

SLEEPAWAY



JAY DRAGON



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AUTHOR BIO

Jay Dragon is a queer game designer on unceded Esopus Munsee land in the Hudson Valley. They write games about marginality, ritual, horror, and summer camp. When they're not writing tabletop games, they can be found working at their local summer camp and doing their best to fight the Lindworm.

DESIGN INSPIRATION

The core system of ***Sleepaway*** is based on ***Dream Askew & Dream Apart*** by Avery Alder and Benjamin Rosenbaum. By extension, it is powered by the ***Apocalypse World*** Engine, by D. Vincent Baker and Meguey Baker.

Rituals are based on ***Chuubo's Marvelous Wish-Granting Engine*** by Jenna Moran, and ***Pin Feathers/Cloud Studies*** by Jeeyon Shim.

Lines and Veils were developed by Ron Edwards for the game ***Sorcerer***.

The heart of this game's play is based on ***House of Miracles*** by Kal Muste, from the Wayfinder Experience.

The value of ritual and the power of the underworld is based on ***Secrets Of The Forbidden Isle*** by M Grant, from the Wayfinder Experience.

The game wouldn't be possible without endless consultations and conversations with fellow staff, SITs, and participants at the Wayfinder Experience, both for this game and for all other games.

To the boisterous camper with colorful hair and a stolen flower crown, the frail camper with a gleam of ambition in their eyes, the hopeful camper who is definitely an alien from another world, the cheerful camper who loves to cause problems, the lanky camper full of new ideas, and the quiet camper with an honest heart, thank you for your wisdom and strength in the face of a cold world.

Also, thank you to the kindness of Alyssa, Charlie, Chase, Jace, Jack, JJ, Jud, Kal, Kier, Lee, Maya, Reilly, Shae, Wes, and Worsey, for embodying these characters and fighting the Lindworm with me.

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PART 1
HOW TO PLAY

INTRODUCTION

Sleepaway gives us long hazy days, chilled summer nights, kids screaming and chasing fireflies, crackling campfires, and a gaunt, cruel monstrosity forever hiding just out of sight, always asking, “What do you do next?”

In ***Sleepaway***, you play as a camp counselor at a not-so-ordinary summer camp besieged by a strange and ominous cryptid. In the outside world, people grow increasingly alienated from their own identities, trapped in a miasma of advertising and corporate branding. Isolated from civilization, this summer camp is a beacon of safety, a refuge for misfit kids defined by their marginalization. As time pushes past and the world grows older, this camp also shelters the survivors of the Lindworm.

The Lindworm is a shapeshifter, or so the stories go; a creature that flays the skin of humans and hides within. As counselors of this summer camp, you’ve each been traumatized by the Lindworm, in your own ways.

You remember little of that time.

Just that you don’t want anyone else to experience it either, and you’ll keep this camp safe no matter what.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Find between 3 and 6 players, including you. Gather with the following supplies:

- This book. Printing the **Summer Camp Sheet**, **Character Sheets**, and **Setting Elements Sheets** may be useful. You may scan them from this book or print the Supplemental PDF.
- Pencils and scrap paper, including a lot of index cards.
- A deck of playing cards.
- Something that can serve as Tokens, like sunflower seeds, pebbles, beads, or coins.
- A conspiracy theorist's Corkboard with string and pushpins, or a large sheet of paper with different colored pens.

Before playing, decide how long the game should last. A Oneshot lasts about 3-4 hours, including time spent learning how to play. A Campaign lasts for 3-6 sessions (each 3 or so hours) and should be given that time. It's a lot easier to turn a Oneshot into a Campaign than it is to turn a Campaign into a Oneshot. The rules for both Oneshots and Campaigns can be found in Part 4 of the book. Use them to guide play.



Our flower crowns made it clear to everyone else that we are summer royalty, that the sun shines for us.

GETTING STARTED

1. Look over the required materials and gather those together, generally around a table so you can all sit down.
2. Read the **Introduction** section aloud.
3. Read **The Conversation** aloud.
4. Read the **Safety Mechanics** section aloud, and discuss it with all players.
5. Read the **Playing the Game** section aloud.
6. Everyone, pick up one of the **Character Sheets** and read the Character introduction aloud. Choose a **Character Sheet** to play for this game.
7. Read the **Your Character** section aloud. Then start answering questions about your Character. Give them a name and pronouns, with rawness and honesty.
8. Read **Setting Elements and Rituals** aloud. Then read each **Setting Element** description aloud.
9. Each player chooses a **Setting Elements Sheet** to hold and represent at the start of the game.
10. Draw a map of the **Summer Camp** on a sheet of blank paper. Include both your **Setting Element** and any other elements from the **Summer Camp Sheet** that guides your creative process.
11. Read **The Lindworm** section, and follow the instructions contained within.
12. Ask two of your **Character Sheet's** questions to other players at the table. Lead from that conversation into the game itself.

THE CONVERSATION

Roleplaying is adopting the identity of a Character, usually one who is different from you. Roleplaying may offer you a different understanding of yourself and your relationship with the world. When we gather friends and roleplay together, creating fiction as a group, that is a roleplaying game—like playing make-believe.

Just like playing make-believe with friends, roleplaying games are a conversation. The following description is from **Apocalypse World**, the philosophical forebear to this game:

“You and the other players go back and forth, talking about these fictional characters in their fictional circumstances doing whatever it is that they do. Like any conversation, you take turns, but it’s not like taking turns, right? Sometimes you talk over each other, interrupt, build on each others’ ideas, monopolize and hold forth. All fine.”

The rules of **Sleepaway** are rules for that conversation; they help us settle disagreements about the fiction, suggest who can say what, and push our stories in specific directions. This game isn’t rigorously structured or bound, nor does it belong to any one of us: it’s a collaborative conversation between all of us. We’re telling a story together.

As in other conversations, it’s our collective responsibility to maintain the tone and emotional intensity of the game, just as it is our responsibility to keep each other safe.

Often, in games like these, there’s a Game Master who facilitates play. **Sleepaway**, like all **Belonging Outside Belonging** games, has no such role. It’s encouraged to have someone bring snacks, make sure the supplies are all there, and so on. But, in **Sleepaway**, everyone operates on roughly the same page.

PLAYING THE GAME

Making a heartfelt connection in the dewy field, glimpsing an unwelcome visitor in the woodline, stewing on unspoken thoughts while sunlight beats us into stillness, speaking our fears over the fire, fleeing the monster wearing a friend's skin... these may all be part of a game, moments of our conversation. We add these moments by making Moves.

In this game's conversation, you (the players) will each take on the role of specific Characters. Whenever you want to take action upon the world, or take your turn in the conversation, you make a Move—sometimes through your Character, sometimes in different ways. Moves push the story forward, and allow us to act upon the world. The most common Move you'll ever make is "Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable," and "Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group." When in doubt, make a Move.

When you make your Move, name the Move you're making, follow what it says, and add that to the fiction. Use other words to expand it.

Maybe your Move is the Campers' "Introduce drama and contention"; after you name it, mention how there's a crowd around the nurse's office, and Merry is crying. Everyone says that Merry's crying because Amber (the staff's favorite Camper) attacked them with a knife. No Camper describes it exactly the same. Each story is more gut-wrenching than the last.

You can find Moves on your Character Sheet, on a Setting Element sheet, or in a Ritual. You might find them elsewhere too.

Some Moves are questions, written in *italics* and preceded by "Ask:". These are asked between players about their Characters, and aren't necessarily asked In-Character. You know when you're talking to someone and suddenly realize something important that they're feeling that they're not

telling you? That's what it is to ask one of these questions.

There are three kinds of Moves: Strong, Regular, and Weak. Strong Moves put your Character or other Characters in a better position going forward. Weak Moves leave you worse off or in a more painful place. Regular Moves offer mixed results.

You can't make Strong Moves all the time because you must spend a Token to make a Strong Move. You start game with zero Tokens.

To get Tokens, you must make Weak Moves or engage with other Characters' narratives by fulfilling their Lure. Every Character Sheet has a different Lure. You'll each read your Character's Lure aloud once you've made your Characters.

NO COMPLICITY

The power imbalance between staff and campers at camp is inherent to differences in age, experience, and capacity to impart knowledge. This should be consensual instead of strictly hierarchical. Your Characters are good and devoted counselors; you may fail or make mistakes, but you will *not* abuse or manipulate your campers.

The history of summer camps in the United States is fraught with colonialism and institutional racism. It's vitally important to act with awareness if you're not a member of one of the impacted communities. There is no reason to name your camp or any aspect of it after a bastardization of an indigenous word. It's not respectful or appropriate, and has no place in this game.

USING LINES, VEILS, AND HIGHLIGHTS

When you start playing, your group collectively defines the areas and subjects you are not interested in exploring (*Lines*), the areas you're fine with in game but don't want to contemplate too deeply (*Veils*) and areas of horror you actively want explored in game (*Highlights*). No player owes an explanation for any of these; however, it is vitally important that everyone is on the same page when defining *Highlights*.

SAFETY MECHANICS

This is a horror game. It contains body horror and explicit violence, including against animals and children. ***Sleepaway*** does its absolute best to hold compassion for any pain that might be brought into the play space, and your conversation ought to as well. Many tools exist to help you do so. One such tool is called Lines, Veils, and Highlights.

But that is just one possible set of safety mechanics. If there's another that works for your conversation, use that instead (or as well). At the end of the day, the purpose of all these mechanics is to ensure that everyone is given the tools to act compassionately and support one another's experiences. In the same way you'd ask your friends before talking about something potentially upsetting, grant everyone the same courtesy in this conversation.

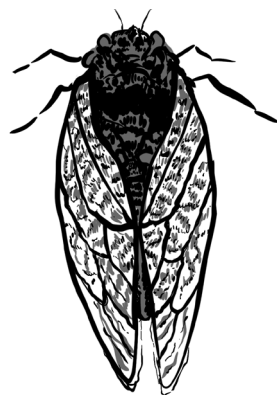
Some Lines are built into the game. ***Sleepaway*** refuses to be complicit in modeling toxic power dynamics between campers and staff or exploitative racism against indiginous people through the use of racist summer camp names and slogans.

YOUR CHARACTER

To play your Character, follow the tips in your playbook. Think about their behavior, and trust your instincts. When you're not sure what they'd do, remember to keep them both fallible and relatable. Let them mess up big time, failing their friends in a time of need or blurting out desperate painful secrets to all the wrong people. But always remember that they have a good reason for messing up.

To make your Character, answer all the questions on your Character Sheet, including eyes, body, gender, and anything about your history and present. Then decide on a specific name and set of pronouns. Remember that these don't need to be the name or pronouns that your Character has always used, or even those that they use in spaces besides camp. These are the name and pronouns that make sense for now. Share them.

Read your Lure aloud. Make sure everyone knows it.



I still remember the summer the cicadas were everywhere. I think I fell in love with being alive that year.

PRONOUNS & GENDER

Your Character might be a man, sure, but is he more *Rusted Blade* or *Campfire?*

Sleepaway, like the summer camps it's based on, doesn't care whether you're cis, trans, or something more tangled. Gender here is more abstract and raw. ***Sleepaway*** cares how your gender shapes you, and what pronouns you use at camp. To that end, on the next page are a list of pronouns your Character might use, borrowed from actual campers and staff the author has encountered. You may invoke additional pronouns if you're familiar with others.

SETTING ELEMENTS AND RITUALS

The world isn't just our Characters. It's also the misty lake with its splintered dock, the cool woods and the whine of mosquitos, the sunny field. It's all the campers, those loveable weirdos. It's the traditions we've kept and those we've lost, and even the Strange Magics at the edge of all things.

Whenever it feels right, pick up one of the Setting Elements and have it support the game. While holding it, you control that aspect of the world. Sometimes that Setting Element will be literal, sometimes it won't. For example, you might be holding the Lake during a scene when no one's near the Lake. That's okay. Setting Elements are also metaphors for other feelings and moments within the game. It's possible to drown without any Lake nearby—or even any water—both in life and in ***Sleepaway***.

Setting Elements let you make Moves beyond those available on your Character Sheet. These Moves add to the conversation just like any other Move. Setting Elements never have to worry about Tokens.

Sometimes Setting Elements create Characters. These Characters should always have motivations and desires that tie into that Setting Element and its desires.

A Ritual may be started whenever you choose. Some Moves or situations call for one. Rituals pause the normal structure of the conversation and briefly replace it with a new structure. The Ritual may represent a game of Truth or Dare, a romp through a meadow, a quiet moment among friends, sneaking down a path, or crafting a powerful spell. When a Ritual is happening, only communicate using the Moves printed on the Ritual itself. End the Ritual as it instructs you to do so.

PRONOUNS & GENDER (CONT.)

- He/Him/His
- She/Her/Hers
- They/Them/Theirs
- Ey/Em/Eir
- Xe/Xim/Xirs
- Je/Jem/Jeirs
- Fae/Faer/Faers
- Star/Star/Stars
- (any combination of the above)
- (any combination of the above), alternating
- (any combination of the above), based on my presentation
- (any of the above), I guess
- (any of the above), for this week only
- (any of the above), or they/them/theirs, but only if you understand my gender
- (any of the above), but only technically
- Just my name
- Any and all
- Whatever feels right to you
- Any that aren't intended as insults
- Use the pronouns you use for yourself, for me
- I'm not sure yet

THE LINDWORM

The Lindworm is the monstrosity that haunts our summer camp. It is the bane of our existence, and will destroy everything we've built if we're not careful. It is the trauma of history, the collective pain of a cruel society, and the violence inflicted upon the marginalized and the vulnerable.

It is generally around 10 feet tall, with arms like tree branches, papery flesh, and a mouth full of too many teeth. It is a shapeshifter, and will steal people's skin after flaying them alive.

At the beginning of each session, someone in the group must ask the space you're in if the Lindworm is there, and if it would like to play. Give it around thirty seconds to reply.

If it isn't there, a player is secretly chosen to act for the Lindworm for the session. Do this silently:

1. Set aside cards equal to the number of players. One must be the Queen of Spades.
2. Shuffle and deal one card to each player, face-down. Look at your cards privately.
3. The player who receives the Queen of Spades is chosen. Once everyone has nodded that they understand what card they received, return the cards to the deck without revealing them.

No player roleplays as the Lindworm. The chosen player discovers the Lindworm's actions through a deck of cards.

When the players invite the Lindworm to act, all players close their eyes. The chosen player channels the Lindworm and looks at the top three cards of the deck. The channeling player chooses one of the cards, places it as the Lindworm sees fit, and puts the other two on the bottom of the deck. Then they close their eyes and knock on the table.

It is up to everyone to interpret the meaning of the card,

based on the Lindworm Card Action tables on pages 74-77. For example, if the Lindworm's card is the Three of Diamonds (cues: biting at skin / anxiety / long scrape marks on a tree) and the card sits on a specific player's Character Sheet, then it is clear that the Lindworm's action centers on that player Character. Players should interpret the Lindworm's play as brutally as possible, building from some or all of the card's cues.

Sometimes cards will appear in specific places on the map, or engage with the space in other ways. Sometimes the actions of the Lindworm can be explained as the actions of the Strangeness. That's okay. Life rarely ties together neatly.

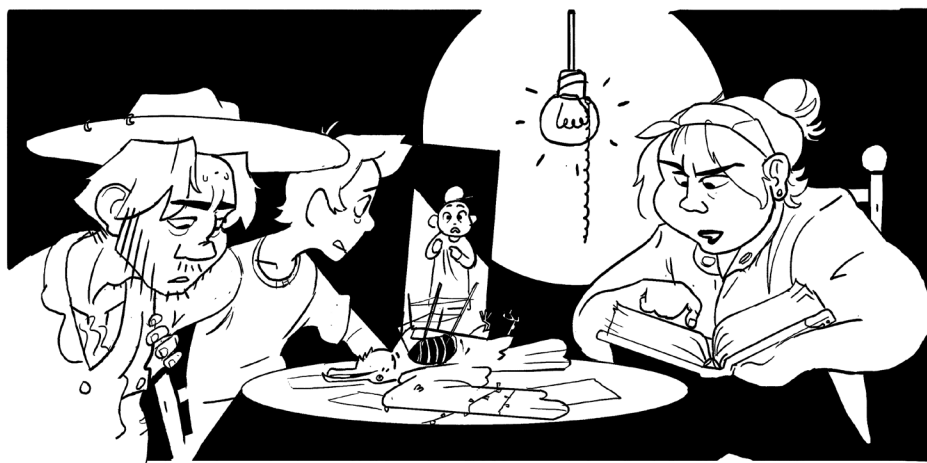
If a player uses a Strong Move, they may soften the Lindworm's action. This doesn't remove the consequences, but allows you to redirect them. If the Lindworm's action would kill someone and that action is mitigated, someone must still die.

Oh, one final thing:

Never roleplay as the Lindworm. No matter what.



We once found a deer jaw in a quarry, covered in moss and telling a story too grim to listen to. I should be more careful.



PART 2

CHARACTER SHEETS

CREATING THE SUMMER CAMP

Follow these steps to create your Summer Camp. Make a map on a piece of paper. Scrawl notes as you need.

DRAW THESE:

- The Field At The Center Of Camp
- The Lake
- The Fire Pit
- The Oldest Tree In The Woods
- The Bunks

EACH PLAYER CHOOSES 1:

- The Nurse's Cabin
- The Creek With Mud Castles
- The Performing Stage
- The Field Everyone Dreams About
- The Best Stargazing Field
- The Sneaking Path
- The Hidden Picnic Bench
- The Petroglyph Boulders
- The Swamp Full Of Mosquitos
- The Path Covered In Cairns
- The Mushroom Log
- The Secret Kissing Grove
- The Abandoned Stone Wall

AS A GROUP, CHOOSE 2:

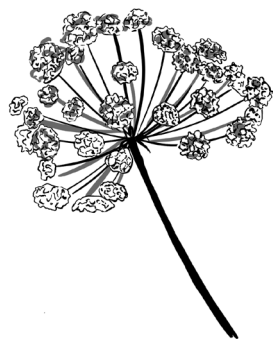
- Camp Cat
- Courageous Leaders
- Culture Of Honesty
- Economic Prosperity
- Minimal Camper Drama
- Long Administrative Memory
- Protected Property
- Easy Access To Public Transportation
- Understanding Parents

EACH PLAYER DETAILS 1:

- Where the fire pit used to be.
- Where the frogs used to sing.
- Where the faerie houses used to be built.
- Where the path used to go.
- Where you used to sneak away to watch the sunrise.
- Where you realized you weren't straight.
- Where the oldest cabins are.
- Where the witch was spotted.
- Where kids kissed when you were young.
- Where you confessed your childhood crush.
- Where the great battles of youth took place.

WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME?

- Half the camp danced into the lake and woke up freezing.
- Flayed animals roamed the woods.
- One of your friends died.
- The cops showed up and shut everything down.
- Each one of you got a scar in the same place on your faces.
- No one remembers—it's been too long.



I fell asleep in the grass after watching the sun rise. I wish I could explain what the light changed in me.



THE ATHLETE

“Always choose win!” yells the Athlete, both on the field and in life. The Athlete is cold skill, emotion transformed into a furthering of the desire to do even better in the world. Never assume the Athlete doesn't care, even if they never show it. Feelings come secondary to victory over the Lindworm, to keeping everyone else safe, to giving everyone else the space to process. Feelings are later. Win is now.

The Athlete is a storming individual. Their power is in restrained fury, tragic heroism, and their physical ability.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- What happens when you try to hold back your emotions?
- How can you win against the unbeatable?
- Are you really a hero?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Sturdy Name
- ☐ A Dependable Name
- ☐ A Name That Hides Who You Are
- ☐ A Name That Can Be Used Like A Battering Ram

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Furious Eyes
- ☐ Piercing Eyes
- ☐ Burning Eyes
- ☐ Explosive Eyes

- ☐ Coiled Body
- ☐ Massive Body
- ☐ Tank Of A Body
- ☐ Blade Of A Body

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ A Glaive
- ☐ Lightning
- ☐ Health Goth
- ☐ Sports Dyke
- ☐ Barbarian
- ☐ Lonely King

CHOOSE YOUR CHILDHOOD FEAR:

- ☐ Wolves torturing your family.
- ☐ All your bones breaking.
- ☐ A bully with a sharper weapon.
- ☐ Slowly transforming into a statue.
- ☐ A doll that can control you.
- ☐ Getting robbed and killed.

CHOOSE YOUR CONTRABAND WEAPON:

- Baseball Bat
- Broadsword
- X-ACTO Knife
- Explosives
- Axe with Barbed Wire
- Chainsaw
- Butterfly Knife
- Brass Knuckles
- Spiked Chain

DESCRIBE IT WITH 2:

- It (or something like it) was given by a mentor.
- Used to defend yourself from your fear.
- Proof of your heroism.
- Tied to self-destructive tendencies.
- Something everyone knows you by.
- Has your name carved into it.
- Has been used to protect others a thousand times.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- How did you perceive me when you saw me at my most vulnerable?
- Why do I feel okay opening up to you?
- Do I take care of you? and Do you want me to?

TIPS:

- You're not mindless, but that doesn't mean you need to think.
- Hold back your feelings until you can't.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone respects you and your autonomy, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Perform a feat of mythical physical ability.
- Reveal your true feelings.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play, channeling it through your weapon.

Ask: "Does your Character need help?"

Ask: "Who does your Character want dead?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Lash out at someone and injure them.
- Intimidate someone with a sudden display of emotional intensity.
- Exert yourself past your limit.

Ask: "Why is your Character giving up?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Kill someone who isn't the Lindworm.
- Misinterpret someone's actions as an insult.
- Reject a moment where you could open up and instead bottle your feelings.

Ask: "Why doesn't your Character just fuck off?"



THE COUNSELOR

Most people who work here are here for the friendships. But not the Counselor. They're just here to help the kids. Nothing more and nothing less, and they'll die before they let a single kid get hurt. The world is harsh and cruel, and the Lindworm has traumatized too many. The Counselor will do anything to keep their kids safe.

The Counselor is a passionate individual. Their power is in their heartfelt speeches, charming air, and the people they surround themselves with.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Who is the Counselor willing to let die for their kids?
- What is the price of preserving another's innocence?
- How does the Counselor handle failure?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Cheerful Name
- ☐ A Round Name
- ☐ A Name Made Up of a Single Letter
- ☐ A Name Good For a Small Bird

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Honest Eyes
- ☐ Listening Eyes
- ☐ Watchful Eyes
- ☐ Flaming Eyes

- ☐ Large Body
- ☐ Thick Body
- ☐ Curvy Body
- ☐ The Body Of Someone Who Wants To Love Being Alive

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Old Woman Atop a Mountain
- ☐ Robin
- ☐ A Vast and Caring Body of Water
- ☐ A Campfire
- ☐ An Indie Song about Friendship
- ☐ Social Justice Cleric

CHOOSE WHY THE CAMPERS LISTEN:

- ☐ You're funny.
- ☐ You're thoughtful.
- ☐ You talk to them about their feelings.
- ☐ You give good life advice.
- ☐ You pay attention to the quiet ones.
- ☐ You command the room.

CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE ACTIVITY:

- Sitting around the campfire.
- Fishing for bass.
- Camp theatrical performances.
- Hiking up the old mountain.
- Digging up worms in the mud.
- Sand castles by the lake.
- Building fairy houses.

CHOOSE WHY YOU ALMOST LEFT:

- You're not getting paid enough.
- You fell in love with someone who offered to take you to the city.
- You need to take time to support your family.
- You need to start your life.
- It just doesn't feel meaningful anymore.
- The camp has changed too much.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- Why do we keep fighting?
- How do we get each other in a way that other people don't?
- What can't we resolve within our friendship?

TIPS:

- Force yourself and your Character to make impossible choices.
- Be openly authentic with your Character's feelings.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone engages with a Camper as a fully realized Character, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Help a Camper make a vital life choice.
- Take action and succeed on a Camper's advice.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play in a way that protects the Campers.

Ask: "What does your Character need most right now?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Ask a Camper to do something you can't, leaving them vulnerable.
- Look to the Campers for guidance.

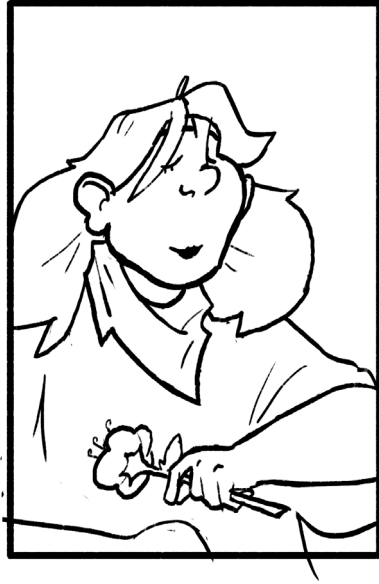
Ask: "Which other Characters are involved in this?"

Ask: "How can my Character help yours right now?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Lead the camp astray.
- Lie to a Camper. They can tell it's a lie.
- Act in a way that upsets and spoils the heart of the camp.
- Tell a Camper the harsh truth in a way that hurts them.

Ask: "What does your Character want from me?"



THE CRAFTER

There is Magic in the world, the Magic of the secret places that want to grow and thrive. All things are connected by this Magic. Even the Lindworm, as horrific as it is, must be connected to this order somehow. The Crafter is responsible for teaching arts and crafts to campers, but is more importantly responsible for cultivating their sense of Magic and connection to the arcane. Crafters listen to the call of the universe, and respond with their own creative expression.

The Crafter is a quirky individual. Their power is in the subtle Magic of the world, information from the greater world, and skill at creating new art.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Does the Magic care about you?
- How do you stay connected to the real?
- What do you have to cope with? and How do you cope?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Unique Name
- ☐ A Tongue-Twister Name
- ☐ A Word That Is Normally Not a Name
- ☐ A Name Chosen to Confuse

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Gleaming Eyes
 - ☐ Mismatched Eyes
 - ☐ Bright Eyes
 - ☐ Honest Eyes
 - ☐ Exhausted Eyes
-
- ☐ Round Body
 - ☐ Body Built for Listening
 - ☐ Lanky Body
 - ☐ Uncertain Body

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Priestess Femme
- ☐ Grasslad
- ☐ A Turtle
- ☐ A Cloud Over the Sun
- ☐ A Particular Color
- ☐ Treekisser

CHOOSE YOUR CHILDHOOD FEAR:

- ☐ Flayed by wolves.
- ☐ Drowning in a lake and no one hearing.
- ☐ Getting caught kissing someone you shouldn't.
- ☐ Teeth falling out and you can't explain why.
- ☐ The plot of *Home Alone*.

CHOOSE YOUR CRAFT:

- Augury
- Runemagic
- Hexes and Blessings
- Staring at Fire
- Embodied Spellcraft
- Dream Journeys
- Promises
- Protective Wards

CHOOSE 2 TRAITS OF THE CRAFT:

- It cannot be used to lie.
- It cannot be used to spill blood.
- It cannot cause death in any form.
- It cannot be used with modern technology.
- It cannot be taught easily.
- It cannot be repeated.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- Why do I keep falling in love with you?
- How did you rescue me?
- Why did you abandon the Craft?

TIPS:

- Act like you know more about what's going on than you do.
- Remember that the Magic is subtle, not loud, and most believe it doesn't exist.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone questions your eccentric worldview, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Have a conversation defined by pure honesty.
- Remember or find something dreadfully important.
- Perform the Spellcrafting Ritual.

Ask: "Does your Character know I care?"

Ask: "Are our Characters going the right way?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Listen to the Magic and follow what it says.
- Give a friend an honest compliment.
- Teach someone a small charm for good luck.

Ask: "Does your Character want to talk about it?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Confess your love for someone in a way that's just awkward.
- Break one of the Magic's rules.
- Be temporarily abandoned by the Magic.

Ask: "Why doesn't your Character believe in me?"



THE FRESH BLOOD

The Fresh Blood isn't really fresh. They've gone to this camp for longer than some of the administrators have worked here. They're fresh, however, in the sense that they only stopped being a counselor-in-training (CIT) this year. For the first time, they have to navigate their world anew. It is now full of Strangeness, and they are surrounded by idols from their youth who have turned out to be not gods, but instead just regular people with regular lives and regular desires. The Lindworm has always been a campfire story, but watching their once-mentors and newfound friends prepare for it feels impossible.

The Fresh Blood is a naive individual. Their power is in youthful energy, genuine love untouched by age, and a heartfelt peer relationship with many of the campers.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Are you really respected by the other staff?
- Do you *really* belong here?
- Are you strong enough?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Common Name
- ☐ A Quiet Name
- ☐ A Name That Blends In Easily
- ☐ A Name Chosen to Not Raise Eyebrows

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Chipper Eyes
- ☐ Feisty Eyes
- ☐ Playful Eyes
- ☐ Earnest Eyes

- ☐ Spry Body
- ☐ Lanky Body
- ☐ Chubby Body
- ☐ Body That's Still Figuring Itself Out

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Full
- ☐ Empty
- ☐ Open
- ☐ Closed
- ☐ Ajar
- ☐ Adjacent
- ☐ Crossing Past
- ☐ Above
- ☐ Below
- ☐ Inbetween
- ☐ Overflowing
- ☐ Vacant

CHOOSE YOUR CHILDHOOD FEAR:

- ☐ Transforming into a wolf.
- ☐ Going to school without any pants.
- ☐ Suddenly being President of the United States.
- ☐ Being told to carry something and not being strong enough.
- ☐ Being lied to.

CHOOSE YOUR NATURAL TALENT:

- Superb fairy houses.
- Winning at Four Square.
- Sick flips on the rope swing.
- Well-timed puns.
- Expert set design.
- Creative T-shirts.

CHOOSE WHAT YOU'LL NEVER LIVE DOWN:

- Got into a fight around the fire circle.
- Tried to kiss someone who wasn't into you.
- Had a longstanding in-joke that wasn't very funny.
- A bit of a teenage heartthrob among the other campers.
- Had no friends (except at camp).
- Had no friends (even at camp).

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- What made me stop having a one-sided crush on you?
- How did you teach me the most important lesson I could learn?
- Why do I still resent you, after all these years?

TIPS:

- Gleefully get in over your head.
- Ensure the campers have a role in the story besides objects to be protected.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone acknowledges what they can learn from you, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Make something completely new from the old.
- Do something you didn't think you were capable of doing.

Ask: "Why doesn't your Character just talk to them about it?"

Ask: "What can my Character do that will help?"

Ask: "What changed for your Character?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Get up to some mischief.
- Find something old and forgotten by the other players.
- Spot something everyone else overlooked.

Ask: "Does your Character want to go somewhere else?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Bungle something you were confident you could handle.
- Try to explain to a camper and get it all wrong.
- Take action, leaving everyone else vulnerable.

Ask: "Does your Character actually view me as an equal?"



THE LIFEGUARD

Some people might become lifeguards to avoid having to do the hard work at camp. This Lifeguard is not one of those people. It takes a special kind of strength to be willing to drop everything and jump into the waves to save a kid you've never met before. The Lifeguard is here to protect their friends and the camp, weathering everything the universe could throw at them with the same dogged smile.

The Lifeguard is an unbreaking individual. Their power is in mutual aid, physical defense, and self-sacrifice.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- What aren't you willing to sacrifice?
- Are you actually selfless or does your selfishness just look different?
- Will you leave the camp behind?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Short Name
- ☐ A Name That's Easy to Yell
- ☐ A Sharp Name
- ☐ An Honest Name

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Watchful Eyes
- ☐ Warm Eyes
- ☐ Hardened Eyes
- ☐ Watery Eyes

- ☐ Coiled Body
- ☐ Lithe Body
- ☐ Proud Body
- ☐ Stocky Body
- ☐ Built Like a Wall

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Nice Boy
- ☐ Wonder Woman
- ☐ A Savior and A Saint
- ☐ Eagle
- ☐ Castle
- ☐ Lighthouse in the Darkness
- ☐ Relatable

CHOOSE YOUR CHILDHOOD FEAR:

- ☐ Wolves that kidnap your friends.
- ☐ Diseases undetected until it's too late.
- ☐ Being excluded.
- ☐ Small insects that live in your ears.
- ☐ A current too fast to outswim.

CHOOSE AN OUTSIDE RELATIONSHIP:

- A little brother who misses you.
- A best friend who used to work here.
- A support game.
- An old house you think of as home.
- A family.

CHOOSE WHAT KEEPS YOU WORKING HERE:

- The kids.
- Your friends in the staff.
- The land.
- The chance to save people.
- You've forgotten why (but want to remember).

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- How did I save you from metaphorically drowning?
- Are you still in love with me?
- When's the last time we fought?

TIPS:

- Make strong choices to not help people when you should, or vice versa.
- Keep coming back around, even if you should leave.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone asks for your help to stay afloat, they gain a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Keep pushing forward even as everything tries to stop you.
- Get someone breathing again even if they shouldn't be able to.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play in a way that directs the Move at you.

Ask: "How can my Character help yours heal?"

Ask: "Why is your Character holding themselves back?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Shoulder a burden.
- Share genuine emotions with another.
- Provide useful advice.
- Tend to someone's wounds.

Ask: "How is your Character hurting?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Lose your temper at someone and ruin that friendship.
- Give up at the worst possible moment.
- Botch a rescue in a potentially lethal way.

Ask: "Where are the waves pushing our Characters?"



THE ROPESKEEPER

The Ropeskeeper tends to the ropes course, the structure at the heart of the Woods. They are an enigmatic staff member, one who prefers the company of the wooden beams and tall trees to the presence of other staff or, heavens forbid, actual campers. Still, the Ropeskeeper is a vital part of the camp ecosystem and helps hold the entire community together with their stoic hermeticism.

The Ropeskeeper is a distant individual. Their power is in quick movement, sudden shows of cold kindness, and the forest itself.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Why do you care about other people?
- What drove you into the Woods?
- Why do your friends keep you around?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ An Old Name
- ☐ A Name Said Thoughtfully
- ☐ A Carefully-Chosen Name
- ☐ A Name With Power Behind It

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Dull Eyes
- ☐ Hardened Eyes
- ☐ Pointed Eyes
- ☐ Animal Eyes

- ☐ Wideset Body
- ☐ Tense Body
- ☐ Wiry Body
- ☐ Nimble Body
- ☐ Scarred Body

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Hermit
- ☐ Sailor
- ☐ Druid
- ☐ Swamp Thing
- ☐ Rusted Sword
- ☐ A Fox
- ☐ An Ancient Oak
- ☐ None of Your Business

CHOOSE HOW THE WOODS FIRST HELPED:

- ☐ You were running from a bully.
- ☐ The Lindworm was trying to kill you.
- ☐ A wise mentor showed you its wisdom.
- ☐ A dream guided you between the branches.
- ☐ You were in love here, once.

CHOOSE THE WOODS' IMPACT:

- Overwhelms with natural beauty.
- Reveals spoken lies with birdsong.
- Honors pain with shared simile.
- Tells the truth with venerable silence.
- Keeps promises with sunlight.

CHOOSE WHY YOU STILL HAVE FRIENDS:

- You're funny.
- You give good advice.
- You listen.
- You're there for people when it matters.
- You know people better than they know themselves.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- What happened that made you seek refuge in my Woods?
- Why were you banned from entering my Woods?
- Why did I stop loving you?

TIPS:

- Interact with your Woods like you would with your own internal thoughts.
- Don't leave your Woods behind. But don't get trapped in your Woods, either.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone runs to your Woods to escape a problem, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Use the Woods' impact on someone else.
- Teach someone else how to defend themselves.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play by redirecting it through the Woods.

Ask: "Where does your Character feel safe?"

Ask: "What happens if my Character opens up to yours?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Lash out at someone by using the Woods as a weapon.
- Ask the Woods for advice.
- Communicate with silence better than words can.

Ask: "What is your Character hiding from mine?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Completely shut down.
- Shatter your friends' trust in you by fleeing.
- Allow the Woods to feel unsafe for you.

Ask: "How is your Character jealous of mine?"



THE SONGLEADER

BY ABE MENDES

Camp music lifts us up and binds us together. In uproarious singalongs, we find community. In heartfelt refrains by campfire light, we find home. The Songleader sings from the soul with carefully chosen words and a gentle touch, and their voice hits you square in the heart and makes you want to join in. If camp has a voice, it isn't that of any one person; it's the combined voices of each and every camper and staff member. But it's the Songleader who spurs them all to sing.

The Songleader is a tender individual. Their power is in their voice, the voices of others, and the togetherness of countless arms wrapped around countless shoulders.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Is this place still home for you?
- Does singing together hold any real power in the face of violence and cruelty?
- Will your softness last the coming storm, or will it be worn away to reveal roughness and sharp edges?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Name With a Pleasing Sound
- ☐ A Name Used Only Here
- ☐ A Name That's Fun to Chant
- ☐ A Full Name Never to be Abbreviated

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Curious Eyes
- ☐ Thoughtful Eyes
- ☐ Happy Eyes
- ☐ Gentle Eyes

- ☐ Delicate Body
- ☐ Fluid Body
- ☐ Stable Body
- ☐ Slow-Moving Body
- ☐ Body Built for Strong Hugs

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Blackberry Blossom
- ☐ June Apple
- ☐ Freight Train
- ☐ Crawdad
- ☐ Wagon Wheel
- ☐ Quite Early Morning
- ☐ Blowing in the Wind

CHOOSE YOUR CHILDHOOD FEAR:

- ☐ Distant howling only you can hear.
- ☐ Nobody being able to see or hear you.
- ☐ Going to sleep and never waking up.
- ☐ Your own face in the mirror.
- ☐ All of these.

CHOOSE YOUR SINGING VOICE:

- Strong and grounded—like an anchor.
- Warm and welcoming—like an embrace.
- Playful and meandering—like a chase through tall grass.
- Intimate and honest—like a promise to a friend.
- Haunting and full—like the moon reflected in the Lake.

CHOOSE 2 SONGS:

- Group song no outside force could ever interrupt.
- Story song campers always listen to in quiet, rapt focus.
- Hiking song that always gives the tired and weak a boost of energy.
- Traditional song that provides insight into the camp's history.
- Cyclical song that always brings the camp dog running.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- Why did we grow apart all those years ago?
- What song best represents our relationship?
- What have you said to me but never to anyone else?

TIPS:

- Describe your songs in terms of the imagery they evoke.
- Let your voice carry. But find places to lift up other voices, too. Especially those of less developed Characters.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone answers your voice with their own, echoing your words, sentiment, or tone exactly, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Help someone find their voice.
- Sing someone tired peacefully to sleep.
- Ease tensions with a song everyone knows by heart.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play, redirecting it with raw emotion.

Ask: "What does your Character most want to hear from mine right now?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Illustrate the power of a song.
- Call out and wait for a response.
- Step out of the light and pass the melody to someone else.
- Hang your head over; hear the wind blow.

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Get involved in a conflict that's none of your business and try to mediate.
- Be overcome by someone else's fear, anger, or grief.
- Lead a song half-heartedly and lose its power forever.

Ask: "How has camp lost its Magic for your Character?"



PART 3

SETTING ELEMENTS



THE FIELD

The Field is young, bright, and full of life and victorious play. It is here where young warriors play under the hot sun and where happy-go-lucky teens fool around within the shade. It is a place for doing, not for talking, and its heart is the rhythm of movement and innocent joy.

The Field is a place overflowing with energy. It desires decisive action, movement, fun, happiness, peace, fast travel, and community coming-together.

The Field can be many fields in the Summer Camp, but it is always the Field.

TIPS:

- Create invitations to play—with animals, with each other, with the land.
- Reward action in whatever form it takes.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- A scene is set in the Field.
- Someone is frantic or hurried.
- The mist clings to the grass in the morning and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You need to take a breather from the energy.
- You need to frolic.

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- Tall Grass
- Freshly Mowed
- Vibrant
- Mist-Covered
- Teeming with Life
- Well-Trodden
- Untouched
- Damp
- Dewey
- Exuberant
- Clearly Loved

MOVES:

- Provide insight and fresh eyes on another Setting Element.
- Invite a moment of healthy communication.
- Resolve tensions through play.
- Cause injury without meaning to.
- Create an Item that will help.
- Create a Staff Minor Character.
- Provide another Setting Element's desire.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



THE WOODS

The Woods are an old place, far older than the camp, and filled with the aching pain only acquired from generations of trauma. The Woods are dedicated to revealing, opening, and inspiring, but are also apathetic and filled with the weight of its own memories. If you treat the Woods with respect, it might respect you. Live within the Woods, and you'll become one of its own.

The Woods are a mournful place. It desires to be left alone, to bring together, to heal, to talk, to reveal, and to live independent of cruelty and misunderstanding.

If there is a Ropeskeeper, use their answers for information here. They should start with the Woods. Otherwise, answer those sections and write them down yourself.

TIPS:

- Act quietly, through framing scenes and asking questions.
- Explore the majesty of something that has an emotional life independent from a human idea of feelings.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- A scene is set in the Woods.
- Something from the Woods emerges into the camp.
- The air is thick and misty and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- The Woods feel incomprehensible, deeply unsafe, or exhaustingly mundane to you.

WRITE YOUR IMPACT:**CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:**

- Old Growth
- Young
- Evergreen
- Deciduous
- Swamp
- Tangled
- Clearcut
- Surrounded
- Sprawling
- Intelligent
- Pained
- Healing
- Hopeful
- Distrusting

MOVES:

- Perform your Impact (as written by the Ropeskeeper if present).
- Lead people together, even if they don't want to see each other.
- Create a Staff Minor Character.
- Reveal a new secret that must be grappled with.
- Express the Woods' pain.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



THE LAKE

The Lake is where secrets go to die. When it is present in the story, it seems to cover up and distort truth by swallowing it under the waves. Although the Lake is not an agent of the Lindworm it can often work in the Lindworm's favor, hiding its influence and putting others in danger.

The Lake is a hungry place. It desires to conceal, to feed on secrets, to smother, to kill, to grow beyond its banks, to seduce, to lure, and to keep the truth hidden beneath its waves.

Anyone can start with the Lake except for the Lifeguard. The Lifeguard never ends up with the Lake unless it makes perfect sense.

TIPS:

- Create good reasons for someone to either literally or metaphorically enter the Lake.
- Be filled with the alien, beyond what is expected.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- A scene is set by or in the Lake.
- The Lake has wisdom (or false wisdom) it must offer the camp.
- The air is murky, misty, and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- Your Character needs to keep a secret.
- The Lake feels too dark and too exhausting to bear.

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- Shining
- Vast
- Rippling
- Misty
- Forbidden
- Muddy
- Algae-Filled
- Plentiful
- Deceiving
- Reflective
- Revealing
- Hungry

MOVES:

- Work to keep a secret from being revealed.
- Push people apart, through coincidence or geography.
- Fabricate a falsehood.
- Create a Staff Minor Character.
- Feed the waves.

After every Move, ask “What do you do?”



THE CAMPERS

The Campers are a diverse body of fools, fiends, and toadies, who love nothing more than to get up to terrible mischief and vex your existence. And you love every single one of them, oh so much. The Campers are young and full of confusion, but are also always capable of more than you'd expect. The Campers are capable of helping you and each other, but can never understand the stakes of the Lindworm.

The Campers are a group of kind souls. They desire freedom, autonomy, space to make mistakes, parental guidance, wisdom from elders, fun, jokes, and drama.

The Counselor never begins with the Campers, and should avoid picking them up.

TIPS:

- Create lovable Campers, who even at their worst are relatable, and reveal their anxieties and capacities.
- Be helpful when expected to be useless, but fail when it is reasonable to fail.
- Play, fight, bicker, run around, have feelings, and be honest.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- The Campers speak up as a group.
- A Camper should have their voice heard.
- The air is warm and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You cannot understand why the kids are this way right now.
- You want to talk to a Camper.

FOR EACH CAMPER, CHOOSE 2 GENDERS (1 FROM EACH COLUMN):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Masculine | <input type="radio"/> Cicada |
| <input type="radio"/> Feminine | <input type="radio"/> Fox |
| <input type="radio"/> Full | <input type="radio"/> Eagle |
| <input type="radio"/> Empty | <input type="radio"/> Pillbug |
| <input type="radio"/> Open | <input type="radio"/> Worm |
| <input type="radio"/> Closed | <input type="radio"/> Faux Wolf |
| <input type="radio"/> Ajar | <input type="radio"/> Dragon |
| <input type="radio"/> Adjacent | <input type="radio"/> Robin |
| <input type="radio"/> Crossing Past | <input type="radio"/> Coyote |
| <input type="radio"/> Above | <input type="radio"/> Lion |
| <input type="radio"/> Below | <input type="radio"/> Moth |
| <input type="radio"/> Inbetween | <input type="radio"/> Butterfly |
| <input type="radio"/> Overflowing | <input type="radio"/> Tree |
| <input type="radio"/> Vacant | |

MOVES:

- Show someone starting something new.
- Remind everyone what they're fighting for.
- Reveal vulnerability through reflection.
- Create a Camper Character.
- Introduce drama and contention.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



THE MAGIC

The Magic is a force, something that pervades all of existence and inhabits the secret parts of the world where humans haven't been. To guide the Magic is a process known as Crafting, something that can only be done carefully and precisely. The Magic is only as violent as its users, but it can also be a capricious and odd force. No one knows if the Magic is real, but it feels like it is in its quiet and subtle ways.

The Magic is a tricky force. It desires stories, adventures, heroes, villains, art, beauty, joy, and above all, improbable coincidences.

The Crafter begins with the Magic, but should put it down quickly.

TIPS:

- Push for odd coincidences and unexpected events that slam disconnected plot elements together.
- Never discover whether or not Magic is real.
- You help weave the story into something cohesive. Utilize that.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- The story needs a little tying together.
- There's some electricity in the air and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You want to ask the Magic for help.
- The Magic is taking up too much space.

CHOOSE 2 VISUAL METAPHORS:

- Fireflies
- Cicadas
- Flaming Embers
- Smoke
- Mist
- Flashlights
- The Moon
- The Stars
- Eyes in the Darkness
- A Specific Knobbled Tree

MOVES:

- Act through something unaware.
- Provide unexpected tools.
- Create a Villain Minor Character.
- Create a Savior Minor Character.
- Provide a moment of impossibility when needed most.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



THE STRANGENESS

The Strangeness are the old creatures of the world who arrived to this barren Earth long before we did, and carry with them the rats and pests and squirming pieces of faraway lands. They have blood on their hands but they do not allow it to phase them, preferring instead to dwell on what could've been. The Strangeness knows about things they shouldn't, and have many secrets and truths to offer—if you'll listen. Sometimes, the Strangeness is just a possum that keeps walking after getting hit by a car. Sometimes it is an entire commune beneath the hills, with their own laws and a god made of broken concrete. They are not the Lindworm, but perhaps they can help.

Read the Act instructions for whether or not the Strangeness should be in play, or if there's something more explicit (such as a Strange Setting Element, found later in this book).

TIPS:

- Be subtle at first, so subtle that people don't realize you're playing as the Strangeness.
- Imply something larger that no one can understand.
- Imagine something more bizarre than you started with.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- The world is alien and uncomfortable and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You need to confront something profoundly odd.

KEEP TRACK OF STRANGENESS EVENTS:

Whenever you think an event meets with a specific theme, mark it on the Strangeness Table. When you consult the Strangeness Table, follow whichever has the most tallies by it.

MOVES:

- Foreshadow Strangeness.
- Decide something about the world.
- Offer an unexpectedly useful Item, without your presence being known.
- Hint at a secret that changes everything.
- Quietly push people in weird directions.
- Cause injury under mysterious circumstances.
- Create a Minor Character with ominous intentions.

After every Move, ask “What do you do?”

THE STRANGENESS TABLE:

If the Strangeness is in play, keep track of the themes of the game using this table. Whenever a Strangeness has more than 3 tallies its associated themes, begin to foreshadow that Strangeness using the aesthetic elements next to its name.

THE MURDER OF CROWS	Destiny, Heartbreak	Feathers, objects in groups of three, tangled thread
OUR LADY OUBLIETTE	Cold, Forgetting	Unseasonable cold, unrecognized kids, Fuzzy memories
THE SLUMBERING BEAST	Dreams, Conquest	Haunting dreams, omens, mist from holes in the ground
THE UNDERHILL KING	The Underworld, Authority	Dirt, strange calls from the mountain, hoofprints

CHARACTER SPARKS

BY KAZUMI CHIN

In *Sleepaway*, most Setting Elements include Moves that ask players to create Characters. This optional table, loosely based on the tarot, can be used to give each Character a unique Spark (a thematic quality and Move) during the creation process.

USING SPARKS

1. To incorporate Sparks into your game, utilize a second deck of playing cards.
2. When you use a Character creation Move, draw three cards and consult the chart. Select a Spark or two, corresponding to your card(s), and assign them to the new Character. Write the Character's name, pronouns, and Spark details on an index card, then pin it to the Corkboard.
3. Whenever that Character is portrayed, let the Sparks guide that portrayal. At some point, the Character might use the Move associated with the Spark.
4. There are many other ways to use this table; feel free to experiment. The aim here is to help breathe life into your Campers and other NPCs, and give them the full, complex lives they deserve without slowing down the game's pace.

	HEARTS	DIAMONDS	CLUBS	SPADES
2	<i>Loving</i> Give someone my heart.	<i>Helpful</i> Offer more than I can give.	<i>Observant</i> Notice strange things.	<i>Gloomy</i> Complain that you're bored.
3	<i>Popular</i> Be liked by most everyone.	<i>Divisive</i> Lead a critical faction.	<i>Secretive</i> Tell someone my plans.	<i>Cursed</i> Be followed by bad luck.
4	<i>Peaceful</i> Find meditative space.	<i>Organized</i> Refuse a change of plan.	<i>Joyful</i> Love more than most.	<i>Introverted</i> Spend time alone.
5	<i>Depressed</i> Stay in bed all day.	<i>Vulnerable</i> Reveal the pain I feel.	<i>Destructive</i> Blow something up.	<i>Simmering</i> Attempt to harm someone.
6	<i>Dreamy</i> Get lost in thought.	<i>Mystical</i> Lead others in Ritual.	<i>Humorous</i> Be the center of attention.	<i>Questioning</i> Be unsure about it.
7	<i>Alluring</i> Lead others astray.	<i>Political</i> Raise consciousness.	<i>Alien</i> Misunderstand humans.	<i>Selfish</i> Break someone's trust.
8	<i>Lonely</i> Hang out all by myself.	<i>Independent</i> Do everything myself.	<i>Frantic</i> Be unable to communicate.	<i>Tormented</i> Become easily frustrated.
9	<i>Excited</i> Fixate on a single desire.	<i>Driven</i> Take advantage of others.	<i>Mocking</i> Viciously bully someone.	<i>Cold</i> Refuse to engage in activities.
10	<i>Fiery</i> Light something on fire.	<i>Lucky</i> Gain something special.	<i>Wrathful</i> Hold a deep grudge.	<i>Morbid</i> Talk about death and dying.
J	<i>Heroic</i> Charge towards danger.	<i>Assertive</i> Hate something loved.	<i>Dramatic</i> Tell exaggerated tales.	<i>Rebellious</i> Challenge power structures.
Q	<i>Protective</i> Smother others with love.	<i>Kind</i> Sacrifice to keep others happy.	<i>Judgmental</i> Gossip and spread rumors.	<i>Forthcoming</i> Say what others won't.
K	<i>Vengeful</i> Harm those who harmed.	<i>Confrontational</i> Start a fight.	<i>Decisive</i> Make a strong decision.	<i>Inspirational</i> Urge others to action.
A	<i>Energetic</i> Exceed containment.	<i>Adventurous</i> Get into some trouble.	<i>Artistic</i> Create something heartfelt.	<i>Creative</i> Invent something useful.



PART 4
ACT
STRUCTURES

CHANNELING THE LINDWORM

It is the monster that makes the world bleed, with arms like tree branches and far too many teeth. There is always someone to profit from the suffering of children. The Lindworm is a shapeshifter, a skin-crawler, something that can steal the skin of a human, flaying them alive, and live inside of it. It doesn't need to, of course.

There's just something so fun about the way naked tendons dance before falling still.

You do not roleplay as the Lindworm. No one roleplays as the Lindworm. Instead, you decide the Lindworm's actions from its deck, channeling the Lindworm's ghost hovering over the table.

When it's time for you to decide the Lindworm's actions, everyone closes their eyes. Wait a moment and then open yours. Choose one of the top 3 cards from the deck, and place it in a way that makes the Lindworm's meaning as clear as you can—in front of a specific person or sitting atop the deck to indicate its general atmosphere.

Afterwards, knock on the table and then close your eyes as well.

TIPS:

- The Lindworm enjoys playing with its food.
- The Lindworm avoids Hearts cards unless it has no choice.
- The Lindworm prefers choosing cards with the symbol of the current Act on it.
- The Lindworm has no goals or desires beyond making people hurt. This is just a game to it.
- The Lindworm first kills animals. Then adults. Then children. Then, finally, the Characters. Always in that order.
- Ask nothing. Allow the cards to speak and destroy.
- The Lindworm is infallible and unrelatable.

CARD TABLES

For the list of the Lindworm's Actions, please refer to the tables on the following pages. Each one provides multiple interpretations, so that your group can work together to create meaning in whatever manner best suits the story you're telling.



Nighttime is its own world during the summer, full of mysterious song and deep shadows. It feels like you could just start walking, and never stop.

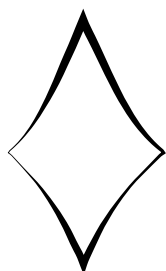
	HEARTS
2	Young love, Speaking up, A hollow sense of unease.
3	Play, Running through the Field, The oppressive heat of the sun.
4	New friends, Community, A figure at the woodline and gone in an instant.
5	Small kindness, A gift, Today reminds you of a dream you once had.
6	Innocent laughter, Fumbling hands, A half-hearted lie.
7	The majesty of nature, Time spent appreciating, The pain of a tree.
8	Sudden excitement, Blinding light, An enormous sound.
9	Halcyon, A bountiful world, A heavy weight on your shoulders.
10	Found family, Caring and connection, Hold tight to what you care about.
J	The tension of the coming storm, Dark clouds gathering, Sudden haunting realizations. <i>Add a new Motif, "Rain," to the Web.</i>
Q	The oppressive nature of rain, Feeling trapped, Isolation from your friends. <i>All players gain a Token as the rain pours down.</i>
K	The joyful release of rain, Running free on the Field, Old friends coming home. <i>Create and add a new Minor Character to the Web.</i>
A	The smell after the rain, Dewdrops on grass, Nostalgia found in the mud. <i>Create and add a new Item to the Web.</i>

	DIAMONDS
2	Approaching danger, Small things in pain, The flayed corpse of a squirrel.
3	Biting at skin, Anxiety, Long scrape marks on a tree.
4	Uncertainty, A dark cloud overhead, A scar that you don't know where it came from.
5	Decay, Rotting food, A bloated carcass emerging from the Lake.
6	The uncanny, Alien sensations, Floating bones.
7	Becoming lost, Desperate cravings, Mysterious patterns locking together.
8	Sudden pain, Sharp unease, Coyotes howling in the darkness.
9	Lost sleep, Deep shadows full of pain, Two rats having devoured each other.
10	Fields thick with noxious mud, Festering wounds, Rabbits with black bile.
J	Fire, Sudden brightness, Fear amongst the Campers.
Q	Fog, Obscuring, People missing within the heavy mists.
K	Strange massacre, Scattered droplets of blood, Drowned fish in the lake.
A	Cursed royalty, Nightmares, A vivisected deer scattered on the branches.

	CLUBS
2	Jolted awake, Reality melting, Campers having nightmares during the day. <i>Who?</i>
3	Bloodstained fingernails, Pleas for help, Campers can't stop clawing at their own skin. <i>Who?</i>
4	Blood trickling from the trees, Inevitable slow pain, Campers can't stop bleeding. <i>Who?</i>
5	Ghost stories, Memories of past trauma, An extra Camper who shouldn't be here. <i>Who?</i>
6	Confusion, Mists pushing people against each other, One Camper lashes out against another. <i>Who? Why?</i>
7	Secrets, Old objects emerging from the undergrowth, Campers saw the Lindworm and won't talk about it. <i>Who?</i>
8	Mistakes, Manipulation, Campers have started playing with animal bones. <i>Who?</i>
9	An alluring promise, The scent of distant fruits, Campers lured away. <i>Who? Where?</i>
10	Sudden attack, Destruction of safety, One Camper's bed was destroyed by sharp claws. <i>Who?</i>
J	A Camper was found dead; mouth stuffed full of wooden sticks and eyes gouged out. <i>Remove a Camper Character from the Corkboard and replace it with this card. Draw the Camper.</i>
Q	A Camper was found dead; stabbed twenty times and covered in animal bones. <i>Remove a Camper Character from the Corkboard and replace it with this card. Draw the Camper.</i>
K	A Camper was found dead; skin peeled off, unrecognizable. <i>Remove a Camper Character from the Corkboard and replace it with this card. Draw the Camper.</i>
A	A Camper was found dead; lobotomized while writing a letter for help. <i>Remove a Camper Character from the Corkboard and replace it with this card. Draw the Camper.</i>

	SPADES
2	Their body is my plaything: <i>Destroy a Minor Character card who isn't a Camper. That Character's body is now the Lindworm's form. (Do not roleplay as the Lindworm.)</i>
3	You run in circles like mice in a cage: <i>Divide the map in two. It requires a Strong Move to cross the division.</i>
4	Dance with me!: <i>Cut five strings on the Corkboard, leaving a clean line through the web.</i>
5	Don't you realize what I've turned you into?: <i>Answer, "What goal in life has my Character given up on?"</i>
6	Don't you remember what I did to you?: <i>Answer, "What does my Character most regret in life?"</i>
7	I take away everything that reminds you of your childhood: <i>Destroy the Field Setting Element.</i>
8	I'll take everything from you: <i>Destroy all but 3 Item cards.</i>
9	Behold what I will turn you into: <i>Add the Bones Setting Element.</i>
10	Die: <i>A player Character dies.</i>
J	They scatter like roaches before me: <i>Destroy the Campers Setting Element.</i>
Q	My children hunt: <i>Add the Wolves Setting Element.</i>
K	You really thought I'd let you live?: <i>None of your Characters will survive. All of you answer, "How does your Character cope with inevitable death?"</i>
A	I want to make you bleed: <i>You cannot make Strong or Regular Moves until you spend three Tokens.</i>

THE ONESHOT



Oneshots are ideal for new players interested in trying out ***Sleepaway***. They last a normal session length, about 3-4 hours, including learning how to play.

OBJECTIVES:

- Introduce the Characters, the setting, and those relationships with one another.
- Keep asking questions.
- Make aggressively strong choices.
- Help each other fall in love with the Characters.
- Invoke the Strangeness.
- Put your Characters in bad situations.
- Leave questions unanswered.

BEFORE THE ONESHOT

Remove all Spades from the deck and put them aside.

CREATE THE WEB

In a Oneshot game, the normal act structure of *Sleepaway* is condensed. The building, expanding, and destroying phases are collapsed into one. As such, the Corkboard can't serve the same use as it does in a three-act game. But it can still serve as a valuable ritual or aesthetic object, if that works for your group.

When running a Oneshot, I recommend using the Corkboard to draw the map instead of using a blank page. Write Locations down on index cards and attach them together with string. As the game develops, take notes and pin more things to the board. Allow it to become your playground for telling the story together.

ONESHOT SCENE PROMPTS

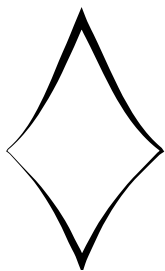
- A hike in the Woods during sunset—what do you need to confess?
- Swimming in the Lake after the kids have gone to bed—what haven't you told each other?
- Helping to resolve an argument between two Campers—what's wrong in the air?
- A meal, at which the Magic is felt—how does it make its presence known?
- One Staff takes another to fix up an injury—how does the conversation become emotional?
- The Strangeness manifested during a game of four square—what form does it take?
- You're making the rounds after check-in, because two Campers are missing, when you hear giggling in the Woods—what form of Strangeness have your Campers become entangled in?
- A body has been found in the Lake—when was the last time the camp director had been seen?

ENDING THE ONESHOT

A Oneshot won't necessarily have the full emotional arc of a full Campaign game. I encourage you to end it on a note of creeping dread. Perhaps a vision of the camp rotting away, or a wave of spoiled flesh. Perhaps a description of the Lindworm's actions, or a montage of where everyone is in the final moments of their uncomfortable and tragic positions. It's okay to encourage players to end up in those positions together, and create the setup for a creepy and raw endpoint.

If you have access to any Rituals, you're welcome to end the Oneshot using one of them. They work well as a final scene to tie it all together. The Daybreak Field, A Moment of Identity, or Spellcrafting are all perfect Rituals for this purpose.

THE SURFACE



A Sleepaway campaign can be one of the most rewarding ways to play the game. The shortest possible campaign you can play with Sleepaway is three sessions—one for each act; the Surface, the Descent, and the Abyss. The Surface is where the story begins for Campaign play. It is when tensions begin to rise, the world just starts to creep you out, and the Strangeness is alluded to.

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce the Characters, the setting, and those relationships with one another.
- Set the stage for the interpersonal conflicts that will shape the story.
- Help each other fall in love with the Characters.
- Keep the story feral and wild.
- Foreshadow the Strangeness.
- Become the architects of your game.

BEFORE THE ONESHOT

Remove all Spades from the deck and put them aside.

BUILDING THE WEB

Using index cards, create small notes on the Corkboard that you can pin and connect as you play. These should cover four general categories:

- **Characters:** Representing campers, other staff, Strange individuals, and other beings with identities. Camper Characters should be the most plentiful.
- **Items:** Representing objects found during your journey.
- **Locations:** Representing spots where moments occurred that are notable enough to be marked on the Corkboard. These are distinct from Setting Elements, but can and should be contained within them.
- **Motifs:** Recurring thematic and aesthetic elements that either have cropped up multiple times or that you expect to come up again.

Connect these four types of cards together freely, based on physical or spiritual proximity. Whenever the Lindworm makes a play, attach that card to the Corkboard and interweave it with the other cards. The end result is ideally a psycho-emotional reflection of the interconnected relationship between the players, the game, and the conversation as a whole, which means there's no way to do it wrong.

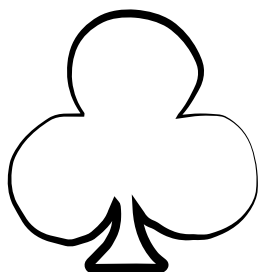
STARTING SCENE PROMPTS

- A hike in the Woods during sunset—what do you need to confess?
- Swimming in the Lake after the kids have gone to bed—what haven't you told each other?
- Helping to resolve an argument between two Campers—what's wrong in the air?
- A meal, at which the Magic is felt—how does it make its presence known?
- One Staff takes another to fix up an injury—how does the conversation become emotional?
- You're making the rounds after check-in because two Campers are missing, when you hear giggling in the Woods—what form of Strangeness have your Campers become entangled in?
- A body has been found in the Lake—when was the last time the camp director had been seen?

END THE SURFACE

Leave the Surface after the Lindworm has played a Clubs card between 2 and 5 times, or when the group agrees that it's time. As you leave the Surface, perform a Ritual to provide emotional closure on this act of the game. If you're not sure which Ritual makes sense, A Moment of Identity is always a safe bet.

THE DESCENT



The Descent is when the story explodes with fear, action, drama and tension.

OBJECTIVES

- Allow emotional relationships and dynamics to explode in your faces.
- Let Minor Characters die, and mourn their deaths in turn.
- Terrify your friends, shaking them to their core, and be terrified in turn.
- Ask questions about the setting, and begin to answer them together.
- Don't save anything for later.
- Take pauses with flashbacks.
- Engage with the Strangeness.

BEFORE THE DESCENT

Take out all the Hearts except the face cards (Ace, Jack, Queen, King), and put in all the Spades except the face cards. Consult the Strangeness Table and, as a group, choose one of the Strangenesses to use.

EXPAND THE WEB

The process for continuing the Corkboard in the Descent is identical to building it in the Surface. However, don't add totally new Motif cards to the board. Instead, begin to flesh out the Motifs by writing down sub-Motifs and patterns that connect to the main cards established in the Surface.

IF YOUR CHARACTER DIES

The Descent can last for a very long time. During the span of play, it will inevitably happen that Characters will die. You can always choose for your Character die, but sometimes your Character will die without your comfort or expectation. When your Character dies, you have two main options:

1. Choose one of the Late-Game Character Sheets, such as the Found-Again, the Guide, or the Orchid, and create a new Character.
2. Have no new Character at all, and take a more authoritative role with a Setting Element or two.

If you have access to them, Strange Character Sheets such as the Moth Maiden or the Cataract Squire can also be utilized, bringing your character back to life.

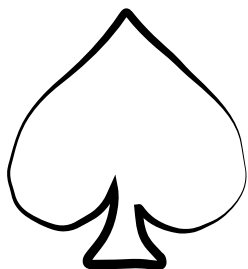
ENDING THE DESCENT

Leave the Descent after the Lindworm has played a Spades card between 2 and 5 times, or when the group agrees that it's time. As you leave the Descent and enter the Abyss, perform a Ritual to provide emotional closure on this act of the game. If you're not sure which Ritual makes sense, the associated Strangeness' Ritual is always a safe bet.



I once sat with two friends past curfew and watched the moths leave our world and travel to the moon, carrying our secrets away.

THE ABYSS



The Abyss is the lowest point, when everything collapses together.

OBJECTIVES

- Resolve your interpersonal conflicts, genuinely.
- Don't forget that your Characters are wholly realized people, not just Lindworm fighters.
- Trim away the excess, leaving only the core of your story.
- Discover the themes that make your game tick.
- Do not fear death.
- Do not roleplay as the Lindworm.
- Be the architects of your own game.

BEFORE THE ABYSS

Remove all Hearts from the deck and add the final Spades cards.

SCENE SETTING

Start each scene with one Location or Motif notecard. Once you have a scene tied to that theme, remove it from the board, ripping apart any string tying it to anything else. Then flee to the next card along one of the strings as it falls away. Any Items or Characters you can pick up will be invaluable. If there is a Spades card there, that means the Lindworm will act again with that action. Get to as many scenes as you can, gathering allies and having conversations. Rescue any setting details you can. Cope with any new ones.

If a set of scenes becomes isolated from the rest, those scenes wither and die.

Once you're trapped in a corner and you can't jump to any other scenes, you must fight the Lindworm.

ENDING THE GAME

When you end the game, everyone alive has the final staredown against the Lindworm. Turn out all the lights, leaving just enough to see by. Set the mood correctly.

Place all of the cards played by the Lindworm in the center of the table, and remove all unplayed cards. Then take all the items and visited scenes and put them in the center of the table in a separate pile. Do not place any Camper Characters in this pile.

Going around the table, each player should take one of their cards and destroy it. Declare how some aspect of it helps them live and keep moving forward.

The other players, in reaction, should fold in half or otherwise mark one of the Lindworm's cards and explain why that strength is a weakness.

If you run out of index cards before the Lindworm has run out of playing cards, start using your Character Sheets or anything else that can be your strength against the pain. Remember to never roleplay the Lindworm.

The Lindworm wins if you must resort to destroying Camper Characters in order to survive.

All the players win otherwise.

After that is up to you.

AFTER THE ABYSS

Sometimes you want to keep going after everything's gone to Hell and back. That's good! Although my personal playstyle and philosophy encourages me to use that as a chance to take a break from the setting of ***Sleepaway*** and explore other stories (or even play a new session of ***Sleepaway***, with new Characters and new approaches to the game), I also understand the desire to keep going forward. If you think there's more story to tell, you're welcome to go back to the Descent and play in that space. Remove Moves that reference the Lindworm and instead focus more heavily on the variety of Strangeness in the game.







PART 5

THE

STRANGENESS



STRANGENESS CHARACTER

THE FOUND-AGAIN

The Found-Again was once a staff member at the camp, long ago, before the Lindworm arrived. With its arrival, for one reason or another, this poor unfortunate staff had no choice but to flee, and hide deep within the secret places of the world. Now they've returned, nervous and unprepared for a world that has rapidly changed without them.

The Found-Again is a lost individual. Their power is in nostalgia, a fresh perspective, and a connection with the Strangeness.

The Found-Again can only be played if your previous Character has died.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Why did you run?
- What happened to you?
- What changed when you left?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Name Previously Invoked in The Conversation
- ☐ A Slightly Old-Fashioned Name
- ☐ A Familiar Name
- ☐ A Simple Name

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Fretful Eyes
- ☐ Haunted Eyes
- ☐ Hopeful Eyes
- ☐ Wandering Eyes

- ☐ Unkempt Body
- ☐ Injured Body
- ☐ Body Touched by Magic
- ☐ Body With Nowhere Else to Go

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Nettles
- ☐ Plums
- ☐ Old
- ☐ Young
- ☐ Snapdragons
- ☐ Mayflies
- ☐ Cicadas
- ☐ Queen Anne's Lace
- ☐ Maple Tree
- ☐ Cairn

CHOOSE WHAT CAMP HAS BEEN MISSING:

- ☐ A Heart
- ☐ A Compassionate Leader
- ☐ A Dreamer
- ☐ A Realist
- ☐ An Anchor

CHOOSE WHERE YOU'VE BEEN:

- Beneath the mountain, in a cruel king's court.
- Beneath the waters of the Lake, trapped.
- Beneath the frozen dirt, tended to by a kingdom of ice.
- Beneath the world, with a massive Slumbering Beast.
- Beneath the skies, wandering free and friendless.

CHOOSE WHAT YOU GAVE AWAY & FOUND:

- Traded away your future for a family of Strange creatures.
- Traded away your heart for the secret language of the trees.
- Traded away seeing your family again for a bronze crown.
- Traded away living outside the Woods for a way for everyone else to live.
- Traded away any chance of being normal again for a Magic that makes you glow with power.

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- How does your childhood crush on me feel now?
- Why didn't you remember me fondly?
- What did my disappearance make you realize?

TIPS:

- Give the group what it's missing, but also leave empty the space left by your previous Character.
- Underline how different things are now.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

Every time someone else starts a flashback scene, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Pull off something mythical, like what the staff could do when you were small.
- Reignite a spark from the past.
- Introduce a new Strangeness of your choice, that you're kinda friendly with.

Ask: "How did our Characters make it through this last time?"

Ask: "What will your Character do if you survive all this?"

REGULAR MOVES:

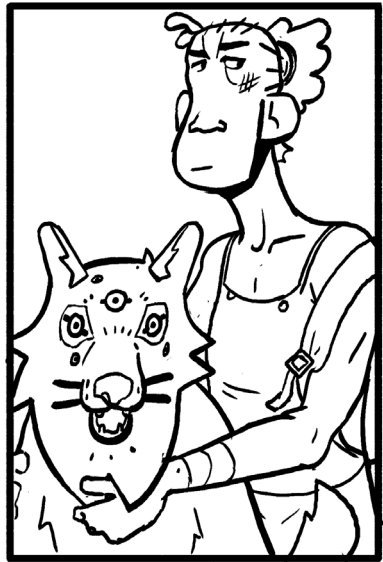
- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Lash out, using your words as a weapon.
- Find something that had been lost.
- Remind someone of a fact of the camp that people forgot.

Ask: "Why did your Character let go of that?"

Ask: "What is your Character hoping for?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Forget how things have changed, and mess up because of that.
- Speak of something that shouldn't have been mentioned.
- Break an ancient promise.
- Forget what the point of all of this is.



STRANGENESS CHARACTER

THE GUIDE

BY ABE MENDES

The Guide's duty is to accompany campers whenever they journey beyond their little haven out into the world, bringing them up mountains, down rivers, and safely home to camp. Though not without risk, such trips can be times of tremendous growth and empowerment. And when the wolf is at the door, the Guide doesn't bar the way. They look out at the animal, recognize the hurt in its eyes, and offer to lead it home as well.

The Guide is a worldly individual. Their power is in clear directions for lost travelers, a steady hand on the steering wheel, and the lost wolf they've brought back from their most recent trip. The Guide can only be played if your previous Character has died.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Is there another way forward, or are some obstacles insurmountable?
- When all seems lost, will you keep on moving?
- What will become of the lost wolf?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- An Aspirational Name
- A Referential Name
- An Inherited Name
- A Name Chosen Only Recently

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- Sharp Eyes
- Far-Off Eyes
- Steady Eyes
- Weary Eyes

- Brisk Step
- Leisurely Step
- Springy Step
- Uneven Step

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- A Port in a Storm
- A Needle and Thread
- A Guiding Star
- A Pair of Well-Worn Boots
- A Sheepdog
- A Magnet
- A Gender that Comes and Goes

CHOOSE WHERE YOU'RE HEADED NEXT:

- Back home—to get some much needed rest.
- Back home—to remember who you used to be.
- Back home—you're needed there and can't leave for long.
- Wherever your feet carry you—your old home is home no longer.
- You're not leaving—someone must care for the land over the winter, after all.

CHOOSE WHAT OF YOURSELF YOU SAW IN THE LOST WOLF:

- Ever-Present Alertness (*What are you watching for?*)
- Insatiable Hunger (*What need drives you?*)
- Fierce Loyalty (*What might you overlook in those you trust?*)
- Reckless Courage (*Why so incautious?*)

NAME 2 CAMPERS YOU JUST BROUGHT HOME:

- One who has grown attached to the Lost Wolf.
- One who is completely terrified of it.

Use the rules for Sparks on pages 68-69 to detail them.

5 WAYS THE LOST WOLF'S HURT MIGHT MANIFEST:

- Unprompted aggression, blood that seeps from wood and stone.
- Growling at nothing, bared teeth, contagious anxiety.
- A destructive rampage, a change in the landscape.
- A retreat from view, sharp thorns that bar the way.
- A mournful howl answered by many more. (Add the Wolves Setting Element).

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- How do you remind me of my past self?
- In what way have you rejected my guidance?
- When I was lost, how did you help me find my way?

TIPS:

- Speak of the future often, drawing connections between it and the past and present.
- Act like it's no big deal that you set off on a trip with some kids and came back with an actual wolf as well.

LURE:

Every time someone offers the Lost Wolf a little more trust than they had previously, they get a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Find a way, clear a path, plot a course.
- Show someone how far they've come.
- Provide someone a reason to keep going.
- Reinterpret the Lindworm's play with an act by the lone wolf.

Ask: "If you knew luck was on your side, what route would you take forward?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Take a load off someone, but shoulder the weight yourself.
- Light the way home for friend and foe alike.
- Let the wind lead you to where you need to be.

Ask: "What does your Character see on the horizon?"

Ask: "Where is your Character coming from here?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Lose sight of the path you've been treading.
- Push someone who isn't ready to move on.
- Let the Lost Wolf's hurt manifest a way it hasn't before.

Ask: "What has your Character thrown to the wolves?"



STRANGENESS CHARACTER

THE ORCHID

BY KAZUMI CHIN

Sometimes we sink so deeply it takes years to emerge. And the forces of the world keep pushing us down until we end up somewhere we never thought we'd be. It makes sense then, that there are those of us who find comfort in the Strangeness. And through it, a way to return to the surface—to once again bloom. The summer camp is a refuge for anyone who needs safety from the violence of the world, and sometimes our old friends find their way back to our doorsteps at the Strangest times.

The Orchid is an unnerving individual. Their power is grounded, mysterious, and draws upon those Gifts granted by the Strangeness. The Orchid can only be played if your previous Character has died.

PLAY TO FIND OUT:

- Will you use your Gifts selfishly or generously?
- Will you be able to lean on others for support?
- How will you relate to your past and those who know it?

CHOOSE YOUR NAME:

- ☐ A Brooding Name
- ☐ A Lunar Name
- ☐ A Wandering Name
- ☐ A Name the Strangeness Gave You

DESCRIBE YOUR LOOK:

- ☐ Arresting Eyes
- ☐ Darting Eyes
- ☐ Knowing Eyes
- ☐ Quiet Eyes
- ☐ Piercing Eyes

- ☐ Slim Body
- ☐ Starved Body
- ☐ Tired Body
- ☐ Heavysset Body
- ☐ Hunched Body

DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER:

- ☐ Disobedient
- ☐ Subtle
- ☐ Burgeoning
- ☐ Thrush
- ☐ Void
- ☐ Starlight
- ☐ Moon Queen

CHOOSE 2 GIFTS:

- ☐ The Hunger
- ☐ Moonlight
- ☐ The Coming Storm
- ☐ Renewal in Decay
- ☐ Culling the Bones
- ☐ Uncanny Likenesses
- ☐ Haunting Mists
- ☐ Tree-Speech
- ☐ Unearthing
- ☐ The Thrush's Call
- ☐ Dark Comforts

CHOOSE 1-2 TERRORS & FASCINATIONS:

- A Daring Smile
- Open-Ended Questions
- Intense Touches
- Emerging from Darkness
- Impeccable Skincare
- Very White Teeth
- Over-the-Shoulder Glances
- Always Watching
- Melodious Laughter

CHOOSE 1-2 HISTORIES & HAUNTINGS:

- A Father's Death
- Falling From a Cliff
- Parents Screaming
- A Sister's Illness
- A Prison Cell
- Dysphoric Bodies
- A Second Identity
- Gunshots
- A Mental Hospital
- Trapped in a Car
- Rehab
- Fire

CHOOSE WHAT YOU USED TO LOVE:

- Working on Puzzles
- Searching for Four-Leaf Clovers
- Swimming in The Lake
- Playing With Horseshoes
- Eating Blueberry Pie
- Pillow Forts
- Candy From The Corner Store
- Making Dams in The River
- Playing Chess

ASK 2 (TOTAL) TO OTHER PLAYERS:

- What do I know about you that no one else does?
- Why did we fall out of touch when we were younger?
- Why don't you trust me?

TIPS:

- Tell the other players of your past so they can incorporate it into the story.
- Share with deserving others the power of the Strangeness.
- Make your Character fallible and relatable.

LURE:

When someone asks you to use a Gift, they gain a Token.

STRONG MOVES (-1 TOKEN):

- Get out of harm's way.
- Listen unnoticed from the shadows.
- Simply do what needs to be done.
- Silence someone with words or your Gift.
- Use your Gifts with artful precision.

Ask "What is your Character's greatest fear?"

Ask "What does your Character wish I would do next?"

REGULAR MOVES:

- Take action, leaving yourself vulnerable.
- Attempt to lend a helping hand.
- Share a quiet moment with someone.
- Use your Gifts with unexpected consequences.
- Let someone see you at your most vulnerable.

Ask "What has my Character not yet noticed?"

Ask "What is your Character really feeling right now?"

WEAK MOVES (+1 TOKEN):

- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the group.
- Confess something and seek forgiveness.
- Temporarily lose control of your Gifts.
- Make a promise you cannot keep.
- Break or lose something others depend on.

Ask "Does your Character feel okay with mine being here right now?"



STRANGENESS ELEMENT

THE MURDER OF CROWS

Also known as: The Ladies, The Norns, The Fates, The All-Judges.

The three crows gather atop telephone poles and the tallest mountain peaks. One knows the past but only lies, one lives in the moment, and one gibbers of the future that will not come to pass. Some say the Lindworm was once among their number. Some say their talons clutch at people's breath. People always have things to whisper about old, mad, powerful women like these.

TIPS:

- Show kindness to people who need it.
- Push too far and punish too harshly, from cruelty or misunderstanding.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- A heart is broken.
- The future is uncertain.
- The air is overcast and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You feel your Character has broken an ancient rule.
- You need to ask for help.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- Mock
- Avenge
- Deliver Auspice
- Study
- Confuse

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| ○ Scattered Black Feathers | ○ Pine |
| ○ Pieces Of String | ○ Wires |
| ○ Bronze Coins | ○ Knots |
| ○ Broken Twigs | ○ Gemstones |
| ○ Telephone Poles | ○ Pieces Of Glass |
| ○ Needles | ○ Arid Cliffs |
| ○ Groups Of Three | ○ Old Bottles |

MOVES:

- Carry something into the clouds.
- Answer a question with another question, in a mocking tone.
- Lie about the past.
- Reveal something too late to prevent.
- Ironically punish the sins of another.

After every Move, ask “What do you do?”



STRANGENESS ELEMENT

OUR LADY OUBLIETTE

BY ERIC MERSMANN

Also known as: Frau Faste, The Snow Queen, Who?, Dolores.

In Winter, this is all still here, but forgotten. The camp, the Lindworm, and the Queen of Winter. She strides through the barren wood and across the frozen water, draped in furs ripped from mink and fox and raccoon and other creatures who, were it summer, would be playing in verdant woods. The chilly breeze whispers forgotten secrets, and you huddle closer to the fire. An ice-cold mountain stream promises that you can forget all of this if you let yourself sink a bit further. If you acclimate to the cold. You can get used to anything. It's not that cold if you dive in all at once.

TIPS:

- Hint at secrets divulged in winters past.
- Speak lovingly about forgetting and being forgotten.
- Lavish promises onto your Favorite.
- Insist that pleasant falsehoods are correct and true, and forget the truth.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- Someone is abandoned by their friends.
- Pleasant fiction is chosen over an ugly truth.
- Teeth chatter.
- Minor Characters are forgotten.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- Everyone is warm and seen.
- Buried secrets are confronted.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- Be Forgotten
- Be Attended
- Coddle the Forgotten
- Bury the Truth in Ice

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- Stole Made Of Still Chittering Minks
- Blue Lips
- Slender Pale Horse
- Forgotten Faces Peering From The Fog
- Frost On Windowpanes
- Damp Firepits That Refuse to Light
- Freezing Home Where Everything Is In Its Place

MOVES:

- Choose a new Favorite.
- Answer a question with an obvious lie.
- Point out the pain of remembering.
- Encase a memory in ice.
- Make a Minor Character forgotten.
- Offer an empty delight in lieu of what is demanded.
- Exacerbate an existing isolation.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



STRANGENESS ELEMENT

THE SLUMBERING BEAST

Also known as: The Dream-Bearer, The Mountain Range, The God-Bear, The Thrice-Eldest, Catskill.

A massive beast lives beneath the world, a memory of what once was and what will be. They dream of times long-forgotten and times still yet to come, of times unspoken and unspeakable. Some say the Lindworm is something that escaped from its dreams and now wanders the Earth. It carries ancient dreams, journeys, other times, the past, the future, and an isolated fate.

TIPS:

- Play with subtlety, and do not awaken until it is time.
- Offer disorienting dreams and unexpected visions of other worlds, other times, and secret truths.
- Once awoken, turn your dreams into reality.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- Someone dreams.
- Someone should be dreaming.
- The air is mystical and psychedelic and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You must dream.
- There is no space for dreaming.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- ☐ Dream
- ☐ Destroy
- ☐ Create
- ☐ Burn
- ☐ Unite
- ☐ Fly Alone
- ☐ Fly With Others

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Tusks | <input type="radio"/> Whispers |
| <input type="radio"/> Claws | <input type="radio"/> Flickering Lights |
| <input type="radio"/> Wings | <input type="radio"/> Thruways |
| <input type="radio"/> Spines | <input type="radio"/> Cavernous Maws |
| <input type="radio"/> Spiked Rocks | <input type="radio"/> Paintings |
| <input type="radio"/> Moss | <input type="radio"/> Desolate Peaks |
| <input type="radio"/> Cobwebs | <input type="radio"/> Rounded Hills |

MOVES:

- Tell a story that feels unrelated to what is happening, but isn't.
- Narrate a dream.
- Bring dreams into reality.
- Create a Minor Character who doesn't actually exist.
- Begin to awaken.
- Make a Minor Character forgotten.
- Offer an empty delight in lieu of what is demanded.
- Exacerbate an existing isolation.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



STRANGENESS ELEMENT

THE UNDERHILL KING

Also known as: The King Beneath the Mountains, The Corpse-Lord, The Horned God, Chthon.

It is the court of the Underhill King that lies beneath the mountain, its low ceilings made of knotted roots filling the thick air with the smell of rain. The King himself sits atop his burial site, adorned with sacrifices from ancient secret worshippers and massive horns bursting from his head. He is the lord of all death. Some say the Lindworm was once his lover. He is the one who carries anger, pride, authority, and the wisdom of an ancient god of death.

TIPS:

- Hold the players to institutional rules that don't match with expectations of traditional society.
- Embody a Strangeness version of masculinity.
- Remind others of death.
- Ask compelling questions and build on the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- Someone explores beneath the world.
- Death hangs in the story.
- The air is dark and filled with rain and it feels right.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You must confront the dead.
- People leave the dead behind.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- Return to Glory
- Fight All
- Confront the Weak
- Rip Love Away
- Conquer
- Assert Power

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| ○ Old Camp Patches | ○ Rusted Blade |
| ○ Court of Fauns | ○ Massive Tree |
| ○ Petroglyphs | ○ Flickering Torches |
| ○ Rotting Skin | ○ Parade of Ghosts |
| ○ Rotting Fruit | ○ Dancing Spirits |
| ○ Antlers Adorned With Bones | |

MOVES:

- Bring forth those left behind.
- Offer an impossible bargain.
- Force a sacrifice.
- Keep something beneath the mountain.
- March forth from the hills with vengeance in your heart.
- Answer a question for a price.

After every Move, ask “What do you do?”



LINDWORM ELEMENT

THE BONES

The Bones are the flayed bodies of roadkill, pets, and farm animals that have been transformed into the mocking, hungry servants of the Lindworm. They exist only to remind us all of the pain the Lindworm has caused, and the nauseating reality of what exists directly underneath our skin.

TIPS:

- Negotiate with your group a level of comfort with body horror. Once determined, go as hard as hell with that body horror.
- Act as a perspective for the Lindworm's cruelty, hunger, and fascination with bodies.
- Ask compelling questions and both build on and destroy the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- The Lindworm introduces the Bones to the game.
- When your friends need something to oppose themselves and to remind them of their fragility.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You've escaped the horror.
- You need to confront the Bones.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- Gnaw
- Crawl
- Subvert
- Reveal Fragility
- Tear Away

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- Rotting Possum Wandering With Children
- Massive Flayed Deer
- Huge Bear With No Hair
- Pack Of Coyotes Missing Eyes
- Family Of Rabbits With Hollow Guts
- Coins Sewn Into Fur
- Dangling Bits of Thread
- Smeared Mud
- Bones Arranged In Patterns

MOVES:

- Telegraph the incoming threat of death.
- Sow discontent and discomfort.
- Lash out, killing Minor Characters and breaking Items.
- Take action, causing disgust and horror.
- Place the main Characters in an impossible choice.
- Begin the Ritual for the Roadkill Parade.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



LINDWORM ELEMENT

THE WOLVES

The Wolves were once a noble people, their hearts tied to the land and the winter snow woven from their fur. The Lindworm came and, disguised as one of them, flayed each and every one of them in this land. Now the Wolves, lost and confused, wander these ancient woods, enacting the same violence forced onto them.

TIPS:

- Negotiate with your group a level of comfort with eldritch horror. Once determined, go as hard as hell.
- Express and vocalize the pain and anger the Lindworm has caused, and wrongly apply that anger to the Characters.
- Ask compelling questions and both build on and destroy the answers others give.

PICK UP WHEN:

- The Lindworm introduces the Wolves to the game.
- When your friends need something to oppose themselves and to perpetuate violence.

GIVE AWAY WHEN:

- You've escaped the horror.
- You need to confront the Wolves.

CHOOSE 2 DESIRES:

- Howl
- Chase
- Dig In
- Torment
- Break

CHOOSE 2 AESTHETIC ELEMENTS:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ○ Human Hands | ○ Wolf Skulls |
| ○ Too-Big Mouths | ○ Holes In Skin |
| ○ Too Many Eyes | ○ Floating Blades |
| ○ No Eyes At All | ○ Slobbering Tongues |
| ○ Long Long Legs | ○ Long Shadows |
| ○ Bloodstained White Fur | |

MOVES:

- Expose a secret that cuts at the heart of the camp.
- Sow discontent and malice.
- Lash out physically, killing Minor Characters and breaking Items.
- Invite the Lindworm to act upon the players.
- Place the main Characters in an impossible choice.
- Begin the Ritual for the Pale Hunt.

After every Move, ask "What do you do?"



PART 6

RITUALS

THE CROSSING WAVES

When the winds are strong and the air is brutal and filled with mist, it might come time to cross the Lake. Perhaps what lies on the other side is known. Perhaps it is a mystery. Either way, it is a grave and perilous journey, the fragile canoes unable to handle the intensity of the gathering storm. One can only hope the Lake does not choose you to be one of its secrets. The other side of the pond offers what you need, if you can get to it. But for now, there is the Lake.

This Ritual allows you to navigate out into new waters, and explore parts of the game previously undefined by the map. It is a time for both strong action and tragic loss.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The statement, “There’s a storm coming.”

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe with an unexpected metaphor: *Wide-mouthed bass*; *Gray skies*; *Calm water*; *Light rain*; *Heavy rain*; *Storming skies*; *Furious water*; *Flashes of lightning*; *The boat itself*; *Dampness*.
- With a single phrase and an action, storm forward against the waves.
- Lose an Item Card to the Lake. Soak it in water.
- Lose a Character Card to the Lake. Soak it in water.
- Get a Token.
- Make a Strong Move without spending a Token.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken exactly once (except for the first and last, which can be taken any number of times), the statement, “The storm is clearing. At least we made it.”

THE DAYBREAK MEADOW

The only time a camp is truly at peace is in the early morning, when the mist clings to the grass and the air is still cold and just starting to warm. If you were watching over campers, they fall asleep peacefully in the grass. The tensions of the late night dissipate, and any who stand in the Daybreak Meadow become lost in the sensation of relief—that the long night is over, that the day has arrived regardless, a moment of respite in a Strange and shuddering world. Soon the camp will awaken again, and some normalcy will return. But for now, there is the Field.

This Ritual is perfect for a moment of peace, where the Lindworm cannot act. There is no reward for completing this Ritual besides feeling a bit more positive about your place in the universe.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

A collective, deep breath, and a sigh of relief.

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *Mist in the Field; Scattered birdsong; Dew in the grass; Tiny bugs; Wet shoes; Cold air; Cautious sunlight; Small creatures dancing in the bushes; Berries in the bushes; The confused badger onlooker.*
- With a single phrase and an action, act how you do in the Field.
- Have your Character say aloud an impulsive feeling or good-news confession.
- If the weather is nice, invite the other players to come outside with you.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

A quick pause, then the rhetorical question, “Isn’t it pretty cold out here?”

A MOMENT OF IDENTITY

Sometimes Campers gather in secret places and talk about their feelings, in darkness or behind the Staff's backs. This isn't a space for the Staff, but is instead a hidden moment for Campers to grow as people. Someday soon they'll be older, and they'll have learned much of the world. But for now, they are the Campers.

This Ritual is for when you want to develop some Camper Characters further, in a space not defined by the core conflicts of the game between other Characters. For this Ritual, each player must put aside their normal Characters and pick up a Camper Character from the Corkboard.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The question, "Okay, is everyone here?"

MOVES:

- Say "Never have I ever..." followed by something you've never done. Everyone who has done that groans.
- Ask someone "Truth or Dare!" Then either ask them a question or give them a dare. Neither answer nor action should be described.
- Compliment someone on their appearance (*eyes, lips, hair, hands, ears, neck, legs, etc.*)
- Reveal something profound about yourself like you're answering a Truth.
- Get mad at someone and express it through a snide comment.
- Make a strong decision about yourself and vocalize it.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

The statement, "I...I think I should go to bed. It's getting late."

SPELLCRAFTING

Anyone can craft a spell. Certainly, the Crafter is the best at it. But all have much to learn. The crafting of spells begins perhaps alone, perhaps as a group. It is a slow, careful process, both the creation of art and the action of Ritual. The Magic is not forceful but is instead subtle, its presence felt through quiet actions and silent gifts. You would be easily forgiven for assuming the Magic doesn't exist. Many do. And perhaps, out in the world of concrete and steel, it doesn't exist. But for now, there is the Magic.

This Ritual is done with a piece of paper that you can draw on freely to create your Magic spell.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

Gathering supplies in the real world for the Ritual.

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *Incense; Crystals; Crayons; Pens; Personal objects; Pieces of fabric; Fire; Your breath; The breath of others; The sensation of one object against another.*
- Draw a line or portion of the symbol on a piece of paper.
- Write a word on the piece of paper.
- Burn the paper, or dabble water on the paper.
- Scatter salt on the paper.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

The statement, "Well, that should do it. I hope it works." Then fold up and pin the paper to the Corkboard as an Item card. At any point, you can remove the paper from the Corkboard and destroy it in order to negate the Lindworm's play.

THE SNEAKING PATH

There's plenty of reasons to get from one place to another in a hurry, in a way no one will find you. The Woods connect the unexpected, tying together your secrets and helping the paths make sense when they need to. The Sneaking Path winds through the Woods, connecting two disconnected parts of the camp, in a way that the kids don't really know about. It's private, and it's free from the outside. Soon you'll have to emerge from the other side, and see yourselves in the evening light. But for now, there are the Woods.

This Ritual allows you to navigate from one scene to another without drawing the ire of the Lindworm. It leads from a Location where a scene has already occurred to another Location. Once used, tie a string in a new color between these scenes.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The question, "What's the fastest way to cut through the Woods?"

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *Beautiful bugs; Branches underfoot; Mushrooms on a tree; A Squirrel; Cicadas; Birdsong; Dappled light on the ground; The sensation of being surrounded by life; A small creek with a bridge; Dirt beneath your shoes.*
- Hush everyone—they're too loud!
- Spot someone unexpected, engaged in something equally unexpected.
- Listen to the advice of the Woods.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

The exclamation, "Whew, we made it!"

BEGGING THE FATES

The Murder of Crows calls out to you, and you know the destiny that lies in store. You can see it as clear as the sky, and it clings to you like the clothes on your back. What else is there to do when faced with certain and inevitable death but to beg the world for help? Maybe someday you can find someone kind and benevolent enough to help from the kindness of their heart. But for now there is the the Murder of Crows.

This Ritual allows for both the gaining of wisdom for the future, and navigating the threatening dual nature of the Murder of Crows.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The exclamation, “Please, please, help us!”

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *The mocking call of crows; The dizzying nature of heights; Tangled string on dead tree branches; Three of an object; Black feathers.*
- The Murder of Crows asks a question about the past, with a painful answer.
- The Murder of Crows presents an agonizing choice.
- The Murder of Crows reveals the future that won’t come to pass.
- Make a Weak Move without gaining a Token.
- Make a strong decision and stick to it.
- Ask the Murder of Crows a question about the future, which any three players answer.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken exactly once (except for the first and last, which can be taken any number of times), the statement, “Thank you. I understand now.”

BEING FORGOTTEN

BY ERIC MERSMANN

They turned their backs on you. Was it because of what you said or did? No. She promised you it was because of what they are. Liars, cowards, bullies, all the things you're afraid you might be... But you're not. She said so. She said they're jealous of you, how you're her favorite. You are her Favorite. And now she's promised you one more thing. Promised you that she can freeze your memories of them so they don't ache any more. That she can freeze your memories of this entire summer and the summers before. They can't hurt you once they're frozen, as long as they stay frozen. All you have to do is forget and Be Forgotten. But for now there's only Our Lady Oubliette.

Use this Ritual when Our Lady Oubliette makes Her Favorite Forgotten.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

Determine the Favorite, and ask the rhetorical question, "Won't it be nice to put all this behind you..."

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *The taste of pure sugar on your tongue; Numbness in the tips of your fingers, toes, and ears; The void where a memory is missing; The gentle clink of silver against china; The curl at the edge of her smile.*
- The Favorite loses a memory shared with another Character. Say it aloud for the last time.
- A Character loses a memory shared with the Favorite. Say it aloud for the last time.
- The Favorite removes a card from the Corkboard. Fold it as small as you can and put it in a pocket.
- Take a thread from the Corkboard and tie it in a bow around a finger.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken at least twice, say the statement, "I can't forget, pleasant though it may be..." Then each Character has a flashback to an erstwhile forgotten memory. If not every Move was taken twice, the Favorite is Forgotten.

THE ROADKILL PARADE

A single clatter of metal on bone, repetitive and exhausting in its timbre, announces the arrival of the Roadkill Parade. The outpouring of vermin clog the group with their mass of writhing bodies, flesh and meat and skeleton rubbing up against one another in a grand shuffle of cruel cadavers. The overwhelming sensation of this rippling sea of flayed bodies, testaments to the Lindworm's grand work in motion, is disgust at the realization that the twitching muscle of the massive stag at the center of the macabre spectacle is exactly the same as your own muscles, only exposed and honest. Perhaps you'll be able to be strong enough to survive. But for now, there are the Bones.

Use this Ritual when you want the plot surrounding the Bones to come to a head.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The question, "What's that? It sounds like bone..."

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, in as much detail as the group is comfortable: *The stag in the center; A badger flayed alive; A very familiar cat; Endless possums; The screams of a child; The choking feeling in the air; The itching feeling under your skin; The Lindworm in the distance.*
- Make a Weak Move.
- Lose an Item card to the Bones. Rip it up with your mouth.
- Lose a Character card to the Bones. Rip it up with your mouth.
- Fill your body with tension, and then let out a strangled scream/roar/yell/cry.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken at least twice, say, "Wait, where are they going?" Describe the parade scuttling off into the distance. Remove the Bones from the game.

THE UNDERWORLD DUEL

The flames of the torches beneath the hills grow stronger as the fauns and ghosts cavort through the shadows. A rhythm begins, cruel and ready for war, and for once, the King rises from his throne, rusted blade drawn. If you can win, then perhaps he can give you what you need to defeat the Lindworm once and for all. But his victory could release a threat far worse than the nightmares that haunt the surface world. Your friends are nearby, cheering you on, unaware of the depths of the consequences. Soon you will see your campers again, and know your sacrifices were worth it. But for now, there is only the Underhill King.

Use this duel when you wish to fight the Underhill King, alone.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

Determine a duelist, and the statement, “I won’t let anyone else die.”

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *The clang of metal against metal; Flickering torches; The dreams of those who slumber; Ghosts; Fauns; The king in his glory; The smell of fruit; Low-hanging roots; The roar of battle.*
- The duelist loses an Item card to the Underhill King. Rip it up.
- The Underhill King removes a Character, Location, or Motif card from the Corkboard. Rip it up.
- Strike a dramatic pose.
- Cut a thread on the Corkboard.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken at least twice, the statement, “I won’t kneel,” and the creation of an Item Card that can be destroyed at any time to undo the action of one of the Lindworm’s cards. If not every action was taken at least twice when the duel ends, the duelist dies.

THE BEAST'S LULLABY

In your dreams, the world shakes, rattles, rumbles and roars as the grass and rocks of the tallest point on the tallest mountain begins to stir, and the Beast's back begins to arch. The campground is thrown into chaos as a knobbled hill erupts with talons and flame, as the Beast's limbs begin to thrash. How do you keep the thrice-eldest asleep? Some say with a song. You stand at the precipice of the awakening of the doom of the world. The future holds many threats, but for now, there is only the Slumbering Beast.

Use this duel when you need to get wisdom from the Slumbering Beast, and keep it asleep. It occurs while all of you sleep, perhaps passing out from exhaustion while fleeing the Lindworm.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The statement, “How do we calm it down?”

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, with an unexpected metaphor: *Your body as it stirs in your sleep; The eyes of the beast; The scales of the beast; Rumbling hills; Flames; The cataclysm; What its awakening means to you.*
- The Slumbering Beast cuts a thread on the Corkboard.
- The Slumbering Beast consumes a Motif card on the Corkboard. Burn it.
- Sing a fragment of a lullaby.
- Take a moment and talk about a dream you've had, perhaps in real life, perhaps as your Character.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken at least twice, the statement, “I think it’s calming down.” Then, each player has a flashback scene with a Character that is important to them who has not yet been added to the Corkboard.

THE PALE HUNT

A low, haunting howl echoes through the trees. The howl is picked up by another call, elsewhere in the darkness. Another, another. The calls resound, burning their way into your bones. The conscious, thoughtful part of you suspects it might be just coyotes. In the animal part of your brain, you know the truth. There are only the Wolves.

Use this Ritual when you want the plot surrounding the Wolves to come to a head.

STARTING THE RITUAL:

The question, “Oh god, I can hear them howling.”

MOVES:

- Choose 1 to describe, in as much detail as the group is comfortable: *The sound of blood pumping; The jerky movements of the wolves; Howling wolves; The Lindworm in the distance; The feeling of cold air against your skin.*
- Make a Weak Move.
- Make a Weak Move.
- Lose an Item card to the Wolves. Rip it up with your mouth.
- Lose a Character card to the Wolves. Rip it up with your mouth.
- Fill your body with tension, and then let out a strangled scream/roar/yell/cry.

ENDING THE RITUAL:

After every Move has been taken at least twice, the statement, “I think we made it!” Describe the Wolves passing you by without another sound. Remove the Wolves from the game.

A THEMATIC RESPITE

DEAD CRICKET

BY JEEYON SHIM

You are all playing campers bunking in the same cabin together. Through adolescent rituals of staying up too late, sharing deep secrets, playing ridiculous games walking between your quarters and the mess hall, all of you have drawn very close to each other over the course of the week. You all feel you would die for each other.

There are two camp games you need to know in order to play Dead Cricket.

The first is the eponymous Dead Cricket, which works like this:

1. Each player lies on a flat surface (e.g. the floor, a meadow, their cabin bed) with their arms and legs held straight above them.
2. One by one, each player will need to let their limbs fall.
3. The last player with their limbs in the air is the winner.

The second is Hot Seat:

1. Hot Seat is essentially like Truth or Dare, without the Dare part.
2. The social contract of Hot Seat is that everyone must be honest; how forthcoming or thorough you are with that honesty is up to you.
3. One player sits in the Hot Seat. They must answer questions.
4. Every other player may ask one question of the Hot Seat. If the open-endedness of Hot Seat and the prospect of being honest is intimidating, creating a theme to the questions helps both narrow down the scope of what's being asked as well as the pressure of answering (e.g. Hot Seat: Outdoors Edition or Hot Seat: Mammals Edition).

ACT I: STAY VERY STILL

There is no turning back now. You could try to recreate the events that led you and your friends to this field, but none of it matters. You can feel your own body betraying you with the subtle sounds of its existence. You can feel the grass beneath you warm beneath your weight. You can feel its footsteps, soft, inexorable, approaching you. You wait for it to find you.

1. Find a field. This can be a literal field, especially if it is a field with tall grass; it can also be someone's backyard, or their living room, or a large bed. Whatever you collectively feel comfortable and adventurous defining as a field works.
2. Describe the horror that stalks you through the field.
3. Why is it hunting you? Why is it hunting your friends? Take turns going around and sharing one or two reasons you've been turned to quarry.
4. When rabbits, deer, and other game animals hide from predators they often try to evade through stillness before they run. Set a timer for four minutes. All of you find a place in the field and close your eyes. Imagine the footsteps of the horror as it walks around you. Feel how quickly your lungs and heart move within your ribs. Is your breath louder when it passes through your nostrils or over your lips? Try to stifle the sound of it. The horror's tread draws closer, ever closer.

ACT II: THE ANSWERS MEANT SOMETHING THEN

A week ago you were all in your cabin. You snuck snacks and caffeinated beverages in and hid them under your bunks. You stayed up late comparing stories from your lives outside of camp. You confessed secrets from your heart, your dreams, your imaginings of the future. None of you questioned that you had all the time in the world ahead of you.

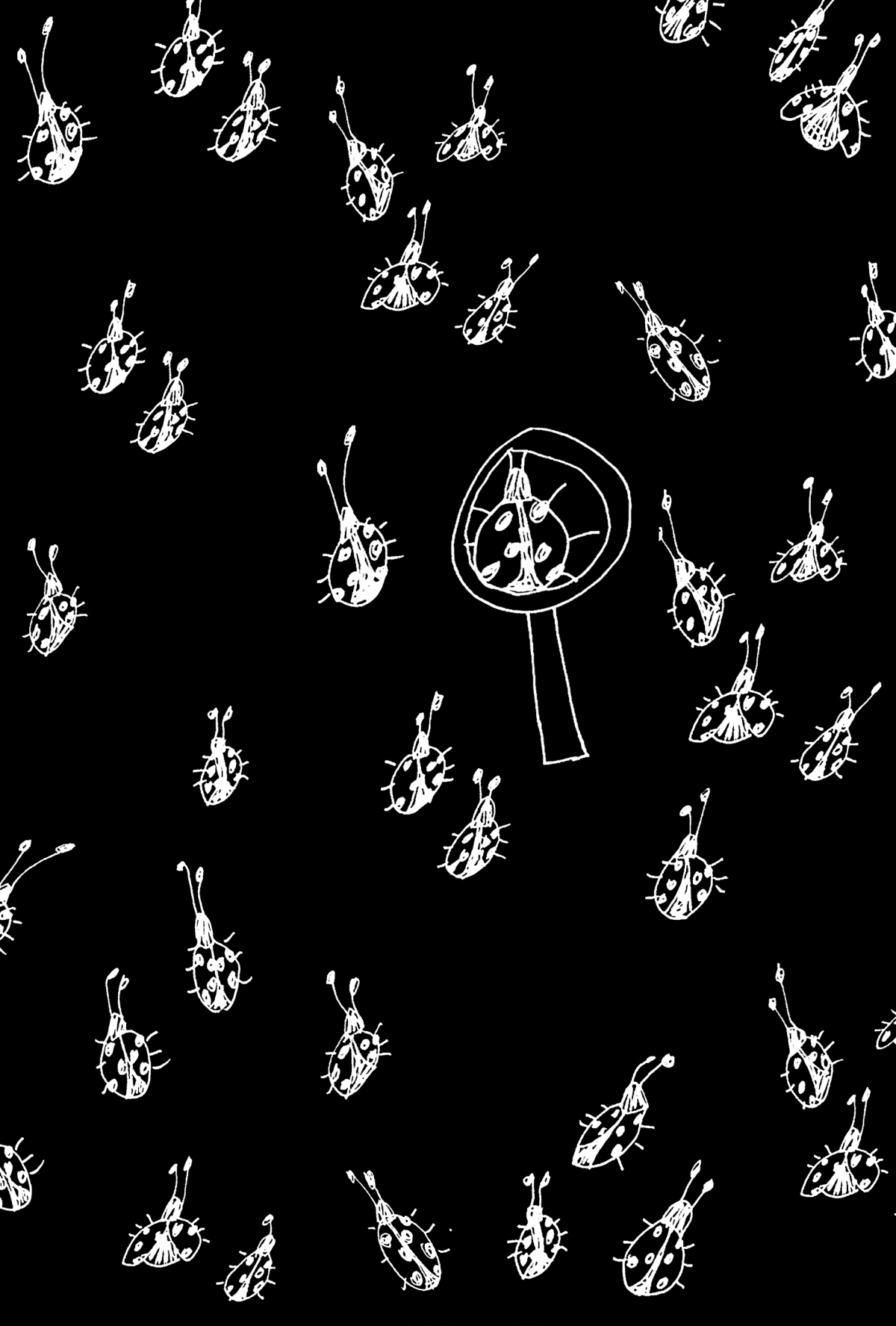
1. Who, as a player, last attended summer camp? Everyone identify that player out of character.
2. Find a cabin. This can be a literal cabin, especially if you are playing this game at a camp setting; it can also be a player's bedroom, or a car during a road trip, or anywhere that feels nested and safe and warm with companionship.
3. Settle in to roleplaying as your characters. Goof off, tease each other, whatever feels natural to do to create rapport and camaraderie.
4. Whoever last went to summer camp will initiate a round of Hot Seat. All players will take a turn being in the Hot Seat, and ask and answer questions in character.

ACT III: THE HUNT

One by one, all of you are found.

All but the sole survivor.

1. Go back out to the field.
2. Scatter into your positions from Act I.
3. The player who last attended summer camp will say, clearly and in a neutral tone, "Dead Cricket."
4. All players will lie down and assume the play position (all four limbs straight up in the air).
5. Let each player drop out of the game until there is a sole survivor.



Sleepaway is a breathtaking piece of design. Jay has built an elegant and unsettling scaffold of poetic prompts, relatable archetypes, and bogey-monster horror that facilitate a truly terrifying experience.

— ERIC MERSMANN

SLEEPAWAY gives us long hazy days, chilled summer nights, kids screaming and chasing fireflies, crackling campfires, and a gaunt, cruel monstrosity forever hiding just out of sight, always asking, “*What do you do next?*”

