



**THE MONSTER
WE DON'T KNOW**

DESIGN DOCUMENT

VERSION 1.0

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WWW.TMWDK.COM

WELCOME TO THE DESIGN DOC!

This is the design document for **The Monster We Don't Know**, a collaborative, co-creative online and live action role-playing game. The game is set in the **Supernatural Universe**, for which all rights are owned by **The CW Television Network**. This game is a fan made creation, born out of love for the show, role-playing and the wider community around them. **No copyright infringement is intended.**

WHY AM I READING THIS?

A design document holds relevant information about how this game functions: how it's created and how it's played. Some or most of it is relevant to read if you are considering participation. This document exists to create understanding about what this game is trying to achieve, and how to best contribute to that.

Note that a Design Document is a living work in progress. This document will be updated as we figure out the best ways to create this game. It's collaborative work, and the document expands and changes into the directions the community steers it to.

Change log



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- CHAPTER 1: BASICS -

THE SETTING

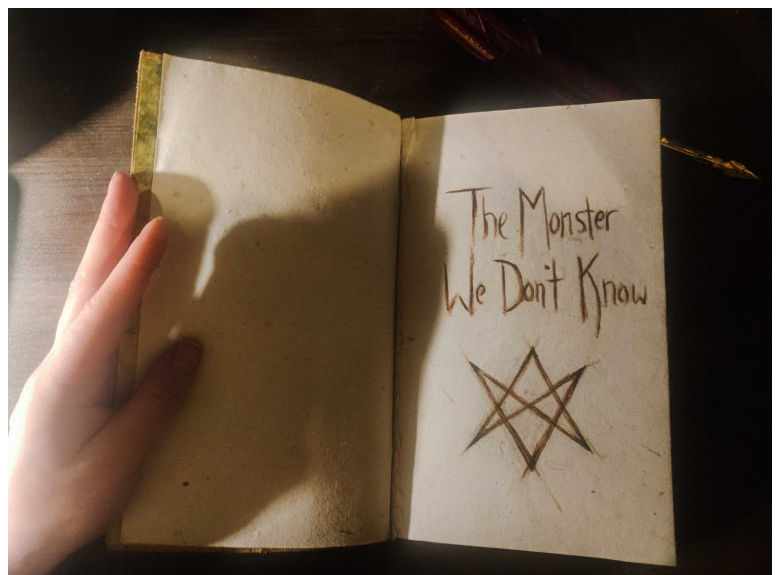
The Monster We Don't Know (TMWDK) is set in the **Supernatural Universe** and in the present day. In this world monsters exist, demi-gods, demons and angels roam the worlds, and magic is real. On the surface, to a normal person, these things don't exist. The forces of Heaven, Hell and Humanity battle it out beneath the surface, mostly hidden away from normal people.

What are urban legends, weird occurrences, world religions and occult beliefs to those normal people, are very real to the hunters and the operatives of the Men of Letters who try to keep the monsters (and at times angels) in check.

THE CHARACTER SETTING

The game is about hunters and operatives who deal with the ugly things all the time. For hunters it's a routine job to face danger with little back up. The Men of Letters are directed by their British office, with factions created from groups of learned people around the world. They work further away from the trenches, but are also capable of getting their hands dirty. Things are organized a little differently around the world, but usually there is a working relationship between hunters and the local Men of Letters operatives.

Now the Governments have closed off borders and set restrictions to normal life. This has allowed the bad to run amok, while at the same time making it more difficult to work cases.



The characters all have their own opinions, views on the world, morals, hopes and dreams. There will be situations, where everyone might not see eye to eye, and tensions can run high in the good guys camp.

THE LONESOME HEROES

Real life isolation is reflected in the character's situations. Magic can help them in some cases, but mostly everyone is working with less contact to others than is usual for this line of duty. The characters tend to their duties and relationships as best they can. They need to trust others to take care of things more than they usually would, but also not judge when someone has to step back. It's all a real exercise in communication, something no hunter ever has been known to excel at.

PIECING IT ALL TOGETHER

Things are being investigated and cases handled here and there that might have to do with a bigger picture. But how to piece together a big picture, when no one is sure what is being looked for? Documenting, photographing, recording and sharing are becoming more common day by day, and the Men of Letters meticulously chronicle the hunt for their records. It's an intricate and changing puzzle with a risk that the big bad is secretly watching.

SHADES OF GRAY

There is no absolute good and absolute bad. Everyone has made terrible choices for good reasons, and the assumed monster might sometimes be the one to save your hide. What defines a monster is a matter of perspective, not a doctrine, even if some organizations force a strict set of rules in the matter.



THE GAME STRUCTURE

The Monster We Don't Know is in part a huge scavenger hunt and puzzle, in part an organic role-playing game that is responsive to player actions. The scale, depth and amount of plots can be increased and decreased around the main plot according to player activity.

The game is split into a minimum of five episodes. Each episode is split into scenes that make up the plotline. The scenes have a partially set sequence, which means certain played scenes unlock new scenes, and the results of each scene can affect the next one. An episode can also expand and spawn new scenes while it's being played, depending on how the game goes. The episode ends once it has run enough scenes for the necessary plotlines to unravel and reach a conclusion.

Players can participate in character driven play and drama on online platforms, and in live-action scenes so long as they act according to local safety regulations. The game runners provide some intercharacter plots in addition to faction plots and the core narrative.

TMWDK is run around a core narrative. Set plot twists and episode structures direct the game, but leave a generous amount of leeway for exploring more plots and missions. These can be added according to the amount of players and co-runners.

Player characters are members of at least one **faction**, in which they represent their character group. Factions are location based (for example a city) to make running scenes and coordinating with players possible. A faction can be added to the game once it has one or multiple co-runners and players.

Planning an episode around the core narrative begins when the previous episode starts running. This includes breaking the preset narrative down into plots, coordinating effects from the ongoing episode to the next, creating contents and preparing practicalities.

An episode doesn't need to have a set time limit. It can be run as quick or as slow as people are prepared to play it. Playing scenes is opt-in activity, and live-action scenes are scheduled with faction co-runners. The game isn't active everywhere at once, but is rather an ongoing process with sparks of play happening when people want.



CO-CREATING GAME CONTENT

The experience of **The Monster We Don't Know** becomes better the more individuals what to contribute to content creation. What that content will end up being is up to what contributors want to and can do.

Contents can take a lot of forms, for example in-game messages, videos, audio files, props, scene preparation, puzzles, text based RPG scenes, written report of events, written lore material, images, tutorials etc. *The core idea is, that the content is usable for the players and thus is meaningful for the contributor to create.*

Content can be the source of inspiration for an entire scene, or it can be created to enable or enhance a plot, scene or play. Participants can also contribute by portraying NPC's. These non-player roles can be one shots or recurring roles, depending on how the participant wishes to contribute. An NPC can be a member of a faction as well, and serve as an in-game link to the game runners.

STORYTELLING THROUGH SHARING

The game is built for social distance, so to make it good community activity, it needs good communication. Discovery and sharing is what moves the plot forward for everyone, and it's also important for the characters in the game. For this many aspects of the game are transparent, as participants are able to read events from the game that they themselves haven't been involved in.

The game runners need at least basic knowledge of how a plot or scene is played out, but the more material can be used to document and share events with others, the better the actual playing experience becomes for everyone. This maintains transparency and makes the story visible for everyone. The game runners, together with contributing community members, curate the material and release parts of it as game content or in the **Hunter's Diary**, which chronicles the events of the game.

Making-of, behind the scenes, bloopers and other material is also part of the story, which is as much about the experience of participation as it is about the game. People are invited to share these through their own channels, or give permission for the game runners to release them.



- CHAPTER 2: PLAYING THE GAME -

TO PLAY TMWDK IS TO....

1. Create your own character with help from the runners
 2. Sign up for live-action scenes in your area (if available)
 3. Hunt, solve puzzles and create character drama
 4. Document your actions and share them with others
 5. Play online RPG in scenes or in emergent play
 6. Co-create a chronicled story on an online platform
 7. Decide yourself when, where and how you want to play
 8. Become a part of an inclusive, international family
-

CREATING A CHARACTER

Character creation starts when you choose to sign up as a player. In the sign-up process each player fills out a character questionnaire, which helps define the values, morals and objectives of the character, as well as establishes the faction, groups and preferred ways of playing and interacting (these are guidelines, not limiting decisions).

The basic **character sheet is provided next as a collaborative file** shared with the game runners and the individual player. It contains basic, pre-written background (not a lot) and faction plot points based on the answers to the questionnaire, and the template to complete optional and more in-depth writing for the character.

This collaborative character sheet is used throughout the game. Players can use it to develop the character's background, add character contacts and document the most personal events and thoughts that might not be visible in more public channels. *All of this information helps the runners in bringing the best, most impactful plots and play your way.*



PRINCIPLES OF PLAYING

EYES ON THE MISSION

A character evolves as it experiences and learns things or when their views are challenged. Their morals and alliances might shift. But for the integrity of the game it's important that the missions and scenes that the players are given, are also played out. *(Or it should be communicated clearly if this isn't possible.)*

Discovery and sharing is what moves the plot forward, and if a character is sent out to retrieve or solve something, there usually isn't a stand in available to do it for them. A character might go about it or react to it differently, but for the sake of other players, the scenes that have been started also need to be resolved. Even if a character decides this thing is against their values, finish the scene. Greater shifts in the behaviour or choices of the character can be made after the fact.

WE'RE ALL PROS HERE

Even if the players are not, the characters are pros in what they do, whether it's combat, the lore, magic, leadership etc. This means playing each other up. It's okay to politely correct someone or disagree about something in character (or even fight it out with mutual consent), but it's not okay to dismiss or downplay anyone in- or off-game.

Support other players when they might be unsure about how the world or situation functions. Also remember that while a character might be the most pro person out there, they can also face situations where they need to ask for help.



CREATING THE EXPERIENCE

The Monster We Don't Know is designed to fit changing circumstances. It also means that all participants carry responsibility about their own experience in the game. The game is meant to be enjoyed with even small amounts of participation by making the plots and scenes as meaningful



and impactful as possible. To be able to do this, the participants need to communicate openly about their wishes and possibilities to the game runners.

The game can be anything from a single plot, mission or scene every now and again, to playing active drama and plotting with players and NPCs.

The game becomes what the players make it, but the runners carry the responsibility to keep it inclusive and accessible, and not favor the most active players above the ones with less possibilities to participate.

OBJECTIVES AND PLOTS

All characters have objectives and motives that steer their actions. These can and should evolve during the game. The characters also have roles and missions through their factions, character groups and involvement in plots, which might to some extent be shared ones. It's not always transparent if someone is involved in the same plot. When it is, the characters might have completely different objectives. **Even when you obviously know someone has the same plot briefing, don't assume you are playing from the same standpoint.**

SCENES

Scenes are story bits, which can be a single mission or call, a longer lasting process or a big event involving multiple factions and play styles. They always have a starting point and need to create an outcome. A scene can involve one or more character groups, or even just one player. For most parts scenes are available for anyone (usually within a faction or group), but there might be need to run character specific scenes too.

Scenes can contain prepared game content and information necessary to move the plot forwards. Scenes can be played in Discord, on video calls, on the phone or any other agreed upon platform so long as it's accessible for all involved players.

Some scenes are also live-action, usually based on exploration, scavenger hunts and puzzle type content. They are designed to be played either solo, or with only a few co-players according to local safety regulations. Live-action scenes require the most preparation from the runners, which



means they are pre-scheduled as far ahead as possible when each episode begins. Availability depends on the amount of active co-runners to help make it happen.

Some scenes don't require any time specific involvement. Players are free to interact with the content on their own accord, and the scene will be ended by the runners once it reaches a conclusion that moves the story forward.

All scenes are opt-in activity, which the game runners aim to facilitate for everyone as equally as possible. Schedules and signing up for scenes is an ongoing process, which runs on the website. Participants are free to keep playing between their scenes, and some solving and playing needs to happen between actual set up scenes.

Game runners can't necessarily keep feeding game content and carry the plots indefinitely, and the scene structure also won't allow it. This can limit the activity to playing character driven drama at times, or coming up with side quests that don't directly involve the main plot. **Characters are allowed to go off and do their thing outside set up scenes. We encourage taking initiative and creating more play, but please remember that the plot is only affected by things we are aware of and can direct.**

RECEIVING AND LOGGING A SCENE

Scenes involving time specific involvement are announced and scheduled in phases. Basic info about what kind of play is included plus trigger warnings are given when you choose to join a scene. After a scene is confirmed, the players and runners can agree on time and methods. There might be a forced time frame in some cases, but we try to avoid this. Scenes that start stalling can be forced to end by the runners.

Live scenes will have a similar sign up process, but with co-runners naming an area and time frame on sign up. Details are set between players and co-runners, who agree on more specific details. Trigger warnings and any information about needed preparations are issued beforehand, other information according to the situation. Depending on the scene, a player can have remote backup, co-players or NPC characters taking part in it. At least the responsible co-runner should be in reach over the phone or similar during the scene.

The players, both PC and NPC, are responsible for documenting the events as best they can. Sometime it might be difficult to get any images or videos, and in this case a written synopsis is



enough. The events are documented and reported by the player, and the outcomes are logged by the co-runner after everything is played out. Results will be released in the Hunter's Journal at an appropriate time.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

GAME WEBSITE & FORUMS

The official website of TMWDK is the main platform for tracking the game's progress, sign ups and storing game content. All participants create profiles for the platform, whether they are players or co-creators. This is important for transparency about who is part of this project, but also for every core aspect of how the game works.

For in-game activities the platform provides **The Archive**, in-game news feeds and other updating sources of game content and the Hunter's Journal, where past events of the game are released. The platform also has forums, one of which is for in-game coordination between factions. Otherwise the platform functions as a way to communicate between runners, co-creators and players, and to bring together everything created for the game.

DISCORD

TMWDK Discord is used by both players and runners for playing and off-game discussions. It uses locked channels for different purposes, for example in-game faction channels, comms channels for missions, developers-only channels for game runners etc.

The most important rule for using Discord is: don't hide story progress in long channel backlogs.

- 1) When anything important happens, or a meaningful discussion is had, remember to also store it somewhere else (see: Drive). Make it a habit to write even a bullet point about it.
- 2) Use the right channel for what you're doing. Like audio channels for real time mission ops, direct messages for private one on one play, faction channels for group discussions, and comms channels for logging progress on a scene.
- 3) Don't flood the in-game channels unnecessarily. It's nice to have an active group, but unless there's a consensus about keeping the game active during a period of time, it's very off putting to have constant notifications and feel like you're dropping out of the loop.



SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS & CHANNELS

Facebook-groups for factions are optional and can be created by players if they wish (same rules apply for these as for Discord), but only if everyone involved wants to use one.

A dev channel is set up for co-creators wishing to be part of the core plot, and these things won't be discussed anywhere else, just to guard the secrets. No important information will be hidden in any FB events, posts, groups etc by the game runners.

Game content is partly uploaded to social media channels, but these are always accessible without signing up and being linked to on the website. Social media channels are mainly used to communicate about the game to outside audiences.

GOOGLE DRIVE

Google Drive is a great way to store larger amounts of updating and changing information which isn't relevant to everybody. Drive is used by the runners for keeping everything working. For this reason it's a preferred method to have players upload logs, pictures, videos and any other information in Drive. The runners will set up folders for all factions, but not for individual players (the character sheets are stored in a folder not available to them). Players may however share their personal folder with the team if they wish.

OTHER CHANNELS

Players can use practically any channel they like for playing, as long as it doesn't affect the accessibility of the game. If everyone involved in a scene or a group of characters agrees to play something over the phone, in a conference all etc, they are free to do so. **Just remember to document and log progress.**



- CHAPTER 3: THE WORLD AND LORE -

SUPERNATURAL: THE WORLD

The game is set in the Supernatural Universe from the tv-series of the same name.

In this world urban legends, folklore and religious myths are born from reality in a very literal sense. Events and beings are real, but the world in general doesn't know that. The truth has been altered or distorted, becoming everything from children's stories to world religions.

Underneath the surface of what the general public knows or is able to uncover, is a world filled with supernatural beings, monsters and deities. Even God, Death, reapers, demons and celestial beings are entities that exist, and can choose to walk the earth.

The tales that are documented in folklore, history, religious texts and by the occult sciences form the reality of the world. Even things that might not seem supernatural, can in truth have everything to do with it. The supernatural beings and forces have shaped the world, and to keep a general balance and peace, the humans are quite ignorant about most of it.

In this world the beings that can be encountered change in accordance to where you happen to be located. Much like flora and fauna, the supernatural isn't all the same everywhere. These are the deities, spirits and monsters that earlier generations lived with, and which shaped the cultural heritages, folklore and religions. Greek Gods resided in Greece, Norse Gods in Scandinavia. With modernization and globalization some beings might have relocated time and again, but their roots are where the lore says.

Many of these beings are sentient, even human-like, able to blend in or smart enough not to be seen unless they want to. In the modern world and with humans losing touch with religion, "superstitions" and old habits, the supernatural have both become more unreal and much closer to humans than before. Most humans don't know or believe enough to have defenses against anything, but they also keep their sanity and distance by writing off things as something else.



While the world of Supernatural is based on actual stories and beliefs, it maintains a respectful approach and does not attempt to criticize or make fun of anyone's religion.

In TMWDK we maintain this approach, and make it our mission to not expand any lore to cover religions and cultures without collaborating with someone representing them.

For a more comprehensive overview of the world and how it's used in this game, check under "The Lore" on tmwdk.com. For more detailed information, with All The Spoilers of the show, take a look at [Fandom Wiki](#).

RESEARCHING THE LORE

Researching the lore, finding out about creatures, past events and magic can be done by simply tapping into actual real world books and websites. The key to interpret what you find is in the logic of how the Supernatural Universe works. Basic knowledge on the power structures and magic of the world will get you far. The game runners use real world references and the existing story of Supernatural to come up with the game content.

Nothing can come up that couldn't be solved by looking it up online, in available literary sources and through meta-knowledge of the Supernatural Universe. As much as possible of the meta-knowledge needed for the game will be provided in game materials and the website, so people won't have to watch the show or dig into Fandom Wiki for answers all the time. Team Bob is also present in-game to help players in hard-to-research situations.

FACTIONS AND CHARACTER GROUPS

The character groups define the background of the character. Most characters are either *hunters* or *Men of Letters operatives*, but there will be some smaller groups and individuals introduced that are neither. These characters can be *witches*, *celestials*, *demons* or *monsters*.

The character's location defines what faction they are part of. Factions are defined by the Men of Letters international factions, which may be split into sub-factions if there are a lot of active locations.



For example:

- *Hunter, Faction Alpha, Helsinki / Finland -> Finland has multiple active areas. This player is active in Helsinki.*
- *Operative, Faction Zeta, Greece -> Greece has only one active group of players.*
- *Witch, Faction Epsilon -> Player is for example from Spain. No active location, character is played online.*

MEN OF LETTERS

...“preceptors, observers, beholders, chroniclers” of mysteries not easily explainable or known to men. They had knowledge of mysteries of the supernatural and many arcane arts like alchemy.
(Source: Fandom Wiki)

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(Source: Fandom Wiki)

The Men of Letters are a world wide organization, but their chapters widely seceded for various reasons during the last century. In Europe World War II and the Thule (a nazi occult organization still rumoured to exist) played a big part, and there are still very real tensions between Faction Gamma and the Britons.

The world chapters are called Factions, and they are named with different areal coding depending on what part of the world they're from. In Europe they are named by the Greek alphabet in descending order from northernmost to southernmost Faction.

Factions are bound to the same levels of knowledge system as the original organization, but local cultures do affect how this is implemented. The levels are initiate, apprentice, senior and elder.

Ways of being initiated into the Men of Letters vary, because academies like Kendrick simply don't exist in most parts of the world, and most operatives don't want to uphold the tradition of legacies (inheriting into the knowledge and organization). Often the factions search out knowledgeable individuals locally or choose fitting ones born to the life, if they are willing.



Some things are run internationally. Elders are appointed by the international Assembly of Elders when an operative is deemed experienced enough to enter the highest level of knowledge. Initiates are always guided by an appointed senior and aren't allowed many freedoms to explore and experiment.

Apprentices are supervised but already encouraged to explore independently. Usually they are introduced as full members after a rite of passage, a mission or research task that proves high proficiency in the lore and magic.

Seniors, full members, are independent players who get appointed as elders once they autonomously reach a level of proficiency deemed equal to other elders. Becoming an elder grants them full access to everything the organization has gathered in lore, spells and items, the highest level of knowledge. Although Faction elders might still be a long way away from knowing how the British operation is run, and they know it.

Initiates are initiates everywhere, and there's no way around the introductory phase of getting into the business. Elders are usually referred to as elders, but seniors and apprentices are referred to as operatives when dealing with everyday stuff.

Outside of Britain and very official business with them, the difference between the two is fluid. Becoming a senior is almost a decorative, ritualistic thing. It's mostly regarded as important if there's a local lack of access to the knowledge and archives, which full members have more of. Or if someone has clear ambitions to become an elder.

The European Factions

- Alpha (Scandinavia, Nordics, Baltics)
- Beta (Poland, Czech, Slovakia, Belarus, Ukraine)
- Gamma (Germany, Austria, Benelux)
- Delta (Italy, Switzerland, France)
- Epsilon (Spain, Portugal)
- Zeta (Eastern Europe from Balkans to Greece).
- The Vatican remains outside the Men of Letters reach.

Currently represented in TMWDK:

- Faction Alpha: Finland, Sweden



- Faction Zeta: Greece
- Israel

HUNTERS

Hunters, unlike the Men of Letters, isn't a uniform group of people. They're individuals who choose to collaborate with others or don't. Traditions about collaborating amongst hunters can vary, although usually they form a network. How these networks of hunters collaborate with the Men of Letters also varies around the world. Usually at least some of them have a direct working relationship with the operatives.

The history between the Men of Letters and hunters isn't a very pretty one, since in Britain where the organization was founded, hunters were and are regarded as little more than a means to an end. Nearly animals, rather than civilized human beings. This attitude has rooted itself in some individuals elsewhere too, or might have existed between local families of knowledge and hunters even before the Factions were formed. The contrast mostly isn't that stark these days, but the tension is there even in the most tightly collaborating areas.

Usually a hunter is a normal human being that for some reason or another knows about the supernatural and has decided to fight the monsters to save lives.

Hunters have existed around the world for as long as there has been confrontation between humans and monsters, but they've become a concept much later. These days being a hunter is something that you choose or life chooses for you, either through some tragedy, or it might already run in the family for generations. In some families throughout history the knowledge of the supernatural has transformed from hunting into something else, making them keepers of knowledge and the early chroniclers. Some hunters like to point out that the Men of Letters own their origins in part to hunting traditions.

The life of a hunter rarely is a very glamorous one and it's always full of tragedy and danger. To retire from hunting isn't something people get to do in old age very often, and parting with it earlier is hard. A sense of responsibility for other people's lives is strong in hunters, and they often feel honor bound to tend to their duty. A domestic life of their own is something only few hunters pursue, because the job runs the risk of following them home putting everyone at risk.

Thus many hunters lead a life with very little tying them to any place or any person, but they take comfort in their own community. Being a hunter is being a part of a family, whether you know the



other people or don't. But with family also comes an honor code, and the hunters arduously keep each other in check, so no one crosses the thin line over from hunter to monster in human form.

Killing is part of the job, so is hurting or sometimes even torturing, but there is a clear distinction between doing it for the right reason and doing it because you can. And the subject of violence can't ever be someone who isn't clearly a monster or at the very least directly, actively responsible for having people killed by them. And even so hunters should always try to leave humans to be judged by human law. Sometimes this is simply difficult, since human laws don't take into account the existence and nature of the true world.

Hunters are usually very apt with weapons of many varieties and with physically taking on monsters. They know a variety of magic that shield them from or even actively attack monsters, but they are for most part no witches or strong practitioners of magic.

THE AMERICAN HUNTERS

The American hunters are basically like every other network of hunters. However in this game they are referred to separately as they have a story function quite different from other hunter groups.

North-America, or at least The United States of America, don't have a Men of Letters faction. The original American faction was abolished in 1958 and never restored. A couple of legacies took over their main bunker in recent years and fought off an attempt by the Brits to re-establish the faction. Since then the legacies and their network have had some occasional contact with other hunters and even operatives from around the world, but nothing much is known about them or what they do. The Brits however are very aware of them and the parts of the Men of Letters collection that they are currently in possession of.

We do not wish to involve any characters from the tv-show directly in this game. This is why we don't refer to the Winchester by name, but only as legacies. It's irrelevant to the game who they are. The American hunters will come into play during the story and those hunters will be some that share information with the legacies, but we will never directly involve the main characters in this game.

If it makes you feel fluffy (it does me), take comfort in knowing that in this game your message might reach the Winchester, and you might kind of get a second hand response from them.



- CHAPTER 4: THE STORY -

The story of **The Monster We Don't Know** emerges as the game is played. It has a pre-written core narrative that gives it direction, but the story is ultimately what the players create.

The story follows our real world timeline and simply adds another layer on top of it. The game starts at the end of May 2020, with the point of ending still left open. In the beginning the story will start forming within different factions around the world, and these narratives will gradually entwine and grow closer. In the end it'll take everyone to crack this mystery, since the keys to unravel it are spread around the factions and episodes.

The big themes of **TMWDK** are community, facing something bigger than ourselves, and the question of what makes a monster. It's plots don't address politics of the real world, but they do use some real world events. The story also has in-game politics and the lore draws on a lot of real life history. In cases where the game has dark themes, events and characters, these are always fictitious and not meant to idealize anything.

THE ROAD SO FAR...

HERE WE WILL UPDATE A SYNOPSIS ON PAST MAIN EVENTS.



- CHAPTER 5: PRACTICAL -

PARTICIPATION

Participating is possible in various ways, but to make it simple to wrap our heads around it, **TMWDK** has participation roles. These can be combined to fit personal interests in creating and playing.

The roles are *Elder dev*, *Game runner*, *Co-creator*, *Player*, *Team Bob*, *Shapeshifter* and *Seraph*. Player characters are the only ones requiring the full sign up form. For other roles it's enough to register for an invitation. If spots for player characters aren't currently available, it's possible to join in some other capacity first. (For more on participation roles, check out the website!)

NOT BASED ON A BUDGET

There is no participation fee planned for The Monster We Don't Know. This means everyone is chipping in exactly what they can and want in other ways. This project and community isn't about comparison, so nothing should ever be about who can put the most money into things.

A way to accept voluntary contributions might be set up in the future to enable some costs for the production. Those contributions would be used fairly to cover unavoidable expenses such as website costs and critical content production expenses, and none would benefit any volunteer personally.

RULES

1) Eligibility

All participants must register under their own legal name, even if they choose to use aliases on web platforms. All participants must be at least 16 years old, or older if local laws apply.



2) Local laws and regulations

Since this is a global game, the game runners can't be expected to be aware of all laws and regulations that may apply locally. It's the responsibility of each individual player to only perform actions for TMWDK that are permitted in their area by law and don't violate restrictions set due to the pandemic. Actions performed for the game have to be safe to perform for everyone included.

3) Zero tolerance to harassment and bullying

No one is allowed to physically, mentally, psychologically or in any other way hurt, berate or attack anyone else. We do not accept harassment of any kind. We have no qualms about kicking out people who break this rule. Don't try us.

4) Opting out

Inter-character actions that might present as one of the above must always have mutual consent, and the same goes to any physical action or sexual themes. If someone feels uncomfortable in an inter-character relationship or scene, they don't need to give any explanation to back out of it. Don't ask, they will tell you if they want.

5) Don't play chicken

No one is allowed to push any form of play further than the other parties are comfortable with. No one is allowed to push or trick anyone to bend any health restrictions or laws. Doing something like that turns you into an assbutt. Assbutts don't have a long shelf life.

6) I shall not spook the muggles

While playing live-action scenes or shooting footage for the game in public spaces, don't spook any people who might not know that you are larping / staging something. While playing, always wear a visible ribbon or scarf around your right arm. Any prop weapons have to have bright tape or similar around them on visible places to clearly mark them as fakes. And also those shouldn't be wielded in public areas. If you plan on staging something that requires fake violence or effects, contact the local authorities first and don't do anything stupid.

7) I am responsible for me

Everyone participating in TMWDK is aware that this isn't a player experience where everyone is guided by their hands. This is one where everyone is responsible for communicating clearly and enough, and taking initiative when possible. Doing that is the only way the game becomes enjoyable. The game runners are not responsible for anything other than giving their best with what they have, and unless they have something from you that they can work with, you really can't expect a lot back.



And while we're on the subject: the game runners are not customer service and the participants are not customers. It's more like a collegial relationship. We help each other out, but we're not here to do anyone's job for them.

8) That thing about respect

The game runners are responsible for being respectful and wonderful towards all participants. All participants are responsible for being respectful and wonderful to each other and the game runners. Showing mutual respect is awesome. Showing disrespect towards others or things others do is not awesome, and a bad attitude will gain you nothing. Except perhaps a special mention in the book of "all the assbutts" that probably most people keep in the back of their minds.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

If you have experienced or witnessed harassment, bullying or any situations that have made you or others feel uncomfortable, unsafe or attacked, please report the incident to us.

You can contact:

- One of the game runners you have had contact with (Discord DM's)
- The Elder dev's through the game's official email (tmwdk.rpg@gmail.com)
- Or if these feel unsafe, the **head of the project, Vera** (Seraph). You can contact her either via Discord / website DM's or Facebook.

Your concerns are utterly confidential, and any steps that will have to be taken to address them will be discussed with you. We take this thing very seriously, so we won't even make light of the subject here. We will hear out all of your concerns, so please don't feel like they are too small to be heard by us.



MECHANICS

LIVE-ACTION SCENES

These mechanics apply for playing live-action scenes. Use them wherever you play.

Tap out - To opt out of playing an exchange, tap the shoulder of your co-player three times, or if there's no close contact, tap your own shoulder in a very visible and obvious way. Tap out signals that you don't want to push the game into this direction any further, but you don't feel the need to interrupt the game to discuss it.

Break - Saying "break" during the game is another opt out mechanism. People involved in the scene have to stop immediately, playing is halted and the situation resolved through discussion. Note: no one needs to give an explanation to why they opt out, but it might be necessary to recalibrate what happens in order to continue playing. This is when you say "break". Everyone else not involved in this keeps playing during a break.

CUT - If someone says "CUT" during the game, everyone must stop playing immediately and help in resolving the situation if they can. "CUT" is for physical or psychological emergencies demanding immediate response. The game can continue after the situation has resolved.

Stop the game! - "Stop the game!" is the safe word for real-life threats, crisis and/or danger. If the safe word is yelled everyone has to repeat it and the game is interrupted. The runner responsible for the scene needs to be told about the situation if they aren't there at the scene. The game can continue only after the situation has been resolved and reported.

Off-game - Raising a closed fist on your forehead is a signal that you are momentarily not part of the game. This is for situations when you might have to move in the vicinity of other playing people to take care of some non-game related matter, or you might be recalibrating an exchange amidst the game. You don't need to say anything out loud while using the signal. Actually everyone prefers it if you just pretend you're not there.

Game on - Saying / yelling "game on" continues an interrupted game.

Traffic lights - When playing emotionally or physically escalating scenes the intensity can be calibrated with the traffic lights mechanic. This goes for both in-game violence and intimacy,



verbal and physical. “Green” is code for “I’m ready for more intensity”. “Yellow” is code for “This is as far as I’d like this to go”. “Red” is code for “Too far, dial back now.” Instead of red an opting out mechanism can also be used.

Physical violence - Fighting or inflicting any physical damage is simulated by acting it in slow-motion, slow enough that no movements can surprise the other party. Remember to always prepare the other person for what you are about to do by escalating through words first, giving them the possibility to opt out before any physical escalation is initiated.

Intimacy, physical closeness- Physical intimacy and close contact playing in live-scene is discouraged if it increases the risks of spreading the COVID-19 virus. Individual situations and local health restrictions will always have to be considered first before playing intimate scenes with anyone. **The possibility of having close contact in live-scenes has to be discussed before entering the scene in character.**

Sex - If someone’s game would indeed go this way in live-scenes, simulate this in a way that you have agreed on before entering the scene in character. We recommend role-playing such sequences by talking rather than through bodily actions, but simulated movements, shoulder rubs or *ars amandi* are acceptable if this is your personal choice.

Please consider: Sexual relationships between characters can just as well be role-played in text form. Avoid unnecessary physical contact.

Don’t play on any sexual themes if your contact is played by a minor and you are not their age.

Using magic: passive and reactive - Sigils, warding and other magic based on symbols and magic can affect how some characters are able to move or act during the scene. When such magic affects you or someone else in the scene, point it out when engaging in the situation.

“You have now entered a room with angel warding.” “There is a devil’s trap where you stand.” “I have an anti-possession amulet around my wrist.”

Using magic: projected and active - Sigils that are activated to target someone in specific, as well as other spells and hex bags, require giving clear instructions to the affected party. This can happen mid-play if the effect is only slightly limiting to the other person’s play. Otherwise it’s recommended that the effects are discussed off-game using the **break** mechanic.

“I have activated the binding sigil. You are now unable to move.” “Break: I’m slipping a hex bag in your pocket. It will make you fall in love with your hunting partner.”



Using magic: choosing the spell - Only use magic which A) you can find in the Archives OR have validation for from the game runners and B) you are certain your character could wield. Don't come up with random shit, we won't love you for it.

ONLINE SCENES

Discord in-game channels are always for only in-game messages. If anything needs to be said that is not said by characters, use the following mechanics.

Off-game remark - You can make an off-game note amidst the scene by using double parentheses: ((This is my off-game remark)) The game can continue regardless of this remark.

Opting out - You can use the double parentheses to opt out of a scene. This is a way to signal others that you are not comfortable continuing, but don't feel that others need to pause playing. ((I'm opting out of this scene.)) Opting out like this is for situations where your character is involved with what's going on, but you need to stop playing. Others keep on playing and don't draw attention to the player opting out for the duration of the rest of the scene.

Traffic lights - Using the double parentheses, use the codes *green*, *yellow* and *red* to prompt more escalation, keep the current level or ask to dial back.

Pausing the game - If there's a situation where play can't continue for whatever reason (either game running related or other), or the content of the game makes someone feel uncomfortable enough to ask for an intervention or discussion, the game has to be paused. This can be done using double slashes like so:

```
//GAME PAUSED//
```

Anything posted between these lines is off-game and should only have to do with resolving and discussing the situation at hand. This is similar to the "CUT" mechanic for live-scenes. A game runner can be asked to resolve the situation, if it's difficult to do between players.

```
//GAME CONTINUES//
```

Chat logging - Game runners don't read through let alone memorize everything that goes on in the game. Chat game events can be logged through two channels: by reporting a synopsis and/or snippets to a co-runner, or by adding the same information to your personal character profile.



Text RPGs - You can link to text RPGs as Drive files on your own character profile. With every link, add a synopsis of what that RPG is about, when and where it took place in the game and what characters are involved. This way game runners know how to navigate your events.



CODE OF CONDUCT

We're deadly serious about this stuff. If you ignore the Code of Conduct and become an assbutt, we won't hesitate to end your participation in TMWDK.

Zero tolerance for harassment or bullying

We tolerate no bullying, harassment or attacks of any other form against other participants (or people in general), and this applies to all manners of communication and all situations within and around this project. Everyone is expected to follow the principles of the safer larping package, and work together to create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

Inclusivity, not discrimination

There'll be no discriminating against others for any reason, and no behavior that sanctifies discrimination by others. Discrimination and inequality that is based on ethnicity, sexuality or gender is not part of the story we tell either, and we won't tolerate anyone bringing in such themes.

Inclusivity is our top priority, and the involvement and effect of people is part of TMWDK's DNA. No part of the game is to be run or played in a manner that excludes others from participating for any other than story based reasons. An exception here are live-scenes, which we can only run in limited areas and sizes. These attributes are however always openly justified and are never based on exclusion.

Compersion, not comparison

We want people to have a good time, and to be able to have a positive experience regardless of the capacity in which they participate or contribute.

This project is NOT about comparison. Everyone's contribution is equally valuable. Participation should always be based on what gives one energy instead of draining it, and it should not be something that creates stress.

People have different resources in time, emotional and financial capacity, and the game will adjust to everyone using them as best befits their situation. Everyone needs to respect other people's choices in this.



Communication

We value communication and openness. We value openness and vulnerability over promising and not doing. We value trust and respect. We understand and forgive.

In TMWDK we aim to create a community where we feel comfortable to let other people know how we're doing, what we need and how we can be helped. In this spirit we encourage people to be open about situations where they might not be able to play or create like they'd planned to, and they won't be shamed for it. There is no shame in changing circumstances.

