

MONSTER OF THE WEEK



MICHAEL SANDS

A MONSTER LURKS IN THE SHADOWS...

Most people don't believe in monsters, but you know the truth. They're **real**, and it's your task to bring them down. This hardcover edition of **Monster of the Week** brings that adventure to life.

Monster of the Week is a standalone action-horror RPG for 3-5 people. Hunt high school beasties a la **Buffy the Vampire Slayer**, travel the country to bring down unnatural creatures like the **Supernatural** Winchester brothers, or head up the government investigation like Mulder and Scully.

This book contains everything you need to tackle Bigfoot, collar a chupacabra, and drive away demons. In this hardcover edition, you'll find:

- Character creation rules to bring your hunter to life and create a cohesive hunting team, including fourteen ready-to-go hunter types ranging from the Snoop to the Spooktacular, the Monstrous to the Divine.
- A stand-alone system based on the easy-to-use **Powered by the Apocalypse** engine.
- Eight core moves to investigate and deal with monsters.
- Thorough mystery-creation tools and two ready-to-play mysteries.
- Example monsters like Balkan vampires, ghouls, and spore trolls.
- Rules options to expand the scope and change the flavor of your game to fit the weekly monster story you've always wanted to see, including phenomena-type mysteries and alternative weird abilities.

**Grab the fireplace poker and open your spell book.
That monster's going down!**



EHP0060 • ISBN 978-1-61317-203-2
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MONSTER OF THE WEEK

REVISED EDITION, 2015 • HARDCOVER EDITION, 2023



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*For Amanda and Zelda with love, for their support and tolerance
over the very long time this game was in development.*

An Evil Hat Productions Publication
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Monster of the Week Hardcover Edition
EHP0060 • ISBN 978-1-61317-203-2
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Errata applied in March 2019.
Playbook look updates applied in August 2020.
Hardcover edition materials added in 2023.

Revised edition first published in 2015 by Evil Hat Productions, LLC.
10125 Colesville Rd #318, Silver Spring, MD 20901.
Hardcover edition first published in 2022

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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful,
terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and
events portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to
real people, creatures of the night, psychic hunters hellbent on
ending the werewolf threat, or actual Mongolian death worms
is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THE REVISED EDITION

Thanks to Fred Hicks and the Evil Hat crew for supporting this revised edition, to Steve Hickey for once again editing my words into shape, and to everyone who has played *Monster of the Week* over the past several years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST EDITION

Thanks go to many people who helped me with this game. Firstly, to Vincent Baker for *Apocalypse World*, and for not minding that I took his rules and changed them all around to fit my vision.

Also, to the many playtesters who indulged me by joining in and hunting monsters over four or five years of development (especially my regular Monday night crew: Scott Kelly, Bruce Norris, Andrew McLeod, Jason Pollock, and Stefan Tyler).

Steve Hickey, who edited the game, was one of my first enthusiastic fans, the first Keeper (aside from me), and has provided great feedback throughout the process. Thanks to my other early fans: Jenni Sands, Sophie Melchior, Hamish Cameron, and Stefan Tyler.

Daniel Gorringer for the art: he was on the same page as me instantly in terms of style, and his work is fantastic.

Thanks to Amanda Reilly, Todd Furler, Patrice Hede, Stephanie Pegg, and Peter Aronson for finding typos above and beyond the call of duty.

Thanks also to everyone who contributed to the game's fundraising campaign: the game would have been much rougher without you.

And, finally, to my wife and daughter. As the dedication says, they put up with a lot while I was writing, and were supportive all along.

Thanks also to all the fans who have played and enjoyed *Monster of the Week* since the first printing, especially those of you who have created new hunter classes, mysteries, monsters, talked about your games, or shared it at conventions.

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PLAY-TESTERS ROLL OF HONOUR

Revised edition: Dennis McFaull, Stefan Tyler, Paul Wilson, Chris Fletcher, Sara Fletcher, and Nasia Alevizos, John Adamus, Matthew Aaron, Mark Miller, Sophie Legacé, Rick Neal, Michael Robins.

First edition: Andrew McLeod, Scott “It’ll be fine” Kelly, Jason “Dark past” Pollock, and Stefan “Unstoppable” Tyler, Steve Hickey, Sophie Melchior, Hamish Cameron, Jenni Sands, Svend Andersen, Celeste Mackintosh, Wayne Ulyate, Dale Elvy, Karen Wilson, Stephanie Pegg, Ellen Couch, Andy Millar, and Nick Cole.

Many more people playtested earlier beta versions of this game. Thanks to you all, too.

FUNDERS ROLL OF HONOUR

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the first edition crowd-funding campaign:

Peter Aronson, Lester Ward, Alasdair Sinclair, Sophie Melchior, Malcolm Harbrow, Colin Jessup, Dev Purkayastha, Marco Andreoto, Hamish Cameron, Shane Mclean, James Enright, Jeremy Tidwell, Rohan Smith, Ian Raymond, Morgan Davie, Stephanie Pegg, Andrew Millar, Robert Oglodzinski, Herman Duyker, Todd Furler, Luke Walker, John Harper, Jonathan Davis, Avram Lewis, Fealoro, Martin Gray, Eirik Kildal Stangnes, Emma-Jean, Jason Pollock, Antoine Fournier, Sevag Bakalian, Steve Dempsey, Rich Rogers, Marcus Constable, Yragaël Malbos, Nathan Roberts, Joseph Le May, Linda Larsson, Vincent Baker, Jonathan Bristow, Stuart Chaplin, Robert T Roy, Marc Majcher, Kevin Lindgren, Nick Reynolds, Dale Elvy, John Ryan, Mike Olson, Brian Allred, Ken Finlayson, Guns_n_Droids, Alan Jackson, Scott White, Matthew Edwards, Guillaume Carré, Svend Andersen, Stefan Tyler, Paul Wilson, Florian Hoheneder, Peter Borah, Bryan Chavez, Dag Sverre Syrdal, David Bowers, Paul Edson, Jason L Blair, Marcus Bone, Jeremy Friesen, Phil Garrad, Adam Waggenspack, Tim Ireland, Sevag Bakalian, Nathan Riddell, Richard Rogers, Derek Grimm, Julianna Backer, Ferrer Jean-Olivier, James Iles, Katrina Allis, Nicolas Brian, Sean Dunstan, Chris Norwood, Mark Harris, Gary Anastasio, Felan Parker, Steve Hickey, Noah Doyle, Karen Wilson, Sven Folkesson, Gino Moretto, Frank Pitt, Chris Moriarty, Jenni Dowsett, Neal Dalton, Alden Strock, Reid San Filippo, Zoe Tsang, Christopher Weeks, W. Mark Woodhouse, Ben Wootten, James Gabrielsen, Auryynn Shaw, Alex Abate Biral, Jason Pitre, Justin Koopmans, René John Kerkdyk, Diogo Curado, Grégoire Pinson, Brett Easterbrook, Wayne West, Nicolas Ronvel, Alex Fradera, Noam Rosen, Mark Shocklee, Scott Kelly, Will A Wright, John Machin, Peter Edwards, Guy Milner, Joe Beason, Avery Mcdaldno, Gerry Saracco, Jim Sweeney, Carl Rigney, Jonathan Walton, Keith Higdon, Scott Bennett, Joshua Cupp, Parke Hultman, Bryan Rennekamp, Andrew Rosenheim.

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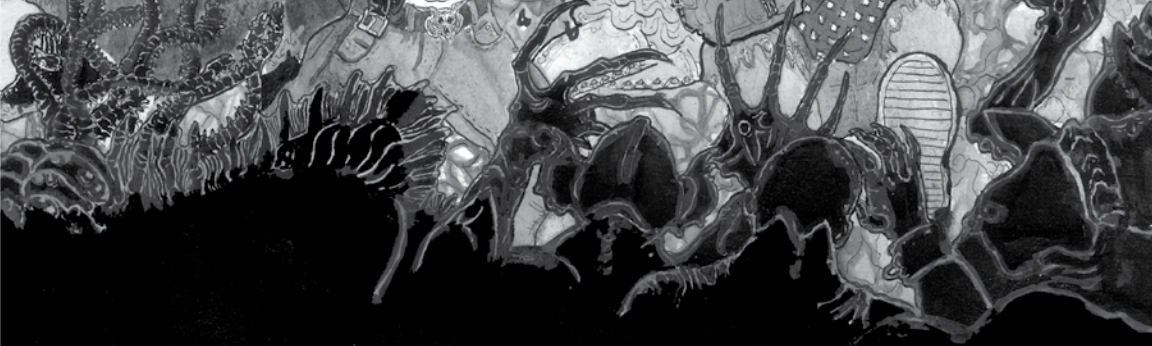
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FOREWORD

TO THE REVISED EDITION

Hi there! My name's Fred, and I'm a bit late to the party.

I've always loved the urban fantasy genre, and I've been particularly happy to see it take over primetime with shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Supernatural*, and *Sleepy Hollow*. Yet somehow the first edition of *Monster of the Week*—a game modeled after shows like those—flew under my radar.

But when I finally did find *Monster of the Week*, man, did it bite me hard: a system driven by Apocalypse Engine sexiness, a genre I go ape for, and smart choices made at every turn in the text and design. The game had it all. I was particularly taken by its clarity: this is a game that's easy to read, learn, and put into practice.

As is my way, I threw a lot of enthusiasm at the game. I started a (still-ongoing) campaign inspired in part by Harry Connolly's *Twenty Palaces* series, and I wrote up a new playbook based on a particular wizard of my acquaintance (you'll find it in this book as the Spell-Slinger).

I also looked into how this game was getting out into the world, because, man, it deserves to go far. Turns out, it wasn't getting out into the world in all the ways it could—it wasn't in retail distribution, and physical copies largely only happened via print on demand.

I wanted to help bring *Monster of the Week* to a broader audience, so I asked Michael Sands, the author, if he'd be interested in partnering with Evil Hat to get the game out to retail. Michael was on board with the idea. And he had a few revisions in mind, too. And I had some ideas about improving the layout and increasing the amount of art ... and several months later you're reading the result: a game that's as great as it ever was, and better in some ways than ever before.

I can't wait to hear how it works at your table! You're in for a treat.

— Fred Hicks





THERE ARE MONSTERS OUT THERE

Most people don't believe in monsters, but they're real. When someone finds out that monsters are real, it's usually just before they get eaten.

But some people are mean enough, smart enough, crazy enough, or hurt enough, that they live.

And some of those survivors go on a crusade against the monsters.

That's you.

It could be that you make a stand and defend your hometown from everything evil that comes there.

It could be that you take to the road and go hunt them down, wherever you can find them.

It could be that you have magic powers to put you on an even footing, or that your name came up in prophecies thousands of years ago.

The one sure thing is that you aren't gonna go back to your old safe life.

WHAT YOU'VE SIGNED UP FOR

When you play this game, most of you will create hunters, people who have devoted their lives to killing monsters.

One player will be the Keeper (that's short for "Keeper of Monsters and Mysteries"). The Keeper will be in charge of:

- designing monsters and mysteries for the hunters to deal with
- bringing the world to life
- portraying the monsters and people the hunters meet.

The rest of you will decide how the hunters work together to investigate the weird situations they find, slay the monsters causing the trouble, and save the people in danger.

Your hunters aren't normal people; you're not even normal *monster hunters*. You are the ones who stand out, larger than life and twice as badass. You can change the world—save it, destroy it, or alter it forever. One way or another, you *will* make a difference.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

The game works best with three to five people, with one of you acting as Keeper. It works with more or less people, too, but there will be a corresponding change to how much time each person gets in the spotlight.

Make sure you have:

- copies of the hunter playbooks (each of these is a rules reference and record sheet for your hunter)
- enough hunter reference sheets to go round
- a Keeper reference sheet
- one mystery sheet for the Keeper, or an introductory mystery to play (there's one on page 161)
- pencils and note paper for everyone
- a pair of normal six-sided dice for each hunter (the Keeper won't need dice).

*The files you need can be downloaded from here:
<https://www.evilhat.com/monster-of-the-week/> or
 from <https://genericgames.co.nz>.*

Also handy, mostly for the Keeper, is a big list of names that you can use for the characters that will be part of the game (I like to use the Story Games Names Project book, but a phone book or the cast and crew list of a film work just as well). If you want to set your adventures in real places you'll find a source of maps, such as Google Maps, will also be useful.

It's a good idea to have drinks and snacks for everyone, too.

A mystery is one situation for the hunters to deal with—like a typical monster of the week episode on *Supernatural*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or *The X-Files*. Each time you sit down to play expect to get through a single mystery in about 2-4 hours. Sometimes it might stretch out longer, so that the mystery is split like a two-part episode instead. The first game will take a little longer because you have to make up your hunters at the beginning.

WHAT YOU SHOULD READ

I've written the rulebook in the order that you'll need as you play, with all the hunters' information first and then the Keeper's section after.

If you want to skip that and just hit the basics, here's some suggestions:

- If you're going to be Keeper, focus on the First Session section (page 175): that covers what you need to prepare and what to do for the first game. It's best to know the hunters' basic moves (page 193) and playbooks (from page 29), at least in passing
- If you're going to play a hunter, read the hunter playbooks (from page 29), and about moves (page 113) and ratings (page 27). Most important is to pick which hunter type(s) you want to play.
- If you've played *Apocalypse World* (or another game based on those rules, such as *Monsterhearts* or *Dungeon World*) then plenty here will be familiar. Check out ratings (stats in *Apocalypse World*) (page 27), playbooks (page 29), and basic moves (page 113) to get a sense of the main differences. Luck is new (page 125). The Keeper's (MC in *Apocalypse World*) agenda and principles (page 143), threats (page 149), and moves (page 184) are different, and mysteries (page 144 & page 251) and arcs (page 239) take the place of fronts.
- If you're an experienced roleplayer who hasn't played *Apocalypse World* (the game these rules are adapted from), check out the hunter playbooks (page 29) and the moves (page 113) and ratings (page 27). From there everything else should fall into place.
- If you want to run a game right away, skim "Running the First Mystery" (page 178) and "On With the Mystery" (page 213) and then read through "Dream Away the Time" on page 161. That should be enough to get you up and running. You can come back for more detail later.

STRUCTURE

This book is split into two main sections, *The Hunters* and *The Keeper*. Each section contains the rules for the corresponding player role. It's helpful for the Keeper to be familiar with how the rules work for hunters as well as for their own Keeper responsibilities. There's also no reason for other players to avoid the Keeper's section (there are no spoilers there, except in the example mysteries) if you want another perspective on the rules.

FEEDBACK

If you have some feedback or just want to talk about the game, you can send me email at mike@genericgames.co.nz, or post at the Monster of the Week forum at apocalypse-world.com/forums/index.php?board=33.0

If you want to keep up with Monster of the Week updates, visit the game's website at <https://www.evilhat.com/monster-of-the-week/> or <https://genericgames.co.nz> or follow @MotW_rpg on Twitter.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE HARDCOVER EDITION?

With the hardcover edition of *Monster of the Week*, we've added in a little bit extra to the existing material from the revised softcover edition—24 additional pages in all.

From *The Tome of Mysteries* supplement, we've added rules options for alternative weird basic moves (page 318), phenomenon-type mysteries (page 326), and an alternative, more flexible **investigate a mystery** move (page 329). We've also incorporated all of the special Luck moves from *Tome of Mysteries* for this book's playbooks that didn't have them previously.

We've also brought in two additional playbooks that previously existed only as online downloadables: the Snoop (page 75) and the Spooktacular (page 86). We've also added a team concept centered on the Snoop on page 24.





THE HUNTERS

So, you're going to be a monster hunter. I'll take you through what happens the first time you sit down to play: creating hunters, coming up with a team history, and getting on with investigating mysteries and slaying some monsters.

It's written to tell you what you need to know in the order you'll need it (with a few digressions along the way).

THE FIRST SESSION

In the first session, you'll create your hunters and investigate your first mystery.

The first step is to decide if the group wants to pick a team concept (page 22). That's the reason you are a team, for example, "We all work for a secret monster hunting agency" or "We defend our home town against the monsters that keep coming here." The Keeper may have some suggestions based on what they've been planning.

If you have a team concept that needs certain hunter types, allocate those first.

If you don't have a team concept, just let everyone pick a play-book (that's your hunter rules and record sheet) and see what the team looks like. You'll work out why they are together as you create your hunters, establish their history with each other, and as you play the game.

The hunter types are:

- **The Chosen:** a once-ordinary person who discovered they have a special destiny, and who has been given the power to accomplish it. The Chosen is good in a fight, with some weird powers. E.g. Buffy from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. See page 30.
- **The Crooked:** a criminal turned monster hunter, haunted by their past and enemies. The Crooked is good in social situations and has a lot of contacts. E.g. Anna Valmont from *The Dresden Files*, Peter Bishop from *Fringe*. See page 35.
- **The Divine:** an agent of a higher power, with a mission to fulfill. The Divine is very tough and has been granted holy powers. E.g. Castiel from *Supernatural*; Michael Carpenter from *The Dresden Files*. See page 41.
- **The Expert:** the hunter who knows all about monsters and magic. The Expert knows a lot of hidden secrets and how to find out more, and also has a well-supplied base to work from. E.g. Bobby Singer from *Supernatural*; Rupert Giles from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. See page 46.
- **The Flake:** a conspiracy theorist. The Flake is great at finding things out and seeing how the events of separate mysteries are connected. E.g. Agent Mulder or the Lone Gunmen from *The X-Files*. See page 51.