**Asylum**

Playable Demo:

“The Lost Child of Park Street”

Contents

[Using this Demo 5](#_Toc379012289)

[Welcome to the Asylum demo game! This file is designed to be a complete resource containing everything you need to play. In these pages you’ll find the following sections: 5](#_Toc379012290)

[Question and Answer 5](#_Toc379012291)

[To help get you started here are a few basic questions and answers: 5](#_Toc379012292)

[**What is Asylum?** 5](#_Toc379012293)

[**Then what’s different about Asylum’s world?** 5](#_Toc379012294)

[**So why should I play an Outsider?** 6](#_Toc379012295)

[**So why should I play an Insider?** 6](#_Toc379012296)

[**Does this mean supernatural or non-human beings are just walking around openly?** 6](#_Toc379012297)

[**Then what do characters do?** 6](#_Toc379012298)

[**You can buy magical powers? How do I do that?** 6](#_Toc379012299)

[**Great! Where do I get this stuff?** 7](#_Toc379012300)

[**How do I start playing?** 7](#_Toc379012301)

[**What’s a Narrator?** 7](#_Toc379012302)

[**Got people together and picked a Narrator, now what?** 7](#_Toc379012303)

[**We just played through Lost Child, where do we go to find more?** 8](#_Toc379012304)

[**What do I get in the full version?** 8](#_Toc379012305)

[Glossary 8](#_Toc379012306)

[Included below are some major terms you should know for playing the game: 8](#_Toc379012307)

[A Quick History Lesson 10](#_Toc379012308)

[Introducing the Impact System 12](#_Toc379012309)

[**What Impact is:** 12](#_Toc379012310)

[**What Impact is NOT:** 12](#_Toc379012311)

[The Basic Rule 12](#_Toc379012312)

[**Difficulty Levels** 13](#_Toc379012313)

[**Impact and Thresholds** 14](#_Toc379012314)

[Turns, Rounds and Scenes 15](#_Toc379012315)

[**Who should go first?** 15](#_Toc379012316)

[**Special Scenes** 15](#_Toc379012317)

[Characters 16](#_Toc379012318)

[**Using Characters** 17](#_Toc379012319)

[**None of the Above** 17](#_Toc379012320)

[Forms 18](#_Toc379012321)

[Additional Rules 19](#_Toc379012322)

[**Circumstantial Modifiers** 19](#_Toc379012323)

[**Specialty Dice and Assists** 19](#_Toc379012324)

[Health, Armor and Injury 20](#_Toc379012325)

[Missing Persons 23](#_Toc379012326)

Part One:

Intro Materials

Welcome!

# Using this Demo

Welcome to the Asylum demo game! This file is designed to be a complete resource containing everything you need to play. In these pages you’ll find the following sections:

* **Intro Materials** – The section you’re reading right now. A basic write-up on the game’s major concepts in both rules and setting.

* **System** – A closer look at the game’s rules
* **“The Lost Child of Park Street”** – A full stand-alone game for 3-5 players and 1 Narrator where the group tries to solve the mystery of a missing child. If you’re interested in getting started right away, you can skip right to this section.
* **Appendix A** – Charts, handouts and references
* **Appendix B** – Character Creation. It’s recommended you play through “Lost Child” before trying this.

# Question and Answer

To help get you started here are a few basic questions and answers:

**What is Asylum?**

Asylum is a table top RPG. In Asylum you play either natives of Earth (called “***Insiders***”) or fantastic beings from other worlds (called “***Outsiders***”). For the most part Outsiders are expected to keep their fantastic nature a secret from Earth society. This is just as much for their protection as it is for ours. The world is otherwise much like our own. You can assume that history, technology and culture have progressed close enough to the real world for you to freely add your own real world perspectives.

**Then what’s different about Asylum’s world?**

Asylum is a world where science and superstition are not opposites. Although few people in Asylum’s world ever experience the supernatural firsthand, they still think knowing a thing or two about it is practical, life-saving knowledge. The capricious and sometimes dangerous quality of Asylum’s magical half makes most Insiders stick with structure, society and technology. Consequently, Insiders have been able to make the Earth (or “***Inside***”) into a cozy oasis that most Outsiders see as a mesmerizing land of hope and opportunity. Those that make it here, however, quickly find that the Insiders have a tremendous home field advantage.

**So why should I play an Outsider?**

Play an Outsider if you want to play a powerful being from a magical world. As an Outsider you can be anything you can imagine, including creatures from myth and fantasy. As an Outsider your special qualities or “***Aspects***” can do wondrous and impossible things. This puts you in high demand with some folks and at the top of the watchlist with others.

**So why should I play an Insider?**

Play an Insider if you want to take on the role of someone discovering and exploring a whole new world beyond their wildest dreams. Because Asylum takes place almost entirely on Earth, Insiders start out better equipped to face Asylum’s challenges and adventures. As an Insider you’ll use those advantages to unravel the secrets of your world and others.

**Does this mean supernatural or non-human beings are just walking around openly?**

For the most part, no. All characters in Asylum have a “***Covert***” and “***Manifest***” form. Covert forms look exactly like normal human beings. Covert forms are useful for blending in or for overcoming an outsider’s natural disadvantages (such as being too big or too small or lacking opposable thumbs). On the other hand, characters can’t use their more powerful abilities while Covert. Manifest forms are unmistakably not human. Manifest forms bring forward your character’s true self allowing them to use supernatural powers easier and unleashing powers they couldn’t use while Covert. On the downside, Manifest forms attract a lot of attention and can alter the minds of – or even traumatize – innocent bystanders.

**Then what do characters do?**

Asylum’s core setting focuses on various groups vying for power and control on Earth. The major conflict in this demo is centered around the competition between:

* **The Red Market** – A loose, unofficial collection of beings who buy, sell and trade supernatural power and Outside goods, sometimes illegally.
* **The** **Bureau of Outsider Affairs** – Basically the supernatural FBI. US agents working to keep law, order and the American Way intact.
* **The Pantheons** – The “nations” of the universe Outside our world. They quite often correspond to the gods, monsters and heroes from our myths and legends.
* **Asylum** – A social movement of do-gooders trying to prove that Insiders and Outsiders can live together in peace and build a world even greater than the sum of all its breathtakingly different parts.

The characters available in this demo will have to juggle the interests of their group as well as their own personal motivations (called “***Foundations***”) all while trying to find a missing child before it’s too late.

**You can buy magical powers? How do I do that?**

The same way you buy everything else: having enough money and knowing where to go. There are two kinds of currency in Asylum. First is actual money. It’s still incredibly useful and accepted everywhere whether you’re a normal human being or a magical talking goldfish. The second are enchanted magic coins called “***Talents***.” Talents are pure magical energy forged into a physical object. Talents are very rare and each one is worth at least $50,000 if sold. Talents can also be kept to take advantage of the magic power they radiate. There are also extremely rare gifted individuals that can unlock the magic inside of Talents and use them to permanently bestow new magical powers.

**Great! Where do I get this stuff?**

Work. Scrape together fifty grand. We hear the Bureau of Outsider Affairs is hiring. They’re hard to get into so you might want to get into the Red Market instead. There is another option if you’re really desperate. Every part of your being – and thus everything on your character sheet – is for sale. Find the right buyer and you can trade off some piece of you that you weren’t using anyway for a bright, shiny Talent or two. Just make sure it’s not something you might really miss later. . .

**How do I start playing?**

First you’ll need some way to keep this file around. **A tablet PC or just printing everything out** works best. You’ll also need **something to write with and at least one ten-sided die per player**. You’ll then need **a group of 4 – 7 people**. More people will usually make the game easier and more interesting as you discover ways to combine powers and find common ground between different points of view. A small group means fewer characters which gives you less to work with when facing down challenges, but it also makes for a more focused and fast-paced game. From the group you’ve gotten together, you’ll then have to pick one of you to be the “***Narrator***.”

**What’s a Narrator?**

The Narrator acts as a referee for the game’s rules and a director for the game’s story. The Narrator is probably the most important and demanding role to play in Asylum because Narrators help make the story happen and bring the setting to life. The Narrator decides how the players’ decisions shape the story. Narrators also play the entire supporting cast of allies, extras, rivals and villains. A good Narrator relies on both spontaneous creativity and careful planning. Don’t worry; this demo does most of the Narrator work for you. The story, challenges, and surprises are already written out, leaving you free to focus on having fun with your friends.

**We got people together and picked a Narrator, now what?**

If you want to have a solid idea on the game’s rules and structure before you start playing, you should all look over the “System” section of this demo. If you want to jump right into playing, go straight to “The Lost Child of Park Street.” It’s made for you to be able to pick up all the basic rules really fast.

Once you get to “Lost Child” everyone who isn’t the Narrator (which from now on we’ll call “***Players***”) will want to look over the characters and pick one they like. Each character will have a write-up on who they are, what they do and a character sheet listing the character’s abilities, skills, Aspects and Powers.

While that’s happening, the Narrator should be looking over the rest of the “Lost Child” section to get ready to run the game. The Narrator sections explain the whole mystery and plot twists so if you’re not planning to be Narrator you really shouldn’t read those.

**We just played through Lost Child, where do we go to find more?**

You can keep up with Asylum at [www.asylumrpg.com](http://www.asylumrpg.com) or by joining us on Facebook and Twitter. We’ve also included a character creation section in the back and encourage you to make all new characters and make up your own adventures! Feel free to use the pre-made characters to do the same thing.

What we want in exchange are your stories! Tell us about how your game went. Tell us about your favorite moments and the things you loved and the things you didn’t. We also really, really want to hear about the new characters and stories you make. It will help us fine tune the upcoming full version.

**What do I get in the full version?**

The upcoming full version of Asylum contains a lot more on the setting and rules. The extra setting material contains a much more in-depth look at how Asylum’s world works as well as four more factions and a mysterious enemy faction for groups to try to take on. In the full version you’ll also find more Aspects and more Powers to give you even more options in creating unique and powerful characters!

# Glossary

Included below are some major terms you should know for playing the game:

* **Aspect** – A facet of your character that makes them distinct. Aspects can be supernatural powers, physical characteristics or social advantages such as fame, wealth or influence. Aspects grant bonuses, special abilities and Powers (q.v).

* **Black Iron –** What Ousiders call the Earth. No one’s really sure why.
* **Blunder** – A complication or crisis that occurs when you roll a die and get a very low number. This represents an unexpected run of bad luck that throws characters for a loop. The Narrator determines the exact kind of Blunder.
* **Challenge** – A scene where the Players must either accomplish a goal or overcome an obstacle. Challenges are designed by the Narrator and usually require Players to score enough Impact to meet the challenge’s Threshold (q.v.).

* **Character** – The made-up role a player takes on while playing Asylum. Characters influence the player’s approach to situations and play style.
* **Covert Form** – Human form. All characters have a covert form. While Covert, even the most fantastical of Outsiders is indistinguishable from an everyday human being.

* **d10 –** A singe ten sided die
* **Difficulty Level** – When asked to roll dice, this is the number you need to meet or beat to have a good result. If your roll is below the difficulty level, you may get a bad result. If your roll is low enough you will get a Blunder (q.v.).

* **Foundation** – A major pillar of your character’s personality and identity. Characters begin the game with five foundations.
* **Harmony** – A number measuring your character’s overall coherence and solidity. The higher the number, the more consistent and self-assured they are. The lower the number, the more distorted and insane they become.

* **Impact** – The points your character generates whenever they complete a successful action. Impact is usually only kept track of during a Challenge (q.v.). Impact is added up until the total meets or beats the challenge’s Threshold (q.v.).

* **Inside** – The Earth and surrounding solar system. Beings from here are called “***Insiders***.”
* **Manifest Form** – True or supernatural form. All characters (even human characters) have a manifest form. While Manifest, characters have access to more Powers and special abilities. At the same time, witnessing a manifest form is psychologically harmful to most innocent bystanders.
* **Narrator** – The person in charge of making sure the game runs smoothly and memorably. One part referee and one part Hollywood director. Narrators play all the people in the story that aren’t the Characters (q.v.).
* **Outside** – All other worlds and dimensions outside our solar system. Beings from here are called “***Outsiders***.”
* **Player** – You unless you volunteered or were volunteered to be Narrator (q.v.).
* **Sideways** – Parallel worlds or pockets of magical reality that are still technically located Inside (q.v.). Beings from Sideways places are still considered Insiders.
* **Threshold** – The total amount of Impact needed for a Challenge to be considered beaten.

# A Quick History Lesson

Answers to questions about where we came from and how civilization came to be are at best educated guesses. Outsiders, on the other hand, can live for hundreds or even thousands of years. Their perspective provides us with invaluable insight to all the history that’s been lost or hidden.

According to Outsiders, Earth is somewhat far removed from a busy universe. Earth also has an unusual tendency for life to be simpler and more straightforward. Earthlings, no matter what species, display much less impressive abilities than the “Aspects” Outsiders possess. When the Outsiders discovered our world they classified it as a welcoming backwater. Not long after their discovery (sometime in our prehistory) several of the Pantheons attempted to settle colonies here. These Pantheons seem to be the origin of a great number of our myths and ancient religions.

Eventually the War in Heaven reached Earth’s colonies causing Insider and Outsider blood alike to be spilled all over our world. More than a few Outsiders feel responsible for bringing strife and warfare to an otherwise peaceful human race. We find that to be highly unlikely. Our own recorded history shows that human nature has changed little since then, and we know that Outsiders are not as lofty or infallible as they used to claim. We find it far more likely that the Pantheons’ wars on Earth were shaped just as much by human ambition as they were by Outsider greed.

Inside and Outside sources tell us that Earth’s part in the War in Heaven ended when humanity turned on all Outisders. By the time their work was done, the Pantheons were cast out and most gateways to Earth were permanently sealed shut.

From there history passed much as humanity believes. Secret societies and conspiracies stumbled on genuine Outsider knowledge and artifacts every now and then, but it was almost useless without access to the Outside. During that time, the Outsiders who survived the purge kept a low profile. Many went native and became members of human societies rather than rulers of them. During those long centuries we’ve become the fairy tale to the Outside. A place that kicked out the war before it could destroy everything. Lately they’ve discovered that Earth is more than a legend and more and more of them are coming to make a fresh start. But how long can this keep up before the Pantheons show up again to make new colonies?

Part Two:

System

Rolling Dice

# Introducing the Impact System

As with other RPGs, Asylum uses rules and die rolls to help players and Narrators determine what happens next. While most RPGs clearly distinguish between types of action (“social,” “combat,” “problem solving,” etc.) sometimes even going so far as to make different systems for different kinds of actions, in Asylum there is no such distinction.

In Asylum all character actions can generate something called **Impact**. Impact is made whenever you make a successful action. Success is usually determined by a die roll, but sometimes your Narrator will decide to award it without one. The Narrator keeps a tally of how much Impact the players make and compares it to a target total called the **Threshold**. When players make enough Impact to meet or beat the Threshold, the scene they’re in ends with a favorable result.

**What Impact is:**

* A direct measure of how effective any action can be
* A way for Narrators to precisely know how close a scene is to being over
* A way for characters to be anywhere or do anything and still feel like they’re part of the same scene

**What Impact is NOT:**

* Score
* Hit Points

Because all actions generate Impact the same way, you only need to know one basic rule:

# The Basic Rule

First roll a single ten sided die and keep track of the number you rolled:

**d10 + [modifier] = Result; If Result ≥ Difficulty Level, success**

**d10 –** The number you rolled

**[modifier] –** Determined by your character’s attributes or skills

**Difficulty Level –** Determined by the Narrator, but usually 8

**Success –** A favorable result or turn of events for whoever made the die roll

If an action or idea is simple and/or instantaneous you can usually stop here.

*Examples:*

* Jump over a gap
* Come up with a quick lie
* Answer a simple question
* Duck!!

If an action or idea is complex and/or long term, we go to the next step:

**d10 (from before) + [Base Impact] = Impact; When Impact ≥ Threshold, success**

**d10 –** Your same roll from before

**[Base Impact] –** Determined by your character’s attributes or Aspects

**Threshold –** The total amount of Impact needed to succeed

**Success –** A favorable result or turn of events

The Narrator keeps a running total of Impact until the player(s) make enough to beat the Threshold.

*Examples:*

* Getting through an obstacle course
* Talking down an angry crowd
* Finding something in a cluttered apartment
* Build!!

Every action makes Impact. There is no exception or special rule to this. This means that any action you can think of has the potential to solve a problem or accomplish a goal.

*Example:*

A group of characters finds themselves in a bar fight. One character physically defends the other two as they attempt to calm the room down. Each character makes Impact with successful die rolls. When they make enough Impact to meet or beat the Threshold (determined by the Narrator) they win the scene and “defeat” the crowd.

**Difficulty Levels**

The number you need to meet or beat for an action to succeed is called the Difficulty or **Difficulty Level**. There are five difficulty levels in Asylum, each one two higher than the last. For quick reference we’ve named each level, told you the number your result needs to meet or beat and given a quick explanation:

**Trivial** (4 or higher) - Easy for anyone, only someone who is untrained can expect to fail.

**Ordinary** (6 or higher) - Easy for someone with training, and anyone with expert or

master training can expect to succeed almost every time.

**Hard** (8 or higher) - Someone without training is likely to fail, but most people with some training can figure it out at least half the time. This is the most common difficulty and considered the default unless the Narrator says otherwise.

**Rare** (10 or higher) - Someone without expert training is likely to fail, and this problem can stump even master practitioners occasionally.

**Elite** (12 or higher) - This action is impossible for someone without at least training, and so daunting that and even masters are likely to fail half the time.

You may have noticed that “hard” is the default difficulty. This is because Asylum is all about characters doing extraordinary things. The Narrator should rarely call for an ordinary roll and almost never call for a trivial one. We’ve included them here so you get an idea of where your character stands compared to most people. It’s also there to show just how hard an “ordinary” task is without the proper training. Fixing a bad wire on a light switch may be easy for a trained electrician, but for someone without any skills it may result in short circuits or worse.

**Impact and Thresholds**

Whenever your character does something, they will make Impact. For skills, the amount of Impact made is usually tied to one of your attributes. For Aspects, the amount of Impact will be written in the descriptions of the various powers. No matter how much you do or how many times you roll, you can only make Impact once during your turn.

Here’s a small list to give you an idea of about how much Impact your actions can make. Die rolls and GM intervention will make these numbers higher or lower, but you can usually count on these numbers:

**Average skill or attribute:** 8

**Average Power:** 10

**Optimized skill or attribute:** 11

**Optimized Power:** 13

**Threshold for an average challenge:** 120

(Hard or Rare DL, five players, expected to last 3 rounds)

Flow of the Game

# Turns, Rounds and Scenes

Asylum has a simple structure based around easy to visualize units of time. All in-game effects are balanced using this quick-flowing structure.

Because Asylum games are similar to books or movies, time is handled in a more free-flowing, narrative style. For the most part, we’re not concerned with how many seconds/minutes/hours every particular action takes. For this reason we break down time this way:

**A turn –** When a player or Narrator-controlled character decides to do something, they are taking a turn. During your turn you get one **Simple Action** and one **Complex Action**. These are exactly what they sound like. The difference between the two is influenced by the Round.

**A Round –** Goes by when all players (including the Narrator) have taken a turn. Before anyone starts taking turns, the narrator is supposed to determine exactly how much time goes by every round. The longer the round, the more you can do during a Simple Action. If everyone wants to run a more free-form scene it’s okay to not use rounds. We only recommend this for roleplay heavy scenes.

**A Scene –** Is a complete movement of the story. Sort of like a chapter in a book or an act in a movie. Scenes typically take between three and five rounds. When a new scene begins, characters may regain Energy or Health and a new count for Impact is begun if the Narrator is using Impact this scene. In addition to what’s described here there are two special kinds of scene, which we’ll talk about in a minute.

**Who should go first?**

Sometimes knowing what order everyone goes in makes a big difference on what happens. When the Narrator (or players) think this is necessary, everyone rolls for Initiative. Initiative works the same as every other roll:

**1d10 + [Initiative Rating] = Result**

The highest number result goes first. Second highest after that and then right on down until everyone has taken a turn. You keep this order for the rest of the scene unless everyone (or at least the Narrator) decides they don’t need it anymore.

**Special Scenes**

When a scene has a few special elements we use a different name for it.

* **A Challenge** is a scene that uses Impact and has a Threshold. Initiative is often used during a Challenge though it isn’t strictly required. Because Challenges rely heavily on what Simple and Complex Actions people take and whether or not they succeed, rounds and turns are always used. Beating the Threshold almost always ends the scene.
* **An Action Scene** is any scene where the Narrator decides that a round is thirty or less seconds long. Action scenes always use initiative, turns and rounds. Often, a threshold is presented as a very simple goal such as fight or flight.

These distinctions are made mostly so that players and Narrators have an idea of how to approach the scene and what to expect. Another major influence on how a player approaches a scene is their character

# Characters

In “The Lost Child of Park Street” players choose from eight characters each with their own personalities and capabilities. Let’s take a quick look at what you get when you pick a character:

* **Attributes –** Your character’s natural inborn abilities. Attributes determine the Base Impact of most actions. They are rated from 1 (not very good) to 6 (supernaturally good).
* **Harmony –** How solid your character’s soul and identity are. It counts down from 6 (spiritual, better than normal) to 0 (soulless, insane).
* **Foundations –** The five fundamental things that make your character tick. Their values or most important life events. Foundations count down from least important (5th Foundation) to most Important (1st Foundation)
* **Health –** Your character’s physical toughness and endurance. Physical wear and tear reduces this number. When your character’s health reaches 0 they are considered injured and helpless.
* **Energy** **–** The amount of mystical power your character has to draw upon. Energy is most often used to change forms or use Powers (q.v.). When your character’s energy reaches 0 they become completely exhausted (but not injured).
* **Initiative –** Add this to a d10 roll when you need to figure out who goes first. High numbers go first!
* **Defenses –** The number other characters (either player or Narrator controlled) need to meet or beat to do something physical or mental to your character. Defense assumes the action is either difficult to do or is being done against your character’s will. You may decide not to use a Defense and let an action automatically succeed.
* **Armor/Resistance –** Are subtracted from any Impact that a character scores against you.
* **Skills –** Basic things your character knows how to do such as Athletics, Medicine or Empathy. Skills have three ranks: Trained, Expert and Master.
* **Aspects –** A facet of your character that makes them distinct. Aspects grant passive bonuses, special abilities and Powers (q.v).
* **Powers –** A unique special ability your character has access to because of his or her Aspects. Powers come in two varieties: Covert and Manifest. Powers create very specific effects when used. Most of the time using a Power costs at least 1 Energy (q.v.)

In the “Lost Child" section we’ll take a close look at the specifics of each character as well as a small strategy guide for playing them. The basics of using any character are covered below:

**Using Characters**

On your turn you must first decide what your Simple Action and Complex action are going to be. By default, almost everything is a Complex Action. Simple actions are quick things that can be done while you’re doing something else. The longer a round is, the more you’ll be able to fit into your Simple and Complex Actions.

There are two basic ways to run actions:

**Describe what your character is going to do –** the Narrator will then help you figure out what attributes, skills, or Powers apply. Pick the one that works best for you and use its modifier and base impact.

**Pick a skill or Power that you want to use –** describe to the Narrator how you’re using it and why it works best for this situation. If the Narrator approves, use the modifier and base impact of the skill or Power you selected.

If an action costs energy, remember to mark off the points you’ve spent!

**None of the Above**

If neither you nor your Narrator can think of a skill or Power that works for your action, your action “**Defaults**” to one of your five basic attributes. When you default, you use half the attribute’s value as the modifier and the full value as the base impact.

*Example:*

You decide that your character should hide from a scary monster even though your character doesn’t have any particular skills or Powers that would apply in this situation. The Narrator then decides your action will default to Agility, one of your character’s five basic attributes. Your character’s Agility is 4, so the modifier you’ll add to the d10 roll is 2 (half the attribute’s value) and the base impact will be 4 (the attribute’s full value).

Another big influence on what your character can do and how much impact he or she can make from it is your character’s form. At any given time they can be either Cover or Manifest. Each form has its own unique advantages and drawbacks.

# Forms

When **Covert,** your character looks and acts exactly like a normal human being. Covert characters’ true nature is safely hidden away from everyone. As such when using the Occult skill or other powers to ferret out the supernatural it is one Difficulty Level harder if the subject is being Covert.

While in Covert form, your character may only use Covert Powers. Covert Powers almost never have any visual flare unless you specifically want them to. Covert Powers cost 1 energy to use.

**Manifest** forms, are obviously magical and often unnatural. Manifest forms unlock new advantages and powers. If your character is some kind of fantastical creature or Outsider, their Manifest form is what they consider their normal, comfortable skin. Manifest forms always attract a lot of attention and can alter the minds of – or even traumatize – innocent bystanders. How extreme this effect is is up to the Narrator.

While in Manifest form, your character may use Covert and Manifest Powers. Manifest powers are always a dazzling sensory experience for anyone witnessing them. Manifest Powers cost 1 energy to use. However, the surge of magical energy when manifesting makes all Covert Powers cost 0 energy.

When switching forms. . .

* Switching from **Covert to Manifest** form is a **Simple Action that costs 1 energy**.
* Switching **back to Covert** form is a **free, instantaneous action**.

Normal humans do have a Manifest form. It is a super-idealized version of themselves. A truer and greater self that calls to them from somewhere deep inside. Humans otherwise still consider the Covert form to be more comfortable and natural.

Extra Details

# Additional Rules

Lastly, we’re going to take a look at a few rules that you might encounter during the course of the game. These situations may not always come up but when they do these rules should have you covered.

**Circumstantial Modifiers**

Sometimes what’s going on around you or something you’re bringing to the situation has such a big effect that the Narrator decides to give you an additional modifier. When circumstances are good and help you out, this modifier is called an **Advantage**. When circumstances are bad and make your life harder, this modifier is called a **Disadvantage**. These modifiers stack on top of any that you already have.

These modifiers can alter your roll by up to two in either direction. Just how far advantages and disadvantages affect your roll is shown below:

* **Minor Advantage:** +1
* **Major Advantage:** +2
* **Minor Disadvantage:** - 1
* **Major Disadvantage:** - 2

When multiple things could be giving you a Minor Advantage or Disadvantage, they are lumped together into a single Major Advantage or Disadvantage. No matter how many things are going right or wrong, the Narrator may never give you more than one Major Advantage or Disadvantage.

Advantage and Disadvantage are almost always given out by the Narrator. Certain Aspects and Powers allow players to bestow them on themselves and others. A particularly great idea or well-described action can net you an Advantage, so it pays to clever and descriptive.

**Specialty Dice and Assists**

During the course of the game the Narrator may offer up a Specialty Die. Specialty Dice are bonus dice you roll in addition to the single d10. You may keep whichever rolls higher.

At times you may wish to use your action to assist another character. When you decide to help out, you add +1 to that character’s base impact and roll at the same time the other character does. Exactly like a Specialty Die, you pick from the higher of the two rolls.

# Health, Armor and Injury

The world of Asylum can be a dangerous place. Every once in a while something may beat your physical or mental defense while trying to harm you. Successful attacks cause you to lose health. All things hazardous to your character’s Health are broken down into three categories:

* **Physical –** Quick, traumatic damage applied to a small area of the body. Usually caused by direct attacks or accidents
* **Environmental –** Something that causes widespread harm over much of the body or internal organs. Falls, fires, smoke, poisons, etc.
* **Innate –** A mystical or psychic assault. Damage applied directly to one’s soul and inner being.

If you are wearing armor, you will lose less health. The number listed next to armor tells you how much less health you lose. The type of damage the armor protects you from (Physical, Environmental, Innate) will also be listed.

Resistance, on the other hand, simply reduces incoming damage by half, rounded down. Resistance is always applied to one very specific health hazard such as “Fire” or “Poison” or “Gunshots.”

*Example*:

The great dragon Brontor breathes a mighty blast of fire on our heroes! This blast will cause each character to lose 9 health (which is a quite a bit!). Our first PC is wearing armor that reduces environmental damage by 2. Since fire is environmental damage, he loses 7 Health instead of 9. Our second PC has resistance to fire. She takes only 4 damage – half of 9 rounded down.

If your character’s armor and resistance both apply to the attack (such as a fire resistant character who is also wearing Environmental armor) apply resistance first and then armor.

When your health is reduced to 0, you become **Injured** and your character falls to the ground helpless and unconscious. While injured, you cannot take any actions and can be injured again by follow-up attacks. Your character remains in this state until revived by another character or until the scene ends. When either happens, you wake up and regain half your Health. You can be injured yet again if your health goes back down to 0.

Each Injury gives you a -1 penalty to all die rolls. This penalty is apart from any other things affecting your die rolls such as Advantage or Disadvantage. Your character can be injured three times before being killed.

Part Three:

The Lost Child of Park Street

The Setup

# Missing Persons

The only choice he had was to drug the kid. It was going to take at least three days to finish making the deal with the unseelie prince that would make her go away for good. But it wasn’t even a whole day before she started getting too complicated. She wasn’t buying “Mommy’s out of town for a few days,” and he couldn’t just leave her alone in his apartment. Knocking her out for a couple hours was better for everyone involved.

What he needed was someplace to stash the kid while he did the deal. After asking around he hit a goldmine: some ancient demon offered to take the kid right now. He was able to move the kid to this new buyer before she woke up from her drugged nap. Two people paying for what he was selling. This was turning out to be a once in a lifetime score. All he had to do was collect both payments, let his buyers sort out who kept what and skip town with the kid’s mom unless she also got too complicated.

Everybody wins.

**Where You’ve Landed**

Welcome to the world of Asylum where Outsiders from myth and legend try to escape grim, unchanging lives by coming to a world of hope and opportunity that we call Earth. For some, the getaway isn’t a clean one and all the ancient traditions and enemies of the old realms follow them here. For others, Earth’s new visitors represent nothing less than a full scale invasion by beings from other worlds.

The Outsiders bring powerful and wondrous magic with them. The most incredible and game-changing has been the power of **Contract** that allows beings to trade virtually anything with one another. An entire shadow economy called **The Red Market** has grown where normal, bizarre and unthinkable things are bought, traded and sold. Now everything from your most valued possessions to your most treasured memories can be appraised for their value in **Talents** – coins made of pure mystical energy.

**What You’re Doing Here**

In Asylum you play Insiders (from Earth) and Outsiders (from somewhere else) working to keep the tenuous peace that keeps the world running. In this story you’ll take on the role of one of eight investigators racing against time to find a missing child before it’s too late! As well as unraveling the mystery, you’re also placed in charge of determining justice. Who’s really guilty of this terrible crime is for your characters to decide!

In addition to the main challenge, your characters also belong to different **Factions** that each want to see different results. On top of that, each character has their own personal goals and agendas called **Foundations**.

To get anything done, your character will use their attributes, skills and unique **Aspects**. While attributes and skills represent the natural abilities and aptitudes people are born with and learn over their lives, Aspects are special qualities that set your character apart from everyone else. Aspects cover everything from being exceptionally rich or the grand master of a skill to being able to breathe fire or turn people to stone with a gaze.

# Finding the Lost Child of Park Street

You’ll need a few things to play this demo:

* Some way to access player handouts like character sheets; a laptop or tablet works, though you should also consider just printing everything out
* A group of between 4 and 7 players (including you)
* At least one ten-sided die for each person playing
* Something to take notes with

We’ve included almost everything else you need to get started.

The **Player’s Section** includes a description, strategy guide and character sheet for each of the eight characters. There’s also a quick rules sheet and several handouts giving you the starting details of the case.

The **Narrator’s Section** contains all the keys to the mystery. This section details exactly what happened and how and gives the Narrator full support in running the story and making it work. **If you are not planning to be the Narrator** **do not read this section**. It’s basically like skipping straight to the ending of a book or movie.

**What’s a Narrator?**

From the group you’ve gotten together, you’ll have to pick one of you to be the **Narrator**. The Narrator acts as a referee for the game’s rules and a director for the game’s story. Narrator can be the most rewarding and demanding role to play in Asylum because Narrators help make the story happen and bring the setting to life. The Narrator decides how the players’ decisions shape the story. Narrators also play the entire supporting cast of allies, extras, rivals and villains. A good Narrator relies on both spontaneous creativity and careful planning. Don’t worry; this demo does most of the Narrator work for you. The story, challenges, and surprises are already written out, leaving you free to focus on having fun with your friends.

Player’s Section

# What You Know

About one day ago, a public school in Washington DC reported a nine year old girl named Laurie Hamilton missing. Later that day, authorities opened up a case and sent officers to take statements from the school, Laurie’s mother Clarissa and witnesses at the apartment building where they live. When they met with Clarissa Hamilton they hit an unsettling snag:

Despite birth, school and medical records to the contrary, Clarissa Hamilton claims to have never had a daughter.

Members of the DC police force