

Unspeakable

Metaphysical horror

“The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

H.P. Lovecraft, in The Call of Cthulhu

Table of contents

Aim of the game.....	4
About this version.....	4
Game material.....	5
Vocabulary.....	6
Game phases.....	8
Mysterious situation.....	8
Symptoms.....	10
Scenes and threats.....	12
Moving on.....	13
The dice.....	14
Protagonists.....	15
Monologues.....	16
The suggestion.....	18
Conflicts.....	20
Renouncement and flight.....	23
Difficulty.....	23
The fate list.....	24
Bonding.....	26
After the character.....	27
Epilogue.....	28
Advice for players.....	29
Advice for the guardian.....	30
End notes.....	31

Aim of the game

Unspeakable is a game to tell stories of individuals confronted with the sudden realization of the metaphysical void of Humanity. Screams, paranormal activity, stress, fear, madness and yet the flickering light of hope. Can one remain human nevertheless? What does it even mean?

One of the players, the guardian of the mystery, controls the antagonists and the cosmical horror. Two to four other players control the threatened protagonists of the story, while at the same time shaping the cosmical horror. This game plays in one sitting.

About this version

This is the first English version of the game. My mother tongue is French, something you might notice while reading this text. I started writing this game about two years ago. It arose from some mad fun we had had using the rules of *The Pool* with the experience suggested by *Call of Cthulhu* some years before that.

My goal is to reach a larger audience of people willing to test this game. I'm pretty confident it works nicely overall, but there are some dark spots which are not quite ironed out. These points include in particular the effects of a "1", suggestions/injunctions, difficulty management

and game ending. Of course, one never sees the beam in one's own eye, so I definitely welcome comments on all points. This approach is based on the Ashcan Front¹.

The text is aimed at experienced roleplayers that are used to testing unfinished games, and as such is written in a technical manner, with little examples and rough layout and editing. However, I have witnessed numerous inexperienced players take to this game like ducks to water when the rules are explained to them.

If you get to play the game and wish to write a report of an actual play session, the most helpful form of assistance I can imagine, please post it in the “Playtesting” forum of the Forge².

By all means, write to me. I love discussing the game and answering questions!

Game material

To play *Unspeakable*, one needs a bowl. Preferably one that rings when dice are dropped into it. You need a certain number of non-Euclidean, but definitely Platonic, dice: four-sided dice (d4), eight-sided dice (d8), twelve-sided dice (d12) and twenty-sided dice (d20). The exact number of each type depends on what the guardian of the mystery prepared (with paper, pen, pencil, computer,

1 www.ashcanfront.net/2008faq.html

2 www.indie-rpgs.com

internet, etc.) for the mysterious situation. He or she will also need some paper and writing material for play itself.

There is no character sheet in this game, because you don't need one. You may however, if you insist, take notes. It's not very useful though.

I solemnly ask everyone, the guardian included, to sit in a circle (or something resembling) around a table or stone slab, such that everyone may easily reach for the bowl. You cannot play without a bowl or equivalent artefact.

It is best if everyone speaks the same language, at least when coming to the table to play.

Vocabulary

A certain number of technical terms are necessary to describe the procedures contained in this booklet. These procedures are in great part inter-connected and it seemed impossible to find a linear order to explain them. That is why I present a brief alphabetical glossary of the central terms in this game, before beginning any explanations. In this way, you will have at least an idea of what I'm talking about, before I explain them in detail.

- *Character*: an agent of the imagined events
 - *Antagonist*: a character with an outrageous plan at the heart of the plot, controlled by the guardian

- *Protagonist*: one of the characters at the heart of the action, controlled by one of the players, who will confront the antagonists
- *Fate list*: a tool for the guardian which allows to abuse the protagonists
- *Bond*: an element which symbolizes the humanity of a protagonist and serves as an anchor to reality
- *Mysterious situation*: the content prepared by the guardian, on which the revelations and the antagonists' actions are based
- *Resolution*: a roll of dice to determine the narrator of a protagonist's attempt at a goal
- *Scene*: unit of place, time and action
 - *Extraordinary*: scene directed by a player which allows him or her to introduce events (monologue, bond, suggestion) and which is embedded in an ordinary scene
 - *Ordinary*: a scene directed by the guardian which allows him to make revelations and to assault the protagonists
- *Source*: monstrous element created by guardian and players alike at the origin of the mysterious situation, which the protagonists will unravel progressively

Game phases

A session is divided into four phases:

1. Rise to awareness
2. Action
3. Clash
4. Epilogue

The chapters of this booklet can apply to multiple phases.

Mysterious situation

You, the guardian of the mystery, must prepare a mysterious situation according to **five steps** which will lay the foundations on which play will be built. You will then have to prepare **five symptoms** and finally decide for a **dice attribution scheme**. Preparation should only take about half an hour. Your own metaphysical fears and some research on the internet or in the relevant literature are all you will need. It doesn't matter in which order you prepare the five steps.

1. Choose a **location**, a **time** and a **context**. Think about the places the characters might find themselves in. Savage countrysides and behind closed doors situations are ideal to reinforce the hopeless atmosphere of the events. You may want

to describe some secondary characters (neither antagonists nor protagonists) that populate this setting.

2. Create **antagonists** which try to activate or awaken the source to take advantage of it for their own interests, without really understanding what they are playing with, especially that the source might turn against them. These people have an outrageous ambition, so you should have an idea of the **consequences** if they are not stopped.
3. Define a recurring **aesthetic** element, which will colour your scenes. It can be an object, a melody, a deed, an event, etc. Use its symbolic character to the fullest to underline the contents of the mysterious situation. With this you seed the monologues of the players.
4. Remember that behind everything lurks the **source**. It is inhuman, but needs the antagonists' help to awaken. Fundamentally embedded in reality, its discovery questions Humanity's place in the order of all things, bringing horror and despair to those who understand its implications. It can be either **abstract** or **symbolic**. Yet it is not up to you alone to create the actual source! You may only hint at it through what the antagonists believe it to be and the aesthetic element. This however you should know and

prepare for. Just remember that the antagonists might be wrong. The imagined events, in particular the monologues, will give you enough elements to flesh it out coherently with the happenings in play.

5. Decide a **role** for the protagonists which the other players will create. There must be a reason for the involvement of the protagonists in the mysterious situation, so about how to mesh this with the other steps of preparation. This could lead to the creation of some additional secondary characters.

You have now established the mysterious situation. Your role is to reveal and play with these elements. The game phases give you guidelines on how you should do that. But you must still prepare the symptoms.

Symptoms

In the first game phase, the antagonists are still preparing and the source is, at best, indirectly referred to. At this point, you reveal **symptoms** of the mysterious situations. A symptom is a sliver of metaphorical information which the players will use to discover the **perversion** the source is bringing to the place as well as the **intentions** of the antagonists. A symptom must be **coloured** by the aesthetic element of the mysterious situation.

First you need a symptom that will let you **start off** the session. This revelation is the opportunity to describe the location, time and context of the mysterious situation. The symptom has to suggest in no uncertain terms that something is about to go very wrong.

Prepare three **intermediary** symptoms which will be revealed in this phase. It is up to you to decide if they have a specific order of appearance, and if they are unique or recurring events (in this case they still only count as one, since the information is the same).

You need one last symptom, the **trigger**, which will mark the transition to the second game phase. This symptom must illustrate the fact that the antagonists are stepping up a gear: they are now ready to initiate their hellish plan.

These symptoms have to be revealed every one or two ordinary scenes. The protagonists may discover them by chance or by the consequence of their actions. No symptom may be specifically directed against a protagonist. The five symptoms taken together should only help to motivate and orient the protagonists' actions. The true identity and the hideout of the antagonists will only be confirmed in the second phase.

If the mysterious situation and the symptoms don't hold on an A4 paper sheet (on both sides if your handwriting is big), then you probably prepared too many details. *Unspeakable* is not an investigation game. It might

superficially look like it, but at heart, your role is to reveal the situation and unleash the horror no matter the costs. The characters must be confronted with the contents of your situation, otherwise the session will go down the drain.

Scenes and threats

The role of the guardian consists in framing ordinary scenes so as to progressively reveal the contents of the mysterious situation. Moreover, during the three first game phases you may threaten each protagonist once per ordinary scene. This simply means that you describe a potentially harmful situation which might urge the player to grab the dice to ward it off. Only once per scene! If the players actively take risks, then they will roll dice again, but you may not press on during the same scene. The fate list (see page 24) will give you an idea of the level of the threats you should use.

Threats are essential as they are what makes play intense and engages the protagonists. Threats are also what keeps the horror from remaining solely contemplative.

Moving on

In the **action** phase you will start playing aggressively and reveal concrete items of knowledge about the antagonists. Have an idea of what the antagonists could undertake, but don't prepare them precisely in advance. It is better to play off the events of the first phase, just as you would if you were a player. Keep in mind that the antagonists' priority is to launch their plan, which will require the elimination of the opposing protagonists and connecting with the source. At the end of this phase (read the next chapter on dice to see how it ends), the protagonists will have discovered the source.

In the **clash** game phase, the antagonists are about to achieve their plan. You have no more revelations to make, you just play the devil's advocate and try to kill off as many protagonists as possible. At this point, the source may become a threat of its own (even for the antagonists!) To finally neutralize the mysterious situation, the protagonists will need to accumulate as many successes as there are boxes for "The Clash" on the fate list.

The **epilogue** is the phase which concludes play, and basically is nothing more than the description of aftermath of the clash as well as the fate of the protagonists. More information on page 28.

The dice

Your last task is to split up the dice between the two first game phases.

Start off by choosing a **dice scheme**. I advise to count $3 \cdot (N+2)$ dice in total, where N is the number of players controlling a protagonist, decomposed according to the following formula:

$$\#d20s \geq \#d12s \geq \#d8s \geq \#d4s .$$

That is, you should have at most as many d12s as you have d20s, d8s as you have d12s and d4s as you have d8s. The more you balance out the dice, the more you will allow radical paranormal events to infiltrate play. You should carefully suit this to the mysterious situation.

Each time you reveal a symptom (rise to awareness phase) or a concrete piece of information (action phase) you must drop a die into the bowl in the middle of the assembly. Start out by giving all the d20s, then the d12s, then the d8s and finally the d4s. This is the game's doomsday clock.

If you follow my advice on dice quantities, drop $2 \cdot N - 3$ dice when you reveal the start-off symptom, one die after each intermediary symptom and two for the trigger.

The $N+4$ remaining dice are dealt out during the second game phase. Allot dice for the following events: identifying the antagonists, discovering the place where

the plan will be fulfilled and other elements of the antagonists' evil plan. You should be giving out a die every second ordinary scene, if that's not the case, you're not revealing fast enough. As soon as the last die is given, the second phase is over.

None of these dice are to be subject to the success of conflict resolution. Putting a die into the bowl is a hint to the players that the events are marching on inexorably towards their doom, unless the protagonists intervene!

Protagonists

Player, the guardian of the mystery is going to explain you where and when the story takes place and assign the protagonists' role in this context. You are responsible for preparing one of the (anti-)heroes of the story. You should spend less than 10 minutes to do so.

You need to choose a name for your protagonist, what he looks like, his personality and where he comes from. You need to write down just enough features to be able to present your protagonist as in the first chapter of a novel, or the first scene of a film, when we don't yet fully know the character, but are able to distinguish him from the others. Don't forget that the guardian has assigned you a role that you have to respect. Then discuss with the other players in order to build **connections** between your protagonists. Those links can be explicit (friendship, submission, ...) or implicit (a patriotic character and a

foreigner, for example).

Moreover, your character has to be someone you can feel close to. To represent this connection between you and him or her, your character has a **bond**. The bond is a detail that makes him a human being, it's what he turns to when he needs a grounding to reality. For example, your protagonist may have a lover or a child. Or maybe she can be devoted to a particular cause. He may also have an object of personal significance. The bond can't be another protagonist. Beyond the symbol, the bond has to be something that really matters to you, the player. You are the only hope of your character, the only person that will defend its cause, when his final hour has come. Take it seriously, the game you're about to play is intense.

A last comment needs to be made. It's useless to play your protagonist as a psychic expert, because his capacities in this area are beyond your control. Indeed, they will depend on the dice you'll decide to take. Because of that, the player of a psychic expert who takes only a few dice will be less involved in the paranormal events than a novice who takes a lot of dice. The character is going to shape his own identity during the game.

Monologues

A monologue is an extraordinary scene which takes place when a player seizes a die in the bowl. It is a first-person narration that momentarily suspends the ordinary

scene in which it is taking place. When you see a player grab a die, you should shut up and listen! Monologues enrich the story and bring ideas to flesh out the mysterious situation. The player gets to keep the die after the monologue. The contents of the monologue is constrained by the die type.

Premonition (d20): describe a dream or a nightmare, a *déjà-vu* or a memory, either to imply an omen or to connect your protagonist to an event in his past and that takes on new significance in the present.

Hallucination (d12): your character experiences unexpected sensory stimulation! Describe what is perceived! The character needs at least one ordinary scene to realize the illusory nature of the experience.

Occult knowledge (d8): explain how your character acquires knowledge that no man was ever meant to know! This can be the result of a long research in a library, a strange encounter or a chance discovery. Exposure to occult knowledge is a **transgression**.

Paranormal effect (d4): your protagonist unleashes the dark forces! A spell of black magic, the summoning of a demon or a distortion of space-time. Before taking the appropriate die, the character must have **transgressed** the limits of normal mortal beings. In addition to d8s, any act in the course of play judged to be particularly inhuman by the whole assembly may count.

A monologue is only necessary to **introduce** a new

element. Later on, it may be reused freely by this protagonist. In the same way, a player may not benefit multiple times from similar monologues (for example, a recurring dream only gives a d20 once).

Starting with the second monologue and onward, taking a die means landing on the fate list! (See page 24.)

Be courteous amongst players. Don't hold two monologues in a row without leaving the chance for someone else to hold one. Also, if there are no more dice in the bowl, but the guardian still has some in stock, let him speak up and you'll get fresh dice.

The suggestion

You may give a die to another player if your protagonist's acts or words imply an action or information about the targeted character, of the appropriate type according to the die. To do this, stretch out your hand with the die in it. The player must take it.

***Example:** "Damned, we're done for! But I know you have the means to get us out, I saw you rummaging through the priest's belongings the other night!" (The player offers the other a d8.)*

A player who receives a suggestion may not block it, he or she must incorporate it as if it had been true all along, even if it takes a bit of interpretation. Giving or receiving

a die does not imply an inscription on the fate list!

***Example:** “Fine, I didn’t want to get to this sorry pass... but this priest had an amulet of black magic...”*

Each player can only make one suggestion per scene and only to a player who has not received any dice in this same scene. It is perfectly admissible to give a die to a player who just failed their roll (or reroll). In this case, the receiving player may immediately roll the die and count it along the rolled dice in the hopes of succeeding. The player may also decide to stop the resolution and not roll the die.

***Example:** “Look! Something is moving down the corridor, behind the bars...” Player A offers a d4 to B, who takes it and describes how his character moves into the darkness, disappearing from sight. An unintelligible muttering, the sound of a rusted gate opening. Roll: success! Player B describes how an amorphous, but organic, mass springs out of the corridor at an incredible speed and plunges into the heart of the ruins the protagonists are exploring. One hears unearthly screaming in the distance, and then silence. Effectively, the characters have eliminated a foe.*

Conflicts

Sometimes your protagonist will need to *achieve something*. It is then possible that a character, the situation or even the laws of nature try to oppose this action. If this is the case, you must engage a **resolution** procedure, which implies rolling dice. It's the guardian's final say if there needs to be a resolution. The guardian never rolls dice. Never roll dice to resolve a conflict between protagonists.

A roll is done with all the dice accumulated up to this point. Each even result counts as a **hit**. If you roll the maximal score of a die, you obtain two hits. If you must roll dice when you have none, you obtain zero hits. To achieve your protagonist's goal, you must total as many hits or more as the **difficulty** level in effect at this point in play (see page 23).

If the number of hits is sufficient, describe the **success** of the action. You may manipulate the immediate surroundings of your character, but not make any revelations other than such concerning your protagonist. In particular you may describe the actions of characters controlled by the guardian, but not explain their motives (this is left to the guardian to ensure consistency with the mysterious situation). The guardian must wait till the next scene to tackle these benefits. If this was a roll during the clash game phase, tick off an empty "The Clash" box. If it was the last one, proceed to the Epilogue!

Example: *Janine's character is being pulled toward the chair where a dreadful eye operation will take place at the hands of a cruel doctor. Antonie's protagonist decides to fly to the rescue, and so the player rolls her dice. Difficulty is 3, but she manages 4, 6, and 12 (on a d12) on her three dice. This counts as 4 hits, so she gets to describe the outcome. Her character seizes the syringe holding the anaesthetic the doctor just put down seconds before, and slams it right into the man's forehead. Surprised, but soon sedated, the doctor can only witness the flight of his subjects.*

In the case of **failure**, the guardian inscribes the protagonist on the fate list and narrates the outcome. See the rules on page 24 to find out how the guardian may inflict harm on the protagonists. It is technically speaking not sufficient to fail at resolution to do so.

Example: *Sabrina fails her roll to ward off an annoying salesman. Her character's name is added to the fate list. Christoph, the guardian, declares: "I will come back tomorrow, in the hope that you will be more inclined to speak." The threat still looms! If Christoph wished to get the man inside the flat, he would have to use the fate list.*

In the case of failure, you may decide to **re-roll** your odd dice. If you decide to do so, the guardian does not narrate an outcome, nor does she add a name to the fate list. Describe how your character intensifies her efforts and reveal a strange or worrying behaviour on her behalf. Add the new hits to your standing total and compare it to the difficulty in effect, then treat the outcome as usual.

If this still results in a failure, you may obtain an automatic success, by breaking the link between your protagonist and her bond. This **rupture** may be narrated as being the result of the character's actions, or due to external forces. From this moment onward, you do not benefit from the bond's protection any more (p.26).

***Example:** Gaël plays a mother who had been separated from her child for some time in the story. As soon as they meet again, they are attacked and must flee by car. Gaël rolls his dice to define the outcome of the pursuit and fails. He also fails his re-roll, so Gaël describes the mother as not even trying to avoid the corpse of a man. To succeed nevertheless, Gaël breaks the link with the small boy. He narrates how the child realizes that the person driving the car is not the mother he used to know.*

If you succeed the resolution roll, but obtained a “1” on at least one die (regardless of whether you re-rolled it or not), colour your description of the outcome with a

horrific event. The guardian also adds an empty box to “The Clash” on the fate list (p.24).

Renouncement and flight

You may decide to **renounce** your character to obtain one last automatic success at conflict resolution, whatever the difficulty in effect. There are two ways to renounce one’s protagonist: by incapacitation (death, insanity, definite imprisonment, etc.) or by defecting to the side of the source and/or antagonists. In this case, the outcome of resolution must take into account this renouncement. After this, the guardian takes over the character for the rest of play.

If the situation is too desperate and it seems impossible to thwart the antagonists’ plan and neutralize the source, you may decide to have your protagonist **flee**. You must succeed at one last conflict roll to put your character to safety. In case of success, nobody may play the protagonist for the rest of play.

Difficulty

The difficulty of a conflict roll depends on the game phase. In the first phase, difficulty is 1. As soon as play enters the second phase, difficulty rises to 2, and it raises by 1 again when entering the third phase. During phases 2 and 3, you, guardian, may decide to raise the difficulty,

once per ordinary scene, by incorporating an element revealed in a monologue to the definition of the source. Reveal this by some narration and by indicating which element you reincorporate. Difficulty is raised by 1. Difficulty may not raise above 4 in the second phase, and may never exceed 7.

The fate list

Guardian, you keep the books on the protagonists' and their bonds' fate, thanks to the fate list. This list is what allows you to inflict harm directly. Without it, you cannot go through with your puny threats.

Take a sheet of paper and draw twice as many columns as there are protagonists. Every odd column, put a character name on top. Every even column, put the name of the character's bond on top. Protagonist columns begin with an empty box. Keep some space to take note of the monologues. Also write "The Clash" in some part and draw an empty box beside it.

Starting with the second monologue and onwards, add an empty box to the column of the protagonist who just held it. After a conflict resolution roll, add one empty box to the relevant protagonist column if it failed.

If a "1" appeared (even if it was re-rolled) and the roll was ultimately a success, add an empty box to "The Clash".

You may tick off an empty box in a protagonist column to describe an unfortunate effect for the relevant subject. The level of harm is given by the table on page 25. It is limited in intensity by the number of ticked boxes for that character, but you may always add effects of lesser harm to the description. You may tick off multiple boxes in one go if necessary.

You may choose to tick off a box immediately after inscribing it so as to reflect a severe outcome for the protagonist, or wait till later to put the player under unbearable suspense.

You may not interrupt a re-roll, a monologue, a suggestion or injunction, a bond rupture or a renouncement by ticking off a box.

If you render a protagonist unplayable (fifth box and beyond), you describe in a few words how the protagonist trespasses, but its player gets to describe the attitude and general demeanour of the character. Contrary to a voluntary sacrifice, the player does not get a last automatic success in this case.

Harm against protagonists	
Boxes ticked off	Level of the effect
First and second	Moderate
Third and fourth	Serious
Fifth and beyond	Terminal

The level of harm is hard to define in an abstract manner. It's the context that will help you to grasp what really is important to the protagonist or if an injury entails more or less serious consequences. A player is entitled to contest an abusive move by the guardian. If this were to happen, the whole group should discuss the events and adjust expectations before continuing play.

Casting off a harmful effect requires a successful resolution roll.

Bonding

Player, describe an extraordinary scene during which something about the link between your protagonist and bond is revealed. This can be a memory, a desire, some deed, a regret, etc. If you have not ruptured this link, you may erase a ticked box in your protagonist column on the fate list. The guardian however adds an empty box in the column of your bond, which he may then tick off to inflict harm to it, according to a different progression than for protagonists, but otherwise in the same fashion.

Harm against bonds	
Boxes ticked off	Level of the effect
First	Moderate
Second	Serious
Third	Terminal

After the character

If your character has become insane, is dead, has switched sides or has fled, you continue playing as a kind of auxiliary guardian. You keep half your dice (rounded up). The rest is cast back into the bowl, without any revelations. The players still controlling a protagonist may seize these dice just as usual to hold monologues. You are free to decide which dice you keep and which you give back.

From then on, you cannot roll for conflict resolution and cannot hold any monologues. You have however access to **injunctions**, which consist in imposing dice on the other players still controlling a protagonist (just put the die down in front of them).

You may only give one die to a given player per ordinary scene, and only if she or he has not already received one this scene. By doing this, you are entitled to hold a monologue for that protagonist. For example, you may describe a dream he has had recently, a sudden hallucination, you may explain how he finds a dusty tome or how he or she produces/encounters a paranormal effect. You may do this to help a player succeed at an otherwise failed roll, in the same way as a suggestion (p.18). Once you're out of dice, you become a spectator and commentator of the terrible fate that befalls these mortals.

Epilogue

Play ends when one of these two conditions is met:

1. all players have lost control over their character (be it by flight, renouncement, death, etc.); or
2. the mysterious situation is neutralized, that is, all “The Clash” boxes have been ticked off thanks to successful conflict resolutions by the protagonists.

In the first case, the guardian narrates an epilogue where she or he reveals the disastrous consequences of the mysterious situation brought to fruition. In the second case, each player may describe a little epilogue for their character (for example their own funeral), but the source may never be completely vanquished, at best it may be impeded.

Advice for players

Your protagonists should stay grouped! As long as you're together, you may easily make suggestions to one another.

Don't be too scared. After all, you know when your character can die, so before that, you're safe. And once it dies, you can describe their ending and then play on with your remaining dice, which gives you quite a bit of influence on the late game. Indeed, what do you think happens when you give a d8 to a protagonist looking for a Holy Bible?

Remember that you cannot go into conflict against another protagonist. However, if the player of a potentially adverse protagonist is ready to renounce his character at some point, it is possible to coordinate the events. Otherwise, if your opponent has some empty boxes, you can always describe a threat and see if the guardian takes advantage of the situation to follow through with real effects.

Think a bit before creating your bond. Don't choose something on which you know you will be uncompromising (if for example you cannot stand violence against children, then don't take a child as a bond). Neither should you choose something you're ready to sacrifice in a heartbeat. Be intrigued by your bond.

Advice for the guardian

As long as the players don't take the lead, exert pressure on the protagonists. You don't have to pull your punches in this game, because characters cannot die before having been at least five times on the fate list. Aim for one new box per scene.

Allow the protagonists to remain together in the first game phase, then once the situation is somewhat laid out, start to disrupt any team-spirit that may have arisen. Use the fate list to capture, isolate, lead astray, and pick them off one by one. Alone, they cannot make and receive suggestions and are thus weaker.

Don't allow secondary characters to give any concrete help to the protagonists. You can achieve this effect by playing them as incompetent, frightened, collaborating with the antagonists or just through ill-fate.

Some players like to develop their characters with a complex social and private life. Exploit this information to inform your fate list effects and your scene framing. This will involve the protagonist even more, which is desirable.

Take brief notes on the monologues, suggestions and other striking moments. This way, you will have plenty of material to increase the difficulty.

End notes

Version 009 “Essen”, 19th October 2010

Author: christoph_boeckle@yahoo.com

Website: www.silentdrift.net/innommable

Forum for actual play reports: <http://www.indie-rpgs.com>

Thanks to: Romaric Briand, Jérôme Champion, Lionel Rodrigues Ferreira, Julien Gobin, Sylvie Guillaume, Fabien Hildwein, Lionel Jeannerat, Frédéric Sintes, Mélanie Piart, Julien Rebetez, Gaël Sacré, Oliver Vuillamy, and all those who have played!

Major game inspirations: Zombie Cinema, The Pool, Dirty Secrets, My Life with Master, Dogs in the Vineyard, In a wicked age, Apocalypse World, Trollbabe, Call of Cthulhu.³

Fonts & word-processing:

Handserif by Gerhard Grossmann

Thryromanes by Herman Miller

on www.dafont.com

Written on OpenOffice.org Writer

3 There's also a supplement to InSpectres I became aware of after having begun the game and which pre-dates mine, called UnSpeakable, which in two pages of text goes a long way dealing with almost the same subject matter as I do. I also am ashamed of having ripped off the name, but what do you want...

Unspeakable

A game to tell the tale of our own insignificance.

For three to five, half an hour preparation and three hours of play, for the spirited teenager to the virtuous elder.