

MYTHOS WORLD

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Mythos World uses the Apocalypse World roleplaying engine developed
by D. Vincent Baker. The move mechanics, as well as Gamemaster
Agenda and Principles are key to a player-driven storytelling experience.
This book could not exist without the inspiration of the Mythos authors,
as well as Sandy Petersen and Chaosium Inc.'s original idea to bring the
Mythos to roleplaying.

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CHAPTER 1

HORROR ROLEPLAYING

Mythos World is a roleplaying game that allows three to six players to recreate the supernatural horror of authors like Robert Chambers, H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, and Robert E. Howard. As players in Mythos World, you take on the roles of everyday people in the United States of the 1920's. You'll face unimaginable horror and incomprehensible revelations from beyond the realms of sanity. You'll discover intelligent ancient creatures that have roamed the Earth for millions of years, mindless deities that have only allowed mankind to survive as an oversight, bizarre aliens from other dimensions that see no difference between a human being and an insect, and branches of the human race that can barely be considered human. Most people are unaware of the horrors that could snuff them out at any moment. You are the enlightened. You see just a sliver of the truth, but enough to let you take action and try to resist. But even a bit of the truth is more than most people can handle, and you might just end up dead or insane.

Mythos World uses the Apocalypse World approach to player moves and draws heavy inspiration from Dungeon World and other Apocalypse World adaptations.

PLAYING THE GAME

In Mythos World, one player acts as the gamemaster (GM), who is sort of the author of the story. Each of the other players takes on the role of a character with a unique set of traits and abilities, and they decide what they do in the story. You can think of this game as a TV series, where the GM comes up with the setting and the situation, but the players are the main characters and decide what actions they will take. Each time you sit down to play, it's called a session, sort of like an episode in a TV series. The players will keep the same characters from session to ses-



sion, if they survive. The GM introduces new and deeper mysteries as the players gather clues and face the unknown.

In a typical scene during play, the GM describes the current situation for the players, and then they declare what they do in response. This back and forth continues as the players find themselves in new situations or discover new information and react. The GM decides the outcome of the players' actions based on their traits, abilities, physical and mental condition, and also based on what the GM knows about the world. The GM also decides the actions of all of the creatures in the world, as well as all of the people not controlled by the players, known as non-player characters (NPCs).

Sometimes, a player will declare an action that triggers something called a *move*. Moves provide a set of possible outcomes for the action, usually determined by rolling dice. Basic moves can be triggered by any player and are listed in Chapter 4. Players also gain access to certain moves based on the profession they choose.



EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Perhaps the best way to understand how Mythos World works is to see how a scene might play out. Read the following transcript, but don't worry if you don't understand everything that's going on right away. Review it again after you've read through these rules.

In this scene, the players have taken the roles of a criminal named Clara Green, a priest named Father James MacDill, and a scientist named William Lawrence. They've been following a local aristocrat they suspect is the leader of a murderous cult. After they see him leaving his mansion in a hurry, Clara picks the lock, and they all sneak inside. Clara has a sprained right wrist from a previous encounter with cult members, and Father MacDill has developed moderate pyromania after seeing the cultists burn one of their enemies alive.

GM: Carville's library has a lot of dark wooden bookshelves, a writing desk, a comfortable sofa, and a fireplace with a small fire still burning.

Father MacDill: I look around for any evidence of cult activity, or any strange books.

Clara: Umm. Father, there's a fire. (She remembers Father MacDill's pyromania.)



Father MacDill: Oh, I forgot. I guess I don't search. I stare at the fire and move closer to it.

Clara: I'll search for books and cult items. I'll start with the writing desk.

William: I still think there's nothing supernatural going on. I'm searching for scientific supplies that these weirdoes use to create their parlor tricks.

GM: Let's start with Clara. Make a Search for Something move. Roll plus INT.

Clara: (Clara rolls two dice and adds her Intelligence bonus) An 11. Nailed it.

GM: Yup. It didn't take long. Right on top of the writing desk is a piece of notepaper, half covered with writing. There's still a fountain pen sitting in an open inkwell.

Clara: Maybe something interrupted Carville in the middle of writing this. I take it and read it.

GM: Ok, you grab the piece of fresh, flammable paper.

William: Oh, God.

GM: Father MacDill, please Defy Danger with WIL. (another effect of his pyromania)

Clara: Seriously?

Father MacDill: I roll an 8. (this is a partial success, or a success with a cost)

GM: Father, you grab the note from Clara's hand, and she winces at the pain in her wrist. You have a choice. Do you burn half of the note before you realize what you're doing and stop yourself, or do you accidentally start your own sleeve on fire before the note even begins to burn?

William: Start your sleeve on fire. We'll put you out.

Father MacDill: I burn half of the note. I want to see it burn.

Clara: Father, stop! We need that.



GM: OK, Father, you pop the paper into the embers and it blackens and burns at the edge. Then you hear Clara's protests, snap out of it, and grab what's left of the note.

Clara: I take it back and try to read it.

William: What about me, have I found anything?

GM: You've been a little distracted by all this, but while Clara reads, you can Search for Something.

William: Crap. I rolled a 6. (6 or less is bad. It allows the GM to hurt the players or cause them trouble)

GM: You get an experience point. (rolling 6 or less is also a way to get experience points, which players can spend later to improve their abilities) You see nothing resembling scientific equipment, but while you're up on a small ladder searching the top shelves, you hear sounds behind them. One section of the shelves swings open, knocking you off of the ladder to the floor. A tall, muscular man steps through the opening into the room. He looks like most of his face has been peeled away. He's wearing only a pair of old shorts, and wielding a knife. His arms are bloody up to the elbows. All the yelling must have alerted him.

Father MacDill: A Cultist! What the hell was he doing behind that wall? I cross myself and get behind the desk.

GM: He charges at Clara.

Clara: I drop the note and draw the pearl-handled .45 from my purse.

GM: You fumble with it because of your sprained wrist and can't get it out in time.

