



AMONG HUMANS

A GAME FOR ONE PLAYER AND THE INTERNET

I'M A MONSTER. I LOOK HUMAN, BUT I'M NOT. I WANT TO TELL YOU A SAD STORY ABOUT A HAPPY DREAM. THE FIRST TIME I TASTED HUMANITY.

PAST THE RESTAURANTS, WHERE THE HUMANS ARE SPARSE, I SMELL A SWEET DREAM ON THE AIR FROM THIS INN. IT'S RARE TO FIND A GOOD DREAM. HUMANS THINK THEY FORGET ALL THEIR DREAMS, BUT MAINLY THEY JUST FORGET THE BAD ONES. IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT THE BAD ONES ARE ALMOST ALL OF THEIR DREAMS.

I LOOK OVER AT THE MAN PARKING ITS BIKE IN FRONT OF A 7-11. I REALIZE I'M STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD, LEANING TOWARDS THE INN, NOSE IN THE AIR, MY ELECTRIC BLUE TONGUE HANGING OUT. I SUCK THE SALIVA BACK INTO MY MOUTH. IT STARES AT ME WITH WIDE EYES, AS I BACK INTO THE ALLEYWAY BY THE INN, AND DUCK BEHIND A PARTICULARLY RANK SET OF GARBAGE BINS. A MINUTE OR TWO PASSES. MY KNEES HURT. ONCE I FEEL CERTAIN THAT IT ISN'T COMING BACK TO FIND ME, I LET GO OF THE BAG OF CANS AND BOTTLES I WAS PREPARING TO THROW, AND HOBBLE BACK INTO THE ALLEY.

I SEE ONE HUMAN WALK UP WITH LUGGAGE AND I PULL THE SHADOWS AROUND ME AND FOLLOW THE HUMAN INTO THE INN. IT AND THE GIRL HUMAN BEHIND THE COUNTER UNCONSCIOUSLY RUB THEIR EARS. HUMANS DO THAT WHEN I'M CLOAKED.

I PRANCE UP THE STAIRS IN A TRANCE, ONLY TO REALIZE I NEED A KEY FOR THE ROOM. I NEED TO GO BACK DOWNSTAIRS. I RELEASE THE SHADOWS AND CAREFULLY WALK BACK TO THE FRONT DESK, AND WHILE STARING INTENTLY AT THE FAKE LOWERS TO ONE SIDE, I COVER MY MOUTH AND SAY TO THE FEMALE, MY FRIENDS IN ROOM 302. THEY'RE IN THE SHOWER BUT THEY LOCKED THE DOOR AND I NEED TO GET SOMETHING FROM THE ROOM. I GLANCE OVER AND SEE THAT IT'S ACTUALLY SMILING AT ME.

IT HANDS ME THE KEY. ARE YOU FROM KYOTO OR ARE YOU VISITING.

I TAKE MY HAND AWAY FROM MY FACE TO GRAB THE KEY. I'M FROM...
A LITTLE NORTH OF HERE.

ITS EYES GET ALL WHITE AS IT SEES MY BLUE SKIN MOUTH. I QUICK-
LY COVER UP AGAIN AND START BACKING TOWARDS THE STAIRS. IT
OPENS ITS MOUTH AS IF TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT I RUN UP THE STAIRS.
QUICKLY, QUIETLY, CAREFULLY I UNLOCK THE DOOR AND SLIP INSIDE,
TURNING THE LOCK BEHIND ME. MY HEART IS RACING. IT'S COMING UP-
STAIRS, CERTAINLY. BUT THIS DELICIOUS DREAM...

I STEP OVER THE TATAMI IN MY BOOTS. THERE'S ONE IN THE FUTON
AND I BEND OVER, OPEN MY BLUE MOUTH, WIDE, WIDER THAN ANY HU-
MAN, AND INHALE THE WISPS OF SMOKY DREAM INTO MY MOUTH ALL
AT ONCE. THE BLOOD IN MY VEINS GLOWS BLUE. I TASTE AN OLD LIFE-
MATE. I TASTE A QUIVERING HEART. A DREAM OF INFATUATION, OF SEX,
OF SOMETHING ELSE SWEET I CAN'T QUITE UNDERSTAND.

BUT THEN THE DREAM STOPS. THE OLD MAN DREAMER GASPS, SUCKING
AIR INTO ITS LUNGS BEFORE TENSING UP AND GOING LIMP. I PANT AS
THE DREAM COURSES THROUGH MY VEINS LIKE MONSTER HEROIN.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

I PANIC. IT'LL SEE THE DEAD ONE AND THINK I KILLED IT... DID I KILL
IT? I'M STILL GLOWING. THE DREAM ISN'T FADING. THERE'S NOWHERE -
NOWHERE TO GO. I LOOK AT MY REFLECTION IN THE WINDOW: I LOOK SO
AFRAID, SO LONGING, THE LIFE-MATE ON MY MIND... IS THAT LOVE? I'M
CONFUSED. I'D LOOK HUMAN, IF I WEREN'T COVERED IN LINES OF BLUE
LIGHT.

I RUN ACROSS THE ROOM AND JUMP OUT OF THE WINDOW. ALL AROUND
ME, HUMANS ARE STARING, LOOKING AT MY SKIN, AT MY PANTING,
DRIPPING TONGUE, AT THE BLOODY GLASS. I SWING MY HEAD LEFT-
TO-RIGHT. THE MARKET. EXHAUSTED, I CLOAK AGAIN AND HOBBLE
THROUGH THE CROWD, IN A WAKE OF RINGING EARS.

I LIE IN THE GRASS UNDER THE BRIDGE. THE DREAM WASN'T SATISFY-
ING. I ALMOST FEEL GUILTY. DID I KILL IT, THAT DREAMER? WHEN I
FINALLY SLEEP, I SEE A NIGHTMARE ABOUT THE OLD MALE'S LIFE-
MATE.

I LEARN THE VALUE OF HUMAN MEMORIES. DOES THIS
MAKE ME... LIKE ONE OF THEM?

RULES

Post this online:

"I'm a monster. I look and sound human, but I am not. My lair is in [pick a real city]. I am getting out, though, because I desperately need [pick a need]. I must satisfy my need, and return safely to my lair.

"You, my reader friend, may join one of three factions. You do this by responding to a question addressed to that faction. If your answer is selected, then, for the remainder of this story, you will be a member of that faction. If no answer of yours has yet been selected, you remain factionless, and may answer any question you like.

"One faction is The Public. The Public's goal is to see me exposed and destroyed. A second faction is The Authority. The Authority's goal is to silence and trap me. The final faction is The Horror, which would see me truly become a monster and destroy myself and all around me. Your goal is the same as your faction's goal, if you have one. You might not be able to accomplish it, since the other faction's goals don't match yours, but try your best anyways. And besides, you're only allowed to answer my direct questions.

"The rules:

1. You can only answer my questions.
2. If you belong to a faction, only answer questions addressed to that faction.
3. If you don't know the answer, make it up!
4. Try to keep your answers short.
5. If your answer is disruptive, I can ignore it, downvote it, delete it, etc.
6. Otherwise, I have to go with the first answer somebody gives. There'll be some way to indicate I've chosen your answer."

SETTING

You may set your tale in any city (or place) that takes your fancy.

Alternatively you may create an imaginary city.

The most important element is that you must have a lair; a safe place where you can hide from the world.

CREATING YOUR MONSTER

Your monster will have Needs, Features and Signs. You may have as many as you want.

NEEDS

Monsters have Needs. It is because of their Needs that a monster will leave its lair and brave going among humans. Your story will follow your quest to fulfill your Need and the obstacles you face in doing so.

Pick one of these or make up your own:

- Eat fresh meat.
- Fulfill a promise.
- Consume books.
- Stay warm, safe.
- Bathe in motor oil.
- Find clothes that aren't sticky.
- Burn milk and inhale the smoke.

I HAVE TO GO OUT... MY CLOTHES ARE ALL MUCOUSY AGAIN. I SHOULD GET SOME NEW ONES. WHERE S THE LOST AND FOUND AT THE GYM. MAYBE THE LAUNDROMAT OVER BY THE PARK?

CHARACTER FEATURES

Monsters have monstrous powers. Pick one, or make your own.

- I can jump and balance like a cat, and my eyes flash at night like one's too.
- Locks open when I touch them, anything that requires a key or code really, but they'll never lock again after that.
- I am impossibly beautiful, and from a reasonable distance humans are completely enchanted by me.
- The surface thoughts of people around me sound like chanting.

WHEN I TOUCH SOMEONE, THEY LL STOP MOVING FOR A FEW SECONDS. IT S REALLY WEIRD, AND I DON T LIKE DOING IT, BUT IF YOU NEED SOMEONE S WALLET, I GUESS THERE S NO MORE CONVENIENT WAY!

SIGNS

Monsters are different, they have signs. Choose something that could give you away, or make one up, and put it somewhere in your post:

- My blood is thick and yellow in color like mustard.
- I cannot blink, although I do have eyelids for some reason.
- I cannot speak without drooling copious saliva.
- I smell like burnt hair. Sometimes wet burnt hair.

I SECRETE MUCOUS THAT HELPS ME ABSORB OXYGEN, BUT IF I GET TOO SLIPPERY IT S HARD TO STAY IN THE RAFTERS. FALLING DOWN ON HUMANS ISN T FUN, YOU KNOW?

BEGINNING PLAY

Add in your post a few sentences describing your lair and how long you have taken shelter there. Say what you're near and what you're doing on your way to get your need, and then: "I sense something that starts to make me feel uneasy. What is it? The Authority should answer."

GODS IF ONLY I COULD GET AN APARTMENT WITH A WASHER AND DRIER. I MEAN, THERE S NO WAY, BUT NEEDING NEW CLOTHES EVERY TIME THESE ONES GET TOO MOIST IS A REAL NUISANCE. IT S UP THIS WAY RIGHT. WAIT... SOMETHING S NEARBY. THIS IS BAD. WHAT IS IT?

IN PLAY

Always ask for details that interest you. Always say what you're doing right now. Always ask what happens next. In your narration, always refer to humans with the pronoun 'it'. Unless otherwise specified, try to alternate which faction answers. Your job is to get your monster into loaded interactions with humans and follow your Needs. Play to find out if you can survive, and if you have any humanity in you.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

I SEE A HUMAN. IT KNOWS. WHAT GIVES ME AWAY? THE HORROR SHOULD ANSWER .

I HAVE BEEN SPOTTED BY A HUMAN. DO I HAVE A CHANCE TO GET AWAY? THE AUTHORITY SHOULD ANSWER.

THE HUMAN IS GETTING SUSPICIOUS. WHAT AM I DOING WRONG? THE PUBLIC SHOULD ANSWER .

I GIVE THE HUMAN POWERS. WHAT DOES IT DO? THE PUBLIC SHOULD ANSWER

I ATTACK THE HUMAN. WHAT DO I DO TO IT? THE HORROR SHOULD ANSWER

I ESCAPE INTO THE SEWER AND RUN DOWN A TUNNEL. WHAT DO I SEE? THE AUTHORITY SHOULD ANSWER

IT KNOWS. IF I DON T KILL IT NOW, IT WILL GET HELP. CAN I KILL IT BEFORE IT DOES? THE AUTHORITY SHOULD ANSWER .

IS THERE A PLACE AHEAD WHERE I MIGHT LOSE THEM? THE AUTHORITY SHOULD ANSWER

IS THERE A POWER I CAN USE TO HIDE? THE HORROR SHOULD ANSWER

IS THERE ONE OF THEM WHO MIGHT PROTECT ME FROM THE OTHERS? THE PUBLIC SHOULD ANSWER

Keep in mind that the same question may be appropriate for different Factions, though the responses you get will likely be entirely different.

FACTION: THE PUBLIC

The Public responds to questions about humanity and their reactions to you. Importantly, the Public deals with individual humans and mobs of them but not institutions such as police, media or government (that is the province of the Authority).

The goal of the Public is to see your monstrosity for what it is and destroy you. As humans spot your signs they may attack you or alert other humans to your presence.

If the Public manages to alert further members of the Public they may form a mob which will hound you. This may force you into exposing yourself further.

The Public may manage to bring you to the attention of the Authority, which may become your only method of avoiding immediate destruction. The more the Public becomes aware of you, the more the Authority will be able to track you.

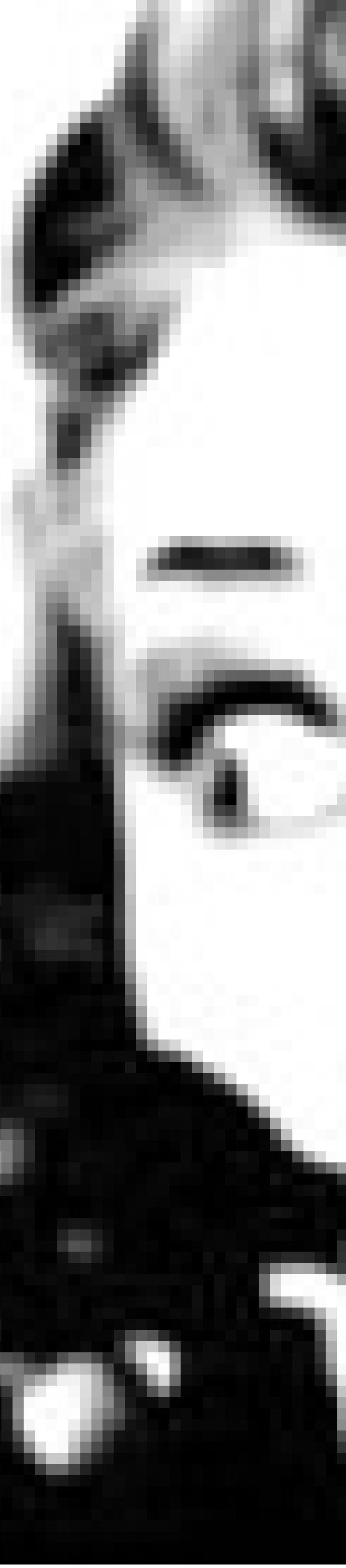
You may of course attack a human, which releases the Horror upon them. However, the Horror will likely create even more trouble for you by leaving a terrible crime scene.

You ask questions of the Public whenever:

- You meet a human
- A human notices your Signs
- You try to avoid a human
- When a human is chasing you
- When a human tries to flee you
- When you want something from a human
- Whenever a human acts
- When you try to understand a human

At the end of a successful story where you have managed to return to your lair after fulfilling a Need, you may make a statement about what you have learned about humans. You may use this knowledge in the future (see the Systems chapter).

The Public manage to achieve their goal if they expose you



FACTION: THE AUTHORITY

The Authority responds to questions about society, the environment and other obstacles that stand in the way of your Needs. The Authority does not deal with individual humans (such as a security guard) but it does control the institutions around them (such as security systems, alarms, SWAT teams and the media).

The goal of the Authority is to prevent you from affecting the status quo and to capture, trap or isolate you. Your very existence goes against everything the Authority stands for. The Authority wants to prevent you from being able to exist among humans.

If the Authority manages to add enough obstacles to your story they can add ever more until you have no ability to overcome them. Once you are completely powerless the Authority will capture you and you will never be seen again.

You may be able to overcome obstacles by exposing yourself. However, this may bring you to the attention of the Public.

As always, you may be able to counter the Authority by releasing the Horror. As always, this can create its own problems.

You ask questions of the Authority whenever:

- You encounter potential obstacles
- You encounter law enforcement, media, emergency services or other public institutions
- You try to sneak somewhere
- You try to break in somewhere
- When you need to know what features are in a location
- When you study the happenings in an area
- Whenever you look for an escape route
- When you try to understand the nature of human society

At the end of a successful story where you have managed to return to your lair after fulfilling a Need, you may make a statement about what you have learned about human society. You may use this knowledge in the future (see the Systems chapter).

The Authority manages to achieve its goal if they trap and/or isolate you.

FACTION: THE HORROR

The Horror responds to questions about violence, pain and destruction. It is a symbol of your darkest and most wicked urges. It cares nothing for safety, compassion or humanity and exists only to bring suffering into the world, even if it means destroying you in the process.

The goal of the Public is to see you become an utter monster. The more you succumb to the Horror the stronger it will become. It would see you destroy any vestige of humanity you may possess.

If you must rely on the Horror for assistance it will result in consequences that will require you to use it again.

You may utilize the Horror to counter the immediate threat of the Public or the Authority, but there will likely be consequences that will bring either one or the other of these threats back upon you. It is wise to rely on the Horror sparingly for it has no desire to see you survive.

You ask questions of the Horror whenever:

- You use violence
- You attempt to intimidate a human
- You attempt to destroy a tool of the Authority
- When you use a supernatural power
- When you lose control of yourself
- When you encounter another monster
- Whenever dealing with dangerous animals

At the end of a successful story where you have managed to return to your lair after fulfilling a Need, you may make a statement about what you have learned about yourself. You may use this knowledge in the future (see the Systems chapter).

The Horror manages to achieve its goal if it causes you to destroy yourself or submit to the darkness within yourself.

SYSTEMS

Each Faction begins a story with a Threat Rating of 1 die. Whenever you are unsure as to which Faction would have the right to answer your questions, roll the Threat dice for each Faction.

Whichever Faction has the highest number on their die wins the right to answer your next question.

If there is a tie for first place, you may answer the question yourself.

As the tale continues, you may grant the various Factions extra Threat dice as seems appropriate (usually if they are advancing their Faction goals). Adding extra dice allows for extra answers to be taken into account.

If the Faction who rolls the highest die has also managed to roll multiple other dice of the same result, then you do not take only the first answer but others as well. The number of extra comments equals the number of extra results rolled.

SO FAR IN MY STORY I HAVE MANAGED TO REIGN IN THE HORROR AT THE EXPENSE OF EXPOSING MYSELF TO MUCH OF THE PUBLIC, WITH THE AUTHORITY TAKING SOME NOTICE. THE PUBLIC HAS 4 THREAT DICE, THE AUTHORITY HAS 2 AND THE HORROR HAS 1.

I ROLL THE DICE. THE HORROR HAS ROLLED A 4. THE PUBLIC HAS ROLLED A 2 AND THREE 1S. THE AUTHORITY HAS ROLLED TWO 5S.

THE HIGHEST RESULT IS A 5, SO I MUST ASK A QUESTION OF THE AUTHORITY. HOWEVER, SINCE THEY ROLLED A SECOND 5 I WILL HAVE TO COMBINE THE FIRST TWO ANSWERS I RECEIVE.

ENDING

Sadly, your monster is doomed. It may exist for some time among humans but it cannot last forever.

Once a Faction manages to succeed in their goal you must give them a chance to end the story and resolve loose ends.

Ask the winning Faction what becomes of you, what happens to your body, what happens to your lair, what proof remains of your existence, and what lasting effects remain from your actions.

And then get ready to play the game again, of course.

CAMPAIGN PLAY

If you are playing for an extended period, you may allow the Factions to begin with extra Threat Ratings depending on how many monsters they have managed to achieve their goal against.

To help you against this, you may introduce knowledge your monster has learned to disallow that Faction from rolling in a contest.

There is a human outside this closet. It may walk by or it may not. I feel a hunger for his eyeballs welling inside me. I don't know what to do. My only solace is that I at least chose an area away from those security cameras that spotted me last time. (I am removing the Authority from influence).

You don't ever have to tell the Factions when you roll for them, nor what their totals are. In fact, they never need to know the system at all.

Alternatively, you may use this system in a tabletop environment with Faction players rolling the dice themselves.

VARIANTS

Murderer: instead of a monster you are a human serial killer. All supernatural elements are removed. The Factions remain the same.

Robot: you play as a robot who is attempting to become more human. The Factions change. The Public remains and would reboot you to basic programming if you give yourself away. The Authority becomes The Program, which forces you to follow it and would see independent thought and identity suppressed. The Horror becomes The Virus which would force you to act erratically and dangerously, exposing you to the Public.

CyberSpy: you are a spy in a foreign or alien environment. The Public and the Authority remain largely the same. The Horror becomes the Training, which accesses implanted procedures given by your handlers.


REPLAYS

Among Humans is set up like interactive serial fiction. Feel free to try different formats or different wording. The game makes it easy to play, but don't let that hold you back. If you have a story to tell, this game is meant to be read, so go wild.

In Japan there's this tradition of publishing Replays, which are short stories or novels based on the events of roleplaying sessions. This game is perfect for inspiration for Replays.

Let's tell stories.





**I AM MONSTER. I LOOK LIKE YOU. I TALK
LIKE YOU, MOSTLY. BUT INSIDE I AM DIF-
FERENT, AND THAT MAKES YOUR WORLD
DANGEROUS FOR ME. YOU WOULD CATCH
ME. YOU WOULD KILL ME. WORSE, YOU
WOULD HOLD ME DOWN AND STICK ME,
TEST ME, HURT ME. LIFE AMONG HUMANS
IS HARD.**

a storytelling game about
passing in society
paranoia
and deep, deep longing

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