

# UNCANNY ECHO

SERIALIZED ROLEPLAYING  
ISSUE 8: FABRICATION



# WHAT THIS IS

*Uncanny Echo* is a serialized roleplaying game. It borrows from part of the Apocalypse World engine created by D. Vincent Baker and Meguey Baker. Games using elements of the Apocalypse World engine are often referred to as Powered by the Apocalypse (PbtA).

*Uncanny Echo* contains small, episodic stories rooted in mysterious or eerie events that unravel with each issue. Something somewhat normal becomes something else: surreal, unearthly... uncanny.

Each issue is a pick-up-and-play one shot, intended to form an ongoing serialized narrative that has a meta-narrative external from any given session. Within these modular experiences, each game will differ greatly with player input. Each uncanny story is of your own making, and unfolds in an emergent manner. You to play to find out what happens with as little cognitive load as possible.

These one shots will sometimes be directly connected to the next issue; other times you will decide how they fit together. They may simulate jump cuts to unrelated events, returning later to the circumstances in previous months, just as a movie or TV show would from scene to scene or episode to episode. As more are released, you may choose to play them in whatever order you choose.

In issue 0: The Heist (available for free), players robbed a bank, based very loosely on the movie *The Town*, with a twist: not all vaults are meant to contain money. What this bank vault kept secure is up to you and the other players.

Each month will be a different experience within the same game world. With each issue, you'll discover how each event relates to the one before it—a process largely determined by you.

# CHANGING THE GAME

You still use stats with modifiers as in most PbtA games. Each stat line is already embedded in each playbook for you. You similarly roll two six-sided dice plus the modifier, as normal.

However, instead of gaining XP or experience, you will instead advance your character using Keys in your playbook. Each Key prescribes specific actions or fiction for your character to play out in your game. When you describe these actions or fiction, you unlock a move in your playbook.

Each Key acts as a narrative guidepost to help pace your game. When you have all your moves (or all the ones you want to use), it is time to corral the story to a conclusion.

Drive your characters like stolen cars. Remember, there is a larger fiction at work beyond this single issue. This one character you embody now might be someone you return to in a later issue, or perhaps someone you will never play again. Either way, the story will move forward.

ISSUE  
EIGHT

# FABRICATION

One part couriers—one part imagineer, Fabricators move in and out of the lives of others unbeknownst to anyone while playing a large part in history—and they don't even know it.

Management dispatches you to a location with a specific vision to execute. Every square inch of the city is your canvas. From rooftops to street art everyday incidents a person might label as trivial; Fabricators influence others' lives, and they do it so nobody knows it's being done.

Nobody knows who the clients are. Nobody wants to know. You're an artist devising and implementing the will of others. No one knows... No one *can* know.

In this issue—inspired loosely by a mash-up of movies *Looper* and *Premium Rush*—you'll be given a concept to make real, a location (referred to as your set), and a time limit. Get there, get it done, and get done in Issue 8: Fabrication.







# HOW TO BEGIN

**First Step:** Make two six-sided Clocks for a 3-4 hour game, or an eight-sided Clock for a slightly longer game. Label one the Progress Clock representing the player characters' progress on their job. Label the other the Time Clock representing the time to complete it.

Each time the plan moves forward in the fiction, a segment of the Clock is filled in to represent that progress. The Clock's progress does not need to be exact; it is merely a helpful pacing tool in service to your fiction.

**Second Step:** Answer the Questions in order on page 9—both before and after you create your character using the one playbook available.

**Third Step:** Choose a stat line; assign modifiers to Creativity and Fitness, mixing and matching each modifier as you prefer to the stat:

-1, +2

0, +1

-2, +3

**Fourth Step:** After answering the questions in step two, create another Clock that combats the PCs if applicable (ie., if it makes sense for them to be against more than just time).

**Fifth Step:** Begin *in medias res* heading to a set (the location you're navigating to, which you will then change with your imagineering skills).

**A typical session** will have the players create characters, choose or create an echo or event from a previous issue to expound upon in this issue, or else make up a new one entirely.

Then, once all the questions are answered, the MC would have the PCs navigating their way to a location tracing (people who use parkour to navigate the city) their way through the city to get there. Circumventing obstacles in their path in terms of both the city literally having obstacles they use to propel themselves forward, but also competition or other factors they might need to surmount represented by the third Clock you created in step four, if applicable.

Once they reach an area, their client will have given them instructions to modify the area for purposes of their own. The players goal is to get this done before the time limit is up. If this location, treated as a set they are staging with their Imagineering move, is an uncanny event or echo in a previous issue, perhaps they are creating what the players know this to look like based on their knowledge from playing that issue.

If not, the MC will have them enact a specific goal. Things like:

- Making an area seem or look uncanny
- Changing the way people might enter the space, literally altering the ways in which they can navigate it
- Making a surface visible or invisible
- Crafting a unique experience, like a theme park ride
- Making a space evoke a specific emotion

Remember: the player characters do not know why they are doing this. Think of it like a courier service where a client orders something, management hands it down, and they send a courier and they do the work. It should be something difficult to enact, worthy of a task of something who must use their creativity to solve a problem others may not be able to do; coupled with their ability to navigate to a space with speed.





# THE QUESTIONS

As in the format of adventure starters in The Gauntlet's monthly zine, Codex, some of the fiction should be devoted to evocative questions about the specific scenario, circumstances, or location. Choose from any of the following questions to answer, or pose some of your own

- 1) What kind of uncanny are you going for? Dark, gritty, intense, scary, etc.
- 2) Do you have a particular uncanny event or echo in mind, such as a previous issue of *Uncanny Echo*, for which you will now use your Fabricators to add to that story?

## **Create your characters, then answer:**

- 1) Have we seen these Fabricators in the background of other issues or is this a new concept being added to your *Uncanny Echo* fiction?
- 2) Is there a direct opposition to Fabricators other than the time factor?
- 3) Are you mundane folks with a strange job, or are you rooted in the uncanny or surreal?

# BASIC MOVES

**Question Your Surroundings:** When you try to understand a situation, roll+Creativity. On a 10+, ask 2. On a 7-9, ask 1. On a hit, also take +1 Hold. When you act on this information take +1 Forward.

- What is the best/fastest way in/out?
- What do I notice despite an effort to conceal it?
- How could I get \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_?

**Act Despite Risk:** When you continue with a course of action that is dangerous, either for you personally or another, tell the MC what you hope to avoid in your actions and then roll+Creativity or +Fitness, depending on how you plan to circumvent this danger.

- On a 10+, you circumvent the problem without issue.
- On a 7-9, in order to do it, you will first have to make a hard choice or you otherwise do it but there are consequences and complications caused by your actions.

**Help or Hinder:** When you spend 1 Hold in order to help someone they roll 3d6 instead of two and take the highest two to get the sum; if you Hinder them, the same, except they use the lowest two. No matter the outcome you are entangled in the result of the roll.

**Inflict Or Receive Harm:** When Harm is taken or done by you, roll 2d6. On a 10+, choose 1. On a 7-9, you choose one and the MC chooses 1. On a miss, the MC chooses 2.

- 1d4 Harm is dealt
- Someone else takes 1d4 Harm
- Mark a segment on the appropriate Clock
- Something important is misplaced, lost entirely, or else broken

# THE FABRICATOR

Name: Oliver, Manon, Jan, Ida, Zoey, Rose, \_\_\_\_\_  
Look: Energetic, Curious, Nervous, Focused, \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity: Asian or South Asian, Black, Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino,  
Indigenous, Middle Eastern, \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender Identity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fashion in keeping with your Look and anything you might need  
for imagineering.

## KEYS

When you do the following in the fiction or one of these things occur in the fiction—you hit one of the following Keys:

- Get to a set on time
- Flashback revealing how you fell into this line of work
- Circumvent an obstacle
- Reveal an obstacle that would have gone unseen
- Take a risk that doesn't pay off

*When you hit a key you gain 1 Hold (max 2). Spend it 1-for-1 to add a new fact about the world or to use the Help or Hinder move.*

## MOVES

**Imagineering:** When you use your skills as an imagineer to alter the space around you, roll+Creativity.

- On a 10+, you do what you set out to, describe what happens.
- On a 7-9, you do it but there is a flaw, a compromise, a trace of you left behind, or it takes more time than you thought it would (mark a segment of the Time Clock).

**HOLD**

**CREATIVITY**

**FITNESS**

**HARM**

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# AGENDA

Above all else, behind every Principle and Move you do, you need to make this Agenda the root of it all:

- Tie events into other *Uncanny Echo* issues
- Give the players a problem worthy of imagineers
- Forge a self-contained story about these individuals that still ends with a question or two unanswered, hanging there
- Play to find out
- Uncover the kind of tone the players want while doing so

# PRINCIPLES

Your best practices for this fiction are as follows:

- Make the fiction and the city feel lived in with “real” obstacles
- Make obstacles multi-faceted and more complex than initially perceived
- Respect the boundaries of the players and considerate of the subject matter
- Address the player character, not the player
- Centralize the fiction on them
- Name everyone
- Linger on details; when you have the time to do so
- Ask questions of the players and then incorporate the details
- Give them a chance to think
- Spotlight all the players
- Show your moves through the fiction, do not speak them



# ALWAYS SAY

Like all Powered by the Apocalypse games, *Uncanny Echo* runs best when you keep your Agenda and your Principles in mind when you're making your moves—both soft Moves and hard ones.

- ...what the Principles demand
- ...what your Agenda demands of you
- ...what the consequences and risks are
- ...what honesty demands

# MC MOVES

You make a Move when a miss is rolled, when you tell them the consequences and they act anyways (a Golden Opportunity), or when they look to you to see what happens next.

- Tie an obstacle to an unforeseen problem
- Insert an uncanny element that defies initial perceptions
- Complicate an obstacle being interacted with
- Make an ordinary activity or event feel and seem uncanny
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask what they do next
- Foreshadow something bad coming in the fiction; now, or later
- Offer an opportunity, with or without strings attached
- Separate them
- Inflict Harm or trade it, as established and adjudicated in the fiction, using a d4
- Put someone in a tough situation
- Turn one of their own moves back on them
- Take something away from them
- Make a small problem a big one

# PATREON

If you like this product, consider helping me out on Patreon, without which this project wouldn't exist. You can find an actual play ongoing podcast exclusive to subscribers of myself and other folks of The Gauntlet gaming community playtesting each issue every month. Find out how our story unfolds, and how it differs from yours!

I also have a blog, Consuming Cyberpunk, where I review and talk about all things cyberpunk (go figure). Additionally, I also edit other podcasts—if you are looking for an individual to provide those services, contact me!

Finally, if you want to support me in any or all of these things, simply click the logo below and become a patron. It would mean a lot to me if you did, hope to see you around soon!

The image shows the Patreon logo, which consists of the word "PATREON" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid red rectangular background. To the right of the word, there is a vertical white line of the same height as the text, which is a characteristic element of the Patreon logo.

**PATREON**

# CREDITS

This product and other Powered by the Apocalypse games are hacks of Apocalypse World, which is a product by D. Vincent Baker and Meguey Baker—both of whom have a Patreon of their own. Click on their names in order to be taken to each of theirs, respectively.

This game and all of my games are always played with the wonderful Gauntlet gaming community. Come game with us! The community is always looking for more people to run games, as well as players. They produce their own zine: Codex, too! It features terrific content every month, with a professional layout designer and fantastic art.

Layout, Design, Writing: Fraser Simons

Cover: Tithi Luadthong—Other Art: By Zeber & Tithi Luadthong

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