

YOUR WORK AS A GM

If you are going to be playing as the GM for a Party, your responsibilities are going to be much heavier and different than the Hunters you are guiding. The next section covers how to guide your Players through your story and put them up against great beasts.

First, before every session, it's your job to create an interesting Hunt for your Players consisting of investigation, dangerous situations, mystery, and a Monster to be slain by the end of the Season. It is your job to describe the world, people, Monsters, Hunter's actions, and how others react to them to immerse Players in the experience.

At its core, *Dread of Night* is meant to be a guided improvisational experience where the GM is to create a Hunt for their Players. The GMs mark out the hook, introduction, investigation, preparation, discovery, confrontation, and aftermath. Even though the GM should have this all prepared, how the Players interact with these events can change how subsequent events transpire. For example, if a Hunter is meant to slay an undead creature in order to obtain information from a client about Hunt's main Monster and the Hunter instead forces the information out of the client, the GM must be ready to improvise and change future story beats. One way they could do this with the given example is by having the client hire mercenaries to come after the Hunter later in the mystery, triggering a different combat exchange than anticipated.

GMs should also be encouraged not to railroad the Hunters with their puzzles or mysteries. They should make hurdles and problems for the Hunters that

have more than one answer, to give each Hunter a chance to show off their unique abilities and talents. The GM is encouraged to let the Hunters have moments to shine, not to restrict them to a set path.

THE GM'S PRINCIPLES

The GM's principles are a set of goals and rules every GM should follow and keep in mind whenever they are running a Hunt for Players. These are:

- Immerse your Hunters in the world around them.
- Encourage your Hunters to use their abilities to their full extent and to experiment.
- Fully utilize the creatures and horrors the world has to strike a feeling of Dread in the Players.
- Nowhere and nothing is safe. Civilians, allies, and enemies alike are subject to the forces of the world.
- Consider what is happening off-screen.
- It's alright to give Hunters what they have earned, not what they want.
- You don't always decide what happens. Leave some things up to fate.

BEFORE THE START OF A CAMPAIGN:

Before you start your new campaign there are a few things as a GM you want to consider and figure out:

- Consider the tone and set your campaign will follow. Do you want it to be a dark and gritty no-nonsense wasteland? Do you want it to be a whimsical fantasy land? Or something in between?

- Have a rough outline for the first Hunt. A good first Hunt can hook your Players and get them settled in for a great journey.
- Give your Players a rough idea of the world they will be exploring. Information about their setting can affect their decision when picking a Playbook or creating their character.
- Become familiar with all of the Playbooks so you can assist the Players in choosing their Playbooks.
- Before you start planning the Player's story, you should consider what the Party Composition might be. For more information see page (x).

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION:

Before you can start the first session of your campaign must proceed, there are a few things that must be done and ready:

- Have a tone and setting established for your world.
- Have the first Hunt prepared and ready for play.
- Have the Players look through and decide what Playbook they will be using for the campaign.
- Have the Players choose a "Life Before..." and "Life Now..." selection from the first page of their Playbooks.
- Once all the Players have chosen their Playbooks, the Players will take turns choosing a "Hunter Relation" for each of the other Hunters. These can be used to establish early reasons why the Hunters might know each other, or give a framework for how they will become introduced to one another. These are optional and can be skipped if desired.

AFTER A HUNT

Once a Hunt has been completed, all participating Hunters should increase their Experience level by one and pick a Basic Improvement. If the Hunters reach Experience 3, 6 or 9 they also should pick an additional Advanced Improvement as well as increase their Mastery level by one.

Once the Hunters have completed their Hunt the GM is encouraged to reward the Players with something other than Improvements. Some examples of how this can be accomplished are by providing them with either an Armor or Weapon Enchantment from a grateful local smithy or a unique perk when visiting the town or civilian you helped. Some examples of this are:

Bazali's Favor: You have been granted a certificate of favor from a noble family of the Bazali people.

You can show this to any guard or military official to pass through Bazali borders and request minor assistance and materials.

Alori's Gratitude: After delivering rare Monster materials to the researcher Alori, he's gracious enough to aid you in your journey where he can. Once a Season you can send a letter to Alori and within two weeks he will send back 1 of any Magic or Elemental Consumable.

Creature Log (Zombies): You have fended off enough zombies to get the hang of combating them. +1 Ongoing towards enemies with "Zombie" in their name.

For more examples of custom Moves, see "Customizing Your Play Experience" on page x.

CREATING A HUNT

Even though Experience and Hunters are earned and tracked through Seasons, what punctuates each Season is an overarching Quest. It should be noted that not ALL Seasons require Quests, some can be used to help the Hunters bond, learn more of each other or the world, or just revel in civil and joyful activities. Although any Season that does NOT have a quest does not have a chance to earn Experience.

A Quest is the driving force of each Season and the Hunters' means of living for the most part. A Quest when created should have multiple layers and be something that the Hunters learn piece by piece up until a final crescendo. This doesn't necessarily mean the Hunters have to be tricked, or out witted, even if the truth of the matter is obvious a slow build up to a final confrontation is what makes the most exciting Quest.

In general a Quest should have a few different parts, this is by no means gospel, but a guideline. Anything that strikes the GM with inspiration or they find as a good addition or idea we encourage them to follow it.

THE HOOK: This is a moment even before the Introduction, something that tells a bit about what's going on, not quite enough to involve the party, but enough to convey something is up. This could be a mysterious corpse found outside of town, a strange rumor from a passerby, weird signs hung up in a village, or an ominous fortune given to a hunter. Something that grabs their attention and lets them know something is happening even if they don't know exactly what.

THE INTRODUCTION: This is when the Quest is actually brought forth to the Party, the official invitation or information necessary for them to decide if they want to accept or pass on it. This can be a meeting with a client, someone who knows the problem first hand, or a first encounter with the problem itself. This will validate any ideas they might have about the Hook or at least be enough to allow the Party to make a decision, is this their problem?

THE INVESTIGATION: Although they will have enough information to know there is a problem and they want to fix it, but not really enough to do much about it. This phase usually has the most Player agency but will allow them to try to find that first piece of the puzzle. The GM should lay out threads for the Hunters to follow some dead ends, some red herrings, and some ominous foreshadows of what is to come. Enough should be learned to allow the Party to take their next step and something that feels actionable, although it is recommended that the GM does not play their entire hand quite yet, mostly this is used to give a first task and possibly a real encounter.

THE PREPARATION: This is a phase in which the Hunters prepare for what is ahead, buying equipment, acquiring aid of NPC's, scouting the area, learning of the threat and its weaknesses. This is past the preliminary learning and into the actionable step where the Hunters get ready for what lies ahead. It should be noted that this phase in specific can be repeated and placed in between almost any phase after the Introduction. So GM's may opt to have an Introduction, then Preparation, then Investigation then another Preparation. Or they may even opt to skip this step entirely, it is a very flexible stage and up to the whim of the GM and Party how truly necessary it is.

THE DISCOVERY: This is the phase in which the truth of the matter is laid bare, this will elevate the stakes most likely and bring in an aspect either the Hunters were not expecting or were not dealing with beforehand. This can be a mastermind behind the threat, the arrival of another hostile faction, or the truth of what they were taking part in. This can also be seen as the twist

or the turning point of the Quest, it doesn't always have to be a surprise but this is definitely where we rapidly approach a climax and things are not as they were. In Rare cases it can be fun to almost skip this step and throw Hunters into a chaotic and messy climax disillusioned about what is right, but in most quests this is the most exciting part so it is encouraged to take your time with it.

THE CONFRONTATION: This is the finale, or what the Quest was slowly building up to, most likely a second (or maybe just the first) Preparation phase would occur right before this stage, but this is the point where there is nothing left to learn, and all that has been building up crosses path. The final showdown, the crescendo of the arc.

THE AFTERMATH: This is a (sometimes) quiet and contemplative part of the Quest, after all is said and done, whether triumph or failure the moment where the Hunters and those who survive can reflect on the events prior, and all get ready to move on.

