





THALASSOPHOBIA

A GAME OF TERRORS AND TRAITORS

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INTRO

Synopsis:

On the surface Bay City seems like the perfect place to live. Quiet, tranquil, and right next to the ocean. But every time it rains people go missing. The bodies are never found and most people just seem to forget about them. There are only a handful of Chosen people whose memories remain intact and they all share one thing in common. Each one of them has had a brush with the same suited man carrying an umbrella. The Suit spoke to them very little, but still its voice wriggles into their heads compelling them to perform unspeakable acts. The Voice never goes away, no matter how much time or distance passes between the meeting. If the Chosen are to retain any semblance of sanity, they must band together as unlikely allies and venture out into the rain in search of The Suit. It's time to put an end to the madness that is drowning Bay City.

"Come find me, my Chosen...We'll be waiting with open arms!"

Supplies:

This game will require up to (8) D6s, a pair of scissors, and (4) envelopes to play.

"You can't have a good time without the proper tools."

PLAYER BASICS (GM & Players)

Health:

If a player's health drops all the way down to zero they will die. Occasionally, there will be items that can recover a player's health, but there's no telling when these might appear.

"If you knew what we had in store for you, you wouldn't be so afraid to die."

Sanity:

There are numerous ways a player can lose sanity. The simplest way sanity can be lost by a player is if they kill a human, including non-traitor party members. A party member will lose (3) sanity if they kill a human. There are also certain enemies that attack sanity instead of health, but these are expensive to summon. A player may also choose to sacrifice some of their sanity in order to use a skill. Like health, items that restore sanity can occasionally be found.

"Power is addictive. Be careful you don't use too much."

Letters:

A player may also choose to regain (2) sanity at any time, but this requires them to sacrifice a letter from the alphabet of their choice. A player may do this multiple times, but **after sacrificing a letter, if a player ever uses a word with that letter in it, they lose (2) sanity. Unlike sanity and health, sacrificed letters can never be recovered.** A player may also sacrifice a letter to avoid spending sanity on a skill.

"Even your words aren't safe. How much of yourself can you give before there's nothing left to take?"

THE GM'S DUTIES (GM)

General Set-Up:

The GM is responsible for understanding/enforcing the rules when it comes to play, but they are also tasked with playing the part of the game's antagonist, The Suit. As The Suit can speak into the minds of the party, communication between the GM and the party should be mostly in-character unless there is some grave miscommunication that needs to be corrected.

The Suit should be dishonest, condescending, and manipulative towards the party as their main goal is to corrupt them into inhuman monsters. While the GM should not directly lie about the rules, it is encouraged that they mislead the players in other areas such as implying there are more traitors amongst the party than there really are. The GM is also responsible for summoning monsters for the party to face, rolling for their actions, and keeping track of their health. For this reason, it is recommended the GM has paper and pencil with them to take evolving notes.

The GM also needs to create (3) different locations (that change when a clue is obtained) and need to be able describe the different battle scenarios that explain why/what the players are fighting at any given time. For example of the former, you could have your story go from a rainy alleyway, to a pier, to a climactic showdown in an abandoned aquarium. For the latter, you could describe where the monsters are attacking from or describe something horrific they are doing to the city's inhabitants. Consider tying in the characters' backstories. The GM can also help set the tone by dressing the part or by playing ambient rain sounds throughout the game.

This is a game for (3-5) people including the GM and there shouldn't be any overlapping characters. This is because the GM also needs prepare in advance for the game, by cutting out the Sunken versions of the different characters then placing them in envelopes.

"What do you think of our children? Lovely aren't they? Aren't you curious to see how you'll change?"

Summoning Monsters:

Every time the party gets into a combat encounter the GM needs to roll a set number of D6s (starting with two). The sum total of the D6s is The Suit's MP (monster points). Each monster has a set MP cost to summon and The Suit may decide what monsters to summon from the Monster Manual. **MP does not carry over to later encounters, so it is recommended that The Suit uses up as much MP as they can.** Every time the party receives a Clue hinting at The Suit's whereabouts, The Suit can roll another D6. For example, if the party had gathered (2) Clues, The Suit would roll (4) D6s. If these dice came up as (4) (4) (3) (2), then The Suit would have (13) total MP to summon with. The Suit could then summon a combination of creatures and effects that add up to (13) MP or under. For example, (The Voice + Armored Tendril) or (Mind Expunger + 2x Armored tendrils) or even (13x Humans) to name a few. The choice is entirely up to The Suit.

"Oh don't look so surprised! We had to at least pretend you had a chance or you'd never play along..."

STARTING THE GAME (GM)

The Sunken Player Envelopes:

Prior to meeting with their group, the GM should cut up the Sunken Player page and place them in four separate envelopes that correspond with the four professions. Then label the envelopes with the matching profession.

"Oh, what fun! Who doesn't love a mystery?"

Choose Your Profession:

The first step to playing is to tell the players to choose a profession type. Each type has different stats, skills, and equipment they receive, so it is recommended that the players try to make their party as well rounded as possible. After they choose their character, hand them their matching envelope.

"Choose wisely, I know we will."

Traitor Selection:

After the players have selected their characters, the GM needs to tell them all to close their eyes and raise their hands if they want to betray humanity in favor of serving The Suit. **There is no maximum or minimum number of traitors. There might be no traitors or everyone might be a traitor.** Only The Suit knows the identities of all the traitors. The game theoretically becomes much easier for the party if there are no traitors as The Suit will have no one to protect them in the endgame, but The Suit may also take this as an opportunity to sow seeds of mistrust amongst the party by saying something misleading like, "Oh, come on don't leave them all alone!" **However, the players must be aware that someone was a traitor in the event of their death as the GM must describe the party gaining a Clue from their body.**

"We all know how this is going to end. Why not choose the winning side?"

Turning:

If a player loses all of their sanity they will transform into a monster unique to their class, restore up to half of their health (rounding down), and will now attempt to kill the remaining party members. In the event of either a player losing all their sanity or a Traitor remaining in the party upon reaching The Suit, the remaining humans will now have to fight their turned allies. Upon turning into their Profession-specific monsters, players lose the abilities to use items or skills, but regain up to half of their health points and get a new buff.

"You'll all come to us in the end, why even fight it?"

WINNING THE GAME (GM & Players)

The party, The Suit, and any potential Traitors all have unique goals to accomplish.

The Party:

In order to vanquish The Voice in their heads, the party must track down and kill The Suit. In order to find The Suit, the players must collect (3) Clues. A Clue may sometimes be obtained from surviving a conflict with The Suit's monsters, but a Clue will always be gained after killing a traitor. **Be ready, as every Clue you gain will give The Suit one more D6 to summon with.**

"Band together, struggle, run... it doesn't matter. We won't let a single one of you get away."

The Suit:

The Suit wins the game if all the members among the party have either transformed into monsters or have been killed. The Suit loses if the party manages to reach The Suit and if it has no Traitors to protect itself with. **The Suit can also promise players items, including Clues, if they perform an action (anything the GM wants, including killing a teammate) and can deny them their reward if they do not follow the request to the letter.**

"We can wear a thousand faces and speak in twice as many voices. Yours will make fine additions."

The Traitors:

The Traitors' goal is to prevent the other party members from reaching The Suit. Traitors may accomplish this by lying about D6 rolls that fall off the playing surface, refusing to help their teammates, convincing other teammates that someone else is a traitor, outright hostility, or any other underhanded method they might think of. **If they fail to stop the party from obtaining all the Clues they need, the Traitors will transform into monsters and will attempt to kill the party in one last frantic effort. However, while the Traitors are stronger in their monster forms, they will not transform if killed in their human forms prior to reaching The Suit or running out of sanity. The game will end when either all the monsters or players are dead.**

"Our Sunken Chosen...So loyal that they'll trip over themselves to shield us with their bodies."

GAMEPLAY (GM & Players)

Combat:

Upon entering combat, the GM needs to tell the players how many combatants there are and what body types they have. **Don't give away any additional information unless they force you to with a skill.** Combat is resolved when there are no more enemies left to fight and the players choose not to attack anything. During a player's turn, they may either attack something, attempt to talk to it, use a skill, or roll against the GM to run away. There is no turn order, whoever wants to go first needs only to say what action they wish to take and after all players have gone, the monsters will attack. **Also, dice rolls that fall off the playing surface are valid.**

"Isn't it so exciting when lives are on the line? Well, yours not ours of course."

Attacking & Defending: When a player chooses to attack something they must roll a D6 against either the GM or another player depending on whether they are attacking an NPC or another party member. If the attacking player's roll is higher than the defenders, the attacker deals the difference in damage points to the defender (Ex. If the attacker rolls a (4) and the defender rolls a (2), the defender takes (2) damage). If the defender's roll is higher than the attacker's, then the defender takes no damage.

After every player has a chance to attack, the monsters will take their turns. Defending is done in much the same way, but some enemies might be able to attack multiple times, attack multiple people, or even have augmented D6 rolls. **Each player may only attack AND defend once per turn unless specifically stated otherwise. Unlike humans, monsters will defend every time they are attacked. Every time a monster is attacking or defending, the GM will roll a D6 for them in the same manner as the players, although some monsters have unique modifiers that can boost their rolls.**

"Please do try to make this entertaining for us."

Team-Ups:

Anytime a player needs to attack or defend, any or all fellow party members who haven't performed that action this turn can choose to join in on the action and add a D6 roll of their own to massively increase the chances of success. However, this is risky as a team-up attack can only attack one target at a time. A team-up defense might protect one party member, but will use up every participants' ability to defend that turn, leaving them wide open. A team-up must also be declared before the first player's dice is rolled.

"Go ahead and protect each other, it'll eventually come back to bite you."

Items:

Items can be used at any time during the game, can be gifted to other players, and have a variety of different effects. Items may also be used upon other players, even against their wishes.

Weapons do not stack, only one can be used at a time. If you have multiples of either weapon type, you could give one to a fellow party member.

- Medical Supplies: Restores (3) health to any player.
- Tranquilizers: Restores (3) sanity to any player.
- A Melee Weapon (The player can make up their own): Adds (+1) to any attack D6 roll, but does not stack with multiples or other items. Can only be used (3) times.
- Six-Shooter: Can add (+2) to any D6 roll, but can only be used (6) times.

"It's adorable that you think you can fend us off with toys."

Battle Example:

Let's say players 1, 2, and 3 are fighting monsters A, B, and C.

- First P1 decides to go first and attacks monster A. P2 decides to team-up with A and the two of them both roll (4)s making their total roll an (8).
- Monster A rolls for defense, only gets a (2), takes (6) damage, and is killed on the spot.
- P3 tries to attack monster B with their gun. Sadly, they only roll a (2), so even expending a bullet they only have a total attack of (4).
- Monster B rolls a (4) and is completely unharmed.
- Now Monster B attacks P1. Knowing that P1 is very low on health, P2 offers to defend with them.
- Monster B rolls a (6) while both players roll snake eyes. P1 receives (4) damage and is killed on the spot.
- Now, having used up their defense for the turn, P2 is unable to defend themselves as monster C attacks them. P3 is able to defend them, allowing them to survive the turn.
- The surviving players once again have the opportunity to attack.

"Does this get it through that thick primate skull of yours or do we need to speak slower?"

Battle Rewards:

The only reward for killing a transformed non-traitor teammate is whatever items they were carrying. Otherwise, at the end of a battle, the player who got the final hit should roll a die to determine what reward they receive. In the event of a team-up, the player who initiated the attack gets the roll.

The corresponding rewards are:

1. Rest Up (See Take A Breather section below)
2. Medical Supplies
3. Tranquilizers
4. A Weapon (Roll a second D6. If you get (1-3) you receive a melee weapon. If you roll a (4-6) you receive a gun with (6) bullets. See item descriptions above)
5. A Clue
6. A Clue

"Go ahead and grab something nice for yourself. You earned it, didn't you?"

Take A Breather:

After rolling a one, the party will be given a break period in which they are not in immediate danger. During this time you can choose to do one of the following actions.

- Nurse Your Wounds: Roll a D6 and recover health equal to the roll.
- Brief Sleep: Roll a D6 and recover sanity equal to the roll.
- Search For a Clue: Roll a D6 and if you receive a (5-6), you obtain a clue.
- Kill A Teammate: If you believe you have a traitor in your midst, or are worried about someone turning, or just want to kill a teammate for their items you may attack them at this junction and force the party into a battle amongst themselves.

"A fleeting moment of peace. Enjoy it while it lasts."

Losing Your Mind:

In the event in which a player loses all of their sanity, they are required to open up the envelope labelled with their profession and they need to read the un-bolded section aloud to the party. The GM will know what to do from there.

"Here's where things start to get fun."

Professions

The Private Eye:

A veteran turned private eye, you know your way around a dangerous situation. No one is better in a shootout and no one is more shell shocked. You were drawn into this mess after accepting a job to find a missing girl which led you to The Suit instead.

- Starting Health (25)
- Starting Sanity (10)
- Starting Items:
 - Roger: A modified revolver that holds (8) rounds. If you receive any more revolvers, you may transfer as many bullets into Roger as you want. The remaining bullets would be in the other revolver.
 - Pretty Little Pills: A bottle of prescription pills that can restore (5) sanity once.
- Skills:
 - Hot Shot: For (2) Sanity you can roll a D6. Whatever number you get is the amount of times you can fire your revolver that turn. You can shoot just one target or multiple if you wish. A teammate may team-up with you, but every teammate can only team-up on one shot each.
 - Soldier's Experience: For (1) sanity you can reroll a D6 either for an attack or defense. However, if you roll under a (3) it will automatically count as a failure and you will freeze up, skipping your next turn.
 - Analytical Eye: Spend (1) sanity to analyze a single enemy combatant. This forces the GM to describe not just their name, but how they look and how damaged they are.

You can keep track of your items, health, and sanity by filling in the following space and marking the meters below:

Items:

Health: /25

Sanity: /10

"This one is almost too easy. The poor little toy soldier is already half-broken!"

The Mobster:

You are one of the most vicious and eerily pragmatic mob enforcer around. Every person in Bay City who recognizes you is afraid of you. But you aren't dealing with people anymore are you? After trying to find out what happened to your boss, you've suddenly realized that there's a bigger fish.

- Starting Health (20)
- Starting Sanity (15)
- Bane: Refuses to be assisted by a Muckraker.
- Stating Items:
 - A single well-worn aluminum bat that gives a (+1) to D6 rolls for (5) attacks.
- Skills:
 - Brute Force: Spend (2) sanity to add another D6 to an existing roll. Has to be declared before the roll.
 - Free Rain: Spend (3) sanity to automatically wrench yourself free from the grasping hands of an enemy.
 - The Better Part of Valor: Spend (3) sanity to either safely hide for a turn or to escape the encounter entirely.

You can keep track of your items, health, and sanity by filling in the following space and marking the meters below:

Items:

Health: /20

Sanity: /15

"Such a penchant for hurting others. Oh, I think we could do wonderful things together."

The Muckraker:

You are a famously fearless investigative journalist who has worked tirelessly for years to expose mobsters and corrupt officials. You know how to get through dangerous situations without so much as a scratch, thanks to your well-honed investigative instincts. What you lack in stature you more than make up for in determination and near indomitable will. You thought that the mob was behind the recent disappearances and now you wish that they were all you had to deal with.

- Starting Health: (15)
- Starting Sanity: (20)
- Bane: Refuses to be helped by a mobster.
- Starting Item: N/A
- Skills
 - Quick Glance: Spend (2) sanity to identify every enemy combatant, even ones that no else believes are there.
 - Instinctive Guard: Spend (4) Sanity to add a (+3) modifier to a defense roll. Must be declared before the roll is complete.
 - Ironclad Resolve: Spend (7) sanity to ignore any of the following during a battle, (Rainfall, The Voice, or being put to sleep).

You can keep track of your items, health, and sanity by filling in the following space and marking the meters below:

Items:

Health: /15

Sanity: /20

"You want to find the truth so badly? Then don't go blaming us if it drives you mad."

The Doctor:

An exceptionally kind hearted practitioner, you took it upon yourself to investigate why so many of your patients were going missing directly from their beds. What you found in the rainy alleyways of Bay City did not conform to any laws of medical science, but it is far too late to turn back now.

- Starting Health (18)
- Starting Sanity (17)
- Items:
 - A Tranquilizer that restores (3) sanity.
 - Medical Supplies that restores (3) health.
- Skills:
 - Skillful Technique: Spend (2) sanity to restore (2+) more health with Medical supplies.
 - Drift Away: Spend (5) sanity to use an injection to put a monster to sleep for a single turn.
 - Defibrillator: Spend (7) sanity to bring back a dead teammate with (5) health.

You can keep track of your items, health, and sanity by filling in the following space and marking the meters below:

Items:

Health: /18

Sanity: /17

"You haven't a chance out here unless you recant that precious oath of yours."

Sunken Players (GM cuts out and places in labelled envelopes):

Turned Private Eye (The Sunken Soldier):

What cruel fate it was to survive the war only to come home and become this. The PI's head fractured apart and peeled back revealing a cannon made out of bone where their throat used to be. Every shot fired is made of its own body and must be beyond agony, but the Sunken Soldier follows every order to attack without hesitation. **The Sunken Soldier now adds (+2) to every D6 attack roll and regains half their health upon transforming, but cannot use skills or sanity.**

Turned Mobster (The Sunken Pressure):

The Mobster's body twisted in on itself with a sickening crunch that went on longer than one could believe was even possible. Eventually, their flesh expanded and undulated before sprouting malformed asymmetrical limbs everywhere. The whole thing appears to be made of pure muscle and is looking for something to test its strength on. **The Sunken Pressure can now attack twice per turn or can attack two people at once. Those being attacked at the same time can't team-up together. The Pressure also regains half their health upon transforming, but loses the ability to use sanity or skills.**

Turned Muckraker (The Sunken Voyeur):

After looking a little too closely at horrors that the human mind is not equipped to process, the Muckraker's mind was shredded as a giant spotlight lens tore its way viscerally through their forehead. Next, sharp tines exploded through what were once limbs and the monster jumped away to cling to the sides of buildings, its watchful eye drilling into the mind of whoever is unlucky enough to be caught in its gaze. **Its attacks now deal sanity damage rather than health damage and it regains half its health upon transforming, but loses the ability to use skills or sanity.**

Turned Doctor (The Sunken Angel):

The transformation was not merciful enough to be quick with this one. Moist appendages crawled their way out of their back and expanded into great membranous things that might be considered wings if you were truly mad. Those kind eyes in the doctor's skull glacially melted away into sea foam, gifting them a hollow unblinking stare. The Sunken angel, now reborn ascended, will follow anyone in their gaze and send them into a deep sleep from which few awaken. **The Sunken Angel's attacks now restore (1) sanity per hit, but also deal damage to health. The attacks also put players to sleep for a turn if the difference between their rolls is more than (2). While asleep you may not attack or defend. Sleep does not stack. The Angel also regains half their health upon transforming, but cannot use sanity or skills.**

THE MONSTER MANUAL (GM)

You can summon any monster or effect from this list, provided you have enough MP. **You may only summon at max (3) of any type of monster for a single battle (Humans don't count as monsters). While both effects can be summoned in a battle, they cannot be summoned multiple times.**

Monsters:

- Human (Costs 1 MP): A useless fleshy meat sack thrown into the fray. Killing one of these results in a (-3) loss of sanity. Ending a conflict without killing a human results in them rewarding the party. Roll another D6, per human left alive, to decide the reward with the same results as regular battle rewards.
 - Health (1)
 - Can't attack.
 - Body Type: Humanoid
- Drowned Locust (Costs 1 MP): The weakest and smallest of the creatures that make up The Suit's swarm of monsters, their only strength lies in the sharpness of their many teeth. Try not to think of the implications that accompany how young they look.
 - Health (1)
 - Locust attack rolls have a (-1) modifier.
 - Body type: Small Humanoid
- "Human" (Costs 2 MP): A passable facsimile of a human if you don't look too close in its eyes. Like any other monster, it lacks the ability to speak and will attack you if you get close.
 - Health (2)
 - Body Type: Humanoid
- Lost Souls (Costs 2 MP): These jealous creatures were once people who were taken by The Suit's army and forcibly drowned in the puddles littered throughout the city. Now trapped inside of the city's watery reflection, they are only able to reach their arms out into the real world to pull down others to join them.
 - Health (3)
 - Does not deal damage, instead if the GM wins a roll, the grasping hands will pull a party member partially down into a puddle, making them unable to attack anything else until they are freed.
 - Body Type: Puddles

- Puppets (Costs 3 MP): Something about the rain has an adverse effect on people, it makes them tired. But sometimes in Bay City when its citizens fall asleep, something slithers into their mouth and they never wake up. Disgusting tines ripped right through the torso drag these bloated corpses across the ground on their backs like some macabre spider.
 - Health (4)
 - Body Type: Humanoids crawling on the ground
- Armored Tendrils (Costs 3 MP): A collection of writhing centipedes that force a hardened shell forward. It's hardy shell might require teamwork to take down.
 - Health (3)
 - Adds a (+2) modifier to any Tendril defense roll.
 - Body Type: Large Humanoid
- The Vanished (Costs 4 MP): A moving collection of undersea foliage that hides rows of razor sharp teeth. The Vanished can shift their coloring at will to blend in with nearly any surface, especially in the rain, and no one ever sees them coming unless they're looking for them.
 - Health (4)
 - Body Type: Only list that they are here if a Muckraker uses their Quick Glance skill. Otherwise don't count them amongst the other monsters and don't describe its body type (No clear shape).
- Armored Mantis (Costs 4 MP): A drowned insect with a lightweight exoskeleton that provides a decent defense, while still being lightweight enough to allow the creature to punch a hole clean through a man.
 - Health (3)
 - Adds a (+1) modifier to any Mantis defense roll.
 - Can attack twice during any turn.
 - Body Type: Humanoid
- Mind Expunger (Costs 6 MP): A powerful wraith that forsakes physical damage for the ability to drain the sanity from those it strikes.
 - Health (5)
 - Body Type: Ethereal
- Amalgam (Costs 7 MP): A fleshy mass surrounding a giant beak, the Amalgam can either deliver a vicious bite or strike out with multiple pulsating tendrils at once.
 - Health (6)
 - If it uses the bite it can attack one party member with a (+2) bonus to its attack roll.
 - The Amalgam's second attack requires a single roll from the GM, but attacks every party member simultaneously preventing team-ups.
 - Body Type: Giant thing

Effects:

- Rainfall (Costs 8 MP): It's almost always raining these days, but sometimes it feels like there is something different, something malignant in the rain that drains the strength from your limbs.
 - Health (N/A)
 - Reduces all player rolls in this battle by (-1). In a team roll, the total roll would be reduced by one for every player participating.
 - The players must be told that it is beginning to rain harder.
 - Cannot be the only thing summoned in a skirmish.
 - Body Type: N/A
- The Voice (Costs 8 MP): When you hear the voice of The Suit tear its way into your mind you can barely hear yourself think as it begins to pry away every facet of your being.
 - Health (N/A) Lasts until the current battle is finished, but players must be warned of its presence.
 - Cannot be the only thing summoned in a skirmish.
 - Each time it's used it needs to be a different letter.
 - The Suit can pick a single letter in the alphabet and anyone who uses it loses (2) sanity per sentence containing it.
 - Body Type: N/A

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