

The Social Shrieks Game - MC Resources and Scenarios

This horror themed variant, created for Halloween, uses the basic Social Strike game mechanics but adds an extra rule, a ghoulish rule if you will. After the first round the players must roll an eight-sided die every time they use a resource. They shouldn't be told the purpose of the roll but they must roll above a threshold which rises every round. In round two they must roll a three or above, in the round three they must roll a five or above, and in round four they must roll a seven or above. Failure to meet the roll leads to the revelation of the dark side to the resource in question. The appropriate text from the following list should be read out and the new properties of the group should be taken into account in assessing the outcomes of actions.

Momentum Group

An inopportune release of spores during a public event reveals the local Momentum group as actually being a single colony of cordyceps fungus that operates as a hive mind. This explains the group's great successes with achieving consensus and keen ability to coordinate across distance. However, it also exposes the fact that the group is vulnerable to salt and other household anti-fungal agents.

Tenants' Union

We weren't kidding when we said this group has experience of resisting eviction. In some cases, this goes back hundreds of years. The Tenants' Union is entirely comprised of ghosts. We can now see why the group has a reputation for being obsessive to the point of neurosis and why they are disinclined to venture too far from the residential areas. However, this opens new possibilities in terms of acting without being seen.

Marine Conservation Group

There's always been something weirdly Stepford Wives about the local surfing/marine conservation community, with their uniformly good looks, buff physiques, and blond hair. The reason for this is revealed when a local evening stroller encounters one of the group slipping out of their skin, revealing gills, scales, and a wide set of fish lips. Further digging exposes the entire group as some manner of Mer-people. This explains the ease and comfort with which the group approaches any aquatic or sub-aquatic tasks and their slight reluctance to stay on land for too long (and the fact that none of them seem to have houses).

Anti-Racist Group

During a spot of speechifying about colonial era slavery in relation to the oppression of women next to statue in the centre of town, a member of the group refers to the group as witches. Whilst this is not, in itself, entirely without precedent in the town, it is more unusual for such a proclamation to be immediately followed by the transformation of a statue of a white benefactor into a statue of a toad. The group therefore stands revealed as being actually fucking magic. Firmly rooted in the material world, this magic, though occasionally spectacular, is dependent on acquisition of certain herbs or other organic or geological matter.

League of Acid Communists

Arriving late to a meeting and finding no-one there, a new member of the group – Paul – decides that since he's taken the trouble to leave the house, he might as well smoke some DMT. Imagine his surprise on discovering the whole group meeting inside his own head in a technicolour world of indescribable architecture. Amongst several world-changing revelations that Paul has forgotten within 5 minutes, one of the group tells him that the League consists mostly of so-called DMT Machine Elves that Paul only imagines to exist in the material world. This doesn't make the League useless as a resource, however, since these master engineers are capable of occupying the minds of anyone exposed to certain psychedelic or hallucinogenic chemicals and can inspire great ingenuity and resourcefulness.

Anti-Fracking Group

Turns out the occupation of the fracking site out of town was an effort to kill two birds with one stone by both preventing fracking operations and separating the group from the townsfolk during the full-moon after an outbreak of lycanthropy. When the moon reaches maximum portliness, members of the group struggle to control baser urges but will rip anything to shreds if they are pointed in the right direction. On other nights during the lunar cycle, they're just tired people in torn trousers.

Pay As You Feel Cafés

The chance discovery by local homeless man, Leon of a collection of coffins round the back, by the bins, reveals the reason that the cafés can't be relied upon to open in the daytime. It's that they're staffed by an order of Vampires who have to rely on familiars to take up the slack when the sun is out. This explains the weird rule whereby patrons ordering the hummus or other garlic-rich light-bites are required to eat outside, on the other side of the street, with their back to the café, and are not allowed to come back in to use the toilets. The vampires' ability to transform into mist or bats makes them a valuable resource but they are limited by the fact that they cannot enter premises unless invited. Being genuinely terrified of garlic is also quite the obstacle.

Base Union

It had long been assumed that the union's collective call for 'brains' had simply been a recruitment device but an unfortunate incident in which a member's arm detached while scanning goods and ended up being bagged with groceries by a colleague – both of whom continued as if nothing were amiss – exposed them, and the membership at large, as members of the undead. Zombies, if you will. This helps to explain the union's amazing propensity for getting people 'on side' almost instantaneously even in cases where members of the public had seemed overtly hostile to unionism mere moments before. Rumours of rife Ketamine abuse within the union are finally debunked once and for all. However, it remains the case that participants and slow and often fall over and are unable to get up again.

Sample Scenarios

You can, of course, come up with your own set of scenarios but you might need to alter the resources to ensure they're appropriate.

Round 1

It's All Hallows Eve in the town of Whitborough, which clings to the ragged edges of the Yorkshire coast. A chill wind scythes through the town as the last remaining residents of the seashore Varney estate pack their belongings. The council is planning to install flood defences on the land, so those who have been unable to find alternative accommodations are being moved temporarily to an out-of-season Haven holiday camp a little further along the shore. A campaign against the project was barely acknowledged by the Conservative council, despite a groundswell of local support and the shaky nature of the Tories slim majority. They have promised construction will begin immediately, and the new flood defences will be complete in a matter of weeks.

A little down the A187 on the outskirts of town the residents of the Corman neighbourhood are staying inside. Normally at this time of year there's relief as the fireworks of mischief night have abated and the children return to the streets, but two grisly murders have put paid to thoughts of costumes and sweets. The victims were both local but had little else in common beyond their cruel demise. The police have declared the slayings to be the work of county lines drugs gangs despite neither of the victims having any links to the drugs trade. The cops claim the crimes were committed by outsiders and have increased their use of stop and search powers on the already tense and nervous community. Claims of racial profiling have been met with derision by both the police and the council, but local organising has been hampered by people's fears of leaving their homes.

Round 2

Storms crash upon the coast, and as if swelled by a fervent malevolence the waters of the North Sea rise up and lash through the town. Visitor attractions and hotels along the shorefront have been dealt the worst damage, though no part of the town remains unscathed and those who did reside on the seafront are unsure when they can return to their homes. Despite the fact that construction work on the Varney estate was 'completed' a week ago the new flood defenses seem to have done nothing. The devastation to homes and businesses could have been predicted by anyone watching the rise in extreme weather events around the world, but the after-effects have been far less predictable. Pools of sludgy, brown-foaming water were left behind as the sea returned back beyond the breakers. Those coming into contact with the pools have fallen ill, reporting bleak hallucinations and even speaking in tongues. A fishing trawler unable to come into port for days as the storm raged has seen its entire crew sent to a secure psychiatric unit. All any of them could say was that there was movement deep below.

Meanwhile, the Haven holiday camp housing the displaced Varney estate residents escaped the worst of the storms, shielded from the sea as it is by rolling dunes. However, the residents have experienced a spate of disappearances. In all

cases their belongings have also been removed, and a local charity has argued that they may have become so-called 'voluntary homeless' to avoid the difficult conditions at the holiday camp, including cold rooms and the great distance to any affordable shops.

Round 3

Tory Councillor James Jones is found naked at the end of the pier. Dried blood smeared across his face and torso, the dismembered body of a local man at his feet. Police arrive quickly and lead him to a nearby car. A video of his apprehension is circulating which clearly shows a strange script apparently carved into his skin. Attempts to decipher it result in dizziness and nausea. Shockingly, few consequences arise from this event. The council respond as if he had been caught in a minor personal scandal. His wife gives a statement that she is standing by him. The local paper publishes an editorial defending Jones against "online witch hunts and the snowflake left". The police declare that they are satisfied with the councillor's explanation of events, but do not declare what that explanation is.

On the grey shale cliffs overlooking the bay a new structure is being erected. The council has funded the construction of a new statue in response, as they put it, to recent attempts to "rewrite our history". During the day all that can be seen is the hoardings protecting the sculpture, which must be large as these extend 20 metres in height. The only time activity is noted around the site is at night, when strange noises and intermittent bursts of a sickly blue light have been observed. When asked by the local paper for details on the nature of the figure to be depicted the council would only say that it was to be of the town's founder, "The Great Enslaver".

Round 4

The last vestiges of pretence have slipped away. As the terrible dawning nears, madness grips the rain-slicked streets, and there is no lying to those whose minds have slipped beyond this realm. The Tory council have donned their hoods and are making the slow march down through the town, past the lives they have stripped bare to bring this day forth. Clutched in their hands are their offerings, their tawdry prizes of flesh for their God. They pass into the Varney estate and head down, into the earth they cracked apart, along delirious stairs and snarled passages as they head down, down, to the brine, to the altars, to the stygian depths, to the end. To Dagon.

The Social Shrieks Game - Players Sheet

Rules

The game is played over four turns lasting ten minutes each, with each turn representing a period of three months. All groups take their turns at the same time, and are unable to collaborate with each other. Every turn begins with the MCs describing the situation within the city. During a turn, players may select any two resources from the list below and give each a separate task to complete. Players may choose to give both of their resources the same task if they have only one task they wish to carry out. This will increase the chance of success. A task is anything that could be considered a single project, for example organising a demonstration, running a series of workshops on eviction defence, producing a website with videos and articles supporting the aims of a strike or setting up a squatted social centre. Once players have described their tasks the MC will decide how difficult each task would be to complete and assign an appropriate dice roll modifier, ranging from -2 to +2. An additional modifier of +2 is then added if players only gave their resources one task to complete. Players then roll two six-sided dice for each task they are attempting to complete. If the combined roll after the dice roll modifier has been taken into account is 0-6, the task fails. On a 7-9 it succeeds but there have been some unforeseen consequences. On a result of 10+ the task was an unqualified success. At the end of the fourth turn the game ends, and players will discover what has happened to their city after a year of interventions.

Momentum Group

A small but committed group of leftists with one foot in the labour party and a non-exclusive focus on parliamentary politics.

Tenants' Union

A fairly large group but with a smaller number of key activists. Experience resisting eviction, exposing terrible landlords, and supporting members legal challenges.

Marine Conservation Group

Volunteers with local conservation efforts, hosts events around marine conservation and ecology. Seasoned lobbyists, not averse to a more activist approach. Sizable crossover with local surfing community.

Anti-racist Group

Recently formed group riding the wave of the BLM movement. Came together to oppose the longstanding lionisation of regency period colonialist figures in the town.

League of Acid Communists

Experienced with a range of states of consciousness and acutely cognisant of the plasticity of reality. Hosts events and be-ins. A bit unreliable.

Anti-Fracking Group

Organised a long-running occupation of fracking site not far outside the town. Well-versed in covert direct action.

Pay as you Feel Cafes

There are two of these in the town. They serve food in the day and double as evening venues for events and discussion groups. Daytime opening hours are sometimes unpredictable.

Base Union with members concentrated in retail

Organising and membership focused almost entirely on shops within the town's central mall-style shopping-centre. In particular the large supermarket S-Mart. They have used tactics such as lock-ins and, in particular, go-slows effectively to win better wages and conditions.