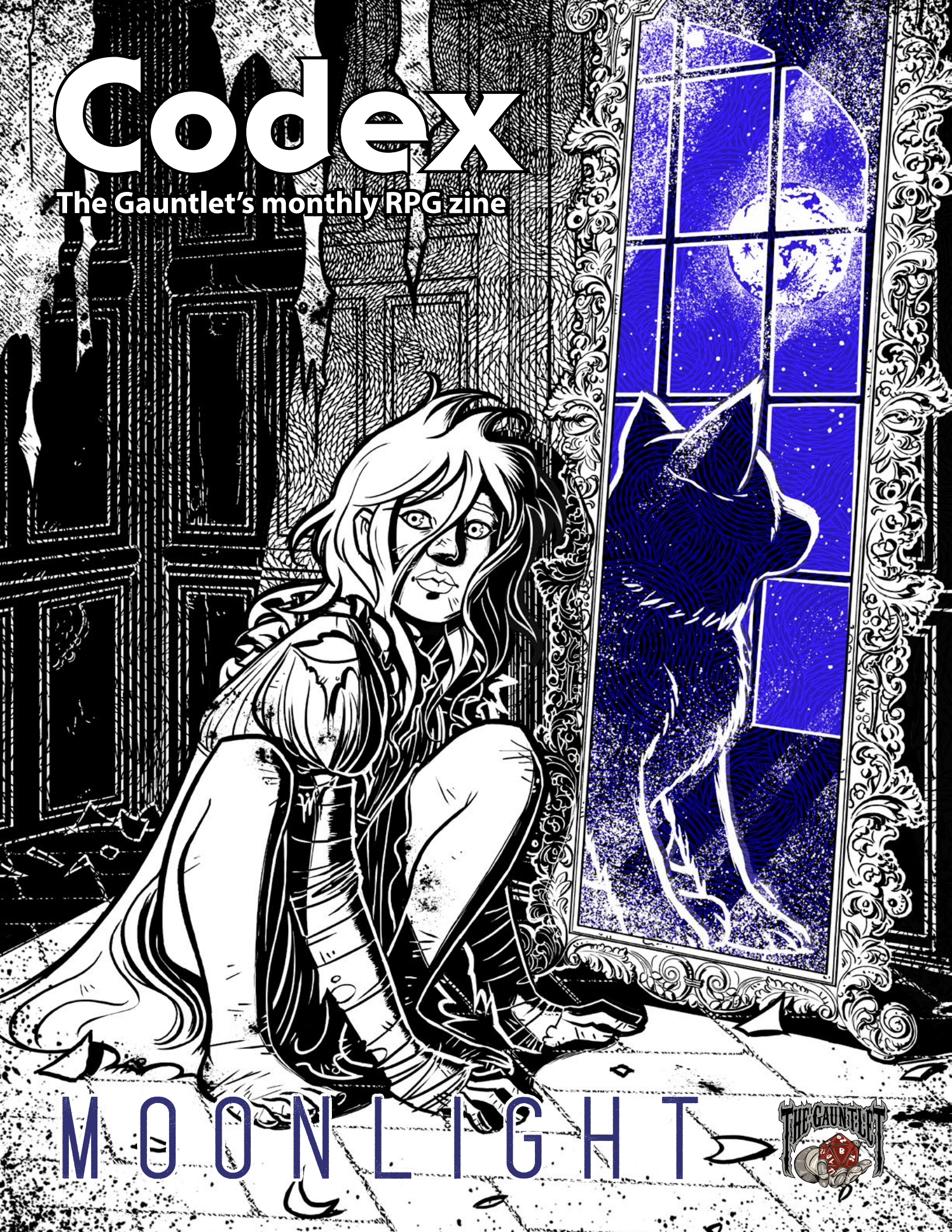


Codex

The Gauntlet's monthly RPG zine



MOONLIGHT



PACK OF STRAYS

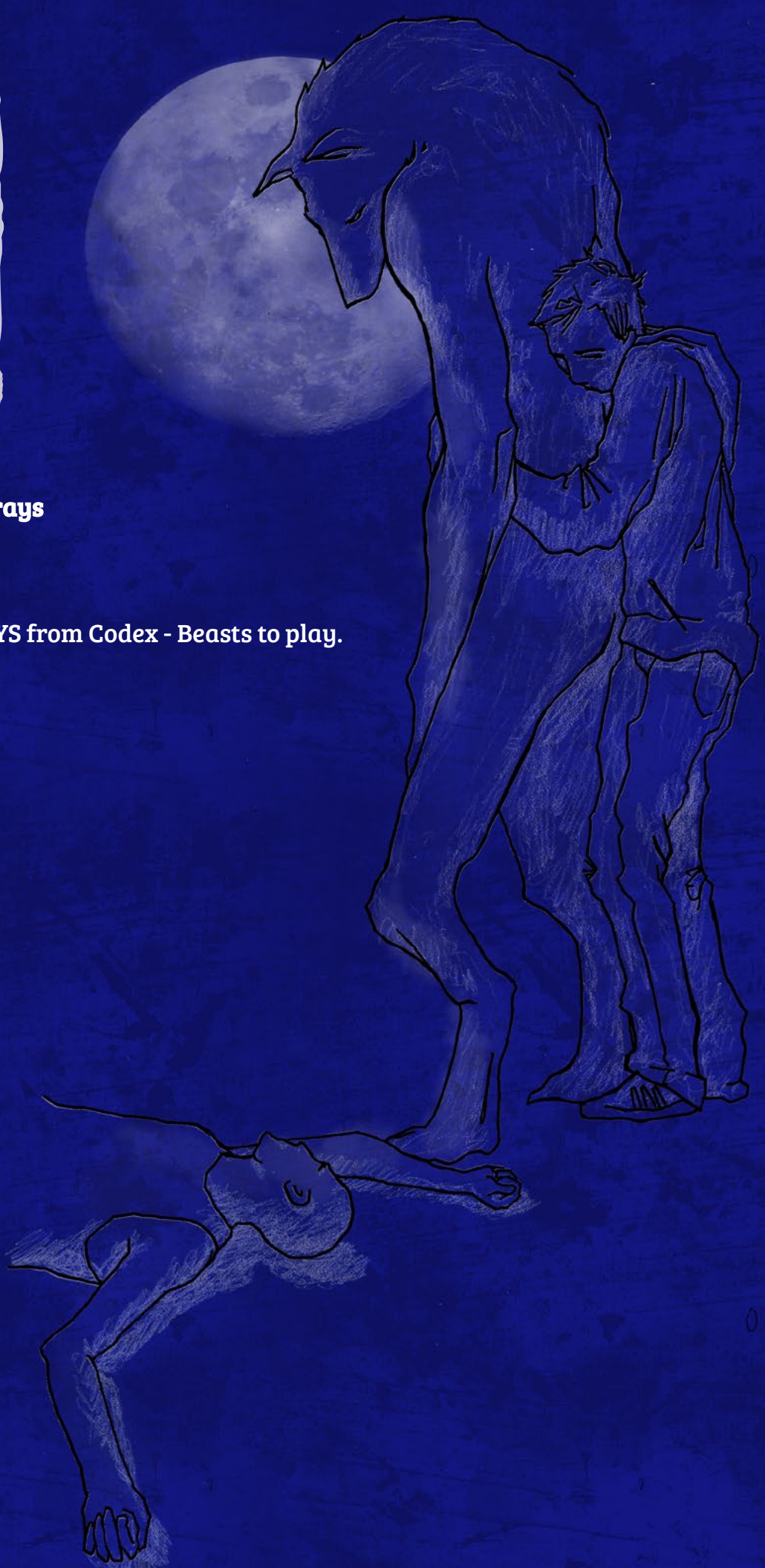
THE MOONLIT ROAD

An expansion for Pack of Strays

by Phillip Wessels

Illustration by Jesse Ross

You will need PACK OF STRAYS from Codex - Beasts to play.



TRACKING DARCY

At any time, the GM can put the pack on Darcy's trail by mentioning a territory and asking how the smell or evidence relates to why you owe Darcy (or another part of your relationship).

Zeroing in on it is a **SMOOTH** action. If you succeed, you may gain 1 Control and 1 Alpha String.

12 TERRITORIES ON THE MOONLIT ROAD

You are not always on the moonlit road for purpose—sometimes a stop is just a stop. There are questions for this situation. Ask any or all.

1 - THE COASTAL DUNES - The beach stretches for miles along the bay, its sand rolled into dunes by the tides and the wind.

- The weather here changes so frequently. You smell a storm coming. But there's a scent being pushed away. What is it? Roll to see if you can catch it.
- How do you recognize the spot where you once had sex on this beach? You can almost smell it. It was secret from the rest of the pack; who was it?
- What "normal" people enjoy the beach nearby? Why do you want to engage them?

2 - THE REDWOOD FOREST - Coastal redwood grow to 379 feet (115.5 m) in height and are among the oldest living things on Earth.

- You are at the top of the food chain. You chase your prey, and you keep trading up targets. What do you end up circling?
- You climb a tree, hundreds of feet tall, to "look out," you say. What are you looking for under the light of the moon?

- You stumble into the camp of an old vagrant. They smell like what? How are they hospitable towards you?

3 - THE DARK & WINDING PASS - A freeway winds through a low mountain pass, one lane in each direction. It used to be called the Bandit Byway.

- Thunder and lightning hammer you as you patrol. What piqued your interest and led you astray? The GM will tell you what you find.
- What shelter do you find for the pack alongside the road? How do you improve it?
- How do you intend to scare the headlights approaching your rest stop? The GM will tell you more about this vehicle.

4 - THE SNOWY PEAK - The trees' needles are crystallized with ice at this elevation.

- A body is dead in a spot of red snow. Beyond the rot, it smells familiar. How so?
- It is as if you have climbed closer to the moon, it is so large in the sky. What did Darcy tell you about howling at the moon?
- Wolves have fur for warmth. But why do you not want to wolf out, and how instead do you warm your bones?

5 - THE FARMLANDS - The fertile lands and moist weather feed the world.

- Who do you pull into the cornfield for a moment alone? The stalks rustle in the wind. Enough cover, enough swishing, for a whisper or a kiss.
- It is rural, but people live here. What do they have that you envy? What do you do?
- Mud, manure, filth. You strip and commune with it. What smell are you masking?

6 - THE FOGGY PASTURES - Acres and acres of soft rolling hills where livestock graze and wander.

- What is the warning left by the locals for any predators such as yourself?
- You are a shadow in the moonlit fog. It is time for the beast to tinge this gray with crimson blood. What do you slay?
- There is a smell out in the fog. You wander after it. What is it?

7 - THE RUSHING RIVER - The frigid river roars and foams, carving through the land.

- Long ago, there was a fight. You washed away the blood here, splashed the ringing out of your ears here. Darcy's voice became clearer. What happened here?
- The underside of a nearby bridge is covered with graffiti. There's something resembling a moon. Why do you feel like you need to show the others?
- You fish in the cold, stinging water. It numbs you. Why do you need to be numbed? Who brings you out of it?

8 - THE CRYSTAL LAKE - Its waters shimmer with the light of the moon. Calm or stormy, it's always beautiful.

- You smoothly slide into the water gleaming under the moon. Who are you trying to impress?
- You were last here as a child. The set pieces of your memories—the cabins, the dock, the boats—are now fragile. Their persistence ends with you. What do you break?
- You sit on the dock. What mirage do you see on the opposite shore?

9 - THE ROCKY SHORE - Water crashes against the jagged stone. The sea claws at the stoney cliff face.

- A crevice in the rock. Slip after splash, you may tread carefully to indulge something in the shadows. What is this vice?
- Who do you ask to take a walk with you on the road overlooking the moonlit shore?

- These rocks are a battleground. The GM will tell you who you'll face, but what is their smell?

10 - THE FERN CANYON - Green fronds surround you in this damp corridor.

- This private place is one in which others have come before for illicit deeds. What evidence do you find of it? How does it make you feel?
- What is the beauty of this place that seduces you? How do you lay claim to it?
- Something is buried in the soft soil. What is its smell?

11 - THE FLOWERING PRAIRIE - Wildflowers blanket a bed of green in a hidden valley.

- At the end of the valley is a patch of wolfsbane, and you sneak upon a nude beauty asleep there. Do you know them? How are they beautiful?
- There is a spot where the flowers are disturbed. Something happened here. What's the trail you follow into the surrounding woods?
- Where do you set up camp, and what human food do you prepare for the pack?

12 - THE VOLCANIC HOT SPOT - Steam streams from vents, and thermal heat wells water into hot springs.

- You are pulled out of the way of a steam vent just in the nick of time. Who saved you, and how do you repay them?
- You ease out of your clothes and into a hot spring. How do you react when you discover your voyeur?
- You step away into silver-lit steam and navigate boiling hot springs to a lonely tree. Scratched into its bark is a message from someone you know. Who?

12 HUNTERS TO FACE

Each territory on the moonlit road is linked to a hunter. After marking one of the territories, if you would mark it a second time, you can instead ask to **face the hunter** (zeroing in on them is a **SMOOTH** action). The GM can also introduce a hunter any time as a consequence.

If you eliminate the threat of a hunter, you don't have to worry about over-marking the associated territory. It becomes a refuge.

While some hunters may not seem very intimidating, they all have silver and wolfsbane, which nullify your powers on contact. If you run from hunters after encountering them, even a first mark in a territory will make it unsafe. As with any unsafe territory, ask the GM how to make it safe again.

Each hunter type comes with a set of questions and a special trait. You can also always ask, "What do they drive?" and "What do they smell like?"

1 - THE SPORTSMAN - The Sportsman wants to collect your heads and hides.

- How do you recognize the werewolf trophy in the Sportsman's camp?
- How does the Sportsman disguise their scent?
- What other trophies has the Sportsman claimed?
- ◇ After encountering them, the Sportsman will get on the trail of whatever the pack is tracking.

2 - THE FED - The Fed brings the might of the federal government to clean you up.

- The Fed has cordoned off an area. What drew them here?
- How does the way they cordoned it off display their resourcefulness?

- What gives away the Fed's experience with the supernatural?
- ◇ The Fed can pursue and track your wheels after identifying them and always has backup when doing so.

3 - THE SLAYER - The Slayer wants to bring justice to your victims.

- For what injustice do you believe the Slayer pursues your pack?
- What is the Slayer's signature weapon, and how is it deadly to werewolves?
- The Slayer has allies in the community. Which allies are here?
- ◇ The Slayer is always a threat; they can never be knocked out, captured, or separated from their signature weapon.

4 - THE CRYPTONUT - The Cryptonut wants to study and dissect supernaturals.

- The Cryptonut's bunker laboratory is full of unsightly experiments. What's one?
- What specimen do you find that you must put out of its misery?
- What new weakness for werewolves does the Cryptonut introduce?
- ◇ The Cryptonut will give you immunity to a weakness if you support their research.

5 - THE TRUTHER - The Truther wants to out werewolves to the world.

- What historical records of werewolves has the Truther accumulated?
- What previous moment was the Truther secretly watching and recording?
- The Truther, fixated on werewolves, ignored what evidence of another supernatural?
- ◇ After each encounter, the Truther will share their info on Dogman Radio.

6 - THE STALKER - The Stalker is obsessed with werewolves and wants to join them.

- How has the Stalker fashioned themselves to be more wolf-like?
- What useful skill does the Stalker offer the pack?
- What is the sign of the Stalker's power fantasy?
- ◇ The Stalker will infiltrate the pack's personal life after an encounter.

7 - THE RIVAL - The Rival is an alpha of another pack.

- What are the signs of the Rival's grit as a human?
- How is the Rival especially intimidating as a werewolf?
- Who do you recognize in the Rival's pack that recently disappeared from your life?
- ◇ After encountering the Rival, they will target people the pack knows.

8 - THE OMEGA - The Omega is a reject of your pack seeking vengeance upon it.

- It's been a long time since the Omega was around. What was the last you heard?
- Why was the Omega kicked out of the pack?
- What sign do you see of the Omega's torment?
- ◇ The Omega will reveal information to corrupt the reasons the pack owes Darcy.

9 - THE CULTISTS - To the Cultists, werewolves are intrinsically linked to the Ritual.

- What do the Cultists all wear, and what is their sign?
- The Ritual has already been initiated. What is creepy about the first ritual site?
- What strange effect is the Ritual having on the territory?
- ◇ After encountering the Cultists, someone in your life will turn out to be a Cultist.

10 - THE THING - The Thing's motives are as enigmatic as its weakness. It doesn't use silver or wolfsbane.

- How does the Thing seem to be part of the environment?
- How does the Thing destroy people, physically or mentally?
- How do the locals try to keep people away from the Thing?
- ◇ The Thing's weakness can only be discovered by exploring the situations of other hunters. It cannot be destroyed, but it can destroy people.

11 - THE FIREBRAND - The Firebrand targets deviants, and you just happen to have the Mark.

- How do we see the Firebrand's brand of conservative culture or ideology?
- What awful thing must the sinful do or undergo in order to be cleansed?
- What does the Firebrand do to those who cannot, or will not, be cleansed?
- ◇ After encountering the Firebrand, their followers will commit hate crimes against those the pack knows.

12 - THE CRIME BOSS - The Crime Boss only cares about you because you've interfered with their operation. They must kill all witnesses.

- What is the criminal operation going on here?
- Who do you recognize from your community that works for the Crime Boss?
- How does the Crime Boss reward or punish their underlings?
- ◇ The Crime Boss expands their operation into one of your territories after you encounter them.

20 SETS OF WHEELS

Obtain a vehicle by addressing its question in scene. Expend a vehicle to:

- Take cover from an attack
- Escape a hunter
- Contain a beast

TWILIGHT BAY

1 - TRAILER PARK - What is the crime the old motorhome is used for?

2 - TAXI COMPANY - What deal did you make for a taxi?

3 - JIMMY'S HOT ROD GARAGE - What did Jimmy do to you?

4 - ROSA'S TACO TRUCK - Why is Rosa your ally?

5 - MEAT PACKERS BUTCHERS - What is your arrangement with the owner?

6 - MORTUARY - Why did they leave you their car?

MERCY FALLS

7 - THE HOSPITAL - Who wants to help find Darcy?

8 - THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE - What is the sign of insanity inside the old rustbucket school bus?

9 - GOOCH GAS & PROPANE - What stinks under the tarp over the bed of Gooch's truck?

10 - MFPD - Why do you think the police started pursuing you?

11 - THE NAIL ROADHOUSE - How did you hear of the Hounds of the Moon biker gang?

12 - RANGER STATION - What hidden location has the ranger found and taken you to?

GAUNTLET CITY

13 - MAIN STREET - Who in the Gauntlet City Goblins baseball team would help you steal the team golf cart?

14 - VALLEY HEIGHTS COMMISSARY - It just smelled too good. What type of cuisine is served by the food truck that you steal?

15 - YE OLDE GENERAL STORE - Whose privilege minimizes your guilt over taking off with their electric car left at the charging station?

16 - THE OLD TOWN HALL - What silver weapons do you find in the back of the van?

17 - ROUN'-THE-CLOCK-BODEGA - What smells good on the delivery vespa?

18 - WESTERN CEMETERY - What's your history with the body dragged out of the hearse with the dead driver?

19 - BASSETT PARK - What are the last words of the pagan soldier biker?

20 - WUPPER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - Who's the werewolf in the back of the bus?

moon language by aura belle

illustration by evan rowland

when you were young, you spoke to the moon. you climbed out of your bedroom window and sat on the roof and, at great length, the two of you discussed matters both big and small, both terrestrial and celestial. you confided in each other in ways neither of you could elsewhere. your parents wouldn't understand. your friends couldn't even begin to. and for the moon, the stars in the sky were beyond comprehension, and the planets too wrapped up in themselves. sometimes, the moon told you, it felt as if only the lonely creatures of earth looked up to it. it would bathe you in its serene glow until it passed from the sky, its strange nightlight replaced by bright, lifegiving progression.

when the moon speaks, it's easier to understand when you're young. you would bring your sketchbook and your markers, and you would feel out the words, translating them to paper. but they weren't exactly words: they were ideas, images, often abstract, that you had to draw. to look at those images now, they would look like hopeless blobs. nothing more than random, haphazard tracings or clouds of color. but at that young age, they were a special language that flowed through you, and a mere glance at this surreal portrait was all the divination you needed. that time was meaningful. it was momentous.

but then you moved on. it just happened like that one summer. you weren't home for a few months, and when you came back, you never

went back out that window. the moon was just this thing, far away, that never crossed your mind. that special language got harder and harder to hear (though you weren't even trying to speak it then, were you?) and as you got older, the moon drifted more and more away. the night became just the night. your secrets and promises were directed elsewhere: trusted friends, partners, family—though only awkwardly so. still other secrets just bled into the void, buried deep within you for the rest of time.

and the hours passed on. and the months, and the years.

last week you went through your old things, because everyone, eventually, returns to their old things, and you found the pictures. you couldn't remember the words, but you knew what they were. your old lexicon. and as you glanced over painting after painting, sketch after sketch—hell, you haven't even drawn anything since then, you never were an artist—you remembered that you never found peace with some of your old problems. of course now there's new problems, problems you keep secret, deep down, that you've never told anyone. but you also remember: the moon never got peace in its problems either. it never got solace. and looking over these pictures, you don't even remember what those problems were.

you gather up a few sketchbooks, some markers in many colors. enough light to see by. back then you were stuck to one spot outside your bedroom, but now you can roam anywhere. you'll find the best spots to talk to the moon. these days you've got a few new skeletons to share. and the moon's been waiting for eternity.



when
you
have a
free night,
roam your
territory. any
place around you, as
far as you declare, that has
had meaningful impact on you
growing up until this point—that's
your territory.


bring with you markers or pencils or
paint, as well as paper or canvas. this
is what you'll use to speak with the moon.
what that looks like is largely up to you, but
it's basically freehand stream-of-consciousness
drawing. it could be in inky blacks and grays,
or it could be in vivid color: pick your materials
appropriately, based off the vision you have of
how the moon speaks.

travel to a spot where you'll have relative
privacy, and where you can see the moon. have
a conversation with it: you can just speak freely
with your words, and the moon can understand
you. but to hear what the moon says, you'll
need to listen—really listen—and let the
invisible language fill your head, then drip out
of your hands and onto the paper. it could look
like anything! who knows what you'll draw.

tell the moon about all your real-life problems,
memories, and anxieties. there's things you'd
never tell anyone else, or maybe things you
want to but you're scared. that's okay—you can
always tell the moon. the moon is forever, and
will always listen. and in return, once you're
done, the moon gets to speak, and you will do
your best to listen.

at this point all you'll see are shapes and
doodles. there's no language here. that's fine:
take this home when you're done (maybe thirty
minutes to an hour?) and place it somewhere
safe. soon you'll have many, many such
sketches, and when you have a free day, you
can look over this critical mass of language.

you can collect as many of these as you like,
and you can look over them as often as you like.
this could be over in a week, or it could take the
rest of your life. but one day, it'll click—you'll
see patterns emerging, you'll put things side by



side
to
form a
concrete
image, and
you'll discover
a message—don't
rush this! you may
attempt to do this many
times and just not see
anything. that's fine! wait
for when it presents itself.
be patient.

you can speak to the moon
again, and you'll know what it
wants. can you help it? do you
have anything to offer? maybe
just a kind word? though the moon
may seem grand and surreal, its wants
and needs may be very human indeed.

forever after, you and the moon can speak
again. you understand. you can help each other.

the night is beautiful, whether you're stuck
on a roof watching the stars and whispering
secrets, driving through empty parking lots and
listening to the roar of cicadas, or even in bed
unable to sleep—the night is a living, breathing
meditation, and through it, you can channel
your thoughts in solemn privacy. just look to
the moon for guidance: it's been there since the
beginning, ready to help.

Under the Gaze of Yr

MOONLIT MYSTERY FOR DUNGEON WORLD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JESSE ROSS

MOONMILK WINE BY RACH SHELKEY

ALL THAT REMAINS OF

the Cult of Gesnerus and their tradition of hospitality is a single ornate glass bottle. The cult's legendary Moonmilk wine allowed drinkers to rise above social and language barriers and speak freely and openly. A sculpted lunar cycle pattern decorates the sides of this last bottle. The glass stopper is sealed with metal wires that shine brighter than the stars.



Starting on the night of a full moon, the bottle will begin slowly filling with a pale blue liquid. The wire seal will loosen on the new moon, allowing the Moonmilk wine to be poured out. There's always just

enough for two people. No more. No less. When you share the Moonmilk wine with another character, roll +CHA. *On a 10+, make two requests of the other character from the list below. *On a 7-9, make only one request. The other character may make a request in return. All requests must be fulfilled.

- Tell me something you've always wanted to say to me and why you haven't said it sooner.
- Tell me why you love me or why you never could.
- Tell me how you'd mourn me if I wasn't here.
- Tell me what makes you feel heroic and what makes you feel valued.
- Tell me where you would lead me if we could walk away right now.
- Tell me a secret you hope I'll forget in the morning.

*On a miss, the GM decides which requests you make of each other.

MOONLIT BEZOAR BY LOWELL FRANCIS

WILD, MISCAST MAGIC DOESN'T simply dissipate. Instead it drifts skyward, mixing with unheard final words, imprecise invocations, and half-formed riddles. On occasion these broken concepts congeal and form around scattered magical matter like dead fairy wings and the ghosts of mice. Some become large enough that the spheres themselves begin to heave. It is then that moonlight, the celestial cleanser, seeks out and vomits this warped ambergris back to the earth.

Such a Moonlit Bezoar leaves no impact mark, but it changes the land. The area begins to exude a repulsive fragrance which smells of failure and error. The gods themselves avert their eyes from this anathema, and soon animals, plants, and even people wilt and fade. Prayers, divinations, and blessings have no effect there. It becomes a blank spot hidden from the eyes of the gods.



This nature draws alchemists and mystics to these Bezoars. Properly prepared as the basis of a perfume, it can conceal a person, object, or location from divine sight. It blocks the vision and scrying of followers drawing on those powers. While useful for conspirators and spies, hideouts infused with this material wear on the soul.

When you use a Moonlit Bezoar to hide something from the sight of the gods, roll +WIS. *On a hit, the repulsiveness of the fragrance averts their eyes. You may conceal it for up to a week before you must reapply. *On a 7-9, you render yourself invisible to the small spirits of luck and hearth which make life bearable. You may not recover HP until you remove the coating. *On a miss, your attempts to conceal something from the heavens instead draws their ire.

THE POOL OF HINATEA

BY PAUL EDSON

IN THE VOLCANIC ROCKS AT THE edge of the sea is a tidal pool where fair Hina once swam with the eels. By day it is lovely and lively—a good spot to fish if you have the flair for cleaning and preparing such a difficult catch. By night, though, by the light of the moon... for most of the month it is as if the Eel King himself has ordered an anguilliform ball in Hina's honor. Lithe, slender bodies twist around each other, their silver and dark scales catching the moon's rays as one fish after another leaps through the air. However, on the last night before the new moon, as if Hina herself were preparing to take the final steps in her grieving journey to the Sacred Isle, the pool is as still as a mirror.

When you view your reflection in the Pool of Hinatea amidst the light of the last sliver of the waning moon, some part of you deep inside, something that was once pure and bright, swims to the surface. Share a bright memory, then roll +WIS. *On a hit, an echo of happiness shines off you like



moonlight off scales. *On a 10+, take +1 ongoing when you act with optimism and joy until you act out of darker motives.

*On a 7-9, take +1 forward when you act with optimism and joy. *On a miss, you realize how much you have lost. Tell us how you grieve, and the GM will make their move.

THE BONES OF YR

BY KATE BULLOCK

WHEN SHE FIRST PLUMMETED FROM the sky, the world should have ended. As the world awoke anew all that remained of their deity, they say, was the skeleton of a woman, her bones made of moonstone and tarnished silver. She was pulled asunder. The skull became the crown, the humeri were wands, the femurs fashioned into short swords, the spine carved into a staff, and the tiny phalanges into rings. Eventually her name was forgotten, and only her power remained—death of a moon god, bones of the ancients, the promises of power.

To wear a Bone of Yr is to welcome her into your fold. She lives in the corners and crevices of your mind, where she scratches out an existence by harvesting your memories and enrapturing your senses. Yet while her claws dig into the minds of her companions, she grants power beyond mortal means.

A Bone of the Moon

When you are in possession of a bone of Yr and have bathed yourself for a night in the light of the full moon, hold three. You may spend your hold, one for one, to invite Yr into your mind where she will do any of the following to someone you gaze upon:

- Reveal their most painful secret.
- Destroy and rearrange their mind.
- Create obsession for you within their heart.
- Awaken the beast within their soul.

You must also choose one:

- Debase yourself for Yr.
- Commit a horrible sin for Yr.
- Sacrifice blood for Yr.
- Offer a treasured memory to Yr.



By Oli Jeffery.
Illustration by Bill Masuku.



Apocalypse by Moonlight

Apocalypse by Moonlight is a plugin or mini-supplement that allows you to run emergent, player generated mysteries in theoretically any Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA) game. The closer the game cleaves to the original *Apocalypse World*, the more likely it is to work. *Dungeon World* and *Monsterhearts*? You're golden. If you can make it work with a one page prose poem with a Powered by the Apocalypse logo on it, God bless you.

The plugin works by adding a series of moves to the game you're already playing. Like standard PbtA moves, trigger these moves whenever you perform the bolded action. There's one additional stat, Complexity, which tracks how many clues the characters need to discover to fully solve the mystery. Otherwise, play the game as written, including player moves, and MC agendas, principles, and moves.

Aside from *Apocalypse World* and its descendents (in particular the Labyrinth move for *Dungeon World* by Jason Cordova), this plugin is inspired by *The Dreadful Secrets of Candlewick Manor* by Benjamin Baugh, and *Lovecraftesque* by Josh Fox and Becky Annison.

Moves

Present a Mystery

At the start of the session, the MC presents the mystery to be solved, and determines its Complexity score from 3 - 5, where 3 is simple and 5 is very complex. If there's a ticking clock to the mystery, e.g. a hidden bomb or kidnapped victim, the MC might also create a Mystery Clock—see below.

The MC presents the mystery's opening—the dead body, the stolen uranium, the kid missing from class—but should have no solution in mind. In the tradition of make your move, but misdirect and its equivalents, the MC shouldn't just outright state the mystery in a flat sentence; instead, present it in a scene as you would any other element of the game. If you're playing a game where the campaign frame has the players as investigators, the MC can frame it pretty hard.

Otherwise, weave the mystery into the normal play of the game.

An Example in Monsterhearts 2

Mercy Falls's head cheerleader and favourite for homecoming queen, Flora Handler, has been found dead on the banks of the local river, drained of blood, but with no puncture wounds found anywhere on her body—and it seems everyone in town has a connection to her, from the proaic to the perverse. This is a Complexity 5 mystery that will unearth secrets throughout the entire town.

Search for Clues

When you **search for a clue**, describe how you're looking for the clue and roll +appropriate stat.

On a hit, you find a clue. Tell the MC what it is. It cannot by itself conclusively solve the mystery.

On a 7-9, there's a complication—either with the clue itself, or a complication you encounter while searching. The MC will tell you what the complication is.

The “appropriate stat” will vary according to the game you're playing. However, as long as it makes sense with the action the player's describing, it's fine. For example, if the character is trying to smooth-talk someone to access a restricted area where they know a clue is hidden, that could be +Hot in *Monsterhearts*, +CHA in *Dungeon World*, or +Mundane in *Masks*; whereas threatening them to get the same thing could be +Volatile, +STR, or +Danger respectively.

An Example in Dungeon World

Sparrow the Thief has spotted someone spying on the party from a nearby rooftop as they investigate the murder of the innkeeper at the dive where they normally go to carouse. Sparrow rolls +DEX to chase the spy across the rooftops of the labyrinthine city, and gets an 8. The spy gets away, but drops an invitation to a ball as they escape—a ball being held by Sparrow's dastard half-brother, Lord Dunstan.

Theorise

When you come up with a solution to the mystery based on the clues you've found, roll+(number of clues found minus the mystery's Complexity).

On a 10+, it's the correct solution. The MC will present an opportunity to take down the culprit or otherwise save the day.

On a 7-9, your solution is correct, but the MC will either add an unwelcome complication to the solution itself, or present a complicated or dangerous opportunity to take down the culprit or save the day.

On a 6-, your solution is incorrect, and the MC makes a move.

There's a little bit more math involved here than in most PbtA moves, and you may very well end up with a heavy negative modifier to start with; this set-up is intentional, as it discourages the players from trying to solve the mystery too early in the session. You can keep searching for clues beyond the Complexity score of the mystery. If you have a number of clues equal to the Complexity of the mystery plus five, you're guaranteed to get at least a 7, so mysteries will come to a natural end.

An Example in The Sprawl

The crew are trying to discover what was behind the cyber attack that destroyed their identities and wiped their creds from the face of the 'net. They've gathered four clues for a Complexity 3 mystery. Liliana the Fixer figures all the clues point to an old enemy presumed dead, the Conley Genetomatics exec Kennedy. She rolls +1 because they have one more clue than they need, and gets a 7. It's Kennedy alright, but when they turn up at her supposedly abandoned apartment to confront him, they find the whole place is wired to explode.

Mystery Clocks

If the mystery has any ticking clock element, like rescuing someone from a serial killer who keeps his victims alive for twenty-four hours before he murders them, or finding a mad scientist's lair before she has time to construct her death ray, the MC can start a Mystery Clock. A Mystery Clock works similarly to Grim Portents in *Dungeon World*. The MC defines the Ultimate Fate that will happen if the clock runs out, and defines between three and five Dire Warnings—these are significant, ominous, and potentially dangerous things that will happen. When a player rolls a miss on any move, the MC can choose to tick off one of the Dire Warnings. If there are no more Dire Warnings to tick off, the clock's Ultimate Fate comes true instead, which will usually be a fail state for the players—the bomb goes off, the hostage dies, or the murderer gets away. Outside the fiction, the fewer Dire Warnings there are before the Clock runs out, the more time pressure the players are under; more Dire Warnings gives them more wriggle room.

An example in Masks

The heroes are trying to find the secret base of Bronze Age villain Xandraa, a dimensional warlord trying to build a portal to the pocket dimension where their robot army lies trapped.

Ultimate Fate: The portal opens, and Halcyon City becomes a warzone as the robot troops pour forth, wreaking havoc.

Dire Warning 1: Xandraa breaks into the Halcyon nuclear plant, stealing enough plutonium to power a bomb that would destroy the city, but no ransom demands are made.

Dire Warning 2: Portals begin to open up randomly from one part of the city to the other as Xandraa tests their plutonium powered portal-machine unsuccessfully.

Dire Warning 3: Dr. Sarah Albrecht, genius theoretical physicist and friend of the heroes, is kidnapped by Xandraa during a TED talk. Xandraa plans to use Dr. Albrecht's knowledge to stabilise their machine...

ILLUSTRATION BY THE DUCHESS OF BEEFCAKE

GAUNTLET DADDIES #008

MUSCLE BEAR

Hello readers! We're having a contest! Send us your dirtiest, cleverest jokes about Muscle Bear to gauntletpodcast@gmail.com by July 1st, 2018. We'll pick a winner and five runners-up to be included in an updated edition of Codex - Moonlight that we'll send to Patrons through DriveThruRPG. The author of the winning entry (the one that makes us laugh the most and/or is the most clever) will also receive a \$25 cash prize. Remember: a good Gauntlet Daddy joke is 1) in the form of a biographical detail, 2) makes reference to roleplaying games in some way and 3) is dirty as fuck. If you have any questions, you can drop us a line at the above address.



Three Dozen Truths Revealed by the Light of the Moon

The People of the Forest are always present, but they are usually unseen and unseeing. Warm light passes right through them, whether by lantern or sunlight, forcing them to sleep or find their way around with their hands much of the time. At night, however, the cold light of the moon falls upon their pale skin and flashes in their eyes. And that is when they hunt.

Most of the time, this letter appears to be a fervent and sentimental love poem from a shy boy. In moonlight, it is the dying words of the world's last witch.

When the crescent moon is at its apex, take ten paces across the bridge at Dulnhelm Castle and look down into the lake. Reflected in its depths you may see a different, stranger moon beckoning you. If you swim down to the bottom you can pay that moon and its people a visit. But beware: if even the passing of a cloud breaks the reflection, you may never return.

You've walked many times through the ruins but never before in such brilliant moonlight. As you pass what remains of the stone foundation, a glimmer above catches your eye. You move your head this way to see light reflecting from a what looks like ghostly glass—standing alone where once must have been a window in the now fallen tower. Now, a young woman behind the phantom pane appears desperate to get your attention...

In the night circus when the moon is full, each reveler's mortal wound is revealed. The dark red line of a head that will someday be severed, the weeping puncture of a blade, the leprous spots of a terminal disease. No person can see their own—only those of others. They can communicate what they see; they can also swap fates with another with or without full knowledge.

Eugene Bowmen is a well respected, though somewhat uptight, lawyer by day. By night Eugene glams up and takes the stage as Lady Fatisque. Her show is known to be the most outrageous this side of Berlin.

Hellfen Manor, despite its ominous name, is a cheery place by day with perfectly manicured gardens of spotless white roses, scabiosa, wisteria, delphiniums, and scads of moonflowers. By the light of the moon, however, the years of decay are revealed. The foundation seems riddled with cracks, and the peaks are slumped under a dreadful weight. Many of the flowers close, but the moonflowers on their 20' trellises remain open. They drink in the light of their namesake, and emit a barely audible and ominous hum as if they are conducting a massive load of electrical current.

There is a door in your house. It only appears when the moon shines through your bedroom window. And when the moon is full, you can hear someone knocking on the door.

On most days, the polished silver disk shows your reflection as good as any mirror. But, or so the witches say, if you hold it up to the night sky during a full moon and look down, staring back up will be the face of your true love or the one destined to kill you. There is no known way to tell which is which.

Just north of I-40, a couple hours east

of Holbrook AZ, you'll find a ghost town named Muuyaw (population 235, according to the fading green sign). The place is desert-empty and naught but tumbleweed and lizards, except in the moonlight, when the residents wander about, silvery shades of people dressed like it was 1970 who can't quite fathom that they just ain't real anymore.

Scientists at the super-collider had

been using photons derived from trapped sunlight (sapphire, used in their lasers, is a sun-aligned element, of course). Moonlight-derived photons, on the other hand, produced a very different set of quarks.

Was it the moonlight or your accept-

ance that revealed him? You may never know. You both dance on the golf course greens that surrounds your families' homes. His cock is splayed out like a gut salmon. You realize he's free here. You realize he's not quite a boy anymore. You'll soon realize how much it always feels like the first time—when he tends to your neck, when you tend to his wet face. The moon has always revealed New Haven's pagan boys on Fridays and Saturdays.

Tsukigane Pond is on most days little

more than a fishing hole for the idle and a home for nascent frogs. Yet those who gaze upon its surface by the full moon's light may see a beautiful young woman, clad in robes of golden thread, who looks back with curiosity, but soon disappears.

Whitebird Quarry flooded years back.

It's mostly just a swimming hole now filled with cold, still water, with sheer granite walls all around. But under light of the full moon, the wall's reflection in the water shows a gate in the rock face: arched, black as nothing, rimmed with silver runes, and yawning open into the night.

The howl of the wolves is all that keeps

the moon in the firmament. The wolves have lost their voices. The moon is unstuck—and falling.

Ms. Moon is a tracker. Whether man or

beast, she can find it using her "spirit lamp" as she calls it. It looks like an old oil lamp, but you've seen her put something else into it, and it's definitely not a liquid you've seen before.

Timmy Johnson's favourite toy is Mr.

Diddums: a life-sized stuffed teddy bear that sits at the end of his bed. Timmy hugs Mr. Diddums every night before bedtime. But, when the light of the full moon shines through the bedroom window and strikes the bear, Mr. Diddums casts six shadows, smiles widely, and shows his yellow teeth. Timmy doesn't sleep so well on those nights.

You haven't been to Queen's Supplies

for Magickal Practitioners yet? Oh, you have to go. Don't bother with Google Maps—just go to the corner of South and Market in the light of a full moon. Look for the alley just to the left of the hydrant, and—yes, it's there, but it's gotta be a full moon, not just "at night." Anyway, take the alley, down the tree-root stairs, and through the clearing of tents. Do not stop to browse yet—this isn't the store, just a sort of a pop-up flea market, I guess—and definitely do not take any free samples. Let the ferry take you across the mirror lake, and you're there. Just make sure to buy something, or she won't let you take the back entrance out, and getting back the way you came is an absolute nightmare.

Most people don't know this, but if you

squint at the moon just right, you become aware of everyone else also viewing the moon the same way, and can talk to any or all of them as long as you all keep looking.

The temple of Kolu is not made of met-

al or stone as it purports to be. The moonlight reveals it is made from the bones of the gods Kolu forgave.

Those who have no shadow in the

moon's light have been marked by the moonwalkers. At first it's a movement at the edge of your eye. It is not there if you look. But each time you glance away, it is closer in your periphery. Until it is upon you. The only way to rid yourself of a moonwalker is to stare long and desperately into the eyes of one you love. If you're lucky, the moonwalker will find your love more tempting and leave you with your guilt.

Every full moon lines up perfectly with

the pillar at Haesoo'an's Temple so that it appears to be resting in the uplifted hands of the Goddess. That's not possible, of course, unless the pillar is moving.

Looking down, the moonlight casts an unmistakable silhouette on the jungle floor. Looking up, you notice that the stars and sky between thick canopy form the shape of the mythical Shimmering Beast. And then, the moon blinks.

Along the Walkway of the Brothers of Night, the light of a full moon reveals the true form of their elder sister pursuing her vengeance against them for their mother's death. Those mortals who see her true form are called to join her quest, her howling pursuit.

The moon will hum, you know, on certain nights. Respond with the same tone and she will ignore you. Harmonize with her and you must join her celestial chorus forever.

The one safe course through the reefs to Rakehell's island fortress can only be charted by the bioluminescent sea life gliding along a particular current. They glow brightest and most true on the full moon, which is also known as a "shooter's moon" to the marksmen in the fortress.

On paper the colonization of Alde-baran IV went off without a hitch. But the colonists all know what unsettled the agency enough to censor all outgoing traffic: the moon in the sky above Aldebaran IV is identical, down to the tiniest crater, to the moon above Earth.

The sandstone obelisk is a vestige of the tribe that used to populate these lands. By day, it is a curiosity. By night, a vibration coming from the center of it can be detected with specialist equipment—unless there is a full moon in which case the obelisk, and everything within three-hundred yards of it, is eerily quiet.

The clouds hang heavy here, and every day is much the same. But if the moonlight breaks through, you may see the town as it is: a still-smoldering ruin.

The city of Mooncurse got its name from a dark spell that causes any who see their reflection by moonlight to be attacked by their reflection and pulled into the Moonsea. Their drowned corpse will appear the next night, smelling of the faraway sea...

Moonlight turns the Hekle worm's flesh inside out. If you dig one out of a corpse and expose it on a clear night, you'll see tiny fragments of the memories it's eaten.

M00n!ght is the drug of the neo-Catholics, torturers, and revenge-seekers. A drop in the eye strips away all the illusions and, let's be frank, the lies you tell yourself. You're not beautiful, strong, or smart. They don't love you, and your best "art" is a piece of shit. Tell them what they want to know, and let them put you out of your misery.

Jean Livingston is an ordinary woman. She has an ordinary job, an ordinary car, and when she comes home at night, she spends time with her ordinary cat. Unless it's the night of the anniversary of when her husband and children were brutally murdered, in which case she goes into the backyard to greet them, their forms silhouetted in moonlight, and begs them for forgiveness, which she never receives.

The trees of the Shadow Grove are dead, twisted things. But in the light of the moon their leaves return and their spectral fruit can be picked.

Lucy Westenra's skull (yes that Lucy Westenra), normally mottled with stains of blood and rot, shines pale in the light of the full moon, and that pallid jaw gnashes hungrily around children. Could it be a psychic link to Dracula, if he somehow still lives?

When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, that's the signal to start the invasion.

CODEx

KEEPERS

Aaron, Keeper of the Child Upon Whom We Dare Not Look

Jesse Abelman, Keeper of the Moon's First Memory

Rob Abrazado, Keeper of the Purple Falsehood

Joaquin Aguirrezabalaga, Keeper of the Blood of Lursiss

Vendevogel Alain, Keeper of the Omegatherion of Fasar

Alan, Keeper of the Wanting Widows of Thon the Promiscuous

John Alexander, Keeper of the Child Whose Face is a Mirror

Zach Alexander, Keeper of the Weeping Cells

Brendan Allison, Keeper of the Child Who Creeps and Crawls

Bryen Alperin, Keeper of the Sibylline Grimoire

Gary Anastasio, Keeper of the Bludgeons of Ecstasy

Dustin Andrews, Keeper of the Egg of Existential Dreaming

Vincent Arebalo, Keeper of the Dolm Sarcophagus

John Atwood, Keeper of the Diary of Sanguine is the Eye

Chad Bale, Keeper of the Chimes of Misery

Noah Ban, Keeper of the Maze of Unending Pleasure

Joe Banner, Keeper of the Pedigree of Two-Faced Demons

BansheeGames, Keeper of the Lost Child's Breadcrumbs

Michael Barford, Keeper of the Eternal Chime

Jacob Bates, Keeper of the Fleeting Blooms

Lyndon Baugh, Keeper of the Trial of the Second Birth

Joe Beason, Keeper of the True Name of Ashmedai

David Beaudoin, Keeper of the Clock's Fourth Hand

Rick Beck, Keeper of the Five Limbs of Acolia

Dan Behlings, Keeper of the Iridescent Ungulates

Mathias Belger, Keeper of the Spectral Hounds

Matt Bevilacqua, Keeper of the Beetle's Teeth

Al Billings, Keeper of the Dun Spirit of Disobedience

André Bogaz e Souza, Keeper of the Refined Rose Dust of Daar Angúl

Boni, Keeper of the Thirteen Principles of Volmun

David Bowers, Keeper of the Rootless Forest

Sophia Brandt, Keeper of the Dying Heart

Patrick Brannick, Keeper of the True Name of Abbadon

Brett, Keeper of the Seven False Smiles

Darren Brockes, Keeper of the Agony Songs

Stephanie Bryant, Keeper of the Vessel that Once Held the Silver Dragon's Eyes

Mike Burnett, Keeper of the Fire of Nal-K'aa

John Campbell, Keeper of the Dark Shard of Nemrath

Freya Campbell, Keeper of the Litch Child's Last Rites

Mike Carlson, Keeper of the Obsidian Forests of Yend

Andi Carrison, Keeper of the Unknowable Words

Bill Carter, Keeper of Rengollis's Gaseous Blood

Matthew Caulder, Keeper of the Blue Masquerade

Mark Causey, Keeper of the Lotus-Dweller's Fortunes

Alexander Chambers, Keeper of the Woman Whose Face is Naught But Tentacles

Bay Chang, Keeper of the Heart of Lursiss

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Cubano, Keeper of the Iron Troll's Menagerie

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Will Davies, Keeper of the Holy Seals Carved from Valoña's Bones

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Joshua DeGagne, Keeper of the Sword of Aloester Graymantle

Philippe Delmott, Keeper of the Last Light of St. Lannen the Pure

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Jacob Densford, Keeper of the Rusted Metropolis

Rob Deobald, Keeper of the Child Who Turns the Key

Aaron DeRosa, Keeper of the Nightmare Diadems

Steven desJardins, Keeper of the Black Between the Stars

Mark DesLauriers, Keeper of the Goblet of the Maudlin Priest

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Mark Diaz Truman, Keeper of the Clockwork Corvid

Jeffrey Dieterle, Keeper of the Red Drums of Bellona

Ian Donald, Keeper of the Dying Grottoes

David Dorward, Keeper of the Fetid King's Ashes

Matt Doughty, Keeper of the Well of Immaculate Blood

Tim Dreier, Keeper of the Bone Crown of Old King Smule

Bryant Durrell, Keeper of the Golden Shroud

Mark Durrheim, Keeper of the Little Gravestone Doors

Herman Duyker, Keeper of the Beast Masks

Arthur Eames, Keeper of the Roar of K'al Ha-whalit, High Drake of M'huun

Eli Eaton, Keeper of the Stone Sparrow's Heart

Vincent Eaton-Valencia, Keeper of the Orc King's Quivering Regret

Harald Eckmüller, Keeper of the Invisible Mouth of Molek

edchuk, Keeper of the Sorrow of Morning Mist Castle

Paul Edson, Keeper of the Secret of the Thousand Cuts

Matthew Egger, Keeper of the White Bats of Good Queen Jedra

Kurt Ellison, Keeper of the Shining Sadness

Nick Emmerich, Keeper of the Last Tears They Shed

Tor Erickson, Keeper of Brother Elijah's Last Breath

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Andy Evans, Keeper of the Woman Who Scrawls the Symbols

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Mark Fenlon, Keeper of the Undulating Brood of Clarissa Dunlop

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Asbjørn Flø, Keeper of the Ten Hidden Keys

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Kevin Flynn, Keeper of the Vermin Chaplet

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Daniel Fowler, Keeper of the Unidentified Artifacts

Josh Fox, Keeper of the Pitch-Black Sails

Lowell Francis, Keeper of the Black Quill

Brian Frank, Keeper of the Reflecting Pool of Galaurang

Michael Friese, Keeper of the Smoke Sylphs

Mirko Froehlich, Keeper of the Man Who Dies Every Third Day

furst77, Keeper of the Invisible Candle

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Hayley G, Keeper of the Selkie's Secret

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Nicolás Garcia Lanza, Keeper of the Mossy Robes of the Green Monk

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Tim Jensen, Keeper of the Pilgrim's Forge
K Jeremy, Keeper of the Bloody Road to Bellet Osc
Fada Joe, Keeper of the Skull Which Catches the Blood
Wright Johnson, Keeper of the Cliff of the Crying Saints
Justin, Keeper of the Nightmare Crèche
Derek Kamal, Keeper of the Sacred Bees and the Honey of Salvation
Stephen Karnes, Keeper of the Hare Skull and the Blue Candle
Kassidy, Keeper of the Flask of Sorrows
Jay Kemberling, Keeper of the Hollow Squire
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Shane Liebling, Keeper of the Unlearnable Alphabet
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Tyler Lominack, Keeper of the Burning Pages
Benjamin Longcor, Keeper of the Child Who Has No Shadow
Eduardo Lorente, Keeper of the Chambers of Gentle Understanding
Bryan Lotz, Keeper of the Skull of the Wax Child
Kevin Lovecraft, Keeper of the Flesh-Bound Book
Benjamin Loy, Keeper of Evlaar's Glass Bellows
Ryan Macklin, Keeper of the God Sarcophagi
Rory MacLeod, Srorrim Ni Nees Eb Ylno Nac Hcihw Taht Fo Repeek
Jeremy Mahr, Keeper of the Almanac of Leng
Steve Mains, the Keeper Who is Beyond Our Reach
Eric Maloof, Keeper of the Child Who is a Nest for Spiders
Josh Mannon, Keeper of the Twisted Teeth of Garthuul
Volker Mantel, Keeper of the Children of Malgolian
Manu, Keeper of the Little Box with a Tongue and Mirror Inside
Manu Marron, Keeper of the Automata Philosophica
Eugene Marshall, Keeper of the Autumnal Princedoms
Mike Martens, Keeper of the Thousand Verses of Voe'huul
Keith Martin, Keeper of the Woman Who Screams the Prophecies
Colin Matter, Keeper of the Labyrinth Beneath the Sands
Mikel Matthews, Keeper of the Scarification Blades
Christine Maunsell, Keeper of the Alchemical Blade
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Lee McDaniel, Keeper of the Crown of King Ahanu the Laughing
Tom McGrenery, Keeper of the Two Tongues
Casey McKenzie, Keeper of the Pain Repast
Alex McManamon, Keeper of the Rainbow Shores
Lauren McManamon, Keeper of the Secrets of Quachil Uttaus
Ryan McNeil, Keeper of the Floating Flesh Monolith

Christo Meid, Keeper of the Tainted Feast
Daniel Mejia-Onat, Keeper of the Wind God's Lungs
Nery Mejicano, Keeper of the Magister's Chain
Michael Mendoza, Keeper of the Sleeping Pygmy
Darius Meskauskas, Keeper of the Unseen Moons
Corey Metcalfe, Keeper of the Most Delectable Wyrms Viscera
Sophie Middis, Keeper of the Midnight Court of Old Queen Rianne
Kristopher Miller, Keeper of the Chain That Bound Desmond the Soul-Shattered
Steve Moore, Keeper of the Final Syllable, Which Must Not Be Uttered
Christopher Moore, Keeper of the Five Poisons
Jim Morris, Keeper of the Darkstar Instruments
Harry Morris, Keeper of the Sebayt of Silver Dreaming
Jim Morrison, Keeper of the First Starlight
Elias Mulhall, Keeper of the Child Who Dies Each Night
John Muste, Keeper of the Word that Binds and Blinds
Brent Naylor, Keeper of the Star Beyond the Veil
Phillip Neitzel, Keeper of the Oculus Tenebris
Keith Nelson, Keeper of Braegon's Anguished Ashes
Adam Ness, Keeper of the Axe of Jeffery Bleakwood
Ben Newland, Keeper of the Unlit Effigy
Joshua A.C. Newman, Keeper of the Bronze Glyphs
Chris Newton, Keeper of Where the Lone Wolf Sleeps
Jessica Niles, Keeper of the Horn that Echoes the Cries of the World
Sean Nittner, Keeper of the Wolves of Fall
Robert Nolan, Keeper of the Furtive Manikin
Adam Nordin, Keeper of the Vault of Atrocities
Patrick O'Leary, Keeper of the Reel of Dreams
Tyler Oden, Keeper of the Blessed Venom Sacs
okokok, Keeper of the Carnifax of Hyluren
Andy Olson, Keeper of the Broken Bones of Askorath
Oporst, Keeper of the Bright Eyes of St. Hanneffin the Flame
Johannes Oppermann, Keeper of the Temporal Rift
Oriflamme, Keeper of Moonpoison's Magnificent Hurdy-Gurdy
Justin Ortega, Keeper of the Midnight Palace
Ray Otus, Keeper of the Endless Page
James Page, Keeper of the Seed-Sacks of Jonjon Applecore
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