

# CLUES AND THREATS



**OPTIONAL RULES FOR  
MANAGING THREAT  
AND INVESTIGATION**



FOR USE WITH  
LIMINAL HORROR

**PRINTER-FRIENDLY  
VERSION**



**SOME OPTIONAL  
RULES FOR  
MANAGING THREAT  
AND INVESTIGATION**

**FOR LIMINAL  
HORROR**

# INTRODUCTION

I love Liminal Horror. No, I freaking love Liminal Horror. It's a game that suits the style I like to play the most: Horror. In addition to this theme that is so close to my heart, the game has a solid base on which we can build and implement our different rules and possibilities.

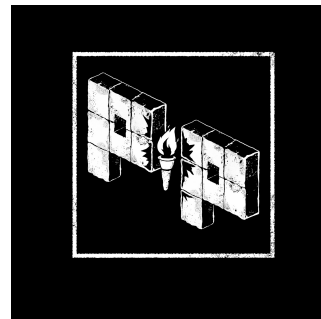
In that vein, I've written down a few rules that I love to try out during certain games. I've been trying for a while to come up with a mechanic that can handle the investigation and the intrigue. I've achieved something that I like, and that can even be adapted to different TTRPG without much difficulty.

In this document, I propose an adaptation for Liminal Horror of this system of investigation and intrigue that I have named : The Threat Gauge.

I hope you find it useful! Of course, I encourage you to check out [Goblin Archives' Itch.io](#) to see the various Liminal Horror products.

Thank you very much for your interest in what I do, it is sincerely appreciated

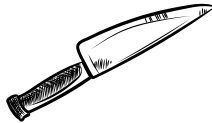
Pierre-Philippe Renaud



# DECREASE THE INFLUENCE OF THE MENACE THROUGH INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH.

The mechanics presented in this document are intended to put forward certain concepts that need to be explained in advance.

## THE MENACE -



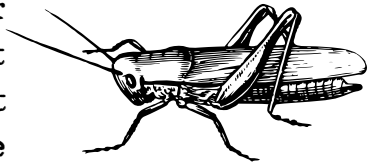
When we talk about the menace, we are generally talking about the great danger or antagonist of the current adventure.

It is not necessarily a single entity, but rather the overall danger that overhangs the scenario.

For example :

- An unscrupulous real estate tycoon who wants to destroy an ancient, haunted cemetery.
- Dangerous locusts migrating toward a small American town
- The mind of a serial killer who jumps from one body to another to commit murders.

It is therefore a threat, a problem that will be present, physically or not, during the whole scenario. But whether this threat is actively against the characters or not, the repercussions of its existence will be felt in many ways.





## THE INVESTIGATION -

Investigation is a central component of a scenario, and many facets of this aspect of the game are handled by the facilitator rather than the players. It is during an investigation that the players will uncover discoveries and accumulate clues.

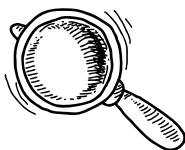
The facilitator should secretly agree on a number of discoveries and clues that the players can accumulate over the course of the scenario. As the characters accumulate clues through in-game discoveries, they will understand facets and relevant information about the scenario's antagonists (A.K.A. The Menace).

Clues are mechanical elements that players can accumulate that directly influence the dangerousness of the Menace. It is important to understand the difference between :

**CLUE :** An intangible, mechanical element that players can note on their character sheet. Combined with the discoveries, this element influences the danger of the Menace, but it can also be used as a "joker" to get out of an immediate danger.



**DISCOVERY :** In-game discoveries that bring to light relevant information about the current Menace (its objectives, its past, etc.). A discovery can generate one or more clues that the players can note.



Together, Discoveries AND clues influence the Threat Gauge.

# THE THREAT GAUGE



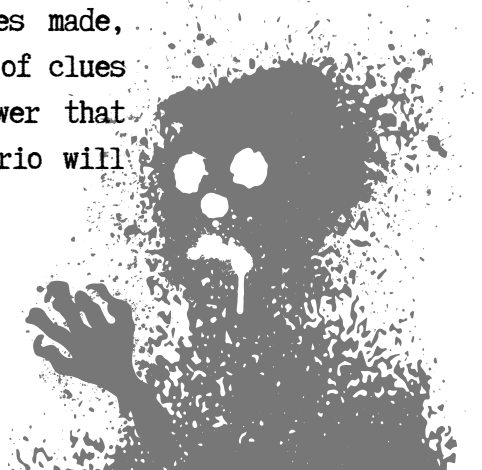
The threat gauge is an information that the facilitator keeps secret. As the players accumulate clues and In-game discoveries, the gauge will fluctuate on a scale agreed upon in advance by the facilitator and the dangerousness of the scenario.

The gauge should be seen as the mystery and malevolent influence The Menace may have on the scenario. As players accumulate clues and make discoveries, the threat is perceived as less omnipotent and lethal. It becomes a danger that can be understood, a danger that can be overcome.


The gauge will include the following elements:

- The number of discoveries the players can uncover
- The number of clues distributed per discovery
- The influence that discoveries and clues may have on the gauge

For every X number of discoveries made, the characters will gain X number of clues and the capabilities and the power that The Menace can have on the scenario will decrease.




## AN EXAMPLE OF A THREAT GAUGE



DISCOVERY	CLUE
0	+0
1	+1
2	+2
3	+1
4	+1
5	+1

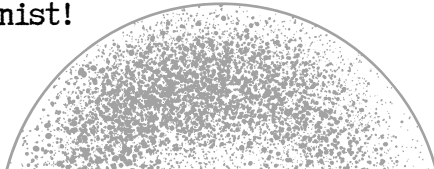
CLUES THAT THE PLAYERS HAVE	MENACE
0	6
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1
6	0



In this example, you can see that, on the second discovery, the players will gain TWO clues. At this point in the scenario, if the players have not spent any clues, they will have accumulated a total of 3 clues.

For the whole scenario, the characters can accumulate 5 discoveries and 6 clues, the players can expect to reduce the threat level to 0.

The easier the scenario, the more clues the characters will be able to uncover. Thus, characters have the opportunity to accumulate a certain "surplus" that can allow them to spend clues without a significant impact on the threat gauge. A difficult scenario will have only a few clues per discovery (at least 1 for 1). Each clue will be valuable, and spending just one will mean accepting the possibility of a more powerful antagonist!



# AN EXAMPLE OF A THREAT GAUGE

DISCOVERY	CLUE	CLUES THAT THE PLAYERS HAVE	MENACE
0	+0	0	6
1	+1	1	5
2	+2	2	4
3	+1	3	3
4	+1	4	2
5	+1	5	1
6		6	0

The level of the threat gauge is influenced by the amount of clues accumulated through in-game discoveries.

The level of the gauge will be modulated by the quantity of clues, Taking the above example:

3 clues = 3 for the menace.

If during the session, a player spends ONE clue, the comparison will be :

2 clues = 4 for the menace.

The gauge will have moved one level, but the amount of threat points is not as worrying as it could be, since the clue spent was a surplus accumulated during the second discovery.

Keep in mind that the number of discoveries made in the game will provide one or more clues, and that these clues will influence the menace. The more clues accumulated, the less influence the menace will have on the players.



# EXAMPLES OF DISCOVERIES

With the threat gauge above, we will write down the different discoveries that the players can uncover. We will take the example of the horde of killer locusts. As we can see in the table on the previous page, 5 important discoveries can be revealed to the characters.

(I) The horde of locusts follows the warm winds from the south.

(II) The horde has its origin in an American experimental laboratory.

(III) In the laboratory, we can learn that the horde was originally created to test a new form of biological weaponry.

(IV) The scientist in charge of the experiment, Richard Atkins, hides in a cabin in New Mexico for fear of retribution.

(V) Richard Atkins tells the characters that the horde can be directed by magnetic waves, and that it would be possible to push it towards the North so that it dies of cold.

The numbers in parentheses are only a guide to the number of discoveries the facilitator can make available to the players. They can discover the facts in complete disorder and still arrive at the same result. Therefore, the discoveries must be decided upon, but not associated with a specific number on the threat gauge.



# THE THREAT GAUGE FOR LIMINAL HORROR



As mentioned earlier, I use the threat gauge mechanic in several games. The version presented here is explicitly designed for Liminal. What will vary in adaptation from one game to another are these two elements:

**WHAT CAN A CHARACTER DO WITH A CLUE  
AND  
WHAT POWERS ARE GRANTED TO THE FACILITATOR VIA  
THE THREAT GAUGE?**

## WHAT CAN A CHARACTER DO WITH A CLUE ?

When characters are given clues in-game, they must write them down on their sheet, as these also fluctuate throughout the adventure. While the number of clues affects the facilitator's threat gauge, a player can still spend a clue noted on their sheet to get out of an immediate danger. This should be seen as a quick and desperate solution, at the expense of the stability of the current investigation. Thus, a character can burn a clue in order to :

- Re-roll a die
- Re-gain an Ability point
- Avoid immediate death
- Increase the reaction level of an NPC by one step.
- Create an in-game narrative element.
- Find an object useful to the current situation
- Ignore the Bulky condition for one scene



Other uses can be suggested depending on the scenario (see Customize the threat gauge)

## WHAT POWERS ARE GRANTED TO THE FACILITATOR VIA THE THREAT GAUGE ?

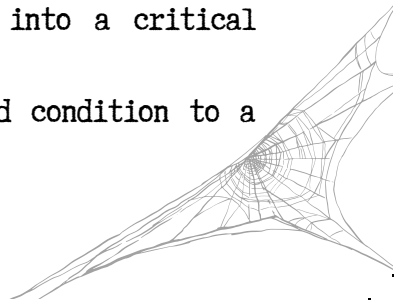
The threat gauge represents a number of threat points that the leader can spend throughout the adventure to simulate the level of danger and influence of the current menace. Although this number fills to its maximum possible at the beginning of each session, it is also modulated by the amount of discoveries and clues.

It is the notes taken at the end of a session that define the threat level that the leader can use for the NEXT game.

Why ? Simply to avoid the unnecessary mathematics in the gauge while the facilitator is using it during the game. The gauge changes at the end of a session, as the leader becomes aware of the number of clues versus the number of discoveries, and it fills to its new maximum possible at the beginning of the next session.

How the leader can use the threat gauge. They can use their gauge to perform the following actions:

- Spend one point to re-roll a die.
- Spend one point to create an in-game narrative effect.
- Spend one point to increase a player's score on the Fallout table by one level
- Spend one point to turn an attack into a critical attack
- Spend one point to give the impaired condition to a player for one scene.



## CUSTOMIZE THE THREAT GAUGE

The strength of the threat gauge is that it can be adjusted according to the scenario.

The mechanics associated with the discoveries and the clues remain the same, but the powers that are associated with the threat gauge may be different depending on the setting and the mood of the scenario.

The example presented on the previous page are mainly used as neutral powers that can be attached to any game.

So there is nothing to stop you from adding specific powers to your big threat. To take one of the examples mentioned above :

As long as the Threat Gauge is at 2 discoveries and below, the unscrupulous real estate tycoon can use the city's law enforcement to get in the way of the characters.



As long as the Threat Gauge is at 3 discoveries and below, The damage caused by the horde of bloodthirsty locusts is much worse.



As long as the Threat Gauge is at 4 discoveries and below, The serial killer's spirit can jump from one body to another without his victims being able to resist the possession.

A facilitator can adjust the threat gauge in this way without changing the rules of discovery and clues.

# THE ONE-SHOT FORMULA



Here is an alternative for single-session game.

Keep in mind the rules presented in the previous pages. The facilitator splits the game in two.

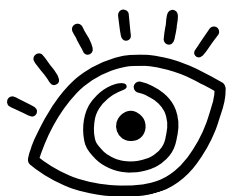
It is not uncommon for the second half of a one-shot scenario to be much more eventful in terms of character survival than the first half. Taking into consideration the ongoing events in the adventure, the facilitator will include in their scenario an additional variable called "The Tipping Point". The tipping point can be a discovery, but it can also be an event that will set a precedent in the game.

Only after this specific event or discovery, the facilitator will calculate the number of clues accumulated by the players in order to determine the level of the threat gauge for the rest of the game.

Keep in mind that the tipping point is not the halfway point of the scenario, but rather that line that, once crossed, the current situation will take on a more frenetic pace until the end of the game. Since a scenario can play out in many different ways, you can even decide what the tipping point will be DURING the session.

Here are some examples of tipping points :

- The sudden death of one or more characters
- The real identity of the menace in the scenario.
- Betrayal of a non-player character.
- The discovery of the place from which the menace plans its schemes



# SUMMARY

## THE MENACE

The main antagonist of the scenario

## THREAT GAUGE

A chart that can be modulated to gauge the Menace of the scenario

## THE INVESTIGATION

The game as a whole, which will contain discoveries, clues and adventures

## THE THREAT POINTS

Points that the facilitator can spend throughout the adventure to simulate the level of danger and influence of the current menace.

## DISCOVERY

In-game discoveries that bring to light relevant information about the current threat (its objectives, its past, etc.). A discovery can generate one or more clues that the players can note.

## CLUE

An intangible, mechanical element that players can note on their character sheet. Combined with the discoveries, this element influences the danger of the enemy, but it can also be used as a "joker" to get out of an immediate danger.

## THE TIPPING POINT

The tipping point can be a discovery, but it can also be an event that will set a precedent in the game.



# THREAT GAUGE SHEET

THE SCENARIO .....

THE MENACE .....

DISCOVERY	CLUE
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	




CLUES THAT THE PLAYERS HAVE	MENACE
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

THE POWERS OF THE MENACE

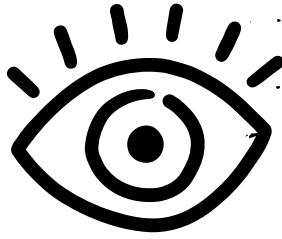
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THE NUMBER OF CLUES POSSESSED BY THE PLAYERS



**WRITING: PIERRE-PHILIPPE  
RENAUD LAYOUT: PIERRE-  
PHILIPPE RENAUD INTERIOR  
ARTWORK: ROYALTY-FREE  
ILLUSTRATIONS**





**TO FACE A THREAT.  
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND IT.  
YOU HAVE TO KNOW IT.  
YOU HAVE TO ANALYZE IT.**

**A DANGER THAT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IS A  
DANGER THAT CAN BE OVERCOME.**

**IN THIS DOCUMENT, YOU WILL FIND SIMPLE  
MECHANICS THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO  
IMPLEMENT INVESTIGATION IN YOUR GAMES.  
COMPATIBLE WITH LIMINAL HORROR,  
BUT EASILY ADAPTABLE TO OTHER GAMES.**