DIAL M FOR MONSTER

WHAT TERROR WILL BE UNLEASHED?

WHO WILL SURVIVE THE NIGHT?

HOW WILL YOU SAVE THE MUSEUM?

DANG
CAUS

A 1950s Black-and-White Horror/Mystery Story
of a Deadly Monster Lurking in a Museum in the Dead of Night

ScreenPlay

DIAL M FOR MONSTER

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Learn more about ScreenPlay at brokenrulergames.net/screenplay

BROKEN RULER GAMES

MYSTICAL THRONE ENTERTAINMENT

Dedicated to everyone who loves a good
horror movie that makes them laugh...

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A museum in the downtown core of any major metropolis. A source of history filled with bright eyes and smiling faces both young and old, coming together amidst displays of woolly mammoths, ancient fragments of grand relics, and the decayed remains of kings and queens. A place of peace and learning.

So what could be lurking in the halls at night, stalking innocent victims and luring them to mysterious deaths? Could it be a curse brought on by one of the relics housed within these esteemed halls? Is there something evil rising to serve the night when the doors are locked and the children have all gone home? Can it be stopped before word reaches the public about the mystery inside the museum?

It's a story about the staff at a world class institution, carrying on about their seemingly ordinary days tending to the place they love... only to discover dark forces at work when the sun goes down. They must band together to piece together the clues and stop this hideous evil before any of them become its next victim.

It's... Dial M for Monster!!

There's nothing quite like an old black-and-white horror movie to see the innocence behind those thrills and chills. Yet in their heyday, intentionally getting together in a darkened theatre to be scared with a loved one or best friends was looked down upon by elders. Why would someone want to watch a movie about fake monsters? Imagine what they must think of horror movies today. Dial M for Monster is a loving tribute to those classic tales of guys in rubber suits pretending to be monsters and violence shown only as shadow puppets on the wall.

Dial M for Monster is a treatment for the co-operative storytelling game, **ScreenPlay**, and contains all the rules needed to play. What exists in these pages is a condensed version of the core rules with a couple of adaptations to fit the genre of a 1950s black-and-white horror/mystery movie. Players who have experience with the full rules can easily do so with only minor adjustments to the contents of this particular treatment. There are also sidebars detailing the specific alternations made for this story.

What is this story about? That's an excellent question with a simple (and complicated) answer: it's your story. As a treatment, Dial M for Monster (or "Dial M" for short) contains a concept, some key initiatives, pre-generated character roles and other notes to provide a framework for an infinite number of possible renditions. What you'll find here will be a storytelling experience where all players will have a chance to take this concept plus all the other tools that come with it and create something truly original.

What makes this game unique is that the very creature haunting the museum is created as the story unfolds. Players take turns telling the story and creating secret clues leading to a shocking reveal as the lead characters explore the dark hallways in the dead of night. There are no pre-generated monster stats of any kind here, and the monster can be unique every time this story is told.

That what this game is all about, all while aiming to work within a specific genre of a precise medium. Yet the sky is the limit here, and if you and your fellow players can think of another genre, timeline, medium, or any other exciting alterations... go for it! As a treatment, this book offers inspiration and the tools to get started. In fact, the closest thing to a typical adventure you'll find is an example of the first scene to help get the ball rolling. After that, it's all up to the players to make this story come to life.

Everything you'll need to play is provided in this treatment and broken into the following chapters.

> Here in **the Introduction,** for example, you discover what this game is all about and get an idea of the spirit of the black-and-white horror genre of the drive-in era.

> **Act One: How To Stop A Monster** provides the rules for this storytelling game, presenting how players take turns creating the first draft of an original story.

> **Act Two: Cast of Characters** offers a variety of features needed to tell the story, including a collection of 8 character roles, guidelines for establishing your museum, rules for creating the monster during play, and a list of key initiatives.

> **Act Three: Worst Case Scenarios** ramps up the fear factor with three optional situations designed to make the night an exciting challenge the survive.

Survive The Night

If you can survive until the sun rises, the story is over. That applies to both players and characters. Dial M is intended to be told in a single night over the course of 3 to 4 scenes. If it doesn't feel like there's enough time to establish your character's personality, history, psychology... good! Three dimensional characters have no place in drive-in movies.

Having Fun With Horror

Dial M for Monster is a tribute to the classic horror films of a bygone era where, unbeknownst to the general public, bloodthirsty monsters creep about unleashing buried shadows from a more primeval era and summoning demons by committing dark deeds. Sometimes they involve monsters of classic fiction, direct translation, or cheap knock-offs; other times they end up coming from space or as the result of nuclear fallout. Whatever the reason, these monsters pose a dire threat to those caught in their path and only those who risk becoming their victims can stop them.

As easy as it can be to dismiss classic black-and-white horror films of the 1950s, they not only set the stage for horror films to come, but together have become a revered genre. As time went on and audiences grew wary of the tactics incorporated by screenwriters and film directors, modern approaches to editing and special effects had to step up to maintain the suspension of disbelief you need to

Playing Against Type: Women and Minorities in Dial M for Monster

Part of the fun may be playing up on the stereotypes of the genre and the decade that swarmed drive-in theatres, such as an attractive female secretary who must be saved. Maybe your version of Dial M will flip the genre on its head with strong female leads fighting to save the men who blindly rushed into the fray and/or star a black character as the sole survivor. This is another avenue where horror films have bucked the norms in North American cinema and there's absolutely no reason why your version of Dial M should have to follow any social conventions of the time.

feel the fear that sells a horror movie. Looking back on those classic films, they seem a bit dull and goofy and that's what makes them so much fun to watch today. For every Psycho, there is Attack of the Giant Leeches, Blackula, and others like Plan 9 From Outer Space. Dial M for Monster seeks to recreate the latter and provide a fun, light-hearted flashback to bygone days.

These kind of stories are not about bloodshed, carnage, fast cuts and chase scenes. They're almost like stage plays shot in a single take, starring actors who hope this will be their big break yet still have a long ways to go before anyone can ever take their career seriously. They're where all the lead characters are unbelievably attractive, and the worst that can happen to a character is a dark shadow shaped like a hideous man in a monster suit looming over them just before they let out one final scream. It's about having fun with horror. Perhaps yours will start off as cheesy fun and shift into a dark, gripping tale worthy of an Alfred Hitchcock film. It could even be a remake or sequel of a personal favourite, good or bad. In other words, if you're laughing while telling your version of Dial M, you're doing it right.

Before Your Very Eyes...

What exactly will your monster be? The trick to playing Dial M is that you never know what hides in the shadows late at night because there is no pre-existing beast. At the beginning of every story, the monster remains a complete mystery. The Director has a blank canvas by the end of the opening shot and leaves it up to the Writers to provide clues that will build up to a completed monster.

As the story progresses, all players (except the Director) will provide one clue, typically using material introduced in their current

description. These clues can range from physical evidence (claw marks on the wall), historical (the missing scrolls were written by the great pharaoh, Khufu), or anything else Writers can conceive of. The only catch is that only the Director gets to collect all the clues and piece them together into a monster for the ages. This keeps everyone on their toes and makes sure the creative experience is shared by everyone at the table and that your monster will be something hilariously strange and appropriate to your story.

Rules for creating your monster are provided in **Act Two: Cast of Characters**.

What Is ScreenPlay?

If Dial M is the story put to paper, ScreenPlay is the pen. This book is a self-contained treatment of this co-operative storytelling game where players take turns to create a dynamic, exciting story of mystery, danger, and maybe even romance. As a shared narrative experience, all players will be able to assemble their own version of Dial M with scenes of fright, secrets, humour, drama, or any other elements the group wishes to embed into this particular rendition of the story. Think of this treatment as laying down the basic foundations for what the core of the story is to be about; the next step is to write the script and make it come alive. That's what ScreenPlay does.

ScreenPlay recreates the screenwriting experience as a roleplaying/ storytelling game where the players gathered together become either Writers or the Director. Together, they build off the establishing features of this treatment and introduce their story scene-by-scene, round-by-round, and turn-by-turn. They present character descriptions, provide outcomes and determine if any character's progress faces a complication. Rather than lay out the entire setting before play, everyone can establish as much as they desire as a means to strengthen the plot or build on character motivations and hindrances.

If everyone has enjoyed this experience, you can purchase the complete rules for ScreenPlay from our website and take your story to the next level. There you can discover new rules to help lead characters grow more powerful, create stronger supporting characters, expand the uses of Survival, and so much more. Very handy if everyone decides to make this treatment just the beginning of a long running series...

Where our eager players discover how to tell daring tales of unsuspecting heroes stepping up to stop a vicious monster and living to see the sun rise.

Games are best played with a common agreement on rules and principles, especially when dealing with the imagination. Each of us can conceive of whatever we want; the rules are there to ensure everyone has equal opportunity to create their share of the story and visualize the same events as they are created. In this Act, we will go through a step-by-step process introducing you to how the ScreenPlay system works and how everyone will work together to create something memorable.

Whenever a new term is introduced for the first time, it is written in **bold blue text**. Should you ever need to reference the definition of these terms during play, look for this text.

Stage 1: Writers and Directors

There are two types of players: Writers and Directors. Writers are charged with telling the story from the point of view of the story's lead characters and describe how they interact with the world and move the plot forward. They may also take on additional supporting characters as they desire. Each story typically has one Director (though there

could easily be more), who responds to the Writers' descriptions with outcomes, fleshes out the story they create, and challenges them with physical, emotional, and moral conflicts. Writers must work together to face the outcomes and problems thrown at them by the Director to move the story forward, but while you may try to overcome the Director's challenges, you must also work with your Director to help create a fun and exciting story.

As a Writer, you have access to the following characters.

Lead Characters: Each Writer creates a lead character who will significantly influence the story. These characters are your primary source of storytelling and if there are no more lead characters left alive, the story is over. On your turn, you will use your lead character to provide descriptions and react to the outcomes provided by the Director and help the story progress, engage in exciting combat, and so much more.

Supporting Characters (Optional): Should you so desire, you can also create additional supporting characters. These work the same as lead characters in many ways, yet do not have the same influence or significance as your leads. But they can add that extra little bit of fun and roleplaying uncharacteristic of your lead. Some supporting characters may be created by the Director and provided to Writers, others are strictly for Director control only.

Players and Characters

There's an important distinction to make between players and characters. Anytime this book references an individual playing the game at a table (whether wooden or virtual), it is the player. Whenever it involves an individual character in the story, even if the actions are actually controlled by a player, it is referenced as the character. Because it is plausible (and encouraged) for players to use multiple characters – particularly the Director – this distinction exists.

A Step-By-Step Guide To Character Creation

What follows is a detailed breakdown of character creation for Dial M.

1. Choose a character type.
   - Lead, Supporting, or Extras
2. Choose a role.
3. Create your potentials.
   - Lead characters have 2 potentials (1x d8/5/3, 1x d6/3/2)
   - Supporting characters have 1 potential (d8/5/3)
   - Extras have 1 potential (d6/3/2)
4. Create resources for your first scene.
   - Lead characters have 3 resource slots
   - Supporting characters have 2 resource slots
   - Extras have 1 resource slot
5. Create at least one motivation. For every additional motivation, your character must have a hindrance.
6. Mark your character's maximum Survival.
   - Lead characters = 7 Survival
   - Supporting characters = 5 Survival
   - Extras = 3 Survival

As the Director, you have access to the following characters.

Supporting Characters: Functioning exactly like those described by Writers, a Director-controlled supporting character is a major player in the story and can offer serious aid or be major obstacles to lead characters' achievements. Unlike a Writer's supporting character, there is no limit to how powerful yours can become.

Extras: Any nameless thug or background character in a story is considered an extra. They provide minimal challenge and exist as a means of boosting the lead characters' efforts in the story or attempting to thwart their attempts in a limiting way. Extras can enter a scene as an individual, a collection of individuals, or as a group of multiple extras using the same potential.

Each of these character types have their own guidelines for character creation and are explained through this Act. For a quick reference, consult the chart to the left.

Stage 2:
Who Do You Want To Play?

A typical museum employs a large number of highly skilled and dedicated individuals, though not all of them are going to get caught up in the terror to come. While any number of possible characters can become part of this story, some are more common than others and can help inspire new players as well as provide special features to help improve their odds of surviving the story. These are known as roles for your story's lead and supporting characters.

Choose from one of the following and see **Act Two: Cast of Characters** for complete details. Any of these roles marked with an asterisk (*) is a required role for the story; if any of them are not chosen for a lead character, the Director will create them as supporting characters.

The Detective*: Tonight was not the first incident involving the museum and there's good reason to believe something's amiss and needs investigating. There's no such thing as the supernatural, everything has a logical explanation and a motive. It's your job to get to the bottom of this and make sure justice is served.

The Curator*: The museum is your pride and joy, nothing goes on within its walls without your knowledge and what terrifies you the most is the truth getting out amidst all this carnage. Your dirty laundry may have something to do with this unknown monster and you need to make sure it's never connected back to you.

The Assistant*: Perhaps the most loyal member of the Curator's immediate staff, you've suspected misdoings for a while now. Stories of a dangerous monster stalking the halls at night have peaked your interest, but how could they be related? You always knew people could do bad things, but could someone actually unleash pure evil to cover their tracks?

The Reporter: There have been reports of squad cars and the coroner's van parked outside the museum twice in as many weeks. Something's been going on there and nothing's been released to the press. That sounds like a story to you. And when you get that scent, you're like a bloodhound for the truth.

The Night Shift: Things simply don't clean up themselves, do they? Not without the unseen work of the Night Shift, be it a security guard, janitor or a university intern filing away papers at all hours of the night, this is someone who has learned the back doors and interconnecting hallways where guests never think to explore.

The Archeologist: Someone has to travel the globe and bring back these artefacts for the modern world to discover. It's not always a dangerous job, yet there are risks and the challenge finding these buried relics of ancient societies is a reward unto itself. Such work requires a resourceful spirit who can adapt and just might be able to bring this monster's rampage to an end.

The Scholar: Unlike your more infamous rival, the Archeologist, documenting these discoveries and piecing them together to provide a full tapestry of a dead society's life and death is what keeps this museum from becoming a circus attraction. Knowledge is important and when faced with an unexpected threat, you know how to find a way to counteract the monster's abilities.

The Criminal: Museums carry lots of nice, expensive jewels and priceless artefacts. A very clever person like yourself can surely find a way to make a little money of her own at the museum's expense. It just so happens your greed got you stuck in the middle of the worst night of your life and surviving will take every trick you've got up your sleeve.

Stage 3: Motivations & Hindrances

Everyone is driven by motivations pushing them forward against the unknown danger waiting in the museum's basement but the terror of this experience also plays on the characters' hindrances. All characters have at least one motivation and can be upgraded with more so long as the upgrades are balanced by hindrances.

Note: Motivations and hindrances only exist for Writer-controlled characters.

Motivations

A motivation is a personal goal laid down during the course of a story for characters to achieve by the end of the story. They may be directly related to the main plot or they could create subplots players can help weave into the central storyline. Motivations can be major accomplishments of great strength or inner struggles as the character seeks to understand the events of the past. Motivations can reward players for achieving a scene's goal, so the more motivations you can provide the better your chances of gaining these rewards.

Each lead and supporting character can start the story with one motivation written as a single sentence on the character notes. For every additional motivation assigned to a single character, they must take a hindrance (see below).

> NO ONE DESTROYS MY EXHIBIT AND GETS AWAY WITH IT!
>
> I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE THIS JOB.
>
> SCIENCE PROVIDES THE ANSWERS TO ALL PROBLEMS.

Hindrances

Hindrances are physical, mental, or emotional obstacles that slow a character's progress and increase the effort required at various moments in the story. A bad knee, a violent temper, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a fear of heights are all examples of hindrances. For every additional motivation beyond the first, a character must take on a hindrance. They work like motivations (a single sentence on your character notes) but can be manipulated by the Director spending challenges (see Stage 8) to create problems for your character.

Steps

All potentials, Difficulties, and details are measured using steps, a term for the amount of influence or variety these applications provide. There is a base step, considered the automatic value whenever no other application applies. For example, if a Writer cannot choose a viable potential for their character's next description, it defaults to the base step of d4. Each one provides a different value with each step and increases with step bonuses or decreases with step penalties. Consult the chart below for the individual components of each step.

Potential	Difficulty	Details
d4 or less*	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12 or higher	9	5

*This is the base step for all potentials, Difficulties and details.

I KEEP TELLING MYSELF I'M GOING TO STOP DRINKING.

NO ONE MUST FIND OUT ABOUT MY AFFAIR WITH SANDRA.

A WEAK HEART.

Stage 4: Potentials

There is no failure. There is no success. There are only complications, efforts made by other characters (or the Director) to make future descriptions harder, restricted, or bring a character's impact in the story to an end. All characters will face conflicts over the course of the story where complications will be a real possibility. Writers must roll dice against target numbers to determine possible complications. When this happens, you will use a character's potentials, Difficulties and details to make that happen.

A potential is a wide-ranging, yet also specific, aspect of a character that defines her above all others. Each potential demonstrates her nature, abilities, and capabilities in the story without being limited to any pre-determined approaches. The exact name of a potential is entirely up to its creator; they can be brief descriptions, a single adjective, or a personal mantra. The choice is up to you.

At the start of a character's turn, one of their potentials is chosen to determine any dice rolled (if triggered) and the number of details allowed. When another character tries to roll against you, the same or another potential can be selected for the Difficulty. If there is no potential you can apply to a description, it defaults to the base step.

MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY

ALWAYS ASKS THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

KEEPING A LOW PROFILE

A potential's base step starts at a 4-sided die (known as a d4) and moves as high as a 12-sided die (a d12). Each step is an increase or decrease in the number of sides in the die you roll. Increasing the steps is known as a step bonus, while decreasing them is known as a step penalty. If you are reduced to a step below a d4, then it becomes a d4-1 (subtract 1 from the value rolled) and gains an additional -1 for every additional step penalty until it reaches d4-4 and automatically fails. If you gained step bonus above a d12, then it becomes a d12+1 (add 1 to the value rolled) and continues on indefinitely (d12+2, d12+3, and so on).

> **Lead characters** start Dial M for Monster with two potentials: one at a d8 and one at d6.
>
> **Supporting characters** have only a single potential of a d8.
>
> **Extra** have only one potential of a d6.

Difficulties

You will not be the only one rolling dice, as other characters will attempt to achieve their own ends and thwart your efforts during the course of the story. When this happens, Difficulties are used to determine the target number against which a potential must roll to be considered effective.

Difficulties are always listed as odd numbers and range from the base step of 1 (practically automatic) to 11 (next to impossible). Every step increases the Difficulty's value by 2 (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11). For your characters, each potential also comes with a Difficulty. Whenever the Director rolls dice against your character, choose an appropriate potential's Difficulty. If you do not have one that applies, then the Difficulty defaults to the base step of 1.

Ordinary, Everyday People (or How These Characters Are Different in ScreenPlay)

Experienced ScreenPlayers may notice the number of potentials for lead and supporting character is lower than those found in the core rules and they use Survival instead of Stamina (see page 21). As far as game play is concerned, there is no difference between Survival and Stamina. This has been done to better represent the genre and create the kinds of ordinary characters found within an average workplace (even a museum). If you wish to play Dial M with the core rules, be sure to make the necessary adjustments to your monster (see Act Two: Cast of Characters).

Minimum Difficulties

Regardless of how many obstacles a character faces, a Difficulty cannot be reduced below 1 and simply becomes a matter of determining which character gets to create the complication.

Challenge-based Difficulties

There will be moments in the story when a Difficulty is determined by the situation at hand, requiring the Director to determine the Difficulty based on the complexity of the situation provided. For example, being on top of a speeding train without falling off will be Damn Hard and therefore set at a Difficulty of 7. In these cases, the Director chooses a Difficulty Level and will use the chart below based on the number of challenges spent (see Stage 8).

Difficulty Level	Difficulty
Tricky	5
Damn Hard	7
Foolhardy	9

Details

Whenever a character provides a description in the story, he is restricted to a maximum number of possible actions based on the potential chosen at the beginning of the turn. These actions are known as details. Step modifiers only apply to details when a character benefits from an ongoing step modifier gained from a previous round.

One of these details is considered the key detail and is the primary action performed in the description. If a complication roll is triggered, it will be to determine this key detail's effectiveness, leaving all others to work as additional flourishes and actions related to or assisting in building up to the key detail. The last detail in a description is normally the key detail, but this is not a requirement and remains at the describing character's discretion.

Required Details: Certain events require the use of a detail; these are listed below for your convenience. Many of these are explained in greater depth later in this Act.

Required Details	# of Details Required
Equipping a prop	1
Gain the cover/concealment modifier	1
Move across, into or out of a room (maximum of 25 feet)	1 detail

Step Modifiers

Certain events or situations allow characters to raise their die's step or force it to drop. The following chart provides the most common step modifiers. Certain modifiers require a full description to apply and are marked with an asterisk (*).

Modifier	Step Bonus/Penalty
Aid Another Character *	+1 steps
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps for every additional target beyond the 1st
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps for light, +2 steps for heavy

Stage 5: Resources

Unless you plan on characters starting the first scene naked, they will need clothes, supplies, weapons, and more. They will likely have learned important facts and fields of study before the story began. Not all of these facets will have a mechanical influence in every scene, but some of them will. When they do, they are known as resources and some will provide a dramatic benefit to your characters.

A resource is an item, moment of history, skill, or knowledge of any type that aids your character's performance during a description. Each one can be as unique as a grain of sand or as common as the cold. What makes them stand out during the story is how they affect chances of a complication happening, by whom, and to what effect. While you may come across any number of items during the course of the story, you will only have so many resources.

Each character type has a maximum number of resource slots for your character.

> **Lead characters** have 3 resource slots.
>
> **Supporting characters** have 2 resource slots.
>
> **Extras** have 1 resource slot.

Within each slot, you can assign a particular item, background fact, or skill at the start of a new scene. Each resource will have either a damage bonus or a step bonus.

> **Step Bonus:** The resource provides a +1 step bonus when applied in the description. This step bonus can only be used to increase the complication roll's dice value or the Difficulty.
>
> **Damage Bonus:** The resource provides a damage bonus based on the criteria below;
>
>> If the resource can be used one-handed, it grants a +1 damage bonus.
>>
>> If the resource must be used two-handed, it grants a +2 damage bonus.
>>
>> If the resource is a firearm, it grants an additional +1 damage bonus.
>>
>> If the resource creates an explosion, it grants an additional +1d4 damage bonus per use.

You can only apply one resource to a complication roll or Difficulty at a time. Resources do not provide ongoing benefits and so cannot increase the number of details in a description.

Props (AKA Items, Weapons, Armor)

Characters must use a detail to introduce a physical resource, known as a prop, into a scene if it must be actively manipulated (i.e. remove a camera from the backpack, draw a gun from its holster), but not to discard it or return it to its original space. For example, you must use a detail to draw a sword, but not to re-sheathe it. You can have multiple counts of the same prop, such as a collection of throwing knives, but you must stipulate exactly how many you have and each requires its own detail to become available in a description.

Skills & Backgrounds

Characters have the option of creating a skill or background experience as a resource instead of a prop. For example, a character could have advanced knowledge of Ancient Egypt and apply it as a resource during appropriate moments. A skill or background experience cannot be applied as a resource unless it can be connected to one of a character's potentials. No details are required to introduce a skill or background experience into a scene.

Stage 6: Survival

Every character has limitations of physical and mental endurance, limits that will be tested as they attempt to solve a twisted mystery through research, investigation, and interrogation, as well as survive the danger brought on by whatever is behind it all.

Survival is used to track these limits until a character either completes a scene or falls in battle. It is used to track how long your character can endure and how often she can push the boundaries and adapt to intense moments of conflict in the game. When a character reaches 0 Survival, she is removed from a scene in an appropriate manner decided on by the character that put them there, up to and including unconsciousness or death.

> **Lead characters** have 7 Survival.
>
> **Supporting characters** have 5 Survival.
>
> **Extras** always have 3 Survival each. The total number of Survival per group is equal to 3 x the total number of individuals in the group.

Note that monsters are technically counted as supporting characters but start with more than 5 Survival. See page 41 in **Act Two: Cast of Characters**.
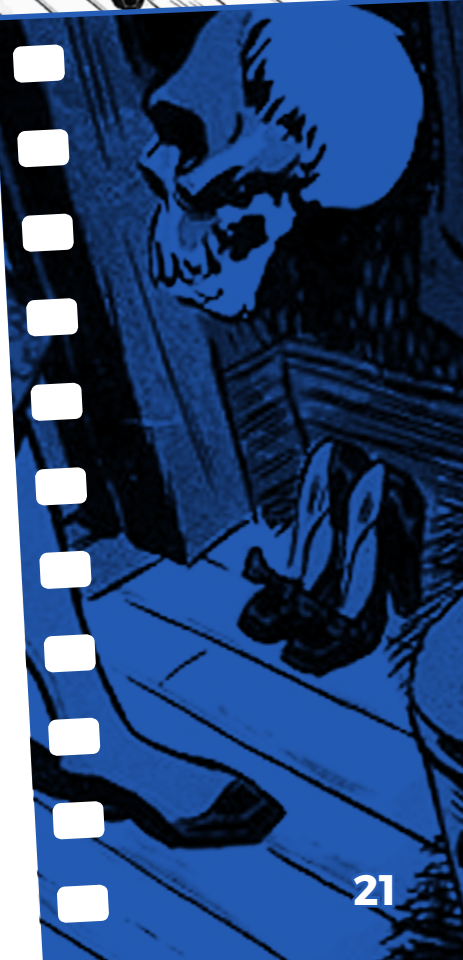
Survival can also be used to alter the outcomes of conflicts during play in the following ways, but you may be able to convince the Director to allow exceptional moments by sacrificing additional Survival. There is no limit to how often you can spend Survival in these ways, but once you hit 0, your character is out of the scene. (Note that extras cannot spend Survival to gain these benefits; only leads and supporting characters.)

> **Shift:** Characters can spend 1 Survival to increase or decrease the result of a die roll (either one they rolled or one rolled against them) by 1. For example, if an opponent rolls an 8 on his complication roll, a character can spend 1 Survival to reduce it to a 7 and choose her own complication. In turn, the other character involved in the complication roll can also shift the result, but both characters can only shift the result of a single complication roll once.

> **Interrupt:** A character who has yet to act in the current round can spend 1 Survival to cut in line. The character can choose whether he wants to interrupt before another player is chosen, or after a character's description is provided.

> **Remove a Complication:** A character can spend 1 Survival to remove a complication with one detail instead of a full description.

Regaining Survival

When you complete a scene, all surviving characters regain half of their current Survival. You can never end up with more than your maximum Survival. There may also be times during play when the Director deems enough time has passed between scenes that all surviving characters will return to their maximum Survival.

Any character allowed to continue participating in a story after she's been reduced to 0 Survival begins the next scene with 3 Survival.

First Aid

Sometimes a Writer will describe their character pulling aside during a wicked skirmish to bandage a horrible wound and cope with a life threatening injury. A character can use a description to actively treat any injuries or replenish her energy or that of another character. If a character does so on herself, she regains 3 Survival. If a character does so for another character, that character gains 4 Survival. Healing any character requires a full description.

Stage 7: Playing the Game

Now we come down to the crux of the game: how to play. This stage covers how the previous stages all come into play during your version of Dial M. As you read this step, review what you've created for your characters thus far and make any adaptations you feel necessary to make your characters work using the mechanics presented here.

The Rule of Initiatives

There is one fundamental guideline to playing Dial M for Monster: whoever introduces a character, element, setting, or any aspect of the story has final say on how it is used in the story. This is known as the Rule of Initiatives and includes any written material provided in these pages by the Director. If another player offers a description that counters or contradicts what has been created, the initiating player can request a revised description (referred to as a rewrite).

Scenes

All stories are broken down into scenes. A scene is a particular moment in the story (not necessarily told in chronological order) played out by Writers and the Director. A scene can last any length of time and ends when the goal of the scene is completed. There are three key questions to ask when creating a scene.

> **Which characters are involved in the scene?** Knowing who's involved in the scene helps shape the scene's goals, setting, and more. (Note that the Director is not required to openly state all of her supporting characters and extras at this stage.)

> **What is the goal of the scene?** What are the characters trying to accomplish and when will the scene end? This helps to determine when a scene ends, regardless of how well the lead characters fared. Individual characters may have different goals or unique objectives to meet a single goal or there may be multiple goals attached to a single scene.

> **Where will the scene take place?** This can involve physical locations as well as points in time, including flashbacks. A scene's duration is not always limited to a single location and it's also recommended to start a scene at an interesting point in the plot (for example, not every scene needs to demonstrate the characters travelling to their next location).

The players can discuss the purpose of the scene and provide notes for everyone and/or individual Writers to act as guides for their characters during the scene. These notes are important for Writers, offering suggestions and context for their characters.

Opening Shot

At the start of a scene, the Director will provide the opening shot, detailing the events leading up to the start of the scene and/or passages of what characters witness as they begin the scene. Directors can embellish using whatever storytelling practises they are most comfortable with, including the use of camera shots. This is a key moment in the beginning of a scene to help the Writers visualize their setting and build upon it with future descriptions. More importantly, it is a perfect opportunity for the Director to lock in key fundamentals by describing them first (see the Rule of Initiatives). For example, establishing a fishing village in the opening shot means the Director has actually created the village and has final approval over any additions.

Rounds

After the opening shot and the scene begins, all Writers and the Director will take turns describing what all their characters will offer to the story. Once all characters have had a chance to offer a description, a round is completed. Certain aspects of your characters cannot be repeated until the start of a new round.

The Director starts a scene by choosing a Writer to go first. This Writer chooses an available character designated for the scene and provides his description. Once the description has been completed, that Writer chooses the next person, be they another Writer or the Director. If that person does not have any characters available in the current round, they must choose someone else instead. Whichever player ends the round can choose any other player to start the next round.

Turns

Once per round, every active character in a scene has a turn, an opportunity to provide a description and discover its outcome. The same rules apply to all characters and work in the following order:

1. The player is chosen to take her turn by the previous player (even if they had the last acting character in the previous round) or by the Director to start the scene. The chosen player must have a character available to act within the round or else another player must be chosen.

2. The player chooses a character to play this turn.

3. The character announces the chosen potential and determines how many details are allowed in their description.

4. The character provides a description.

5. The Director determines if there are any step modifiers or complication rolls. If so, it is played out accordingly and used to help determine the outcome.

6. If the current player is a Writer, the Director will provide an outcome. If the current player is the Director, a Writer will provide the outcome. This Writer may be the one controlling the character affected by the Director's character or not.

7. The character chooses who will go next in the round or who will start the next round.

Creating Monster Clues

As the story progresses, the Writers will have the opportunity to establish clues to the identity of the mysterious creature hunting them. At the beginning of the story after characters have been created and rules explained, hand each Writer a single piece of paper or a cue card. At any point during their turn, they can write down a clue to the monster's identity. As each clue is presented (in secret) to the Director, the monster's stats slowly assemble until there is a fully rendered beast that will stop at nothing until its creators are no more.

All clues should be based on physical evidence discovered at the scene and introduced into the story by the Writer creating the clue or another Writer during a previous turn. Other facets of the monster can be taken from previous descriptions but it is the clues provided to the Director that will help determine what the monster can do, how it moves about the museum, even establish what it is and where it came from. Using these clues, the Director can use the guidelines on page 41 of **Act Two: Cast of Characters** to create complete stats for the monster, even before all the clues have been submitted.

Outcomes

Every description provided in the story will need a reaction from another player to establish what happens as a result of those details. The outcome will be the resulting discovery, consequence or benefit of a description revealing the effectiveness of a description, such as what a character sees when she is described opening the door to a new room. An outcome means the character's turn is now complete and play moves to someone else in the round.

On a Writer's turn, the Director will provide the outcome. On the Director's turn, a Writer will be chosen to provide an outcome.

An outcome is not limited in the same way a description is bound to a set number of details. Players can embellish as much as they desire to help build on the story using the material provided in the description and incorporate any complications created by a complication roll.

Complications

Not everything is going to go a character's way and when it doesn't, that's a complication doing its job. A complication is a forced limitation, viewpoint, penalty, or damage placed on a character as the result of a complication roll. Depending on the nature of the complication applied and whether or not the Director redeems a challenge to extend it further into the story (or even make it permanent), complications can only be removed by using descriptions or spending Survival to expand on how a character handles and confronts them.

Whoever created the complication assigns it a name based on how it functions within the scene. Complications are designed for creativity on the fly and to suit the situation at hand. Think of a complication as an effect placed upon a character as the result of bad luck or the concentrated effort of another character in the scene. If a character effectively grapples an opponent as the result of a complication roll, that character is complicating the other's desire to walk away or accomplish something else requiring the full use of his body.

> **THICK FOG (RESTRICTION COMPLICATION):** A SUPERNATURAL FOG SEEPS THROUGH THE HALLWAY AND MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE WHAT'S UP AHEAD.
>
> **FRAUGHT WITH TERROR (PENALTY COMPLICATION):** SEEING THE MONSTER'S TRUE FORM HAS THE CHARACTER TREMBLING IN FEAR, CAUSING A **-1** STEP PENALTY.
>
> **IT WAS JUST A CAT (INCEPTION COMPLICATION):** PHEW, IT WAS JUST A CAT THAT KNOCKED OVER THOSE BOOKS. IT MUST MEAN I'M SAFE DOWN HERE.

Once a complication has been introduced to the scene and affects a character, it must be addressed and incorporated into the scene until removed. It lasts until the end of the current scene or until it has been actively removed by the affected character. Removing any complication requires the character to use a full description detailing how they counter it, cope with it, or whatever method seems best at the moment. Each of the four types of complications below provides description guidelines for removing them. Survival can also be spent to reduce the description down to a single detail, leaving the character free to perform other feats on her next turn. See the section on Survival for more information.

Damage works differently from other complications and can only be removed (or reduced) by following the standard rules for Survival (see page 21).

There are four types of complications available. All are available through any complication roll and can be adapted to suit the scene.

Damage: Physical, mental, or emotional harm is inflicted on the affected character and he loses a number of Survival equal to the difference between the complication roll's result and the Difficulty. Regardless of how damage is inflicted multiple times in a scene, it all compounds as the character's resilience is worn down, meaning it is plausible for a single character to suffer physical damage as well as endure emotional abuse and feel their sanity slipping away. When the character is reduced to 0 Survival, they are removed from the scene in a manner chosen by the character inflicting the final damage. Damage can only be healed using the rules provided for Survival in Stage 6.

Inception: The affected character is lead to believe something that is not true or re-interpret information from a different viewpoint. Until this complication is removed, the character may believe they heard a noise upstairs, become convinced a guilty person is harmless, or run the wrong way in a chase. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they have come to believe the truth without using the falsehood as evidence.

Penalty: The affected character suffers a -1 step penalty to a single potential, but only after the character creating the penalty spends 1 Survival. Multiple penalties can compound this penalty until the character is reduced to its base step. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they have countered or removed the penalty altogether.

Restriction: This complication removes a character's access to a single prop, set piece, or other aspect already introduced in the scene until the complication is removed. It prevents a character from being able to use a weapon, consider a previous statement, notice an object in the corner, or many other possibilities from their descriptions. Removing this complication requires the character to describe how they are able to regain access to the restricted aspect.

Complication Rolls

Determining whether or not a complication occurs and which player creates it is based on whether the die roll was even- or odd-numbered; that's what a complication roll does. These rolls are settled by rolling a potential against a Difficulty to determine effectiveness (rolling equal to or exceeding the Difficulty) or ineffective (rolling less than the Difficulty). Consult the list below to determine the results and use them to craft an outcome to the description. "Roller" refers to the character rolling dice and "target" refers to the character setting the Difficulty.

Result	vs Character	vs Challenge
Effective with an Even Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the roller.	Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.
Effective with an Odd Number	The target gains a complication chosen by the target.	Avoid the challenge.
Ineffective with an Even Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the roller. The roller can choose to receive no complication, but will receive 1 milestone if she does.	
Ineffective with an Odd Number	The roller gains a complication chosen by the target.	The Director gains and chooses a complication.

Absolutes

Whenever anyone rolls the highest value on their die roll, it's called an absolute. While the roller can shift it up (or down), another player cannot spend Survival to change the value. In other words, if you roll an 8 on a d8, it remains an 8.

Stage 8: Milestones and Challenges

At this point, you're ready to begin telling your characters' stories but there are two crucial features to learn before the first opening shot. Writers will help improve their characters' ability to influence outcomes and rise in power to match that of your most dreaded opponents to come by using milestones, and Directors will up the ante by spending challenges to increase the tension in a given scene.

Milestones

Milestones are assigned to the Writers as a reward for excellent gameplay, use of motivations, and general accomplishments that help move the story forward. From there, a Writer can choose to redeem milestones for any of her characters. It is possible to receive more than 1 milestone per scene and they are only handed out at the end of a scene.

If a Writer meets any of the following criteria, she will receive milestones for each applicable character. For example, if a Writer plays two characters and only one of them accomplished the scene's goal, only 1 milestone is awarded.

> **Introducing Potentials:** When a story begins, Writers can receive 1 milestone for each potential introduced to the story without the aid of a complication roll. For example, a Writer with a character's Defender of the Innocent potential gains 1 milestone when he is described feeding the homeless at a soup kitchen. This is a one-time award. If a character triggers a complication roll at any point and time in the description, a milestone cannot be earned this way. Use the checkboxes next to each potential on the character notes when a milestone is awarded in the story this way.

> **Achieving Goals:** Every character who accomplished their goal in a scene, whether it is a shared goal or an individual one, earns the Writer 1 milestone. If a character connected one of their motivations to successfully achieve a scene's goal, the Writer gains an additional milestone. You cannot apply more than one motivation for this purpose.

There are numerous ways milestones can be used during a scene.

Combine Step and Damage Bonuses: A Writer can redeem 1 milestone to apply both the step and damage bonus of a single resource applied to a complication roll. It costs a cumulative +1 milestones for every additional use of this combination in a single session.

Complication Re-Roll: A Writer can redeem 1 milestone to re-roll one of their complication rolls immediately after it is rolled and before complications (if any) are applied. Whatever the new result, it must be honoured and multiple milestones can be redeemed for the same complication roll.

Make a Comeback!: By redeeming milestones, a Writer can bring back one of their characters who was removed from the story after being reduced to 0 Survival. The character re-enters the story with 3 Survival and cannot make a second comeback. A supporting character's comeback requires spending at least 7 milestones while a lead character requires at least 15 milestones.

Challenges

Along with assisting the Writers in developing their story, the Director's secondary role is to excite and surprise them. Not to say the Writers cannot create their own exhilarating tales, but it can become far too easy for Writers to always write in their favour. That's where challenges come into play.

In the same way that Writers collect milestones for moving the story forward, Directors gain challenges as Writers delve deeper into their characters' exploits and engage in incredible adventures. The short and sure-fire way to explain challenges is that Directors gain challenges to ensure the Writers are... well, challenged.

Whenever any of the following events take place during a scene, the Director gains challenges. Challenges carry over for the duration of the story until spent.

> **At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer.** Whether stockpiled for later or used right away, it's always good to have some ammo under the belt.

> **All lead characters achieve a scene's goal.** When all Writers receive milestones for achieving the scene's goal, the Director also gains 1 challenge. The Director can gain no more than 1 challenge, regardless of how many milestones are awarded to individual Writers.

A single challenge can be redeemed in the same way a milestone can, except these allow the Director to make alterations to the scene for the purpose of pitting the characters against a stronger threat. At any point in a scene during a player's turn, the Director can spend 1 challenge (or more) to accomplish one of the following.

> **Increase the duration of a complication.** Directors can extend the duration of a complication the moment it is placed on a character by spending a certain number of challenges. This means characters afflicted with these complications cannot use descriptions or Survival to remove them and must instead endure their effects for as long as the Director chooses. Damage cannot be extended using challenges.

>> For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.

>> For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the current session.

>> And the deadliest of them all, 3 challenges allows the complication to become a hindrance for the remainder of the story.

Force a challenge-based complication roll. The Director can spend a certain number of challenges and force a Writer to make a complication roll against a Difficulty Level (see Difficulties).

> With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Difficulty of 5.

> With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Difficulty of 7.

> With 3 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Foolhardy Difficulty of 9.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass. This danger can come in the form of changing the setting or introducing opposing characters to start a fight scene. For example, characters racing to escape from a burning building suddenly discover the staircase leading to the main floor has collapsed. These alterations can interrupt the middle of a character's description and it must be plausible for characters to use descriptions to eliminate, overcome, or avoid these dangers.

Choose a Director-controlled character to start a scene after the opening shot. This allows the Director to get a leg up on events in a scene, including triggering a complication roll.

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Drafting an applicable reason why the hindrance would complicate matters for the character, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a restriction or inception complication with the hindrance and 2 challenges to create a penalty complication.

Stage 9: Put It All Together

Using the previous eight stages, it's time to start doing what you're here to do: tell your story. Feel free to consult the material in this Act as needed but if in doubt, do what feels natural for your players and the story. After the camera fades to black, have everyone create a title for your particular story to make it stand out from everyone else's versions and share them with the SCREENPLAYERS GUILD community on GOOGLE+.

Act Two: Cast of Characters

Who are these innocent people caught up in the twisted events that await? How will they persevere and survive the night against such ancient terrors?

A good horror story is nothing without great characters, a unique location and a terrifying monster. Without them, the struggles and dangers you're trying to tell will become lost on the audience – all the players sitting down to tell this story. Even B-movies are able to create vaguely interesting character dynamics and a cheesy monster that still somehow engages the audience to watch the calamity. This chapter contains tools so all players can play their part in making their characters unique and engaging, offers tense descriptions featuring creepy long shots of tall pillars of marble rising up into shadows, and pieces together the clues to craft a memorable monster to close out the story.

Key Initiatives

Laying down a prime set of initiatives to start off the story helps everyone take their characters down the same path and focus on driving individual scenes forward to meet their goals. It is recommended to have these key initiatives listed off by the Director before Writers create their lead characters.

The list below is a starting point for your group and can easily be substituted using suggestions from the Writers. It is by no means the only possible list and even the genre can be moved about to suit the creative whims of the whole group. It could be told as a Coen Brothers film taking place in the 1980s or adapted into a stage play rather than a movie. This is especially helpful if anyone has already played Dial M and wants to try something a little different.

> **Dial M for Monster emulates a classic black-and-white horror film mixed with a murder mystery.** (Because of the views on generational issues like gender equality, it is important all players discuss how traditional or progressive they want to make gender relationships in your story.)
>
> The entire story takes place inside a **major metropolitan museum during the 1950s.**
>
> All characters would be inside the museum **late at night** or have access to enter the museum when it is **closed**.
>
> There is an unknown **creature, force, curse, or any other possible supernatural phenomenon** that has killed two staff members: Jonathan, a janitor, and Henry, a security guard. Both worked the overnight shift and were killed on separate nights.
>
> These deaths have been **kept under wraps by the police and the museum's management** (including the Curator; see Roles on page 37), but it can only remain a secret for so long.

Surviving the Tour: Establishing Your Unique Museum

Some set pieces are so invested into the heart of the story, they practically become characters. Technically, that's not the case here but the role of the museum in your version of Dial M will play a significant part in fleshing out everyone's character roles (what kind of speciality does the Archaeologist have to find herself in the museum while the monster hunts?), accessing resources (perhaps there is a vast collection of historical documents on native

Transylvanian mythology in the archives), room descriptions, outcomes and especially the monster at the end of this story (what would rise up and kill innocent people in the men's washroom of a Civil War museum?).

Laying down the fundamentals of your story's museum will go a long way to establish a few bonus initiatives beyond those of the main plot and it is highly recommended to establish what your museum is before Writers begin crafting their lead characters. Use this step-by-step guideline for building a foundation of what will become the set piece of your night of terrors.

> What is the museum's specialty/focus? (used to establish multiple related departments but not needed now)
>
> Where is it located? (city/state/country)
>
> What is the museum's role? (to teach adults/kids about...)
>
> How big is the museum? (how many floors; basement levels?)
>
> What is the museum's name?

Roles

A bustling major museum makes for a hectic workplace with numerous people operating from behind the scenes to create a memorable experience for their guests. These employees form bonds with both co-workers and friends (though sometimes much more when no one is looking) that will help in the coming hours as the story unfolds. Each of them offers something to the group that could very well keep all of them alive before they put an end to this monster or live long enough for it to return to hibernation... for now.

Choose from any of the lead character roles provided below or use them as a guideline for creating something new. Each one provides a unique feature granting them unique exceptions to the existing rules. If no one has chosen the Detective, the Curator, or the Assistant, each of them will be a supporting character played by the Director.

The Detective

As one of the city's leading homicide detective or a private eye working for an interested party, the murders of two employees at the museum means it's time for you to go to work. Your job is to catch whoever did it and see them behind bars. Or kill him, if it comes to it. What a mess! Everything's been kept out of the paper so far, but it's going to get worse if something doesn't turn up in the investigation. There are things not matching up in this case; the clues are not yet revealing the whole picture. Maybe what you need is some more time looking around the museum, wait until after the place is closed and see what turns up.

A Nose For The Truth: During one of your descriptions, you can spend 1 milestone to request a Tricky challenge-based complication roll based on an investigative detail. For example, while examining a dead body, you can spend the milestone and have to make a complication roll against a Difficulty of 5. If it is effective, you can see a related clue submitted to the Director in addition to whatever else is gained from the complication roll. The Director has final say on which clue you will see.
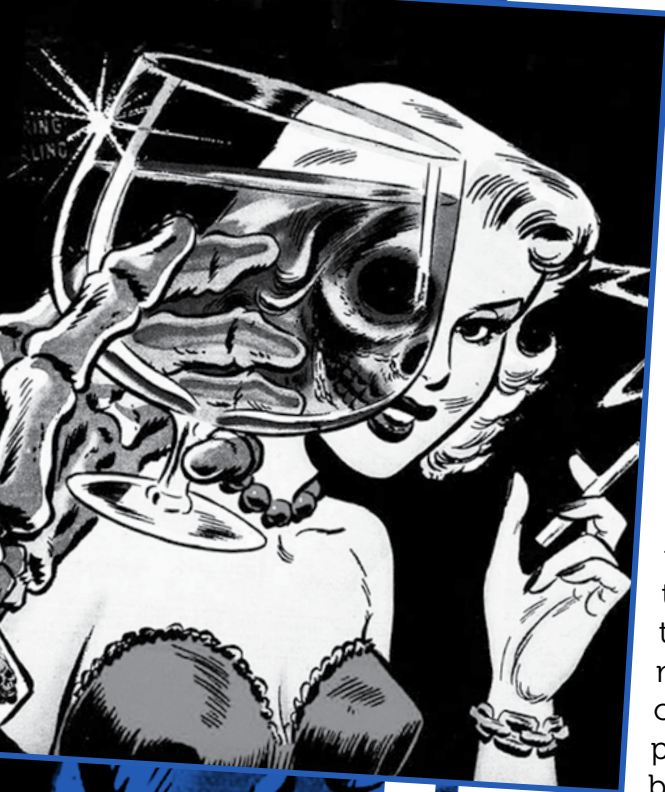
The Curator

After many years making this museum what it is today, years of dirty laundry and backroom deals may finally come to light as a result of these murders. You have used your influence within the city to muffle any reports of two homicide investigations inside your museum, though with so many police poking their noses everywhere it may only be a matter of time before they discover your dirty secret. While the lives of your staff are important, keeping your secrets buried are fundamental to the operation of this museum.

A Dirty Secret: You have a secret unknown to everyone else under your employment and it's one that could bring your career crashing to a halt... or send you to prison for the next few years. Did you commit a crime? Embezzle money from the museum? Bribe politicians? You may even wish to connect your secret with your clue to the monster's identity. Whatever it is, if you finish a scene without anyone attempting to know your secret, you gain an extra milestone. You can spend 1 milestone to provide an outcome instead of the Director. This can be an especially helpful tool for covering your tracks!

The Assistant

A fan of this museum since childhood, you are the Curator's right hand in making sure this museum runs like clockwork. It's a shame your title and paycheque don't reflect that. You know very well that nothing would happen without you and lately you've been picking up this suspicious feeling something's been fishy with the books, or you've been overhearing different accounts on what the Curator's been doing when the day staff are long gone. And now with these murders... what might the Curator be capable of?

Suspicious: When the Curator uses his A Dirty Secret feature to provide an outcome, you can immediately spend 1 milestone to write down an alternate version of that outcome. Share it with the Director. At a later point in the story, the Director can spend 1 challenge to make that a rewrite of the previous outcome and reveal the Curator's previous outcome as a cover-up to avoid being caught.

The Reporter

Working the beat for this many years has provided you with a lot of ears to the ground willing to send anonymous tip for a few extra bucks in their pockets. The latest one talks about homicide at the museum twice without any reports filed at the police station. Something about that peaks your interest and there might be a story to this. Luckily, you're not the type to let a few minor details like the museum's hours of operation get in the way of digging a little deeper.

Ask The Right Questions: You can spend 1 milestone to automatically shift all complication rolls against a single character without spending Survival. These shifts can only occur while verbally questioning that character.

The Night Shift

The pay is alright and the benefits are good but there's something about the peace and quiet of working the graveyard shift at a big old place like this museum. It's an escape from the hustle and bustle of the city, except now there are these murders putting everyone on edge. You've still got a job to do, but now it's with a cautious eye looking around every corner and keeping an ear open for anything strange going on late at night. Whatever's going on, you've got a few ideas how anything can get in or out because you've seen passages in, around and under the museum. You've got a backstage pass to the big show.

Helping Hand: Whenever another character fails their complication roll, you can spend 1 milestone to re-roll it for them and complete the complication roll in their stead. This feature can be used even if you've already provided a description this round.

The Archaeologist

You don't travel the world and dig into lost chambers retrieving forgotten treasures without learning a thing or two about resilience and perseverance. You've also heard many a legend about evil spirits, vicious beasts of legend, and deities who walked the earth but if there's anything to these murders right here in the museum, surely there has to be a logical explanation for it. The key is to track it down and find out with your own two eyes.

Resourceful: You can spend 1 milestone to switch out one of your resource slots in the middle of a scene OR switch it from a step bonus to a damage bonus or vice versa.
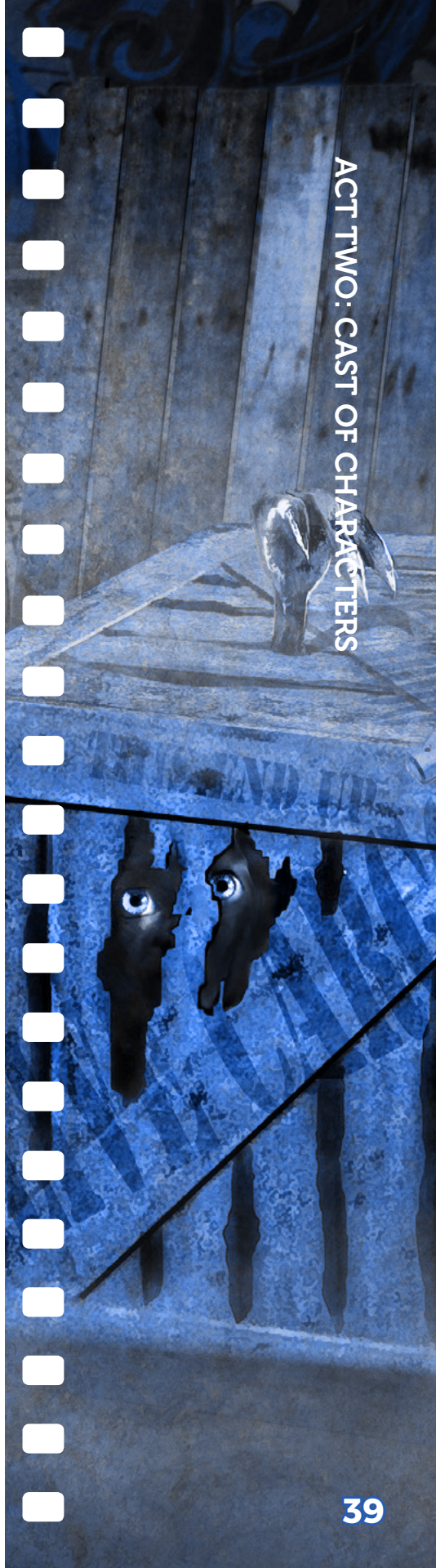
The Scholar

Looking at the bigger picture is what you do for a living, a trade honed from years pouring over books, manuscripts, scrolls, carvings, photographs and film footage containing clues to solving the ultimate puzzles of our time. Whatever has caused so much violence lately may have something to do with the research found within the secured halls of the museum's lower chambers. Maybe there's an answer to stop this thing, whatever it is.

Eureka!: Whenever one of the monster's special features or resources has been revealed, you can create a weakness to counter it by spending 1 milestone and using a full description to create a resource related to that feature. When you use this resource against the monster's special feature or resource, you can choose to negate any of its benefits rather than gain a step or damage bonus for yourself or any other character using this resource.

The Criminal

Some jobs were made for your skills, others end up biting you back. This one is definitely looking more like the latter, but there's still a way to make this work in your favour. The prospects of getting your hands on that prize was too tempting not to try and now it looks like you're going to be trapped in here with all these people while something... something... hunts you down. Time to use what you know and make those talents serve some good for once.

Professional Criminal: For every scene in which none of the other lead characters are aware of your true purpose at the museum, you gain an additional milestone. Choose a criminal expertise, such as lockpicking. You can then spend 1 milestone to only roll even numbers while performing a description using your criminal expertise. This means if you roll a 5, it automatically rises to a 6. If you roll a 4, it remains a 4.

The Monster Revealed: Bringing It to Life During Play

And so we come to it. This is what the story is all about, the slow and steady reveal of the central antagonist and the purpose behind everyone gathered together at this very moment: the monster.

While your monster starts off as a blank slate and becomes filled in by the Writers' clues over time, Directors still need to describe this creature's actions without pulling the curtain too far back. Sometimes that requires complication rolls, Difficulties, shifts and special features slowly coming together until they form a complete villain to conclude the story. This means the monster will be incomplete during most of the story until the last Writer contributes that final important clue.

This section provides guidelines for creating the monster as a supporting character during play. As each clue is revealed, the monster can gain the option to interact with the story using potentials inspired by clues, fill resource slots and choose special features that will define it by spending its maximum Survival. The more features it accesses, the deadlier the beast while also weakening its chances of survival. Below is a step-by-step guide to introducing your monster to the story.

Step 1: Maximum Survival

All monsters are supporting characters, start with 15 Survival, have one resource slot available (see Step 4), and do not require nor have any other information at the start of the story. (Note: All monsters can recover Survival at the end of a scene.)

Step 2: Provide Visual References

As each new clue is presented by the Writers, incorporate a visual element in the monster's description or a player's outcome. The fewer the clues, the less detail is required of the monster. Describing it as moving about in dark corridors, POV shots and other tricks of the genre allow ample room to impact the story without requiring an actual description (and final reveal) of the monster's identity. By the time the fifth clue is presented, the monster's true form can be revealed in full glory.

Step 3: Create Potentials

Each clue towards the monster's full identity creates a chance for a new potential. As a supporting character with 15 Survival (at the beginning), that allows for a maximum of 3 potentials: one at d8/5/3 and two at d6/3/2. When a clue is handed over the Director, it can be converted to a potential using the standard rules. A potential cannot be created using the same clue as a special feature (see Step 5). It is not necessary for monsters to have all three potentials completed by the end of the story.

Step 4: Assign Resources

The monster has two resources slots available and they function as per the standard rules with one exception. Only one resource slot can be filled or reassigned at the start of each scene. For example, the first scene of your story only allows for the monster to have one resource slot filled with the second one available at the start of the second scene or the monster can replace the first resource slot and gain a second one at the beginning of the third scene and so forth. Resource slots can include any existing special features. You can fill a resource slot even if the monster does not have any potentials or special features.

All new monsters default to the following resource:

Unseen, Unheard: The monster knows how to move about undetected until it gets close enough to touch someone. If the monster attempts a complication roll against a target and started off the description applying this resource into the first detail, it gains a +1 step bonus to the roll.

Step 5: Special Features

A special feature is a unique ability created by the Director using a single clue to the monster's identity. For example, monsters can drain blood, walk through walls, sport sharp bear-like claws, command the weak-willed and so much more. Every special feature assigned to the monster reduces its maximum Survival. While each special feature is left to the players' imagination, they are divided into five categories, each with its own Survival cost. After creating a special feature, assign it an appropriate category and reduce the monster's maximum Survival accordingly.

> **Stalker (2 Survival):** Any ability to remain concealed, inconspicuous, or change its shape
>
> **Terror (2 Survival):** Creating fear, anxiety, tension, or any other emotional reaction whenever a character triggers a particular event, such as making eye contact
>
> **Leader (3 Survival):** Summons/creates a small legion of extras at any one time
>
> **Primal (2 Survival):** Enhanced natural features, such as claws or an increased sense of smell
>
> **Supernatural (3 Survival):** Any possible special feature (aside from those suited for any other category) beyond the explanations of science or reason

All monsters can receive a free Primal special feature of the Director's creation. A special feature cannot be created using the same clue as a potential.

A Tougher Monster For Tougher Rules

If your group happens to use the full ScreenPlay rules rather than those found here, it is highly recommended your monster should toughen up to not only keep pace with the lead characters but to remain tougher than them. After all, characters always outnumber the monster and it is the characters that should be afraid. No matter which version of the rules you use, the monster should begin with twice as much maximum Survival as the average lead characters (which is 30 Survival, using the core rules). Use the chart on page 47 of ScreenPlay's core rules and adjust your stats accordingly. The Survival costs for monster special features remain as provided in this section.

Just when you thought the situation could not be any worse, terror strikes the museum tonight of all nights. Will it be during a black tie fundraiser featuring the city's elite, or as the result of a powerful earthquake, or during the world's final hours as the chosen rise and the damned burn?

Some nights simply aren't the best nights for having a monster roam the halls of your museum. This final chapter of Dial M for Monster provides a trio of optional scenarios to incorporate into your story, each of them capable of providing a small number of additional challenges for Directors and secondary goals capable of providing additional milestones for the lead characters. None of these are required, nor should they ever be a surprise. Discuss these scenarios with all players by reading out each one's overview (and feel free to leave out the bonus challenges and secondary goals – these can be discovered during play) or skip them altogether and play the story as you and the Writers see fit. Anything that allows you to experience the best possible story you can create using the most important rule of them all: have fun.

Scenario #1: Black Tie, Black Night

Tonight just happens to be the museum's annual gala fundraiser with anyone who is anyone arriving to mingle with the city's political and social elite. It is a sea of tuxedos and black dresses donating large cheques to raise money for a noble cause. It may also be a celebration marking the opening of a new exhibit, maybe even the very one related to the trouble about to brew this very night. Whatever the reason, the museum is filled with many important innocent people all dolled up to become the monster's first victims.

Additional Challenges

During appropriate moments in the story, the Director can spend challenges to create the following situations:

> **There is a scream/call for help/distant voice from the opposite direction, distracting the lead characters!** It belongs to one of the museum's fundraiser guests and the person clearly needs help. The plea's origin is unknown and is difficult to locate save it coming down a particular hallway or from a certain room back the other way. By spending 1 challenge + 1 additional challenge for every two additional lead characters, multiple characters with hindrances that would either make this challenge terrifying or force them to help this guest receives either a restriction or inception complication. All targeted characters must receive the same complication and type, but each must remove it using their own descriptions.

> **Panicked crowds create a stampede blocking access to the characters' path!** By spending 1 challenge, a crowd of terrified guests creates an obstacle that will force any lead characters caught in its path to be pushed back or even trampled under their dress shoes and high heels. Any characters caught in the stampede triggers a challenge-based complication roll with a Damn Hard Difficulty of 7; every point rolled beneath this value causes 2 damage in addition to any complications. This stampede will last until the end of the current round; until it ends, no characters can move forward as originally planned.

Secondary Goal

Applying this scenario allows the Writers the opportunity to complete a bonus secondary goal in every appropriate scene. Whenever this secondary goal is completed by a lead character, they gain an additional milestone even if they already gained one for completing scene goals. Directors do not gain additional challenges for these secondary goals.

> **Beyond the Job Description:** Whenever a lead character rescues at least one of the fundraiser guests, they receive an additional milestone at the end of the scene. This award is not cumulative based on the number of fundraiser guests rescued; it is a one-time award based on the individual scene.

Scenario #2:
And the Walls Came Crashing Down

It looks like tonight will be just an average night at the museum when everything begins to shake violently, books pour off their shelves, displays shatter to the floor and the very foundation of the museum is cracked like an egg. The damage outside is extensive and the epic shift in plates has skewed the building to the point that the doors won't open until help arrives. All the while, this already dangerous event releases something dark from the depth of the museum's vault...

Additional Challenges

During appropriate moments in the story, the Director can spend challenges to create the following situations:

> **Things are not where they used to be!** The damage caused to the museum is extensive and has blocked off existing hallways with debris as well as created new openings. The Director can interrupt a description to spend 1 challenge altering a character's destination in an outcome to any other room of her choosing. For example, if a character is described heading towards the cafeteria, the Director can spend 1 challenge and turn it into a giant crater leading down into the sewers. This challenge allows the Director to break the Rule of Initiative for this one-time change.

It's impossible to see down here! Dust still kicks up in the air and the debris makes it near impossible to move around easily without letting your guard down. The Director can spend 1 challenge to create a penalty complication for all characters in a particular room, so long as the penalty is related to and caused by their current location.

Secondary Goal

Applying this scenario allows the Writers the opportunity to complete a bonus secondary goal in every appropriate scene. Whenever this secondary goal is completed by a lead character, they gain an additional milestone even if they already gained one for completing scene goals. Directors do not gain additional challenges for these secondary goals.

Adapting to the Situation: Whenever a lead character was able to use the devastation caused by the earthquake to escape the monster, they gain an additional milestone at the end of the scene.

Scenario #3:
The End of All Times

What if the monster's release was not the result of a single curse or a triggering moment isolated to the museum alone? What if this was all part of a much larger plan, one that helped bring about the end of our civilization as we know it? In this final scenario, the museum's troubles are all part of the Rapture, a biblical moment where God's chosen few ascend to Heaven and the rest remain to survive in the apocalypse as the Four Horsemen (literally or figuratively) bring death and destruction to all those abandoned by their Creator.

Additional Challenge

During appropriate moments in the story, the Director can spend challenges to create the following situation:

> **Everything's going to Hell outside and someone's got to do the right thing!** Something taking place outside of the museum makes matters worse. Perhaps a gas line explosion blows open nearby windows and desperate survivors from the nearby alley have broken in seeking refuge. While the majority of survivors have already begun to turn on each other, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a situation where the lead characters must confront innocent people willing to bring them harm or interfere with their pursuit of (or escape from) the monster. This situation works the same as altering a set piece (see page 33) except it involves inserting extras into the scene that must be overcome by all lead characters using a full description. If there are any characters with hindrances related to this situation, the Director does not have to spend additional challenges to trigger them.

Secondary Goal

Applying this scenario allows the Writers the opportunity to complete a bonus secondary goal in every appropriate scene. Whenever this secondary goal is completed by a lead character, they gain an additional milestone even if they already gained one for completing scene goals. Directors do not gain additional challenges for these secondary goals.

> **Making the Humane Choice:** Whenever a lead character handles a desperate situation and moral quandary without any complication rolls (including those created by this scenario's additional challenge), they gain an additional milestone at the end of the scene.

DIAL M FOR MONSTER

ScreenPlay

CHARACTER NOTES

NAME

PLAYER

ROLE

STORY

SCENE

MILESTONES

MAXIMUM

SURVIVAL

POTENTIALS

Dice / Difficulty / Details

RESOURCES (PROPS, SKILLS, BACKGROUNDS)

Step or Damage Bonus

COMPLICATIONS

MOTIVATIONS

Hindrance

Hindrance

STEPS

Dice	Difficulty	Details
d4	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12	9	5

-1 for each step below d4; +1 for each step above d12

COMPLICATION ROLLS

Effective with Even Number: You create a complication for the target character.

Effective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for herself.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for you.

SPENDING STAMINA (ALL COST 1 STAMINA)

Shift: Increase or decrease a conflict roll (yours or another character's) by 1.

Interrupt: Cut in line before your turn in a round.

Remove a Complication: Use 1 detail instead of a full description.

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

ADDITIONAL NOTES/INITIATIVES

ROLE BENEFITS

SPENDING MILESTONES

Combine Step and Damage Bonuses: Redeem 1 milestone to apply both the step and damage bonus of a single resource. (+1 milestone for each additional use)

Complication Re-Roll: Redeem 1 milestone to re-roll a complication roll immediately after initial attempt.

Make A Comeback: One of your characters can be returned to the story after removed at 0 Stamina. A supporting character's comeback requires 7 milestones; a lead character requires 15 milestones.

STEP MODIFIERS

Aid Another Character	+1 steps
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps per additional opponent
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps
Long Range	-1 steps per additional range

CHALLENGE-BASED COMPLICATION ROLLS

Effective with Even Number: Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.

Effective with Odd Number: Avoid the challenge.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The Director chooses a complication for you.

REQUIRED DETAILS

Equipping a physical resource	1 detail
Cover/concealment modifier	1 detail
Move across the room	1 detail

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS/ EXTRAS

Challenges Available

NAME:

Monster

Potentials	Survival
_____	
_____	
_____	

Resources	
_____	_____
_____	_____

Special Features/Notes	Complications
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NAME:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials	Survival
_____	
_____	

Resources	Complications
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NAME:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials	Survival
_____	
_____	

Resources	Complications
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NAME:

Supporting / Extra

Potentials	Survival
_____	
_____	

Resources	Complications
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

ScreenPlay

DIAL M FOR MONSTER

SCENE NOTES

GOALS – SCENE 1

GOALS – SCENE 2

GOALS – SCENE 3

GOALS – SCENE 4

STEPS

Dice	Difficulty	Details
d4	1	1
d6	3	2
d8	5	3
d10	7	4
d12	9	5

-1 for each step below d4; +1 for each step above d12

STEP MODIFIERS

Aid Another Character	+1 steps
Attacking Multiple Targets	-1 steps per additional opponent
Cover/Concealment	+1 steps
Long Range	-1 steps per additional range

DIAL M FOR MONSTER

SCENE NOTES

WORST CASE SCENARIO

HINDRANCES

COMPLICATION ROLLS

Effective with Even Number: You create a complication for the target character.

Effective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for herself.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The target character chooses a complication for you.

CHALLENGE-BASED COMPLICATION ROLLS

Effective with Even Number: Avoid the challenge and gain +1 Stamina.

Effective with Odd Number: Avoid the challenge.

Ineffective with Even Number: You choose a complication for yourself OR nothing happens.

Ineffective with Odd Number: The Director chooses a complication for you.

GAINING CHALLENGES

At the start of every new story, Directors begin with 1 challenge per Writer. Whether stockpiled for later or used right away, it's always good to have some ammo under the belt.

All Writers simultaneously receive 1 milestone during or at the end of a scene. When all Writers receive milestones for achieving the scene's goal, the Director also gains 1 challenge. The Director can gain no more than 1 challenge, regardless of how many milestones are awarded to individual Writers.

APPLYING CHALLENGES

Increase the duration of a complication. Directors can extend the duration of a complication the moment it is placed on a character by spending a certain number of challenges. This means characters afflicted with these complications cannot use descriptions or Stamina to remove them and must instead ensure its effects for as long as the Director chooses. Damage cannot be extended through challenges.

For 1 challenge, the complication remains until the end of the current scene.

For 2 challenges, the complication remains until the end of the current session.

For 3 challenges, the complication becomes a hindrance for the remaining story.

Alter a set piece to create an additional danger requiring a full description to counter or bypass. This danger can come in the form of changing the setting or introducing opposing characters to start a fight scene. For example, characters racing to escape from a burning building suddenly discover the staircase leading to the main floor has collapsed. These alterations cannot provide a direct threat (i.e. a potential complication or damage), can interrupt the middle of a character's description, and it must be plausible for characters to use descriptions to eliminate these alterations.

Choose a supporting character to start a scene after the opening shot. This allows the Director to get a leg up on events in a scene, including triggering a conflict roll.

Force a challenge-based conflict roll. The Director can spend a certain number of challenges and force a Writer to make a conflict roll against a Difficulty Level (see Difficulties).

With 1 challenge, the roll is attempted against a Tricky Difficulty of 5.

With 2 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Damn Hard Difficulty of 7.

With 3 challenges, the roll is attempted against a Foolhardy Difficulty of 9.

Use a character's hindrance to create a complication. Drafting an applicable reason why the hindrance would complicate matters for the character, the Director can spend 1 challenge to create a restriction or inception complication with the hindrance and 2 challenges to create a penalty complication.

KEY INITIATIVES/NOTES

YOUR MUSEUM, YOUR MONSTER, YOUR STORY

One of the world's most terrifying monsters is waiting to be unleashed on a dark and stormy night as a team of unsuspecting employees at a prestigious museum prepares for a new exhibit. Two murders from the past week have disturbed them but the exhibit must open on schedule. Surely the police can handle this matter. But this is no mere homicide investigation.

Dial M for Monster is a 1950s drive-in horror/mystery story of suspense, terror, and pure evil. Writers and the Director will spend an evening crafting a dark tale of something evil lurking within the shadows of the museum after hours. These mere mortals face monstrous challenges and dire complications as players not only tell the story as it unfolds in this one-shot adventure, they also create the monster during play. No two stories will ever be the same and the pages found within reveal the complete rules for creating a heart-stopping rendition of evil run amok, eight unique lead character roles, guidelines for creating your monster using player-created clues, character & scene notes, and three optional worst case scenarios for a truly world-ending cataclysm.

Tell it with ScreenPlay, and prepare for a night of death and chaos by your own hands. It is not a question of who will live... but how many will die!

For 4+ players.
Ages 10 & up
To play, you'll need dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12), pencils
and the will to survive the night...

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