

L I M I N A L

A roleplaying game about those caught
between the ordinary and extraordinary

QUICKSTART

Paul Mitchener and Neil Gow

Sample file

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	6
About Liminal	6
Factions and the Supernatural	7
Characters	10
Chapter 2: The Fang Gang	12
Dr Toni Marshall	13
Detective Samira Begum	14
Civilian Specialist David Wallace	15
Senior Examiner Alison Monroe	17
Chapter 3: Game Rules	19
Skill Tests	19
Using Skill Tests	21
Damage and Healing	23
Combat	25
Chapter 4: Liminal London	30
London	31
The Hidden	32
Pax Londinium	34
P Division in London	35
Chapter 4: The Dead	37
Early December with the Watch	38
Background	38
Characters	39
Initial Situation	42
The First Vampire	43
Complications	44
The Hunt	45
Denouement	49
Coming Soon	50





Chapter 1: Introduction

We're outsiders, all of us, we Liminals. We don't fit into the mortal world- we know too much, or can do too much. But we also don't fit into the Hidden World. We're human as well as supernatural, not like the Fae and the vampires.

-Ygraine Green, Changeling

About Liminal

Liminal is a roleplaying game about the boundary between the modern day United Kingdom and the Hidden World- the world of secret societies of magicians, a police division investigating Fortean crimes, fae courts, werewolf gangs, and haunted places where the walls between worlds are thin.

The game is a take on modern day fantasy. It draws from real world places, their local history and character, even their names, and from folklore. Players take on the role of Liminals- people at the boundary between the Hidden World and mundane reality. Together, these Liminals form a Crew, sharing knowledge and assets, with common goals. The Crew take on Cases, dealing with the affairs of the Hidden World, especially as it effects the ordinary world at large.

This short book is an introduction to the world of Liminal. It contains the essentials of the game rules, some ready to play characters, and a case for them to dig into. With this book you'll be able to try out Liminal straight away. What are you waiting for?

The main Liminal book will be available soon, and you can pre-order a copy from our website, listed on the front page. That book will contain much more, including rules for character creation and different magical traditions, factions and places in the Liminal UK, further cases with advice on building your own, breathtaking art, and more.

But you can start your journey into the Hidden World with this book. Step across the boundary. We'll guide you. There's no need to be afraid.

Factions and the Supernatural

Yes, the Home Office assigns funds to a group called P Division. They are the branch responsible for Fortean Crimes, the full details of which fall under the Official Secrets Act. They're necessary, and the public cannot know the full details of what they do. No, neither is the Home Secretary briefed. Just think of some of the Home Secretaries we've had over the twenty years I've been in this position; I shudder at the thought.

I see you're not convinced of the necessity. Well, perhaps there is a little I can share with you. I assure you that none of the evidence I'm about to present is fabricated in any way.

-Aidan Crombie, Civil Servant, Home Office

Vampires are real, and they're predatory beasts under a complex system of etiquette coming from a previous century. Werewolves are real, but they don't pass on their infection through a bite and most aren't bothered by the full moon. Faeries are real, and some of the folk tales reflect reality- often the nasty ones. Ghosts are real. Much of the time, most of them are invisible to ordinary senses, but there are always exceptions. Every rule about the supernatural has exceptions.

And there are mortal practitioners of magic, some rich and privileged, some coming from the outcasts and outliers of society. Once one knows about the Hidden World, it's hard to fit in. Maybe that's why most people manage to ignore it, and quickly forget about their contact with the terrifying and wonderful not long after they've experienced it. Liminals are people who know, who don't forget, and who still try to keep one foot in the everyday world.



Some aware mortals and supernatural groups band together in factions, much more powerful and dangerous groups than a crew of Liminals. Factions in the game world, which are presented in more detail in the main book, include:

- The Council of Merlin

The Council of Merlin is an ancient, conservative, and wealthy group of wizards. They don't necessarily have the influence they once had (and pretend to still have), but they are respected and include some powerful individuals. They seek to prevent the "wrong sorts" of wizards from getting out of hand, and to gather magical power.

- The Court of the Queen of Hyde Park

The Queen of Hyde Park is a Fae Queen with a hidden domain in the heart of London. She rules over all of London's Fae, and her reach extends throughout England. The Queen is a manipulative dealmaker, trading in favours and less substantial services. She uses these deals to increase her influence.

- The Hidden

Sometimes those of London become lost, overlooked by ordinary people through a certain innate magic. These lost souls are called the Hidden. The Hidden have several Guilds, who provide special services for mundane and Liminal individuals. Those who engage with a guild must pay a price, and it is rarely, if ever, money.

- The Mercury Collegium

The Mercury Collegium are outcasts, rebels, and thieves who make use of magic. They seldom bother committing purely mundane crimes, though sometimes their magical crimes will have a mundane component. The Council of Merlin regards members of the Mercury Collegium as precisely those "wrong sorts" who should not have access to magic.

- The Order of St. Bede

The Order of St. Bede is an organisation dedicated to fighting the supernatural. Both the Anglican and Catholic churches sponsor them. There is an allied Islamic organisation, the Open Knot. The Order includes some magicians, but generally regard magic as a sin. They feel that humanity should be protected not just from the Hidden World, but from knowledge of magic. They have some responsibility for the Hidden World remaining "hidden."

- P Division

P Division is a specialist division of the UK police which deals with crimes involving magic and creatures from the Hidden World. They are out of the public eye, and mocked by others in the police force who know they exist, but they are not completely secret. Enough people in the police force know enough to contact them at times when something strange and inexplicable arises.

- The Sodality of the Crown

The Sodality of the Crown is a cabal of vampires, and rule over the greater portion of all vampires in the UK. Like their enemies, the Order of St. Bede, the Sodality of the Crown believes in keeping the supernatural hidden from ordinary people; not to protect them, but to help them hunt. The reach of the Sodality of the Crown used to extend into government, the police, and the military, though P Division believes the police purged their vampiric influence and the Sodality's power is now weakened. Maybe they're correct.

Characters

Player characters occupy the boundary between the ordinary human world and the Hidden World- the world of magic. They include magicians of various kinds, those with fae blood, werewolves, and mundane but clued-in investigators.

Any character begins with a *concept* indicating who they are, what type of being they are, and what they do. A concept will suggest a *drive* which is what motivates a character gets involved with both the human world and the hidden world. It is the reason they put themselves in danger, get caught up in supernatural politics, solve mysteries, and try to minimise the harm the Hidden World might do to ordinary mortals who are unaware of its existence.

Then come *skills*, which represent a character's training and natural abilities. Most of what a character knows how to do is defined in terms of their skills. Each of a character's skills has a level- a numerical value representing how good a character is at that skill. A level 2 skill is already good enough to usually succeed at ordinary tasks, and the level of an ordinary professional. Higher levels in a skill represent greater expertise.

Some characters have a *speciality* written in brackets after a skill. When they use a skill and the speciality applies, treat it as two levels higher.

Traits are specially trained or innate advantages which stand apart from skills. They often give bonuses to skills. Supernatural abilities, including the ability to use different forms of magic, are traits. Some mundane talents, such as greater than normal strength, gracefulness, or intellectual ability, are traits.

Some supernatural beings have *limitations*. Limitations are restrictions on a character's supernatural abilities or issues coming from their supernatural nature.

Finally, a character has a few *attributes*. *Endurance* measures a character's physical resilience, and how much physical harm they can suffer without critical injury. *Will* measures a character's reserves of inner strength. A player character spends Will to boost their dice rolls, and to power magic. Supernatural effects can also drain Will.

In combat, a character has a *damage* attribute, measuring how much harm they do. Damage depends mainly on the weapon used, though it is boosted by some traits. Damage is measured as a dice, since it varies, plus a flat number. An armed attack varies from d6+1 to d6+4 damage.

A Note on Dice

Liminal uses ordinary six-sided dice. Throughout this book, we use the common notation of Xd6 to mean the result of rolling X six-sided dice and adding the results together to get a number.

For example, in a skill test, you roll 2d6 (two six-sided dice, with the results, added together), add your character's skill, and compare the result with a target number.