guardian demons—monsters. He saw Spring Crescent as his private laboratory.

Hans and the Soldier

Few know the details of Dr. Levitt's background. He had an Ivy League education. The earliest records are of his freshman year in college. In truth, Levitt spent his college years experimenting with various secret societies and cults. He also gained access to society's elite as he invited the upper crust to dark rituals and orgies for their decadent pleasure. He was nearly expelled for his activities, but he blackmailed several school officials, who had attended his orgies, into letting him graduate. After graduation, Levitt delved deeper into the occult underground and learned the basics of black magic while touring Europe between the wars.

Levitt might have been content to study dark grimoires had he not encountered a young boy named Hans in the back woods of Bavaria in 1934. Following rumors of a witch-tainted child, Dr. Levitt found Hans living alone in a squalid hut at the edge of a farming village. Curiously, despite the lack of a parent or guardian, the child appeared well fed and content. The doctor questioned the boy for several hours as the child innocently played with an exquisitely hand-carved toy wooden soldier, but ultimately learned nothing. When Dr. Levitt returned to the village to stay the night, the villagers refused to speak of the child, even when offered cash or liquor as incentives.

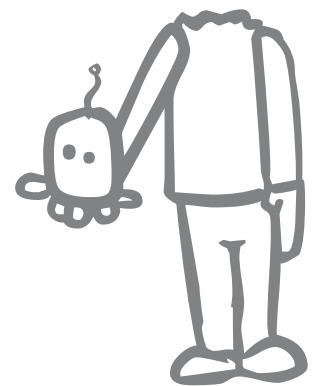
A week of careful study of the boy yielded nothing, but Levitt could sense he was onto something. Reasoning that forcing the boy to act would bring about the best results, he used magic to wither the crops of the village. Soon rumors began to fly. With a few more curses, and suggestions from Levitt, the villagers formed a mob to lynch the boy for allying himself with the devil. Dr. Levitt accompanied the mob, eager to see what Hans would do to protect himself.

A tall soldier in a Napoleonic uniform greeted the mob. The villagers were confused by the man, but yelled at him to move out of the way. The soldier leveled his musket but said nothing. The village headman charged forward, belligerent at this act of defiance. A moment later, he was skewered by the musket's bayonet. The mob surged forward, incensed. For a moment, it seemed they would overwhelm the lone defender, but Dr. Levitt felt a tremendous surge of mystical energy from the soldier. Its angles became sharp and unnatural, a blocky geometric-shaped monster with a thousand bayonets erupting from its body. Only Dr. Levitt's extensive knowledge of the occult allowed him to recognize the monster as a powerful entity from beyond time and space. Fascinated, he watched in wonder as the creature slaughtered the mob.

Levitt was so caught up in watching the monster that he almost missed one of the villagers sneaking up on Hans. Realizing the creature had some kind of connection with the boy, Levitt killed the villager with a spell before he could harm the boy. Hans thanked Levitt for saving his life, not realizing he had stirred up the mob in the first place. Levitt tried to persuade the kid to come with him, that he would care for him; but Hans simply smiled and said his friend was all that he needed. With that, the two vanished into the night, leaving Levitt infuriated.

Dr. Levitt knew the limitations of mystical power. A highly-skilled sorcerer could kill a man with a thought or see into the future. But that power had limitations. He only had so much energy, and killing even a single person required a great deal of it. Furthermore, most magic took a great deal of time to prepare, and a single mistake in its use would doom the wielder.

The guardian monster seemed to have no limitations to its power. It threw about vast amounts of power carelessly. Its only weakness was its connection to a child. That night, he decided to spend his life learning the mysteries of guardian demons.



The Conspiracy

Dr. Levitt returned to America and began to pursue a career in children's education. His past was expunged and suppressed, and he was accepted into academia with open arms. Within a few years, he had made a name for himself and sought a job as a principal in a junior high school to test his theories of education.

After joining the staff of Spring Crescent Levitt spent five years renovating the school, adding two new wings and upgrading the facilities. He easily secured the loans to make the additions, using his name and reputation as leverage. Of course, in private he corrupted or threatened anyone who stood in his way. These additions were only covers for a system of magical wards and sigils designed to detect and counter any monster or supernatural creature that set foot inside the school. Levitt needed the right tools for his experiments and these secret wards were the perfect instruments.

By 1952, Spring Crescent was a paragon of modern education, leading the way in America's race to excel. Not a single child with a guardian demon had set foot inside

Spring Crescent, but that would soon change. Billy and Bad were the first, but far from the last.

Despite Dr. Levitt's wards, it was Bartleby Hebig, a normal science teacher, who first saw Billy's monster, named Bad. Bad appeared as a muscular werewolf with an eternal wicked grin on its face. It protected weak little Billy from the jocks. Mr. Hebig saw the werewolf stuff several football players into their lockers. Terrified, Mr. Hebig turned to drink and refused to acknowledge the monster's campaign of terror.

More and more students were severely traumatized by Bad as it spun out of Billy's control. Dr. Levitt knew something was going on, but couldn't pinpoint the source until he found Mr. Hebig in the science room one night, sobbing into his whiskey.

Levitt got the full story out of Mr. Hebig. Deciding that a few extra eyes and ears would help, he told Mr. Hebig enough of the truth to make him a true believer. That night, the Conspiracy was born. Acting together, they soon figured out how to separate Billy from Bad and managed to trap the demon in a mystical binding. Billy was expelled and sent to a home for "troubled youth" while Bad became the guinea pig for Levitt's experiments for years to come.

Only two more monsters appeared in the 1950s and both were quickly identified and dealt with by the burgeoning Conspiracy, which expanded to 13 members. One monster was destroyed while the second was bound to Dr. Levitt. The Conspiracy's success led to arrogance, which put them off guard for the coming decade. All of the monsters had been isolated and alone. Levitt did not even consider the possibility of more than one monster appearing at the same time.

The freshman class of 1960 held seven kids with seven monsters. Worse, they knew of each other and most of them followed the lead of Caroline Jolly-Kidd, a charismatic and idealistic girl with a powerful monster named Black Slayer.

The Gidim and the Fire

The next two years saw the Conspiracy's first war against a group of kids with monsters. Both sides acted hesitantly at first, as Dr. Levitt could not think of a way to deal with the accumulated power of so many monsters. One monster was deadly enough; facing seven was unthinkable. Meanwhile, the kids had to come to terms with each other and their monsters, ignorant of the Conspiracy's threat. Eventually, one of Dr. Levitt's acolytes, a secretary named Wilma, took the initiative and ambushed Caroline and the Black Slayer in the school. Unfortunately, Wilma overestimated her powers and lost the duel and her sanity. The Black Slayer shattered her mind with its own twisted imagination.

Wilma was found the next morning huddled under a table in the front office, babbling to herself about the hollowed space between worlds. Dr. Levitt declared war and began to harass the students on school grounds and off, suspending them for minor infractions, kicking them out of extracurricular activities and isolating them from the student body. He hoped this would break their spirits and make it easier to bind their monsters to his



will. However, Caroline told the other kids of her encounter with Wilma and they soon banded together for protection and friendship.

The Conspiracy schemed to isolate and demoralize the kids first and then bind the monsters with a mystical ritual. The kids fought back by humiliating the faculty and disrupting their plans whenever possible. Both sides achieved some victories, but by spring 1962 the kids had Dr. Levitt on the run. They had dismantled many of the school's wards and defeated several of his acolytes. Levitt still controlled the two monsters he had bound, but he did not want to risk them in combat with uncontrolled monsters.

He ceased his attack on Caroline and the other kids and plunged into occult research, hoping to determine how to deal with them before they graduated from Spring Crescent.

A week before school was out he found a solution, a ritual that transferred power from a monster into seven human hosts. This killed the monster and transformed the human hosts into deformed freaks with mystical powers, under the control of the ritual master. Levitt gathered fourteen members of the Conspiracy, pawns and fools, and performed the ritual.

Levitt dubbed his creation the **Gidim**, after a Sumerian spirit that possessed the living. With his new army of **Gidim**, he confronted Caroline's band the night of the graduation ceremony, determined to either control the monsters or destroy them.

May 26, 1962, is still remembered in the community as the night of the big fire. Spring Crescent Middle School nearly burned to the ground, the cause still unknown. Tragically, seven children died in the blaze. Older citizens in the community still tell stories of the big fire, which made news around the country. Some blame "bad seeds" for the fire, and prejudice against potential dissidents is still common in the community to this day.

Levitt's cataclysmic battle with the band of kids and monsters resulted in the deaths of everyone involved except Levitt, Hebig, two **Gidim** and Caroline Jolly-Kidd. The Black Slayer gave its life to protect her, and used its remaining power to transform itself into a duplicate of Caroline in death. Thus, no one in the community, least of all Dr. Levitt, suspects that Caroline is still alive. She ran away and has only returned to the community recently.

Dr. Levitt triumphed over the kids, but his was a pyrrhic victory. He had proven his total mastery of the supernatural, yet it had crippled him. He died from his injuries a year later, leaving Bartleby Hebig, his first disciple, as leader of the Conspiracy. As per his instructions, Levitt was secretly buried in a room of Spring Crescent. From there, his spirit watches over the school and secretly advises the leader of the Conspiracy.

Since then, the Conspiracy has ruled Spring Crescent in secret. For more than 40 years, few kids with monsters have escaped intact from the school. Most are subdued, the kids sent to psychiatric facilities while the monsters are drained of power and destroyed. However, the Conspiracy has again grown complacent and arrogant. Under the leadership of the school principal, Mr. Stanmeyer, they have finally forgotten the lessons of the first war and they do not fear monsters.

It is time for a lesson in humility to be taught with claws, fangs, and tentacles.



Rules for **Gidim**

Gidim are half-human, half-monster freaks. Each **Gidim** has some monstrous power. Some of them have human stats and take damage like humans (although, again, with all the resilience of monsters), while others have monstrous hit locations. The ones who look the most human sometimes have relationships like humans, but all have the physical toughness of monsters.

Real monsters recognize **Gidim** for what they are, just like they can spot other monsters, but **Gidim** can't see a monster if it's hidden.

Machinations of the Conspiracy

Teachers are your friends.

After the first war of 1962, the Conspiracy's basic modus operadi was formed. The leader is always a skilled wizard, typically trained and hand-picked by his predecessor. The other members are acolytes with some arcane talent, or supernatural beings disguised as faculty. The leader wields absolute control over the group, because only the leader can command the Gidim created by draining real monsters of their power. In theory, the Conspiracy is an open fellowship dedicated to protecting society against "demons" and the "devil-touched" children who command them. In reality it operates more like a pyramid scheme, where the leaders reap the majority of benefits and the followers take on almost all the risk.

The Conspiracy works like this: The leader and his inner circle recruit two to three dozen adults and older teenagers as members. Most candidates are staff members or part of the Spring Crescent Middle School community, such as PTA board members or high school volunteers. They are initiated in small groups, called cabals, and are not told who is a member outside of their cabal. Each cabal member is given access to a few spells and rituals, depending on their job for the Conspiracy and token rewards for their work. The inner circle treats the cabals as disposable cat's paws, and will abandon them if they become a liability.

Initial Plots

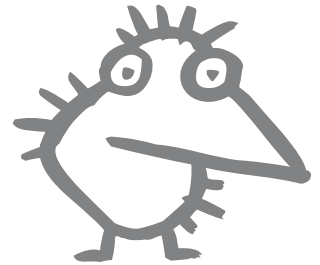
When one or more kids with monsters are identified, the Conspiracy begins to plot against them. As it prefers subtle plans over direct action, the Conspiracy takes time to study and test the kids with minor challenges and threats. Typically one cabal is directed against them and given minimal support by the leadership, in effect becoming shock troopers to soften the opposition. Here are some examples.

The Grudge: A single Gidim harasses a single kid with anonymous threats and acts of vandalism against the kid's family, and ultimately ambushes the kid. The Gidim is given free reign to deal with the kid, but will not receive backup if things go bad. Typically the Gidim is created specifically to attack the kid and the Conspiracy typically picks someone who has a grudge.

Monster House: A cabal summons a hostile supernatural being in an abandoned house in the town (perhaps on Franklin Street; page 55) and then disseminates rumors about

treasure buried in the house. If the kids with monsters do not go themselves, the cabal lures someone close to one of the kids into the house.

The Lock-In: The administration announces a lock-in for all the kids at the school with games, pizza, ice cream and more. Attendance is not technically mandatory, but every success-hungry parent makes sure their kids attend. At the lock-in, several cabalists monitor the party and prod the kids into using their monsters for mischief. (This may give the kids a chance to discover evidence of the Conspiracy.)



Divide and Conquer

Once the threat level of the kids is determined, Principal Stanmeyer moves decisively. He assigns multiple cabals to take them down.

The first targets are the relationships of each kid. By sabotaging their relationships, the Conspiracy finds the kids are much easier to fight. Parents are told their kids are truants who get bad grades and have drug problems, while the faculty subtly encourages other students to harass and torment the kids.

The Trophy: A prized school trophy goes missing and the Conspiracy frames one of the kids. Unless the group can prove he is innocent—a string of clues may lead to the lair of a horrific Gidim—the entire student body and community turn against him, making him a pariah.

Blackmail: The Conspiracy blackmails a parent to act against someone with whom their kid has a relationship. For example, a parent can be told to stop the kid from seeing another kid or to spread nasty rumors about another parent. After the parent is neck deep in the plot, the Conspiracy leaks the information to the kids, hinting that the monsters are responsible for their parents' betrayal.

The Favorite: The administration promotes one of the kids to head of the student body. They attempt to corrupt the kid into turning against his friends. Once the friends are alienated, they take away the kid's new power and prestige. The kid is doomed unless his friends stick by him.

Final Strike

When the kids are the most vulnerable, the Conspiracy musters its forces and strikes. It ambushes one kid and attempts to bind his or her monster. If the monster cannot be bound, it is destroyed.

The Lamb: The Conspiracy lures the kids away from each other at night and then attacks one of them with overwhelming force. Unless the kids realize that something is wrong, one of them will fall that night.

Truce: Feigning desperation, the Conspiracy asks for a truce. The meeting is a trap designed to cripple and separate the kids.

Scorched Earth: If the kids seem on the verge of victory, the Conspiracy truly becomes desperate and goes to war. They attack the kids openly at their homes, kidnap family members and friends and resort to torture. If all seems lost, they may unleash every supernatural being they can summon and attempt to destroy the entire town in a last ditch effort to stop the kids. Luxor (page 20) walks the earth, demons stalk innocent citizens and all hell breaks loose. Only by destroying the leadership of the Conspiracy can the kids save everyone they know and love. This has not happened. Yet.

Damage Control

If the Conspiracy runs into complications from the kids, it immediately attempt to disrupt them. Generally these plans focus on damage control and long-term survival rather than short-term goals. They prefer to destroy evidence of the Conspiracy over destroying a single monster.

The Patsy: A cabal finds a patsy to blame for unexplained phenomenon involving the school. A vandalized school bus is blamed on a disgruntled former student rather than the kids, and reports of monster sightings are attributed to pranksters operating in the area. Typically the patsy is mind-controlled and made to seem to mentally unstable.

Silence! If the leadership realizes that evidence of the Conspiracy has been discovered, it attempts to silence anyone who has come into contact with it. Kids are bribed with good grades (great for relationships!) while adults are intimidated or blackmailed.

Betrayal: The leadership fears the possibility of a mutiny, so all dissent is quashed as quickly as possible. If a cabalist betrays the Conspiracy and is discovered, they attempt to kill the traitor without hesitation. Even low-level cabalists know too much to be left alive. However, if the cabalist is simply becoming disenchanted with the Conspiracy, mind-control magic is employed to seal his or her lips. Afterwards, the ex-member is forced out of the Conspiracy and town, forever exiled.

The Cabals

Secret secrets hurt someone.

Currently four cabals exist at Spring Crescent, each with a specific mission. They are given elaborate names which are typically ironic monikers for their real functions.

The Leader

Principal Stanmeyer is the leader and the most powerful wizard of the Conspiracy. He has years of experience in fighting occult threats and managing a secret organization of ambitious and often treacherous sorcerers and monsters.

Quote: “Do you have a friend who makes you do bad things? Tell me about him.”

Typical Encounter: Mr. Stanmeyer strolls down the hall of the school, sipping coffee. He chats with students, seemingly at random while in fact interrogating them about supernatural entities. He is too cool-headed to slip and reveal anything of value casually. Only an exceedingly witty and clever kid could trick Mr. Stanmeyer into giving up a clue.

Principal Stanmeyer's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 1, Kicking 0, Dodge 2, Ethereal Transportation 3*)

Guts 5 (Wind 0, Courage 5, Wrestling 2 Meditation of Thoth 5*)

Hands 2 (Shop 1, Punching 0, Blocking 2, Signs of Warding and Shielding 3*)

Brains 5 (Out-Think 5, Remember 4, Notice 0, Lens of the Other World 5*)

Face 5 (Charm 3, Putdown 4, Connive 3, Word of Power and Authority 4*)

* This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.

Relationships: The Conspiracy 4, His Pet Cat Muffy 1.



Order of Harmonious Diplomacy

This cabal maintains the secrecy of the Conspiracy and the supernatural by bribing, black-mailing, threatening, or ruining anyone who comes close to the truth. They seldom interact with students, as they focus their attention on the adults. They have their hooks in every major authority figure in the community, from the police department to the mayor.

Harry Gale

A senior police officer in the community, Gale can inflict incredible pain with a spell that does not leave any physical evidence of his brutality. He investigates troublesome adults and acts as the cabal's enforcer.

Quote: "Damn punk kids."

Typical Encounter: Harry Gale has volunteered for every youth-related program in the police department, so he shows up at Spring Crescent every so often to lecture kids on the evils of drug abuse, stranger danger and truancy. He likes to question kids about their parents so he can get dirt on them, and it is very easy to do so at the school.

Officer Gale's Stats

Feet 3 (P.E. 4, Kicking 4, Dodge 3)

Guts 4 (Wind 4, Courage 4, Wrestling 5)

Hands 5 (Shop 0, Punching 0, Blocking 0, Agony Spell 3*)

Brains 2 (Out-Think 1, Remember 3, Notice 3)

Face 3 (Charm 1, Putdown 3, Connive 3)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Stephanie Gwen 1, Cop Buddies 2, Mr. Stanmeyer 1.

Stephanie Gwen

A bored, divorced housewife and PTA member with hypnosis abilities, Gwen seduces potential adversaries so the Conspiracy can blackmail them into compliance. She prefers to target kids' fathers. Her only child, Todd, loathes how his mother acts and has a major problem with authority as a result. He acts out frequently and is always getting into fights. He knows nothing about the Conspiracy, but if it's a way to get back at his mother, he'll become a dedicated resistance fighter.

Quote: "Hi, hun."

Typical Encounter: Stephanie prefers not to deal with kids, especially those who might have monsters. If she stumbles upon one, she will attempt to leave or use her hypnosis as soon as possible. She is skittish, to say the least, when it comes to actual monsters.

Ms. Gwen's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 2)

Guts 2 (Wind 2, Courage 0, Wrestling 0)

Hands 2 (Shop 1, Punching 0, Blocking 1)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 3, Remember 0, Notice, 3)

Face 5 (Charm 5, Putdown 5, Connive 5, Hypnosis 5*)

* This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.

Relationships: Mr. Stanmeyer 1, Edgar Welham 1, Anthony the Pool Boy 2, Harry Gale 1.

Kathy Leuff

An editor at the local newspaper, Leuff is the mother of Betty, a kid who had a monster. She uses her influence to keep any news stories connected to the supernatural out of the media. She has no magical abilities but she is kept in the Conspiracy, whose leaders promise a "cure" for her "sick" child. The kid is kept in a psychiatric facility for adolescents, severely traumatized at seeing her monster killed in a draining ritual.

Quote: "I'm sorry, but saying your teacher is a soul-sucking monster doesn't make it true."

Typical Encounter: While she does not normally report the news, Kathy takes an active role in any story that interests the Conspiracy. If kids do something newsworthy, Kathy makes sure to interview them for the story. She is suspicious of anyone 12 or younger.

Mrs. Leuff's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 3)

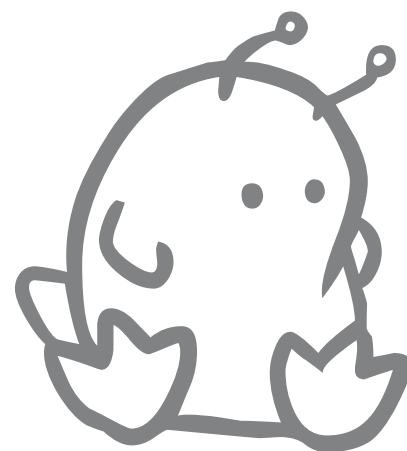
Guts 3 (Wind 0, Courage 4, Wrestling 0)

Hands 2 (Shop 2, Punching 2, Blocking 0)

Brains 4 (Out-Think 4, Remember 4, Notice 5)

Face 4 (Charm 4, Putdown 3, Connive 5)

Relationships: Betty Leuff 3, Mr. Stanmeyer 2.



Oliver Venturi

A teenager and amateur photographer, Oliver knows an invisibility spell that he uses to conduct surveillance and gather blackmail material. He also stalks pretty young girls when possible but is terrified of getting caught.

Quote: “Uhhh. Get away from me. This is for, like, art. Buncha kiddies.”

Typical Encounter: Oliver, like most voyeurs, doesn’t like to be seen. He only interacts with kids if they catch him taking photos. Strangely, he doesn’t think anyone would ever want to watch him, so he is easy to put under surveillance.

Oliver's Stats

Feet 4 (P.E. 4, Kicking 0, Dodge 4, Invisibility Magic 5*)

Guts 2 (Wind 2, Courage 0, Wrestling 0)

Hands 4 (Shop 4, Punching 1, Blocking 4, Photography 3)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 3, Remember 2, Notice 5)

Face 2 (Charm 0, Putdown 0, Connive 3)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It’s left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: The Cheerleading Squad 1, Momma 2, Cameras 3.

Edgar Welham

A retired school administrator and pillar of the community, Welham is well connected and informed. His only magical ability is a restorative spell that keeps his cancer in check.

Quote: “Howdy! How are y’all doing? I think it’s great that you kids are doing so much!”

Typical Encounter: Edgar informs on the community for the Conspiracy, so he remains active, organizing charity events and contributing to various good causes. He may try recruit kids for one of his charity events, where he will keep a sharp eye out for anything supernatural.

Mr. Welham's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 2, Kicking 0, Dodge 0)

Guts 4 (Wind 0, Courage 4, Wrestling 4, Wholesome Restoration 5*)

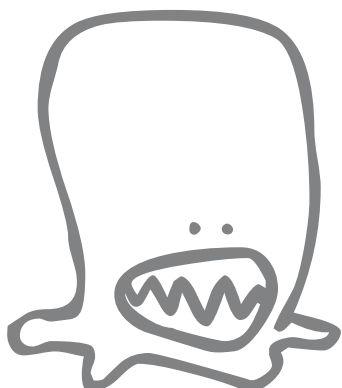
Hands 2 (Shop 2, Punching 2, Blocking 2)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 1, Remember 0, Notice 4)

Face 3 (Charm 3, Putdown 2, Connive 3)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It’s left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Martha Welham 3, Stephanie Gwen 1, Harry Gale 1.



Eyes of Sight's Unseen

The scouts of the Conspiracy, this cabal searches for kids with monsters and assesses their potential threat to the Conspiracy.

Derek Forster

A handsome young English teacher with a reputation for being friendly and honest, Forster focuses on being a confidante to students so they may confess their secrets to him. He can detect supernatural creatures when they use their powers. He secretly dates Stephanie Gwen and is becoming infatuated with her, a feeling she does not share.

Quote: "Growing up is tough."

Typical Encounter: Forster often takes the sides of outcast students, even against other faculty members. He is quite popular with the student body and works to keep that trust. As a result, he will focus on a kid suspected of having a monster and go out of his way to earn that kid's trust. He may chase off bullies, give the kid leniency with an assignment or tutor the kid during study hall. After helping the kid, Forster says he will help whenever the kid gets in trouble. Once the kid asks for help, Foster sets him or her up for the Conspiracy.

Mr. Forster's—I Mean Derek's—Stats

Feet 3 (P.E. 3, Kicking 3, Dodge 3)

Guts 3 (Wind 3, Courage 3, Wrestling 3)

Hands 4 (Shop 4, Punching 4, Blocking 0)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 3, Remember 5, Notice 2, Supernatural Sense 4*)

Face 5 (Charm 4, Putdown 0, Connive 5)

* This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.

Relationships: The Student Body 1, Dopple 1, Stephanie Gwen 1.

Victoria Greenwood

The school counselor and leader of the cabal, Greenwood takes orders directly from Mr. Stanmeyer and from him alone. In her capacity as counselor, she can usually determine if a student has a monster or not with a thorough interview, but she can only talk to students who ask for help or get in trouble. She is immune to mind-influencing abilities and can detect monsters if they are not hiding.

Quote: "Why don't you tell me how that makes you feel?"

Typical Encounter: Students see Ms. Greenwood when they act up in class. She likes to test kids by giving them an opportunity to avoid trouble by getting their monsters to do

something supernatural. For example, if a kid is brought in on suspicion of vandalism, Greenwood will casually mention that the perpetrator left behind his backpack, which is currently in the security officer's locked office. If the backpack disappears from the locked room, she will know that a monster must have taken it.

Ms. Greenwood's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 2)

Guts 2 (Wind 0, Courage 2, Wrestling 0)

Hands 3 (Shop 0, Punching 0, Blocking 3)

Brains 4 (Out-Think 4, Remember 4, Notice 4, Detect Supernatural Creature 3*)

Face 4 (Charm 5, Putdown 3, Connive 3)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Mr. Stanmeyer 3, Derek Forster 1, Dopple 1.

Dopple

A half-human Gidim (see page 6) commanded by Victoria Greenwood, Dopple is a skilled actor and shapeshifter. He spends his time posing as a student, usually as an exchange student so no one questions his background or his absence if he leaves suddenly. Dopple gathers gossip and the trust of students in whom the Conspiracy is interested. Dopple can only change shapes to beings of approximately the same size as a normal 12-year-old boy. Unlike most Gidim, he has human stats and relationships.

Quote: "Want to hang out?"

Typical Encounter: Dopple appears as just another kid in the student body. He can be the bad boy, the alpha male, the nerd, or even the head cheerleader. He spends most of his time watching the students from a hidden room in the front office, using security cameras, and only mingles with the students when on assignment. When he wants to be alone, he changes his appearance to a diminutive old man and wanders the town, seeking trouble. Harry Gale has had to clean up Dopple's messes more than once.

Dopple's Stats

Feet 4 (P.E. 3, Kicking 3, Dodge 4)

Guts 2 (Wind 3, Courage 0, Wrestling 0)

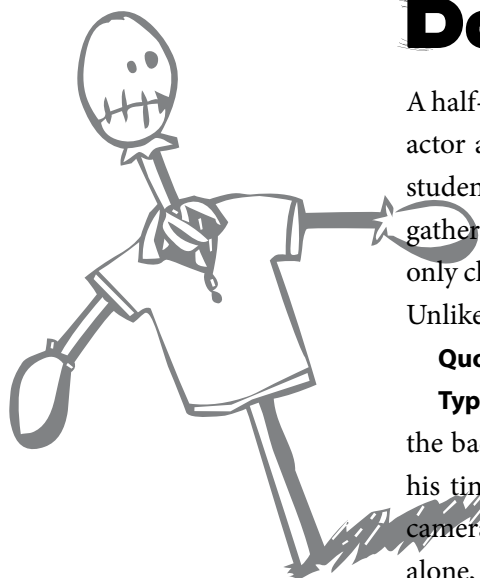
Hands 3 (Shop 3, Punching 3, Blocking 3)

Brains 2 (Out-Think 2, Remember 2, Notice 2)

Face 3 (Charm 3, Putdown 1, Connive 5, Shapeshifter 5*)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Mr. Stanmeyer 2, Victoria Greenwood 1, Derek Foster 1.



Wardens of the Veil

The enforcer cabal, these are the goons sent in to test the might of monsters and, if possible, break them down. They are frequently replaced, as they are usually outmatched by their opponents.

Donald Southerden

The only real human of this cabal, Southerden monitors the pseudo-monsters to see if any are about to fall apart and need to be put down. He is a fairly talented wizard and specializes in defensive spells that make him nearly immune to supernatural attacks. He works as a part-time security officer for the school and flirts with Paula Ptraci, the art teacher, whenever he can. He does not know she is also a member of the Conspiracy.

Quote: “You kids need to be careful. Never know when some weirdo might try to grab you.”

Typical Encounter: After the Conspiracy identifies a kid with a monster, Southerden assesses its potential threat. He attempts to rattle the kid’s cage with veiled threats and searches for “contraband.” He harasses the kid, hoping the kid will sic his or her monster on him. His defenses against supernatural creatures will protect him, and by seeing the monster in action he can direct the Wardens in battle more effectively.

Officer Southerden's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 3, Kicking 3, Dodge 3)

Guts 5 (Wind 2, Courage 5, Wrestling 3, Defensive Magic 5*)

Hands 4 (Shop 4, Punching 4, Blocking 4)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 2, Remember 3, Notice 4)

Face 3 (Charm 3, Putdown 3, Connive 4)

* *This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Mangler 1, Lizzie Sherman 1, Edward E. Edwards 1, Paula Ptraci 2.

Mangler

When he was human, Mangler was a high school dropout obsessed with heavy metal. Now he’s a Gidim who looks like an undead Viking who should be on the cover of a heavy metal album. He can’t be passed off as human, so he spends his time on a farm owned by the Conspiracy. Donald Southerden brings him beer, music and porn to keep him occupied.

Quote: “Brutal.”

Typical Encounter: Mangler is heard well before he is seen. Heavy metal music emanates from him and can be heard a block away. Needless to say, Mangler is only used to beat opponents into the ground. He is a reckless enemy, savagely attacking foes without concern for his or anyone else's safety.

Mangler's Locations

1-2 Heavy metal head 6d Useful (detection), Tough x2, Awesome x2.
3-4 Blood-soaked arms 8d Attacks, Gnarly x2.
5-7 Stomping feet 8d Attacks, Defends, Area x2, Tough x2, Wicked Fast x2.
8 Brutal aura 5d Useful (deafen opponents with metal).
9-10 Weapons of mass mutilation 7d Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly.

Lizzie Sherman

Once an idealistic college student, Elizabeth Sherman discovered she had incurable cancer. When she revealed the news to a member of the Conspiracy, they approached her with a deal to save her life. She became a Gidim and would serve them. However, the ritual transformed her into a hawk-like creature that cannot be passed off as human. She has become a near mindless attack beast for the Conspiracy and lairs on the same farm as Mangler. They hate each other.

Quote: The sound of wings flapping in the wind.

Typical Encounter: Lizzie stalks her prey from above, flying from rooftop to rooftop, waiting for her target to drop their guard. Then she sweeps in and eviscerates them with razor-sharp talons. Outside combat, she prefers to meditate in the beauty of the forest. Anyone who dares to desecrate her woods will face her unbridled fury.

Lizzie Sherman's Locations

1-3 Wings of fury 10d Attacks, Defends, Useful (flying), Useful (disorient with buffeting winds), Awesome x2.
4-5 Beak of doom 8d Attacks, Gnarly x2.
6-7 Taloned claws of sharpness 7d Attacks, Gnarly x3.
8-10 Eyes of the eagle 10d Useful (see everything), Useful (paralyzing fearsome stare), Awesome x2, Wicked Fast x2.

Edward E. Edwards

Quiet and precocious, Edward skipped three grades when he came to Spring Crescent. He was bright enough to learn of the monsters that befriended certain children, and of the Conspiracy. A spoiled child, Edward burned with intense jealousy that some kids had special friends that he could never have. He approached the Conspiracy and demanded that they give him a monster as a pet. Impressed by his cleverness, they instead transformed him into a Gidim.

Edward normally appears as a quiet child in a dark suit and tie, but when he is angry tentacles burst out of his back and chest. He is a skilled fighter, but he has little control over his emotions and can easily be taunted or distracted when he loses his cool.

Quote: "Let's play hide and go seek."

Typical Encounter: Edward loves to toy with his foes and show his total control over them, usually with sadistic games of hide and seek or tag. He taunts his foe with merciless attacks and then disappears before they can retaliate. If Edward is damaged or bested in some way, he flies into a rage and unleashes his full power against his hated enemy.

Edward E. Edwards' Locations

1 Beady eyes 5d Useful (see into your soul).

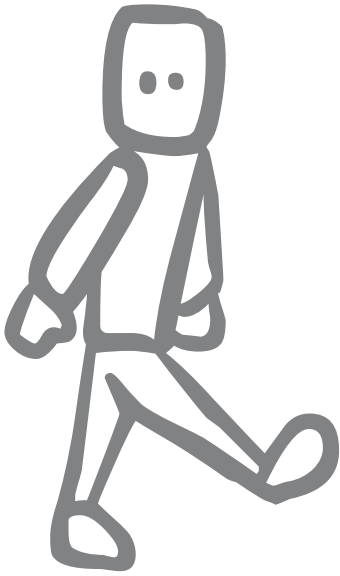
2-5 Hidden tentacles 10d Attacks, Awesome x2 Gnarly x3, Toughness x5.

6-7 Soulless shell 8d Defends, Awesome x2.

8-9 Small hands 9d Useful (pick pockets), Useful (climb really fast).

10 Scampering feet 3d Useful (run silently), Awesome x2.





Luxor

An experiment in golem-making, Luxor is not technically a Gidim but an animated stone statue. Created by the janitor in a secret lab inside the school basement—choose any of the storage rooms—Luxor has an Egyptian design, appearing as a stone pharaoh of immense size and strength. He is the Conspiracy's last-ditch weapon against out-of-control monsters, as he is much stronger than a standard monster but he will cause massive damage to the school if he ever leaves the lab. He would have to tear through several walls in order to get out.

Quote: The rumbling of stone.

Typical Encounter: Luxor is a tool of the Conspiracy and attacks in a straightforward manner. He goes through obstacles instead of moving around them.

Luxor's Locations

1 Granite legs 5d Useful (cause minor earthquake).

2-4 Stone fists 8d Attacks, Gnarly x3, Awesome x2, Toughness x2

5-7 Monolithic body 10d Defends, Toughness x5.

8-10 Grim demeanor 9d Useful (paralyze foes with fear), Awesome x2, Tough x4.

Brotherhood of Elder Sages

An occult-oriented cabal, the Brotherhood focuses on arcane research, crafting mystically-endowed tools, training new acolytes and mastering the supernatural. In theory this is the most powerful cabal, but they suffer from high attrition due to burnout, insanity and rituals gone awry. They maintain the mystic wards on the school (page 26), and strive to develop new and better ways to bind monsters or destroy them.

Charles Beckett

A grad student who works at the local university library, Beckett uses his job and academic connections to gain access to rare occult tomes. He is a scholar with no loyalty to the Conspiracy. In fact, he sees them as provincial hedge mages of no real talent. However, he realizes they are capable of silencing him if he disobeys them. He would be willing to betray them if a group of kids with monsters seemed capable of stopping them. He is not especially interested in monsters, as he sees how the Conspiracy has stagnated with its obsession with them.

Quote: “There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy, and I intend to learn them.”

Typical Encounter: Kids who search for occult knowledge in the community will come across the local university library sooner or later. Beckett will be helpful, but tries to learn more about the kids than he lets on. He will only use magic to defend himself if attacked. Otherwise he feigns being a normal person.

Charles Beckett's Stats

Feet 3 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 3, Speed of Hermes 4*)

Guts 2 (Wind 0, Courage 5, Wrestling 0, Courage of Hercules 3*)

Hands 3 (Shop 3, Punching 0, Blocking 3, Strength of Atlas 4*)

Brains 4 (Out-Think 4, Remember 5, Notice 4, Wisdom of Athena 4*)

Face 3 (Charm 3, Putdown 1, Connive 3, Majesty of Zeus 4*)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: His Girlfriend Jessica 2, Books of Black Magic 3, Lucky the Three-Legged Dog 1.

Tim Chanter

A slimy, repulsive janitor who lives and works in the basement of the school, Chanter leaves only at night for supplies and is quite obviously insane. He is responsible for Luxor's creation and is eager to see the golem in action. The Conspiracy barely tolerates him and most members resent the resources that were sunk into Luxor's creation.

Quote: “Cleanliness is next to godliness, you know. Heh heh heh.”

Typical Encounter: Tim tries to avoid kids as much as possible. However, anyone who sneaks into the basement is fair game. He poses as a normal janitor at first, but his off-kilter behavior should clue in any observant kids. If challenged, Tim runs and hides in the labyrinth of the basement and uses magic to harass and scare the intruders. His only real weapon is Luxor and he is reluctant to use it unless absolutely necessary.

Mr. Chanter's Stats

Feet 3 (P.E. 3, Kicking 2, Dodge 1, Snake's Cunning 4*)

Guts 4 (Wind 2, Courage 5, Wrestling 5, Relentless Power 2*)

Hands 5 (Shop 5, Punching 3, Blocking 3, Entropic Forces 3*)

Brains 3 (Out-Think 3, Remember 3, Notice 3, Mentalism 3*)

Face 1 (Charm 0, Putdown 2, Connive 3, Sophistry 4*)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Luxor 1, The Conspiracy 3, Dr. Levitt 2.

Cecile Flavin

Flavin is the school librarian and has been in the Conspiracy longer than anyone, even Mr. Stanmeyer. His ascension irritates her to no end. However, she has an anti-social personality, incapable of leading a book club, let alone a secret cabal of secret cabals. She uses her magic to curse those who displease her, usually in subtle but agonizing ways. She still chuckles over a curse she once gave a man that caused him to fall in love with a woman he saw only in his dreams; he eventually committed suicide. She is attracted to Derek Forster (page 15). She knows she can't have him, but any woman who flirts with him enrages her.

Quote: "Shhh!"

Typical Encounter: A grim crone, Cecile is beyond caring about the nuances of the Conspiracy. She acts independently most of the time and only barely takes order from Mr. Stanmeyer. She openly speaks of the supernatural to kids who have monsters and openly threatens them. She may try to bully or bribe the kids into fighting her rivals in the Conspiracy, promising safety and mystical knowledge in exchange for stomping them out. If they refuse, she grumbles and does nothing overtly—but later the kids will find themselves under a powerful curse. This curse can be virtually anything you think would be interesting, from banishing the kids to the spirit realm to switching the minds of a kid and his monster. Fighting her is nearly as dangerous as fighting the entire Conspiracy.

Ms. Flavin's Stats

Feet 1 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 1, Teleportation 5*)

Guts 5 (Wind 0, Courage 0, Wrestling 0, Power of Isis 5*)

Hands 1 (Shop 0, Punching 0, Blocking 1, Energy Shield 5*)

Brains 5 (Out-Think 5, Remember 5, Notice 5, Arcane Master 5*)

Face 2 (Charm 0, Putdown 5, Connive 5, Mind Control 5*)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Revenge 2, Derek Forster 1.

Martin Greenacre

A rather bland math teacher, Greenacer has a droning voice and forgettable mannerisms that conceal the fact that he possesses several doctorates in quantum physics and mathematics. Once a rising star in the world of academia, Greenacre's life changed the night he discovered his nephew, Nicholas, had a monster. Traumatized by the hulking beast, Greenacre withdrew from his studies and fell into a deep depression.

When he heard his nephew had been hospitalized for a psychotic breakdown, he became curious. While not a professional investigator, he quickly discovered evidence of the Conspiracy. While Greenacre was snooping around in the school, Dr. Levitt's spirit

appeared to him. Levitt saw Martin's potential and gave him a choice: Either join the Conspiracy or die screaming. Since then, Stanmeyer has groomed Greenacre to become the next leader of the Conspiracy, at Dr. Levitt's behest.

However, Greenacre is torn between his desire to protect the world from monsters and empathy for the kids who suffer from losing their monsters. He could be convinced to turn against the Conspiracy if he thought monsters were not threats to society.

Quote: "The universe operates on laws that we do not fully understand. To know them is to know the divine."

Typical Encounter: Greenacre is inquisitive and just, so he will be open to kids with monsters, giving them the benefit of the doubt and waiting for them to reveal their true nature. He attempts to figure out if they are good or evil and then acts accordingly. He helps good kids by advising them to avoid the Conspiracy. Bad kids are punished by the combined force of the Conspiracy and the wards (page 26).

Dr. Greenacre's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 0, Acolyte Magician 2*)

Guts 4 (Wind 0, Courage 4, Wrestling 0, Acolyte Magician 2*)

Hands 2 (Shop 0, Punching 0, Blocking 4, Acolyte Magician 2*)

Brains 5 (Out-Think 5, Remember 5, Notice 5, Acolyte Magician 2*)

Face 3 (Charm 1, Putdown 0, Connive 1, Acolyte Magician 2*)

* *This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Nicholas Greenacre 2, Dr. Levitt 1, Mr. Stanmeyer 1, Idealism 2.

Paula Ptraci

An art teacher and experimental sorceress, Ptraci wants to examine the relationship between art and magic. Her current hypothesis is that artistically-inclined students can channel magical energies in greater amounts than normal people. Her ultimate goal is to find seven gifted art students and use them as subjects in the next draining ritual. However, Mr. Stanmeyer has forbidden the use of children in the rituals, as it is difficult to cover up seven kids disappearing at the same time. For now Paula keeps busy with minor projects, such as testing the effects of various spells on her art students. She favors giving an art student a magical ability like clairvoyance without telling the student. She flirts with Donald Southerden (page 17).

Quote: "Art is about emotion. Put your soul into your work."

Typical Encounter: Kids usually meet Paula in art class. She lets on more than she should about the supernatural and, sooner or later, the kids will realize that she knows about monsters. However, if confronted, she is quick to run to the Conspiracy for help. If kids want to stop her experiments without bringing in the entire Conspiracy, they must be subtle about it, such as by turning Southerden against her.

Miss Ptraci's Stats

Feet 2 (P.E. 0, Kicking 0, Dodge 2)

Guts 2 (Wind 0, Courage 1, Wrestling 0)

Hands 4 (Shop 4, Punching 0, Blocking 0, Artistic Magic 5*)

Brains 4 (Out-Think 4, Remember 4, Notice 4)

Face 4 (Charm 4, Putdown 4, Connive 4)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: Donald Southerden 1, The Conspiracy 2, Magical Research 2.

Independent Conspiracy Members

These members are supernatural creatures and given great discretion by the rest of the Conspiracy. Mr. Phillips is too strong-willed to act as part of a cabal and Dr. Levitt acts only rarely.

Mr. Phillips



Technically not a member of any cabal, but known to all of them, Mr. Phillips is the right-hand man of the leader and head enforcer of the Conspiracy. Publicly, he is a homeroom and social studies teacher known for his mean disposition. The students call him Screw-head behind his back. In reality, he is an Excruciator who works with the Conspiracy.

As a supernatural creature, Mr. Phillips could be bound by the Conspiracy like a monster, but he has promised to work with them freely in exchange for the privilege of humiliating students. It is an uneasy alliance, as neither side trusts the other, but it works for now. Mr. Phillips is known to act on his own initiative and, fearing the possibility of being bound, is quite eager to get an advantage over the Conspiracy.

Mr. Phillips views all humans as lesser beings, even the wizards of the Cabal. The rank and file members of the Conspiracy avoid him whenever possible, as he has proven to be an unpredictable and dangerous foe. The Gidim are no match for him individually and he is capable of fleeing from a pack. Only the principal and Cecile Flavin deal with him without fear. In fact, Flavin makes a sport of insulting Mr. Phillips to see how he reacts.

Quote: "I foresee a bright future for you in the janitorial industry."

Typical Encounter: Mr. Phillips is quite active in the school, chaperoning various events and otherwise getting involved with students. He enjoys baiting students and punishing

them for acting up in class. He thrives on active conflict and enjoys students who fight back as defeating them is much more satisfying than picking on passive students.

Mr. Phillips' Stats

See Excruciator, *Monsters and Other Childish Things*, page 88. However, the dark powers of the wards enhance Mr. Phillips' powers. As long as he is on the school campus, he gains Awesome x2 on all locations as a monster.

Relationships: None. A soulless monster who views humanity as food and other supernatural beings as competition.

The Spirit of Dr. Levitt

The undead monster that was Dr. Norman Levitt spends most of its time now in a deep slumber, dreaming of cyclopean ruins in the stygian depths and the eldritch secrets of the stars. For the most part it is content to be left alone, as it subsists on the residual mystical energies captured by the Conspiracy's rituals. On occasion it awakens and prowls the school, invisible to all but wizards and supernatural creatures with extraordinary senses, and may reveal itself to those unfortunate souls it deems worthy. What motivates the dread specter is beyond human comprehension. It is a wild card, capable of hatching a diabolic plan at any time. Dr. Levitt's physical remains can be found in a crate deep in a basement storage room.

Quote: Ominous chanting in Latin followed by a spell.

Typical Encounter: Dr. Levitt only interacts rationally with members or potential recruits of the Conspiracy. If he stumbles upon a kid unexpectedly, he unleashes magical hellfire at them. However, he spends most of his time slumbering. Only acts of incredible magical power, such as destroying the mystic wards, will awaken him.

Dr. Levitt's Locations

1-2 Ghostly feet 5d Useful (walk through walls), Awesome x2, Tough x3.

3-4 Chill touch 5d Attacks, Useful (shivering touch of the grave), Tough x4.

5-7 Immaterial body 10d Defends, Useful (invisible), Tough x4.

8-10 Wild spectral eyes that Know Too Much 8d Attacks (hellfire), Useful (see mystic energies), Useful (stagger with glimpses beyond reality), Awesome x1, Sharing, Tough x3.

Mystic Wards

We can see yoooouu.

The Conspiracy's greatest weapon against monsters are seven mystic wards strategically concealed around the school. First and foremost, the wards shield the entire school from supernatural creatures. Monsters that attempt to damage the school will find their attacks magically negated. It is impossible to affect the school until the wards are totally destroyed.

In theory, the wards allow the Conspiracy's leader—currently Mr. Stanmeyer—to instantly know when a monster steps foot inside the school, and allow the leader to subdue the creature without a fight. However, the wards have been drastically weakened by years of use and occasional attacks from enraged monsters. Furthermore, monsters are nearly impossible to detect while they hide and many monsters have stealth abilities to prevent detection even when they're not hiding. The wards cannot detect a hiding or a magically concealed monster, unless Mr. Stanmeyer is already aware of the monster and specifically searches for it.

Technically, only Mr. Stanmeyer can activate the wards, but Mr. Phillips, Mr. Greenacre and Ms. Flavin can activate them if they so choose. However, if they do so while Mr. Stanmeyer is present on campus, he is instantly informed of the fact. Thus, none of them dare use the wards while he is nearby or have a very good reason for doing so. Phillips is the most likely to use the wards and Greenacre the least likely. All members of the Conspiracy on the school grounds are aware when the wards are active and when they are not.

Locations

Each ward is a unique sigil of occult symbols. They are typically about six inches in diameter and are magically immune to mundane forms of vandalism and destruction.

The wards can be found in these locations:

- A mural by the front office.
- The furnace in the basement boiler room.
- The top of the flag pole in the front of the school.
- Behind the back shelf of the library.
- Under the vending machine in the faculty lounge.
- Inside the locker traditionally reserved for the most popular student in school.
- In the ghost world. The seventh ward can only be seen on a full moon, in the reflection of the mirror of Dr. Levitt. Unfortunately, his mirror is kept in a basement storage room only the principal knows about.

Passive Mode

Normally the wards are in passive mode, in which they search for monsters and attack them if they use their abilities. They have a slight chance of detecting a monster when it is not hiding. However, every time a monster uses a power, the wards have a better chance of picking up the creature. Each modifier stacks, so multiple uses of a blatant power would quickly get the attention of the conspiracy. Roll every five minutes.

Detection in Passive Mode

Base chance of detection	2d
Per use of a power	+1d
Blatant use of power	+1d

If a monster is detected, Mr. Stanmeyer receives a telepathic warning, no matter where he is at the time, with the room and an image of the monster. He does not know what child is connected to the monster.

He can make a Feet + Ethereal Transportation roll, taking 5 – width rounds, to appear in the school where he can use the wards more actively.

Active Mode

Once the wards detect a monster they become active and their Suppression Aura (page 28) kicks in.

Once Mr. Stanmeyer is aware of a particular monster, he can sweep the school for it. This takes a great deal of energy and temporarily stops all passive detection of other monsters, so he only uses it in an emergency. It automatically detects the monster in question if it is not hiding or using a stealth power.

Mr. Stanmeyer can detect a hidden monster if he succeeds with a Wits + Notice roll, which can only be opposed by a monster with a stealth power. Otherwise, active detection is identical to passive detection.

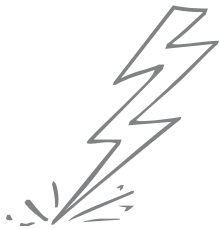
The wards can track the monster as long as it remains active, and this tracking ability only works on campus. If the monster hides or leaves the school, the wards lose its current location. Only Mr. Stanmeyer can use the wards to search for a monster.

Attack Mode

Mr. Stanmeyer can only use the wards to attack a monster he has detected. The wards have three major offensive powers and two defensive powers.

Malefactor's Gaze

Hundreds of inhuman eyes grow out of the walls and gaze upon any active monsters in the area. The monsters and their kids feel a psychic wave of anger, resentment and jealousy. In game terms, this is a 5d shock attack opposed by the kid's Guts + Courage. If the attack is successful, the kid loses 1d whenever attempting to influence his monster. This penalty lasts for 24 hours.



Demonic Purge

A blast of concentrated mystical energy strikes the targeted monster. It is an 8d Scarring attack on the monster. The purge is used only as a last resort against particularly violent monsters.

Tranquil Meditation

A hypnotic wave that attempts to lull a monster into captivity. It is a 6d attack that stuns a monster, reducing the width of all its actions by one for width in minutes.

Defenses

The wards themselves each have a 10d defense with Toughness 5. This defense is always present and anyone attempting to damage the wards must destroy these wards first, before any other part of the ward can be damaged.

Suppression Aura

The wards also emanate an aura that dampens the power of monsters. Whenever the mystic wards become active, all monsters suffer a 2d penalty against their primary offensive power. This aura affects the entire school grounds. Only Mr. Stanmeyer can activate this power and it affects all monsters on campus.

Student Cliques

U R here.

While Spring Crescent is a unique school, it still has the same social ecosystem as many American middle schools. There is a strict pecking order among the students, both in the overall student body and in the various cliques, and in the school's hypercompetitive environment they are only exaggerated.

These are some suggestions for potential cliques, but the school you make should depend on your individual campaign. The amount of knowledge about the supernatural varies from kid to kid, but all of the kids know to keep their mouths shut about it when talking to adults. Anyone caught talking about monsters or demons is sure to get in trouble with the school administration.

The Jocks: Kings of basketball, wrestling and football, the jocks are usually the alpha clique.

Preps: Rich kids with attitude.

Outcasts: The emos and goths. Black clothes, dark music and bad poetry.

Thugs: Future life sentences and career criminals. Bad kids with chains on their wallets and budding drug and alcohol addictions.

Geeks/Library Patrol: The computer geeks, math nerds and roleplayers of the school, the library patrol is so named for the clique's tendency to take refuge in the library whenever possible. More accepting of the supernatural, but the weakest of the cliques, the geeks are targets of many other students.



Allies & Mentors

We're saved.

Mentors are great for pushing the kids into the action. Usually they should have only one at a time, since the identity of the kids' mentor may drive the tone and themes of the adventure.

Caroline Jolly-Kidd

Caroline grew up in the 1960s, wandering from one countercultural group to another after the big fire of 1962. She became a militant, dedicated to fighting unjust authority wherever it appeared. At Woodstock she became apprentice to a shaman who wielded magic justly, in stark contrast to the Conspiracy, and she spent the next 20 years learning of the spirit world. The shaman died in 1989 and Caroline traveled the world, righting wrongs and helping those less fortunate than her. Two months ago her spirit guide, a wise raven spirit, took her back to Spring Crescent Middle School. She realizes that she must right the wrongs of her past and finish the Conspiracy once and for all.

As a former monster-friend and a skilled shaman, Caroline is the perfect mentor. She can train the kids to work in conjunction with their monsters and the secrets of the supernatural. However, she will not help the player characters unless they agree to fight the Conspiracy. Furthermore, she is legally dead and if the authorities or Conspiracy learned of her existence she would become a target. She works best in the shadows, guiding and aiding the player characters, not overshadowing them or saving the day on her own.

She does not venture directly on campus, but will probably drift into town and get a job at a business frequented by the kids of Spring Crescent (see page 55). She may be a waitress at a diner, the cashier of a comic book shop who shows the kids underground comics from the sixties, or a new librarian at the public library. She helps kids whenever she can and quickly earns the reputation as being a pretty cool old lady.

Caroline's Stats

Feet 4 (P.E. 2, Kicking 2, Dodge 3, Fox Spirit's Cunning 3*)

Guts 4 (Wind 2, Courage 4, Wrestling 2, Resilience of the Earth Mother 4*)

Hands 3 (Shop 2, Punching 3, Blocking 0, Bear's Rage 3*)

Brains 4 (Out-Think 3, Remember 4, Notice 4, Wisdom of the Sky Father 3*)

Face 4 (Charm 4, Putdown 3, Connive 2, Herald of the Ancestors 3*)

** This skill represents mystical lore. It works like a regular skill but against monsters and other unnatural things. It's left vague so the GM can describe and use it as needed.*

Relationships: The memory of her dead friends 1, The Revolution 2. She will form relationships with any kids she mentors, rated from 1 to 4.

Charles Beckett

Charles (page 21) is a wildcard in the Conspiracy. He does not fear monsters nor is he committed to fighting them. He dislikes the leash of the Conspiracy around his neck and would aid the player characters if he thought they could free him and/or get him access to more occult knowledge. He is not idealistic, though, and he cares more about his research than the welfare of any kids with monsters. As a mentor, he could discreetly pass on Conspiracy secrets or occult knowledge but only on a quid pro quo basis. He will never get too close to the kids, forming a relationship of 1 at best with them.

Martin Greenacre

Martin (page 23) is a principled man, but he believes that monsters are parasitic demons that suck the souls out of children. If he could be shown the error of his belief, he would become an implacable foe of the Conspiracy. If he helps the player characters, he treats them as gifted and favored students. He is patient yet firm and could be an excellent mentor for some groups. Martin is slow to trust others, but once the bond is formed he trusts them completely. He will start a relationship with the kids at 2 and proceed to 5. Unfortunately, he is not subtle, and taking on the Conspiracy directly is very dangerous. The player characters may wind up defending him from the Conspiracy more often than he helps them.

Rusty the Ghost

Rusty was a Spring Crescent handyman who died in the big fire of 1962 while sleeping off a night of heavy drinking. The amount of magical energy released that night trapped Rusty's spirit in the mortal realm. Unlike most spirits, though, Rusty has a sense of humor about it. A loser in life, he has freedom and power in death. He can go anywhere there is a connection to Spring Crescent—including the homes of students if they summon him with a Ouija board.

The ghost of the big fire is an urban legend at the school. Any time something weird happens, the ghost is blamed. He loves scaring students and playing pranks on the faculty. The Conspiracy has no idea he really exists, though, as their mystic wards cannot detect him.

Aware of monsters, Rusty is sympathetic to kids being harassed by the Conspiracy, but he thinks he can't help. If a group of player characters befriended him, he would become a valuable ally, spying on the faculty and helping with some pranks along the way.

Rusty is not really human but hasn't graduated to full monsterhood. He still has relationships like a human but is immune to attacks. He cannot be seen by humans or monsters, but if kids use a Ouija board to contact him he can guide their fingers on the board to spell out messages, one letter at a time. He's not a very good speller, but it's better than nothing.

Relationships: The school 3, all kids 3.



Using SCMC

Just add slaughter.

The most obvious use of Spring Crescent Middle School is to place the player characters as new students, bright-eyed and oblivious to the threat of the Conspiracy. While the Conspiracy might seem like an unbeatable foe to a few kids with monsters, they are vulnerable to a smart and dedicated group.

When devising your campaign, think about what themes and challenges you want to emphasize. While the Conspiracy has many members, your group will probably encounter only a few of them in any campaign. A combat-heavy game based on tearing down the vile wizards will likely feature Gidim characters like Mangler, while a mystery-oriented campaign could sport characters like Dopple and the Order of Harmonious Diplomacy.

Here are some campaign models, each using Spring Crescent in a different way, ranging from mystery to comedy.



Burning the Midnight Fire

Genre: Mystery.

Theme: Occult secrets, conspiracy theories, unseen forces.

Mentor: Caroline Jolly-Kidd.

As the school year starts, every family with a student in Spring Crescent receives an anonymous letter warning them of a hidden threat within the walls of the school. It hints that the infamous 1962 fire was not an accident and the school administration knows more than it lets on. It also has several enigmatic phrases such as: “REAL imaginary friends BE WARNED!!! THE SCHOOL IS A TRAP!!!” The letter specifically mentions mystic wards which detect “real imaginary friends”, making them vulnerable to “abduction”.

The community passes it off as the paranoid delusions of a madman. The player characters should be more wary. Soon, they stumble upon proof that at least some of the school’s faculty are supernaturally powerful and have an unhealthy interest in monsters.

After several harrowing investigations, they learn of the Conspiracy and the danger it poses. They also make contact with the writer of the letter, Caroline Jolly-Kidd. She becomes the group’s mentor.

Finally, they discover that the spirit of Dr. Levitt is planning a terrifying ritual that will summon an elder demon from the nether world—an even scarier monster than theirs! As the school year comes to an end, the kids must break the Conspiracy before the demon is summoned. Their monsters can tell them that if they fail, this elder demon will be able to eat the kids’ own monsters up like snack cakes; we’ll leave that terrible beast’s stats and powers up to you.

The great fire will burn once again. . . .

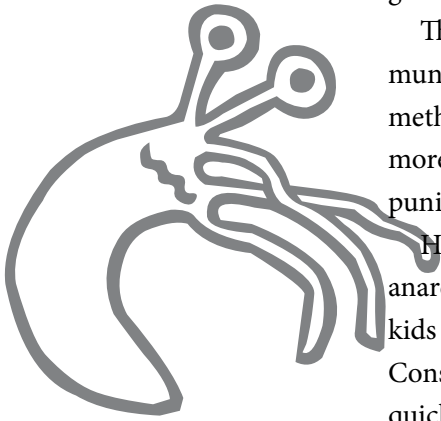
Just Another Brick in the Wall

Genre: Action/adventure.

Theme: Fighting authority; rebellion and solidarity.

Mentor: Charles Beckett.

The Conspiracy is drunk with power. In its arrogance, it has instituted a new policy of school uniforms and has clamped down on all “anti-social” practices, such as listening to



the wrong music or reading the wrong books. The parents either support this new program or dare not antagonize Mr. Stanmeyer.

This bold new program conceals the real plan of the Conspiracy. They intend to use mundane techniques to identify kids with monsters instead of simply relying on arcane methods. By emphasizing conformity, they believe the kids with monsters will act out more brazenly in defiance. Once identified, they can break the kids' spirits with endless punishments and then bind the monsters.

However, one member of the Conspiracy, Charles Beckett, can't stand it. His inner anarchist is burning up with rage. Furthermore, he has identified the newest group of kids with monsters before anyone else and wants to use them to shatter the power of the Conspiracy. Beckett summons a minor demon and sends it to the kids as a guide. The imp quickly tells the kids the truth behind the Conspiracy and how they can break it.

The mystic wards are the key to the tearing down the Conspiracy. The defensive spells protecting the wards are nearly impossible to destroy with brute force, but at certain times individual wards become vulnerable to attack. These times correspond with an ancient calendar that measures the waxing and waning of mystic energies.

There are seven major wards around the school and they must all be destroyed. When the first window of opportunity comes, the player characters sneak onto the school grounds and destroy the first mark after destroying a single guardian Gidim. Mangler can work as the first guardian Gidim. Then the group can tear down the bricks that hold the ward.

The school becomes a battlefield when the Conspiracy panics at the destruction of the first mark. The cabals blame each other for the loss and Mr. Stanmeyer orders the creation of more Gidim to protect the wards. The odd behavior of the Conspiracy causes rumors to fly among the students. With the group's urging, students begin to defy their teachers and take a stand against the oppressive rule of the adults. The student rebellion has begun.

When the next window of opportunity comes, the player characters discover a group of Gidim waiting to stop them. The battle is long and brutal, and even if the kids are victorious, the Conspiracy has the rest of the school year to defeat them and end the rebellion. The kids must tear the wall down, one brick at a time.

Spiritus Mundi

Genre: Horror/fantasy.

Themes: Redemption, corruption, madness and cosmic horror.

Mentor: Martin Greenacre.

The Conspiracy's eldritch experiments have opened a tear in the space-time continuum and attracted the attention of the Great Old Ones. Their messenger, an avatar of chaos and insanity, has instrumented a campaign of corruption in the school. It has slain Mr.

Phillips and taken his place in the school, and it can assume any shape. The Conspiracy has been crippled by the entity, and it controls the school now. Gloom hangs over Spring Crescent, everyone unconsciously realizing the futility of life.

The nameless creature chooses a person at random and magnifies their darkest urges a thousand times, then grants them supernatural powers to inflict revenge upon on the world. The misery and chaos inflicted on the school please the avatar to no end. Only one person understands what is going on and has resisted the creature's power.

Martin Geenacre's brilliant mind easily detected the schemes of the creature and his arcane talents have protected him from its influence, but he is frustrated. He cannot defeat the avatar, at least not by himself. When the player characters enter the school, he sees a ray of hope. When the avatar transforms one of the player characters' rivals into a hate-filled monster and sends it after them, Martin intervenes and purges the vile magic from the afflicted child.

He explains that the only way to permanently save the kid is to enter the kid's mindscape. Once inside, the player characters can find what caused the child to succumb to the temptation of the avatar and fix the problem. The mindscape has become a horribly corrupt, surreal world of twisted memories and psychic demons. The player characters discover the source of the child's problem and resolve it, freeing it forever from the avatar.

The kids, aided by Martin, must go on to help key students and faculty members in order to banish the avatar. They must help both the innocent and the damned, each time risking their lives and sanity, in progressively more deranged and terrifying mindscapes. Finally, they confront the avatar and try to stop it from corrupting all of humanity with its nihilistic influence.

Rusty and Friends

Genre: Comedy/hijinks.

Theme: Pranks, mischief, and true friendship despite all odds.

Mentor: Rusty the Ghost.

The Conspiracy is weak and ineffective from years of infighting, yet no one can topple it. The player characters encounter Rusty the Ghost as he is about to play a prank on Mr. Phillips. When the prank backfires, Mr. Phillips blames the player characters and their monsters and attacks them. They team up with the ghost to fight off the enraged teacher. The ghost fills them in on the Conspiracy, and encourages the kids to teach the Conspiracy a lesson of their own. Pranks and practical jokes are the weapons of choice.

Can the kids prevail over the mean old wizards? That's up to you. Rusty can't interact with the physical world, aside from communicating, so he can only give advice to the characters. Furthermore, he can't stay manifested in the real world all the time, so he tends to come and go. But Rusty's knowledge of the school and the faculty are unmatched.

Gamemaster Tips

The rules are there for a reason!

When running a game based in Spring Crescent Middle School, keep these ideas in mind.

1. The Conspiracy is experienced in dealing with monsters and their kids.

Players might think that their monsters give them an unbeatable trump card, that no one will expect their supernatural powers. However, the Conspiracy has seen many monsters over the years and defeated most of them. They will react to the players intelligently, using their resources in the most advantageous way possible. Blatant use of monsters in public, especially acts of violence and vandalism result in a swift yet secret response. The wards of Spring Crescent protect the building from mystical attacks, so players can't devastate the school on a whim. Characters who act publicly will draw undue attention to themselves.

2. The Conspiracy prefers to isolate students by attacking their relationships.

Once they have identified a kid with a monster, the Conspiracy focuses on isolating the kid from everyone else. They diligently study the kid and will drive a wedge between the kid and his or her friends. They only use force when the kid has no other potential allies or if the kid attacks first.

3. The Conspiracy is relentless.

Once the Conspiracy targets a kid, they will not let go. They are obsessed with enslaving monsters and any potential quarry is too valuable to let go. At any given time, the Conspiracy will attempt to sabotage at least one relationship of every kid they know has a monster. The exact plan will depend on the cabal involved.

4. The Conspiracy depends on secrecy to survive.

Like all secret organizations, the Conspiracy cannot stand the light of exposure. While most adults won't believe in the supernatural aspects of the Conspiracy, there is plenty of evidence to dismantle them any way. Secret rituals, books of occult knowledge and other documents are necessary for the Conspiracy to conduct business, but if they were taken to the proper authorities it would mean the end of the Conspiracy.

Legitimate authorities or media figures who are shown Conspiracy documents (and convinced of their source) will interpret them as proof of a secret Satanic cult that abuses the students of Spring Crescent. Even a single letter or video of a ceremony shown to the right person will start an investigation.

Of course, this requires that the kids acquire the evidence and shows it to someone untouched by the Conspiracy. Then, the kids must protect the investigators if they want to see the Conspiracy stopped. The wizards will not take an investigation lightly and will do everything in their power to derail the investigators, including bribery, seduction or even murder.

5. Finding a kid with a monster is not easy.

Over 1,000 kids attend Spring Crescent. Of those, perhaps a dozen or fewer kids have monsters. Further compounding the search are the numerous troublemakers, goths, emos, and other malcontents. The Conspiracy wastes time investigating these ordinary kids and suppressing dissension and individuality. Even a kid who doesn't bother to hide the presence of his monster may be hard to detect, as the mystic wards do not always work. Finally, the Conspiracy has only a few dozen members at most and only a handful are devoted to searching for monsters at any given time.

Lately, the Conspiracy tends to set up traps that attract kids with monsters and observing who reacts to them.

6. The Conspiracy identifying a kid with a monster is a major turning point in the campaign.

Once the players are known to the Conspiracy, they should definitely know the stakes are raised. Cabalists will conduct surveillance on them, their relationships fall under attack and paranoia should soon set in. Unless the players are absolutely careless, only let the Conspiracy discover their identity when it is time to begin the final phase of the campaign.

The players should feel like they are under siege and that they need to smash the Conspiracy before the Conspiracy identifies them and it is too late. Emphasize that the adults the kids are supposed to trust are in fact waging war upon them and seeking to destroy everything that is precious to them.

7. Build tension as the campaign develops.

The opening sessions of the campaign should feel light and carefree, as the kids revel in the power of their monster friends. However, each session should raise the stakes at least a little bit. Remember, tension is anticipated action.

Hint at the dark clouds around the school. Have the players learn about the mysterious Big Fire of 1962. Let an NPC kid with a monster disappear halfway through the campaign, only to turn up in the psych ward of the local hospital, the monster gone. Punctuate a session with an intense encounter with a Gidim like Edward when the players least expect it. Have teachers like Mr. Forster give veiled threats.

This is a horror game and it requires a steady ratcheting of suspense.



8. Children's entertainment is a good source of inspiration.

Look to the books, movies and TV shows of your childhood as inspiration for your game. The key is to give each story a suitably horrific twist. Many children's stories aim to reassure or empower kids, after all, so give the players that impression and then take it away.

For example, a common motif in children's entertainment is the talking animal. Have the Conspiracy create a family of intelligent talking mice that live near the school and allow the player characters to befriend them (and form relationships with them). Draw the players into their plight as they try to help the mice overcome predators and hazards.

Then pull the rug from underneath them as the Conspiracy transforms the mice into horrific Gidim or tricks the kids into letting them die.

9. Make the relationships an integral part of the game.

The relationship mechanics provide a perfect tool for generating conflict and role playing. Involve at least one of every player's relationships each game. Not every relationship needs to be used every game, but tie them into Spring Crescent.

Perhaps one of the player's parents begins to date a member of the Conspiracy, and when the player realizes what is going on the parent refuses to believe the evidence. Perhaps Harry Gale harasses the friendly comic book store clerk or Dopple falls for the pretty home-schooled girl and won't leave her alone. Parent-Teacher Night and other school events are great to integrate family members into the campaign. Spring Crescent has its hooks throughout the community, so anyone can get involved.

10. Make Spring Crescent your own.

The game is yours to run, so emphasize what interests you and your players. The Conspiracy can be comic-book supervillains, Lovecraftian sorcerers or conflicted adults plagued with existential questions. Pick the elements that suit your group best and run with them. At the heart of the campaign is the eternal struggle between the young and the old. Any number of games can be run based on that single idea.



Class Schedules

I don't feel tardy.

Regular Schedule

Period 1	7:35–8:05
Period 2	8:05–8:50
Period 3	8:50–9:35
Period 4	9:35–10:20
Period 5	10:20–10:50 (Lunch)
Period 6	10:50–11:05 (Prep/Study)
Period 7	11:05–11:35 (Lunch)
Period 8	11:35–11:50 (Prep/Study)
Period 9	11:50–12:20 (Lunch)
Period 10	12:20–12:35 (Prep/Study)
Period 11	12:35–1:05 (Lunch)
Period 12	1:05–1:50
Announcements	
Period 13	1:50–2:35

Early Dismissal

Period 1	7:35–7:45
Period 2	7:45–8:20
Period 3	8:20–9:00
Period 4	9:00–9:40
Period 12	9:40–10:20
Period 5	10:20–10:50 (Lunch)
Period 6	10:50–10:55 (Prep/Study)
Period 7	10:55–11:25 (Lunch)
Period 8	11:25–11:30 (Prep/Study)
Period 9	11:30–12:00 (Lunch)
Period 10	12:00–12:05 (Prep/Study)
Period 11	12:05–12:35 (Lunch)
Advisory	12:35–12:45

One-Hour Delay

Period 1	8:35–8:45
Period 2	8:45–9:30
Period 3	9:30–10:20
Period 5	10:20–10:50 (Lunch)
Period 6	10:50–11:05 (Prep/Study)
Period 7	11:05–11:35 (Lunch)
Period 8	11:35–11:50 (Prep/Study)
Period 9	11:50–12:20 (Lunch)
Period 10	12:20–12:35 (Prep/Study)
Period 11	12:35–1:05 (Lunch)
Period 12	1:05–1:50
Announcements	
Period 4	1:50–2:35

Two-Hour Delay

Period 1	9:35–9:45
Period 2	9:45–10:20
Period 5	10:20–10:50 (Lunch)
Period 6	10:50–11:00 (Prep/Study)
Period 7	11:00–11:30 (Lunch)
Period 8	11:30–11:40 (Prep/Study)
Period 9	11:40–12:10 (Lunch)
Period 10	12:10–12:20 (Prep/Study)
Period 11	12:20–12:50 (Lunch)
Period 3	12:50–1:25
Period 4	1:25–2:00
Announcements	
Period 12	2:00–2:35

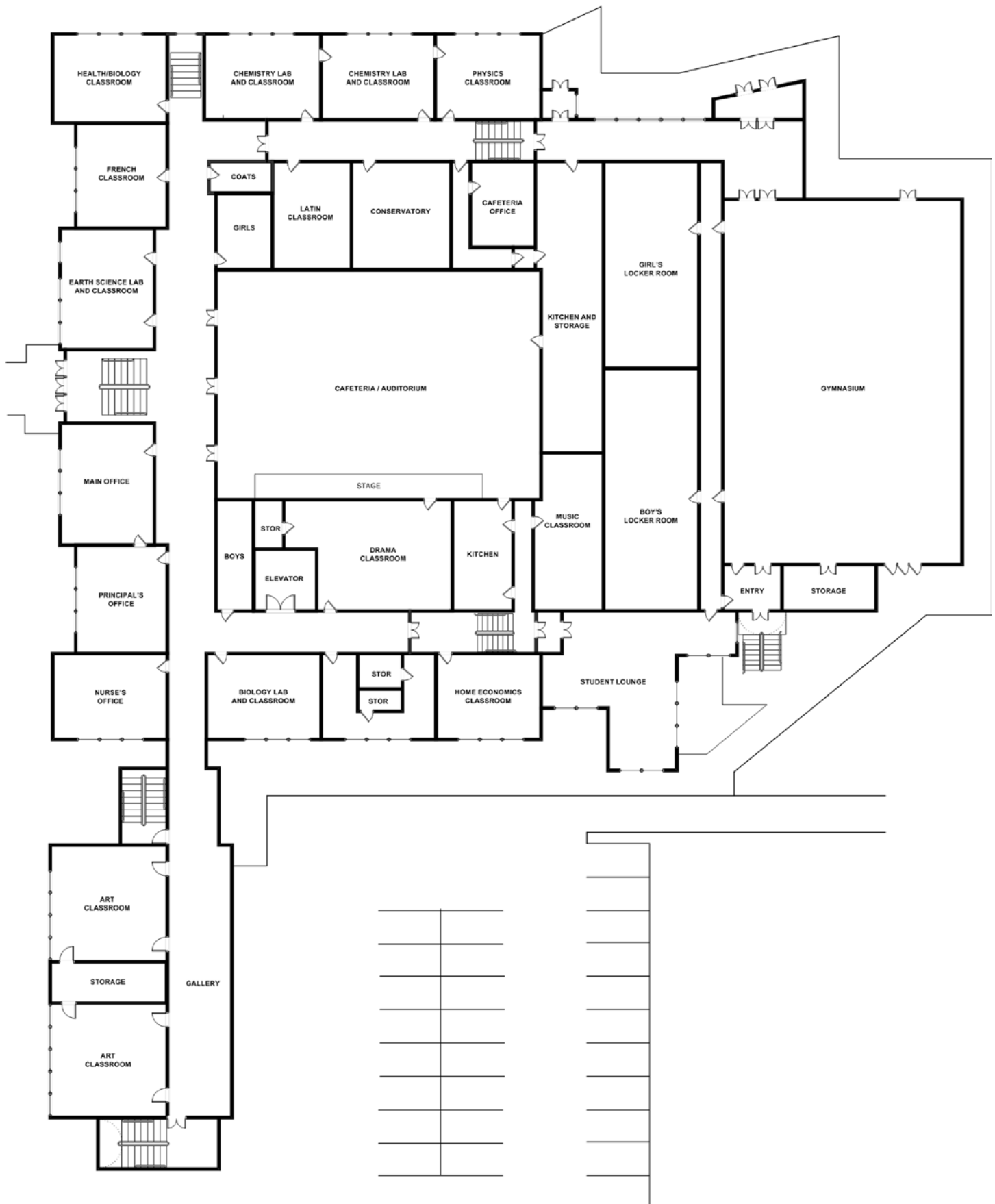
Schedule B

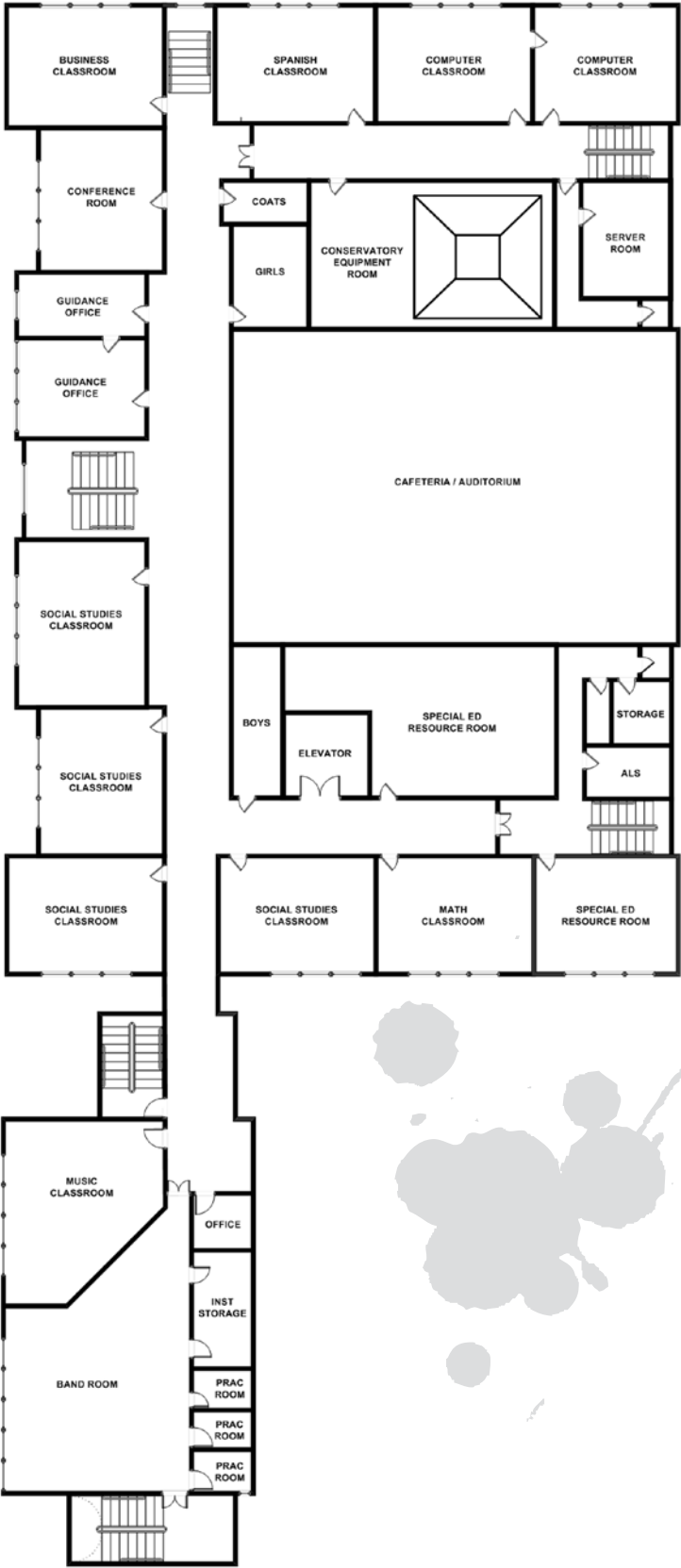
Period 1	7:35–7:45 (Advisory)
Period 2	7:45–8:25
Period 3	8:25–9:10
Period 4	9:10–9:55
Period 12	9:55–10:35
Period 5	10:35–11:05 (Lunch)
Period 6	11:05–11:15 (Prep/Study)
Period 7	11:15–11:45 (Lunch)
Period 8	11:45–11:55 (Prep/Study)
Period 9	11:55–12:25 (Lunch)
Period 10	12:25–12:35 (Prep/Study)
Period 11	12:35–1:05 (Lunch)
Period 15	1:05–2:35 (Event)



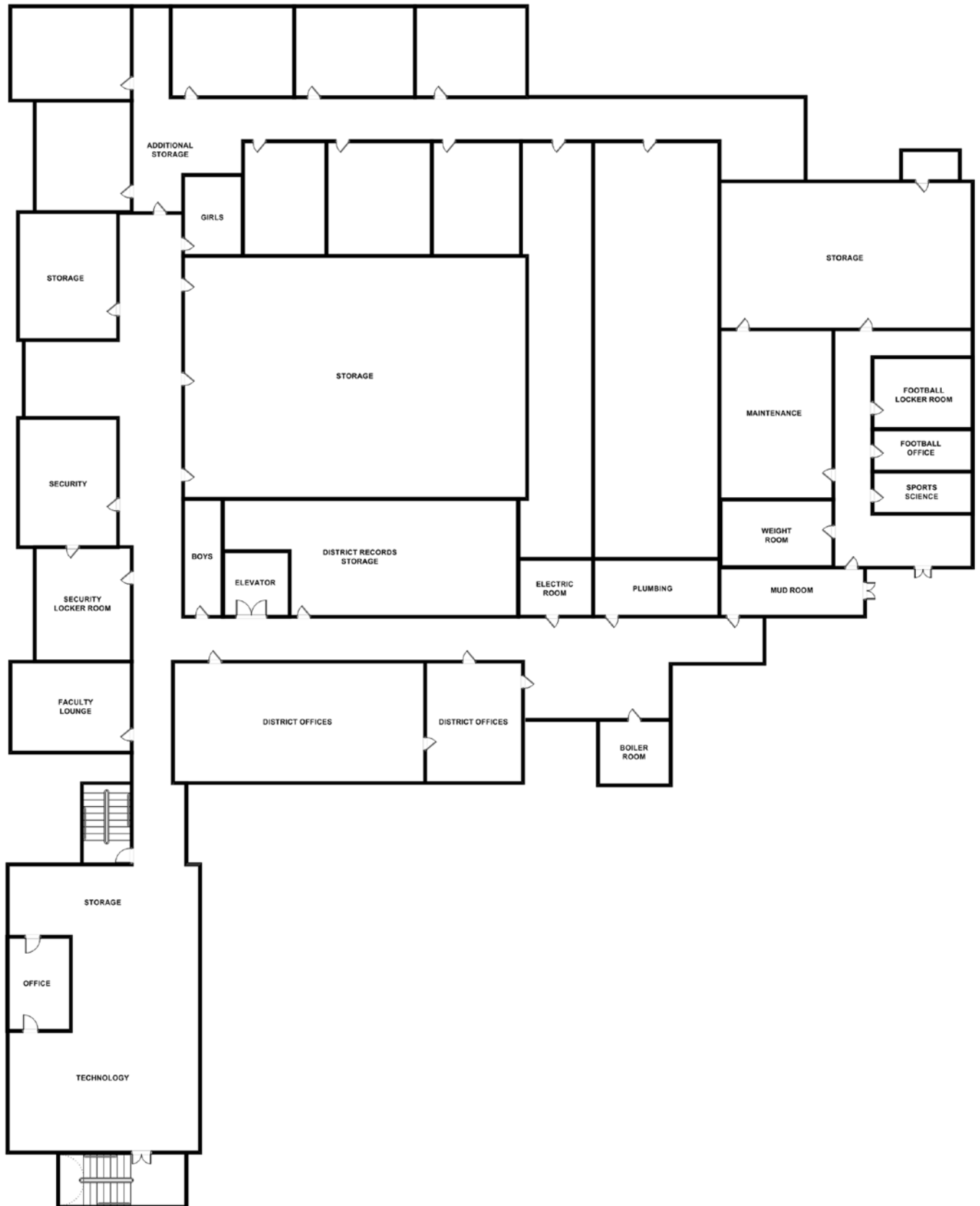
Sample Classes

English:	Computer Science
7th Grade English	Debate
8th Grade English	Drama
Creative Writing	Health
Introduction to Journalism	Home Sciences
Math:	Shop
Advanced Math	Speech
Algebra	Yearbook
Applied Math	Extracurricular Activities:
Pre-Algebra	Band
Science:	Baseball
Applied Chemistry	Drama
Applied Science	Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
Biology	Junior Honor Society
Chemistry	Library Assistant
Social Studies:	Office Assistant
American History	Pep Club
World History	Soccer
World Religions	Student Aide
Physical Education	Student Council
Electives:	Track
Band	Wrestling
Business Law	Yearbook Committee

**FIRST FLOOR**



SECOND FLOOR

**BASEMENT**

Adventure: A Lesson Learned

Nobody likes a wannabe.

“A Lesson Learned” is an adventure set in Spring Crescent Middle School.

Ray Onstad, a normal kid in school, found himself wielding powers akin to a monster this morning. A book of occult knowledge has granted him power, but Ray cannot handle the power responsibly. The player characters must find the book before the meanest teacher in the school, Mr. Phillips (page 24), gets his hands on it and uses the power for nefarious reasons. The textbook is alive and it only wishes to find a friend, one who will take care of it and teach it about friendship.

A Friend for a Fiend

The ending of this scenario focuses on placing the textbook with a kid so it does not fade away, in effect creating a new monster. Obviously, a suitable candidate should be foreshadowed before the players get the textbook. The GM should establish one or more kid NPCs as potential friends for the textbook. Here are three examples.

A player character’s brother or sister: The best potential candidate for the textbook. The sibling is almost certainly aware of the PC’s monster and undoubtedly wants a monster of their own. Furthermore, it allows the PC to keep an eye on the textbook.

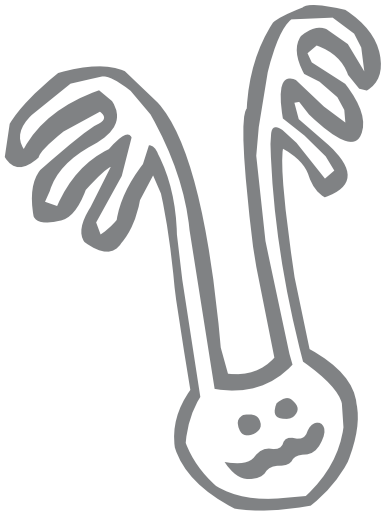
Adam Warren: A polite and nerdy kid who is well known for reading constantly about wizards and magic.

Susan Merriam: Popular and known as one of the rare kids who is equally at home with any of the cliques. She is levelheaded and most kids think she is trustworthy.

The candidates should be part of the action as the scenario progresses. There are three key scenes where they can make a difference: The Shadow Mob fight (page 47), the battle with the garbage monster in the lunch room (page 49), and the battle with Ray Onstad right after school (page 51).

At each encounter, a candidate should interact with at least one PC. Perhaps they need to be saved from a monster or they provide useful advice for the players. The important thing is to show the players that the candidate is thrilled and intrigued by the monsters and supernatural events instead of being terrified of them. The players will remember this later on when they get the textbook and realize they need to find a friend for it.

You can also use the candidates to fill in the blanks for the plot. They can share the gossip about Ray and Mary to the players in case they miss something.



Who's Who

"A Lesson Learned" is all about two shy students and the textbook that brings them together. Doesn't that sound sweet?

Ray Onstad

Ray is a nervous little jerk. He hangs out with the preppies because his parents are rich and he can afford to dress like them, but he doesn't really like the preppies. It's just easier to be part of a clique than to be a loner. He doesn't like his clique, though. They don't approve of Mary Williams, his dream girl, but she's not rich and definitely not cool enough. He wants to ask her out but can't find the nerve to do so. He's afraid of being laughed at by Mary and by his friends.

Mary Williams

A quiet but pretty art student, Mary doesn't hang out with many people. Her family is an industrious blue collar clan that doesn't really get her. She is very sensitive and insecure about herself and loses herself in art as a way of escaping. She admires Paula Ptraci, the art teacher. She has only a few friends and dresses blandly. Most kids just view her as a wallflower, a plain jane.

The Textbook

The spirit is idealistic and quite naive about humanity. Despite being raised by Mr. Hebig, in a sense, the textbook saw time and time again how close kids and monsters were. The textbook began to see that friendship as the most perfect thing in this world or the next. When Mr. Hebig retired, the spirit in the textbook dreamed of finding a kid while it slept. Now that it has found a potential friend in Ray, it will do whatever it can to prove its value. However, it still has a very limited frame of reference and it believes that power solves all problems, something that Mr. Hebig taught it. It is an innocent spirit, lost in the world.

Background

Louis Hebig (son of Bartleby Hebig, page 6) used to teach science in Spring Crescent Middle School. He was also a wizard who studied the supernatural, especially kids and their monsters. All of his observations, mystic formulae, and words of power were re-

corded on a science textbook. Last year, a magical ritual went awry and Mr. Hebig lost his sanity as a result. He was retired by the administration, where everyone assumed the old man had simply fallen into senility.

The textbook is not merely an archive of occult knowledge. Years of exposure to the supernatural, and Mr. Hebig's obsession with monsters, created a spirit that awakened within the textbook. The textbook spirit wants to be a real monster more than anything else, but it doesn't understand how to form a bond between a kid and itself. It is just as powerful as a real monster, perhaps even stronger, but without a human to ground it, it is a serious danger to itself and everything around it.

One month ago, Mr. Hebig died. He had no family, and his possessions were sold off at auction. An amateur bibliophile, David Onstad, purchased a lot of Mr. Hebig's books which included a certain battered, out-of-date science textbook. David gave the book to his kid, Ray, who took it to school today by mistake. The chaos begins shortly after Ray enters school before the first bell rings.

First Scene: Home Room

The player characters arrive at school about ten to fifteen minutes before homeroom class begins. It's a normal, boring day as they meet their friends, gossip and wander the halls. Give the players a few minutes to pursue their own agendas, and then ask for Brains + Notice rolls.

Any character that succeeds sees that the halls are much more crowded than usual, with strange emotionless kids that no one can identify. They are strangers to everyone and wear strange clothes. A Brains + Remember check determines that the clothes are from the 1950s. Most kids and all adults ignore the new unknown kids. Only kids with monsters notice them and can react normally.

Mere seconds after the strange kids appear, someone yells "Fight! Fight!" and the halls go wild. There's pushing, shoving, cursing and general mayhem. Every kid with a monster notices the mystery kids at this point if they haven't already.

What's going on: Ray Onstad wants to ask Mary Williams out for a date. However, he can't work up the nerve to do so. He feels alone and afraid. The textbook can sense this and has decided to conjure an entourage to help Ray out. It surrounds Ray with the shadowy figures and telepathically tells him that he is here to help him. Ray freaks out and bumps into Jim, one of the alpha males of the school and captain of the wrestling team. Jim punches Ray in the arm, hard, and the shadowy figures attack. Normal kids react to the shadow figures, but they treat them as normal kids, not as bizarre magical creatures. Jim's clique gets involved and the mayhem starts.

Complications: The textbook has its own reserve of energy but also drains nearby supernatural creatures. Any monster caught in the hallways suffers a 5d attack that does

width in Shock damage. The monster becomes nervous and agitated and may blame the kid for getting hurt.

When the fight breaks out, it becomes obvious that the other kids seem to be ignoring the magical nature of the shadow kids. A careful monster is unlikely to be noticed in the chaos. The players should understand that they can reveal their monsters if they choose, although it may be risky. After all, no one knows what's going on exactly.

Theme/mood: Claustrophobic and chaotic. Everyone is swamped by other people, no one is rational and emotions run high. Mob rules and panic. Stampedes of scared kids.

Options: The player characters won't notice Ray before the mayhem, as he is just another kid. Everyone in the hall suffers a 4d physical attack every other round while in the halls, from all the kids fighting and shoving each other. Once the fight starts though, the players have several options.

1. *Get out of the halls:* Navigating the chaos of the fight is difficult at best. A character must make several Feet + Dodge checks in order to squirm through the mob.

2. *Search for the source of the shadowy figures:* A successful Brains + Notice check reveals the location of the thickest mob of figures where the wrestling team is heavily involved with the fight.

3. *Fight the other figures off:* The stats for the mob are given in the back but fighting is difficult in the hallway, due to cramped space and large number of innocent bystanders. Subtract 1 die from each attack roll from player characters. A Brains + Notice reveals that Jim is being targeted by the figures.

4. *Analyze the figures:* Successful use of a perceptive monster ability reveals that the figures are magical, but not from a monster. However, the energy is similar to a monster. It seems to emanate from a person or object nearby. It is impossible to pinpoint the source though, especially with the chaos of the fight going on.

After approximately 10 rounds of fighting, several teachers break up the fight and the shadowy figures dissipate. A few of the bad kids are rounded up for punishment but most are simply herded to their first class. Ray is not caught. Jim takes a beating unless the PCs save him from the shadowy figures.

The Candidates

The brawl with the Shadow Mob is a good place to introduce one of the potential candidates for textbook bonding (page 44). Since they're on the way to class, a kid's monster-obsessed brother or sister would fit right in.

The Shadow Mob's Locations

1-3 Shuffling, disorienting shadowy figures 9d Defends, Useful (distract and conceal), Awesome x2, Tough x3.

4-6 Angry, punching shadowy figures 8d Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly x3, Tough x1, Useful (protect Ray).

7-10 Intimidating, scary shadowy figures 10d Defends, Useful (paralyze), Tough x4.

The Shadow Mob has 7d for all Brains + Out think rolls.

Interlude: Morning Classes

Ray boasts of his newfound magical powers but no one believes him, even after he waves the textbook around. Mary even laughs at him. Ray spends the rest of the morning plotting a way to impress Mary. Ray does NOT share any classes with the PCs. They should not overhear him directly, as it makes the mystery too easy to solve, but can hear about it from other kids gossiping.

Each player character has several options during morning classes.

1. Gossip and rumors: A Face + Charm roll garners width in rumors. Choose from the following list.

Jim got trashed at the fight this morning. He won't be able to wrestle in Saturday's match. (Somewhat true. He won't be able to wrestle, but not because of his injury. He is benched for getting into a fight.)

A bunch of kids from another school started the fight to beat up the wrestling team. (False.)

Heather, the head cheerleader and queen bee of the school, hates Mary Williams for flirting with her boyfriend, Mike. (True.)

Heather and Mike broke up. (True.)

The old science teacher died because of all the chemicals in the science room. (False.)

There's a dead body buried in the basement. The janitor told me. (True. There's a ghost, too.)

Someone's stalking Mary but she deserves it because she's huge tease and everyone knows it. (True, at least the part about the stalking.)

There are like at least four kids who say they have a book of magic. That's so lame. (True. Ray started bragging about his book first but three other kids already started to copy him to get attention.)

Someone is going to start something at lunch today. (True. Big time.)

The librarian hates everyone. Someone should prank her. (True, but that's not a wise idea.)

Jim is totally hot for some chick, but he won't say who. (True.)

You can totally score some drugs off the rent-a-cop, Officer Southerden. (False, and also not a wise idea.)

2. Converse with a monster: A kid can spend class talking to his personal monster. Each monster reacts differently to the morning fight but all are uneasy about it. The shadow mob was not a new monster, but something different.

3. Actually pay attention in class: Yeah, right.

4. Sneak out and wander the halls: Most teachers are easily bribed or charmed. A successful Face + Charm or Face + Connive roll allows the kid to sneak around for height in minutes.

Second Scene: Lunch

The student body crowds into the cafeteria for another meal of government-inspected tacos, pizzas, French fries and taco salads. Gossip about the morning fight and Ray's "magic science book" abounds. Several kids brag about having the book, but no one knows who started the rumor. Ray says nothing now, as he is focused on a new project.

As the player characters line up for lunch, a cafeteria worker yells out, "Special delivery for Heather the Queen Bitch!" The worker waddles towards a terrified Heather with a vat of hot grease.

What's going on: Ray knows that Mary hates Heather, the head cheerleader. He decides that Heather needs a scalding hot-grease makeover. The textbook possesses a cafeteria worker. The hapless worker grabs a vat of hot grease from the kitchen and, if not stopped, pours it on Heather's face.

Options: Most player characters will want to intervene and save Heather from being permanently disfigured—seeing something that horrible causes everybody to freak out just like normals seeing a monster attack. Of course, once a monster makes itself visible in the cafeteria, all the other kids freak out and stampede for the exits. Maybe it's time to be sneaky.

1. Save Heather: If the kids manage to stop the cafeteria worker, the textbook creates its own monster to finish the job. It animates a massive pile of discarded food to block potential attackers. The characters see the garbage can explode in a nasty mixture of soggy pizza, milk, tacos, napkins, paper bags, apple cores and other bits of food in a semi-viscous humanoid shape about eight feet high. Its limbs are blobby pseudopods. It carries a shield of discarded meat and a sword made of rock-hard bread. However, it can generate additional tentacles to attack foes if need be. It's disgusting even by monster standards.

The Candidates

Lunch is a great time to introduce Susan Merriam, a popular girl who seems to like everyone, and Adam Warren, a shy kid who's fascinated by magic. Susan will encourage the kids to keep Heather the cheerleader safe; Adam will stare at the monsters in open awe.

The Garbage Monster's Locations

1-2 Gaping maw 8d Useful (can swallow someone and hold them), Awesome x2.

3-5 Pseudopods 8d Attacks, Tough x3, Gnarly x3, Useful (pick up things)

6 Pepperoni eyes 5d Useful (detect hidden monsters).

7-8 Meat shield 7d Defends, Tough x3.

9-10 Bread sword 6d Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly x2.

The Garbage Monster has 7d for all Brains + Out Think rolls.

Creating the garbage monster taxes the textbook's powers heavily, and every monster in the cafeteria suffers a 6d attack when the garbage monster first takes damage. Every monster damaged by the draining attack immediately notices it.

Once the monster is destroyed, everyone must make a Feet + Dodge check opposed by a 5d tidal wave of garbage that floods the room. Failing to dodge the tidal wave results in width in gooey, sticky, smelly Shock damage.

As the battle unfolds, the player characters have four rounds to stop the worker before Heather is disfigured by the hot grease. Bruno, the worker, is a normal cafeteria employee, temporarily mind-controlled by the textbook. He will have no memory of the cafeteria incident.

2. *Find the textbook:* By this point the textbook is acting out on its own, trying to interpret Ray's conscious and subconscious desires. It is stored in Ray's backpack, and when the garbage monster appears Ray flees with the mob and doesn't look twice. He won't respond to taunts or pleas to make himself known. Unless the player characters have pieced together that Ray is obsessed with Mary, they won't know to look for him yet.

Complications: Once Bruno the cafeteria worker succeeds or is stopped by the player characters, order is restored. Principal Stanmeyer and Mr. Phillips round up all the player characters who acted up during the fight and the four kids who claimed to own the textbook.

The Conspiracy immediately goes into action, covering up the event. They blame it all on Bruno, calling it a prank gone horribly awry, and fire him for his incompetence. They use magic to clean up. An announcement on the PA informs everyone that the administration will harshly punish anyone caught spreading false rumors about the incident.

Privately, Stanmeyer tries to figure out what happened but Mr. Phillips assures him he has it under control. Unwilling to challenge the Excruciator without definitive proof, the principal lets Mr. Phillips to continue on. The rest of the Conspiracy assumes the cafeteria incident is a dust-up between two kids with monsters and believes that Stanmeyer has it under control.



Interlude: Afternoon Classes

Mr. Phillips interrogates the player characters and makes it clear that he wants the textbook, and threatens the students with detention or worse if they keep it from him. However, he does not forcibly search each kid, or throw them into detention, as that would attract the interest of the Conspiracy and Mr. Phillips wants the book for himself.

He explains it is a risk for kids to have such a book and he must find it for their own good. He is clearly aware of the supernatural and seems to despise anything connected to it. The kids should be surprised that an adult would openly acknowledge the supernatural in their presence. Brains + Notice rolls indicate his desperation.

The race is on to find the textbook before Mr. Phillips. By interrogating other classmates, the player characters can figure out that Mary is connected to both of the previous events. It seems like someone wants to impress her.

Heather, in particular, blames Mary for the cafeteria incident. She starts a rumor that Mary flirted with the cafeteria worker. Monsters with detection powers can feel some kind of connection with Mary, some link between her and a monsterlike power.

Furthermore, characters can chase down rumors about the four kids who claimed to have a book of magic. One of Ray's friends admits that Ray has a crush on Mary, even though she's totally uncool.

By the end of the school day, the players should easily know that Mary is the primary target of these events and Ray is probably behind them.

The Candidates

Afternoon classes and the big brawl after school are more places to let the players interact with Susan Merriam, Adam Warren, or a monster-happy sibling. You don't need to hammer the point home, but keep one or more of these characters around so the players remember pretty quickly that there's a candidate for a monster not far away.

Third Scene: After School

By following Mary when school ends, the kids can find Ray and the textbook. None of the player characters have classes with Ray, so they won't be able to confront him until after school even if they figure out his identity. Soon after the bell rings, Ray discreetly monitors Mary and waits for her to walk away from school.

If the players are totally lost, then they hear Mary scream. The normal kids and parents leaving the school either don't hear the scream or ignore it. The kids' monsters all clearly sense a monster, or something like a monster, down the street just outside school.

What's going on: Ray corners Mary and demands a date from her. She refuses. The textbook focuses its power on Ray and transforms him into a hulking monster. Mary screams and tries to fight the monstrous Ray off.

Options: Fight the hulking Ray. That's about it. The textbook, in a desperate move, infuses Ray with monstrous power. Of course, humans are not meant to wield this kind

of power and Ray becomes an animalistic monster with no self control. He becomes an enraged kid hulked out with magical power. Purple skin, rippling muscles, a bad haircut and zits. "Me want Mary! RARGH!"

Ray the Monster's Locations

1-2 Muscley legs 7d Defends, Tough x3.

3-5 Ripped chest 9d Defends, Useful (impress the ladies), Tough x3, Awesome x2.

6-8 Powerful fists 7d Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly x3, Tough x3.

9-10 Thick skull 6d Defends, Awesome x2, Tough x2.

Ray the Monster has 7d for all Brains + Out Think rolls.

Once Ray is defeated, he reverts to his normal self. After losing the fight, Ray admits to using the textbook and reveals that someone kept notes on monsters for years. The textbook can mimic any ability from a monster its previous owner recorded onto it. At least that's what the textbook told Ray.

As soon as Ray starts revealing its secrets, the textbook flies suddenly out of his hands phases through the walls of the school to hide. If a player or monster manages to catch it, it simply slips through their grasp like smoke.

Complications: Mr. Phillips is secretly watching the player characters and monitors the fight and questioning of Ray. After the textbook flies into the walls of the school, he shows up and shoos everyone away. Many of the staff remain in the school for a while, so the player characters will find it nearly impossible to search for the book in the afternoon. They probably have to wait until evening. A Brains + Out-Think check informs a character that Mr. Phillips will likely search for the book until he finds it.



Fourth Scene: Evening

The player characters must sneak into the school after it gets dark, to try to find the textbook and avoid Mr. Phillips. As the player characters near the school, they see a single station wagon (Mr. Phillips doesn't see the point in upgrading a perfectly serviceable vehicle, even if others snicker at his poor choice in cars) parked nearby. Mr. Phillips already is looking for the book.

What's going on: The textbook hides in the science classroom and makes its last stand against attackers. Its powers temporarily transform the school into a labyrinth of dark corridors. The school looks like a nightmarish labyrinth of twisty passages, all alike. Menacing figures seem to lurk in the shadows. Monsters with sensory powers can detect that this is some kind of illusion, but they seem very real. Only Mr. Phillips, the textbook and the players are in the school.

It soon becomes obvious that the corridors are too long and there are too many doors in the school, that something supernatural is going on. Any character in the school must make a Guts + Courage check to act normally. Failure indicates they are unnerved by the stillness and darkness of the school and lose one die from all Guts or Face-based checks.

Options:

1. *Search for the book.* The fact that Ray's magic book is a science book might give the players the idea to search the science classroom. Alternately, any monster with supernatural detection abilities can try to sweep the school for the book.

2. *Stop Mr. Phillips.* Unlike the book, he is relatively easy to find. He attempts to maintain his cover identity as a normal human, but he will attack isolated monsters with full force. He retreats when outnumbered and is nearly impossible to catch when pursued. He never transforms into a monster when someone is watching and tries to cultivate the idea that he and the monster are separate entities.

He may use the wards of the school against the characters, but only if he is outnumbered. He prefers hit and run tactics to straight up fights.

Mr. Phillips has standard stats for an Excruciator except that he has Awesome x2 in all hit locations while he is on the school grounds. (See *Monsters and Other Childish Things*, page 88.)

If defeated, he is not permanently destroyed, only temporarily forced from this plane of existence. He reforms in less than 24 hours.

Complications: Once found, the textbook creates a patchwork guardian of dissected frogs, shattered glass beakers, Bunsen burners, microscopes and the anatomical human skeleton in the corner. A loose fitting labcoat hangs around the monster.

The textbook is a cornered rat desperate to survive. It starts the fight by unleashing one final draining attack, a 7d Shock attack to all monsters in the area. For each point of damage inflicted, roll a die and add a point to that location on the guardian monster.

The Textbook Guardian Monster's Locations

1-2 Protective lab coat 7d Defends, Tough x3.

3-4 Bunsen burner flamethrowers 5d Attacks, Awesome x2, Burn, Gnarly x2.

5 Microscope eye 5d Useful (detect hidden monsters).

6-8 Acid-throwing glass beaker fingers 8d Attacks, Awesome x2, Gnarly x3, Wicked Fast x2.

9-10 Central nervous system 5d Awesome x2, Tough x3, Useful (super smart).

The Textbook Guardian Monster has 7d for all Brains + Out Think rolls.

Mr. Phillips will try to sneak in and steal the book during the fight by sneaking around the fighters and making a dash for the book, but flees if he takes significant damage, such as going below half in any of his hit locations. He is a cagey foe and will not risk himself for short-term gain. He has the rest of the school year to get revenge on the students.

Win or lose, after the fight, the guardian monster collapses into a heap of rubble. The textbook can sense Mr. Phillips nearby and has realized that only the kids can possibly be real.

Its pages lie open with the following message scrawled on them:

“Please do not be angry. I only wanted to be real.”

The player characters can talk to the textbook, which will respond by displaying written messages in the text. Every time it says something new, it flips itself to a new page.

The textbook is honest and will relate its history to the characters if asked. See its biography on page 45.

Conclusion

The textbook is weakened and will fade away if it does not form a bond with a kid tonight. Ray hates the textbook for ruining any potential relationship with Mary and wants nothing more to do with it. He doesn't remember much about turning into a monster, but feels awkward and nervous around the players from now on.

The textbook can only be saved if the player characters bring it to another suitable kid and convince him or her to take it. Look back the candidates mentioned in the introduction of this scenario for some ideas on potential choices; see page 55 for some likely hangouts where they might be found.

This should be a roleplayed encounter and not a simple Face + Charm roll. If the kid accepts, the textbook tries to form a connection between it and the kid—but it can't yet muster the strength to do so. It requires a jumpstart of mystical energy from an existing bond.

Instead, the textbook becomes a blank book, leaving only a single message on it. “Sign me.” Every character who does so feels slightly weaker but the book glows brighter and brighter with each signing. After it has been passed around, the textbook takes on a new cover: a Spring Crescent Yearbook, dated the current year. Only those who have signed

the yearbook actually appear in it. Any character who signs the book gives up any advancement dice their monster may have earned during the adventure.

However, if at least one kid with a monster signs the book, it becomes a fully fledged monster itself attached to the new kid they convinced to adopt it. Furthermore, every kid who signed the book gains Relationship 1 with the new kid. If no one signs the book, it crumbles into dust within a few hours.

If, on the other hand, the players reject the textbook or Mr. Phillips steals the book during the battle with the science lab monster, he transforms the textbook into a soulless vicious monster. This monster is the start of his personal army and will use it to take over the Conspiracy. First, however, Mr. Phillips must silence the players, as they know too much. This is the start of a dire new phase in the campaign.

Hangouts

Skeezy Records

The only cool music store in town. The one in the mall treats every kid like a shop-lifter, but the clerks in Skeezy have good taste and know the best albums to shock parents and impress girls.

Caveman Comics

A surprisingly roomy comic book store with old comics available cheap, the latest Japanese card games, and weird roleplaying games. A clique of hardcore players are always there. The owner, Cody Harle, occasionally gives away old comics, especially horror titles where monsters befriend children and get involved in dark deeds.

The Paradise Plaza Mall

The biggest mall in town is a hangout for kids and teenagers. Overzealous security guards love to harass kids. The mall still has an arcade, supported by an active Dance Dance Revolution crowd. Whenever a monster is nearby, game screens show bizarre graphics and vague prophecies of doom.

The Abandoned Street

Franklin Street sits in an otherwise normal suburban neighborhood, but is totally devoid of residents. Even the sounds of the city are muted there. It's like everything

else is miles away.

There are seven delapidated houses, but not a single soul calls Franklin street home. One house is unfinished, a wooden skeletal frame covered in tattered plastic sheets, littered with dog-sized rats and broken liquor bottles.

Rumors run wild of why no one lives on the street, but no kid truly knows what happened. They say a Satanic cult committed mass suicide back in the 1970s, or maybe the Mafia owns the houses and stores drugs in them.

Franklin Street is within walking distance of Spring Crescent Middle School, so kids know it as a great hangout. Older kids use it as a primo makeout spot.

Night Hawks

The only kid-friendly all-night diner in walking distance of the school. It has typical burgers, milk shakes and chili. No one there cares if a bunch of middle schoolers spend a few hours there talking, as long as they order some food, even if it's late at night. But many parents know about Night Hawks, and look there if their kids are out late. Cops show up on a regular basis, too.

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