

APOCRYPHA

ADVENTURE CARD GAME

NO WAY OUT

Guided Mode Mission
September 2017 Edition



LONESHARKGAMES

NO WAY OUT

Apocrypha Adventure Card Game Guided Mission - September 2017 Edition

INFO FOR THE GUIDE

The players take on the role of “Saints of the Apocalypse,” heroes who can see the truth that monsters live among us. However, this means that the monsters can see the saints too, and will do what they can to eliminate the threat. What normal people will dismiss as mundane objects and events, the saints see as supernatural.

The saints can generally use whatever normal equipment they might have on them (flashlight, cell phone, safety pins, etc)—but these things don’t have mechanical effects on supernatural situations above and beyond a basic virtue+skill roll (that is to say, mundane stuff is already included in the saint’s stats). To affect the dice that would be rolled on a check, the saints need to use the gifts in their deck of cards.

MISSION TIMING

This mission is designed to run in 2.5 hours with the group visiting 3-4 nexuses in that time (roughly 35-50 minutes per nexus). This means that the group should use about 7 or 8 omens per nexus between the clock and omens in their decks to build sufficient tension leading to a showdown with the Hay Man at the end. If the group is dawdling, feel free to push investigations onto them by dealing an omen from the clock and giving a saint the next card in the nexus to encounter. Cards in the nexuses can be investigated in any order chosen by the Guide, and not every card in a nexus needs to be investigated (the options are there, if you want).

MASTER AND MINIONS

The Hay Man and the Dust Bunnies are monsters from the Dreaming, another plane that ties together the unconscious and uncontrolled thoughts of people. Normally, it is rare for creatures from the dreaming to enter our plane unless called by particular dreams. They are psychic parasites, and the infection of them indicates that an unwell host is in the area.

Dust Bunnies are small things, ubiquitous, and rarely dangerous to those who can’t really see them. Composed of the wispy threads of dreams and forgotten clumps of lint, they mostly feed on the fears of children by hiding in their closets and under their beds. However, they are also known for feeding on the psychological detritus left behind by more powerful nightmares.

The Hay Man is the amalgamation of autumnal fears that takes the form of the scarecrow come to life and is extremely dangerous if cornered while alone. It is the manifestation of fear of the coming darkness, the thinning of the veils, things that hunt humans when hunting season is here. The Hay Man is the spirit of hunger that must be appeased at harvest time. If not offered blood, the Hay Man will take it.



STORY

Old Lady Sally Johnson was traumatized by getting lost in the corn rows for over a day as a child. Since then, every year at this time, she suffers from narcolepsy, sometimes even entering a coma-like state, and dreams the Hay Man into enough power to abduct tourists from her family’s corn maze. When Big Edie built a Haunted House maze at the Fun Park down the road, she was inspired to feature a scarecrow in the cemetery scene. Now, every full moon in the fall, the Hay Man inhabits the scarecrow of the Haunted House of Mirrors and hunts a victim from the out-of-towners who are unlikely to be missed.

STRUCTURES

Cleanse the Dust Bunnies Along the Trail As the Hours Pass. The saints may start the trail at either the Festival or the Fun Park as they choose. After closing either location they may move freely.

POWERS

Replace the Dust Bunnies' second power with:

- ☠ Lose: ☹ Suffer 1 Mind damage, and bury the damage.
- ☠ Sanctify or Move from Festival or Fun Park: Confront the true threat Labyrinth.

After three nexuses are sanctified, ✚ confronts the Hay Man. If undefeated, the Hay Man is investigated by another saint until time runs out or a saint fades. Once the Hay Man is defeated, the mission is won; go to and narrate Mission Win.



THE LOWDOWN

Any setting text in italics can be read aloud to the group. *The morning air outside, sharply cold after the heat of summer, carries the bitter tang of dust. That's the smell of the harvest, the smell of nature closing up shop for the winter. As the early fog burns away, in the distance you can see the outline of a fun park ferris wheel beyond a gold-green sea of grain crops drying in the fields. You pull over at the tiny gas station that someone from the message board suggested as a meeting place. On the outskirts of Candlepoint, Wisconsin, the little gas station advertises two things with worn, hand-painted signs: "Fresh Nightcrawlers, Fat and Juicy! \$3.95 a pint!" and another for the "Johnson Farm A-Maize-ing Maze, Open only until Halloween, Guinness World Record, Fresh Kettle Corn and Mulled Cider!"*

Several other people are waiting there already. Obviously outsiders as well, they seem to be doing their best to look nonchalant while killing time at a conspicuous hour. As you approach, you feel a keen ringing in your ears like your soul's been struck with a ball peen hammer. The unmistakable feeling of joining the company of others able to see beyond the Paradigm, able to see the things that go bump in the night. They must be the others from the "Saints of the Apocalypse" message board here to answer the call. Tourists go missing here every year, starting at the first full moon of harvest time. It's the full moon tonight, and your chest is heavy with a sense of dread.

As the last person arrives, you're struck with a memory, not your own: "Lost in the dark as a great orange moon rises above, you hear a girl crying. Your heartbeat tharumping in your ears, crackling razor fingers cut at your skin as you run, run from something with red glowing eyes."



NEXUS: Festival (Harvest Moon Cavalcade)

Nexus Goal: Establish the mood for the mission, meet Jan (the Body gift Bruiser), gather clues about the Dust Bunnies, and point the group to the Fun Park and the Farm.

A mile down a gravel road, “turn left at the big rock, but if you cross the creek you’ve gone too far,” the Harvest Moon Cavalcade looks cut straight from a Norman Rockwell painting. Next to the entrance of the boastfully large A-Maize-ing-Corn-Maze, there are several food stands selling Americana staples of autumn: candied apples, corn on the cob, kettle corn, and fried cheese curds. There’s a Pick-ur-Own pumpkin patch where parents take photos of their young children hugging pumpkins as large as themselves. Clydesdales with glossy dark coats pull hay wagons of people sipping cups of fresh-pressed apple cider.

SUGGESTED INVESTIGATIONS

At the food stands...

- **Bruiser (Body Gift):** Jan got ditched by her girlfriend Vanessa who wanted to go to the Fun Park instead. She’s looking for some fellow out-of-towners to see the festival with. Jan is a bit loud, and a bit pissed about being ditched. She doesn’t mean to come across as angry, but most here are giving her a wide berth.

On the hay ride...

- **Sparks (Soul Gift):** You can feel the ping of a young love from somewhere within the hay scattered about on the ground. If they succeed at the check, they find a small promise ring lost amongst the hay, seemingly dropped by one of the teenaged riders. The token of love has become imbued with supernatural power.
- **Werewolf (Threat):** A burly man in a Big Edie’s Big Fun Park employee shirt shoves a saint off their hay bale rudely. He notices the saints and snarls as his hair seems to grow longer.

At the pumpkin Patch...

- **Boline (Soul Gift):** Lying beside the carving table, there is a harvesting knife with an ebony handle with a celtic knot copper inlay, it has been blessed by use in many harvest festivals here.
- **Wickety Wack Sack (Soul Gift):** A pile of burlap sacks sits nearby for visitors to take home their pumpkin. One, however, seems different—it has been left by a mischievous fae hoping to catch a small child.

In the corn maze...

- **Dust Bunny (True Threat):** Beneath the shadows cast by the drying corn stalks, a pair of red glowing eyes glistens, then a dozen more eyes. It hisses, revealing large ivory teeth. It seems to be protecting something.
- **Stash (Threat):** Buried beneath where the Dust Bunny was hiding, you find an old green metal ammo crate. It seems to have been stored here by someone leaving supplies for the apocalypse. Surely, there’s something here you can use. The saint who wins vs. Stash chooses one gift to draw: **Bomb (Rage Gift)**, **Gallowglasses (Mind Gift)**, **Plague Mask (Body Gift)**, or **Twitchcraft (Soul Gift)**.
- **Labyrinth (True Threat):** The A-Maize-ing Maze is more twisted than a mere field of corn—something dark has twisted these passages, perhaps influenced by the endless, nauseatingly ever-changing passageways of their realm. It is difficult to even keep your bearings between endless rows of corn, let alone try to make your way through—but turning around yields only more maze...you must push on.

NEXUS: Fun Park (*Big Edie's Big Fun Park*)

Nexus Goal: Establish the Fun Park as the origin of the physical manifestation of the Hay Man as the Haunted House scarecrow, and foretell the disappearance of Vanessa as this year's first victim.

Obviously built in an era before injury lawsuits were a big concern, Big Edie's Big Fun Park has all the ramshackle seediness of a travelling carnival plus the big gut-wrenching rides and attractions of a permanent place. The Haunted House of Mirrors, in particular, boasts of being the largest in the Midwest.



SUGGESTED INVESTIGATIONS

At the carnival grounds...

- **Death's-Heads (Threat):** A dark cloud of smoke moves toward the saints, and then shifts against the direction of the wind. Too late, you realize it's a pack of poisonous Death's-Heads moths, hungry for the supernatural gifts you carry.
- **Extra Shot (Body Gift):** A cold cup of coffee stashed and forgotten by a fun park operator behind a twister ride control panel. It's been sitting here in the hot weather for days, slowly reducing toward something undrinkable, but potent.
- **Dream Snare (Soul Gift):** A small gift booth selling 'Native Arts' displays silver jewelry, handwoven

blankets, and paintings of canoes on Lake Michigan. A simple dreamcatcher, unsold since the trend for hanging them as window decor, has collected the dust, laughter, and small terrors of the fun park for years.

Inside the Haunted House of Mirrors...

- **Charm Bracelet (Soul Gift):** Dropped by Vanessa, it was bought at a music festival. Hopefully it still has some luck left.
- **Thing in the Basement (Threat):** Next to the Charm Bracelet lies a muddy leather work glove next to a smear of blood. It might have been dropped by a fun park operator. If ♀ win: You find a clump of fresh hay in one of the fingers that smells faintly of kettle corn and notice the empty post for the scarecrow in the Haunted House's cemetery. If ♀ lose: You follow the blood trail into a basement equipment room to find a Gaunt.
- **Gaunt (Threat)** (Confront Gaunt if ♀ lose vs. Thing in the Basement): The bony creature with painfully long fingers drops the remains of a half-eaten dead cat. It sees the saints and anticipates a juicier meal.
- **Dust Bunny (True Threat):** Huddled at the base of the post where the scarecrow should hang is a red-eyed Dust Bunny, munching on the twin to the lost work glove.
- **Labyrinth (True Threat)** (when ⚔ attempts to sanctify the nexus or move from the Fun Park): Turning a corner around a plywood fence, you find yourselves in a narrow hallway painted with ghostly skulls over black latex paint. Mirrors and strings of lights confuse your perception of place and direction. This place does not want you to leave.



NEXUS: Lot (*The Abandoned Lot*)

Nexus Goal: This decrepit setting enhances the sense of danger when investigating.

This field could have been a beautiful place once, when the amber grasses grew long and the wildlife ran by the small stream trickling through it. But those days are long past—now it is full of junked-out cars, appliances that have been dumped to spill their antifreeze in sweet puddles, leeching batteries, and all manner of garbage. The view of the sky and the sound of the trickling stream have a certain loveliness to them, and in another life perhaps this could have been a sort of Makeout Point for teenagers—if only the nearby towns hadn't turned it into... this.

SUGGESTED INVESTIGATIONS

- **Tie Snakes (Threat):** *Something slithers by your feet, with a nearly-silent squelching noise. You look down, already knowing you're not going to like what you see, as a pair of otherworldly pink worms rises, tongues lashing out wildly!*
- **Bushwhack (Threat):** *A goblin, no larger than a small child, watches the saints as they prowl through the Abandoned Lot. He stays low below the height of the grass, and moves with a silent grace. When they are distracted with something (perhaps the **Murder Board (Rage Gift)**), he leaps at one of them with tiny clawed hands.*



- **Murder Board (Rage Gift)** (or whichever gift appeared in the previous investigation): *A pile of construction materials is strewn about, clearly part of some recent demolition. Most of the materials are destroyed, but one board stands out—something about it is different. If ♀ win: As you lever the board out from its pile, you get the sense that it may be wood from a tree fallen in a hallowed glade once upon a time. Those that used it to construct a shed knew nothing of its provenance—but you can see it for what it truly is: a tool capable of pressing back against the dark night, in the right hands.*
- **Vice Dog (Body Gift):** *Something snarls from behind you, and you catch a glimpse of a security vest on the filthy dog that has cornered something in a drain pipe. If ♀ win: The dog recognizes you as someone they can trust, with that mysterious intuition they seem to have. Its fur begins to lay back down as it calms and points into the drain pipe, beckoning you to take a look. If ♀ lose: The dog rushes past you, into the field, quickly disappearing from sight.*
- **Dust Bunny (True Threat):** *Shivering among a pile of moldy children's clothes, a terrified Dust Bunny rears up to strike and dash away.*



NEXUS: Park (Honeywine Park)

Nexus Goal: An imbue and quaint setting with a sense of hidden foreboding. Take this time to pass rumors about Old Lady Johnson's condition.

Honeywine Park is well-cared-for, with a beautiful gazebo set amongst a carefully landscaped lawn. The grass is trimmed short, and is lusciously green with the smell of chemical fertilizer. The trees are calm, barely swaying in the breeze—but something about the shadows that fall from those trees and from that gazebo lends a foreboding sense about this place. The harvest spirits are displeased that this land has been turned from grains to recreation, and they make their displeasure known in the resonance of the air, to those sensitive enough to hear it. A family having a reunion at the gazebo is oblivious, and loudly rumors about Gerald and Old Lady Sally (Johnson) missing the event due to “one of her spells.”

SUGGESTED INVESTIGATIONS

- **Therapy Dog (Soul Gift):** A bouncy, tail-wagging dog is happy to see the saints and tries to lead them to a teenage girl.
- **Soul Stealer (Soul Gift):** A young kid in a green dress with a robot print is running around with an old instant camera, asking her relatives to pose for her, then finds her cousin sulking away from the others. She sets her camera down, clearly worried about her cousin, sensing something isn't right.

- **That Which Follows (Threat):** Revealed by the flash of the Soul Stealer, a shadowy nightmare demon lurks behind a teenage girl sulking away from her family, texting on her phone and holding back tears.
- **Devil Bird (Threat):** Sitting atop the gazebo is what at first appears to be a statue of a bird. It looks bronze silhouetted in the the sunlight. You've nearly ignored it when suddenly you hear a loud metallic CAW and hear the flutter of wings as it swoops down at you, seeming to grow to nearly double its size in a matter of moments.
- **Extra Razor Blades (Rage Gift):** A basket of candied apples sits on the picnic table spread with potluck food. A tall woman with short brown hair picks one up and shouts to the group, “does anyone know who brought these?” She takes a bite and pauses. She runs to the bathroom, holding her bleeding lip.
- **Dust Bunny (True Threat):** A rabbit-like creature with red eyes dashes from beneath the picnic table toward the cornfield at the edge of the park.



NEXUS: Farm (*Old Lady Johnson's Farm*)

Nexus Goal: Give clues as to the origin of the Hay Man's power in Old Lady Johnson's sleeping state.

Climbing a narrow dirt road up a hill, the Johnson farm rests among a line of huge willow trees, the only trees that can be seen for miles. Two stories with a wrap-around porch, the haphazard repairs and warped siding show the house has barely survived a century of harsh weather. A brand new blue pickup is parked out front, next to a raised bed garden that has been tilled under for the winter.

SUGGESTED INVESTIGATIONS

Downstairs...

Beyond a sitting room filled with well-worn furniture, a large dining room and rustic kitchen would be picture-perfect "shabby chic" were it not for the large collection of Elvis plates on the wall.

- **Red Shoes (Body Gift):** *In the mudroom, a pair of worn high-tops feels out of place discarded among farm boots and leather walking shoes*
- **Gladhander (Threat):** *Gerald Johnson, Old Lady Johnson's son and current manager of the farm. He's frustrated and resentful of having to run the farm and the festival alone, all while his mother is in the worst annual "fall sleeping spell" she's ever had.*
- **Blessed Athame (Rage Gift):** *In the kitchen, one of a pair with the Boline from the pumpkin patch, featuring an ebony handle inlaid with copper celtic knotwork.*

Upstairs...

The walls of the stairway are lined with family portraits; it's clear the Johnson family has dwindled in number, their eyes hollow and dark (the result of regular attacks from creatures that cause Soul damage). In a small bedroom hung with elaborate quilts and State Fair blue ribbons for them, a very old woman lies in a twin bed, surrounded by beige and gray life-support equipment. A cluster of prescription bottles on the dresser reveal a long history of battling with narcolepsy.

- **Candystriper (Threat):** *Clinging to the ceiling above Old Lady Johnson, the Candystriper is a nightmare creature known for feeding particularly on those in a coma.*
- **Contagion (Threat)** *(appears after the investigation of the Candystriper): From the wounds on the Candystriper oozes a dark ichor that smells vaguely*

of cleaning solution and plastic. The thing about smells though, once you know it's there, it's already too late...

- **Dust Bunny (True Threat):** *Huddling among the dust and forgotten socks beneath the bed, the Dust Bunny lunges the moment the saints get near Old Lady Johnson.*



CONCLUSION -AT ANY NEXUS-

- **Hay Man (True Threat):** *As sunset begins to fade, the darkness of oncoming night swells around the saints. The sound of a crying girl can be barely heard on the wind. The passages around the saints become indiscernible as the world plunges them into the realm of nightmare. The orange harvest moon rises, shifting into the pumpkin head of the Hay Man—his glowing red eyes burning into their souls as he towers over the saints.*

MISSION WIN

The Hay Man's red eyes within the plastic jack-o-lantern dead fade as it dissolves into sinewy strands of ectoplasm and old clothes. Vanessa is found later that night, when she stumbles out of the corn fields and finds a nearby farm house. She attests that she was lost in the corn for days and heard a young girl crying the whole time. Old Lady Johnson wakes up, without any memory of her dreams while in the coma.

- **Fragments:** *The Old Man + new fleeting fragments*

MISSION LOSE

The next morning, the saints run into Jan who is looking for a print shop. Her girlfriend Vanessa never came back from the festival, the cops won't listen until it's been 24 hours, and she needs to put up posters right away. The cops said that, "Chances are, either she ran off with someone else, or she's already dead by now." Jan sobs.

MISSION RESET

- The doomsday clock should contain 24 omens, shuffled randomly.
- Reset the nexuses.

SAINT DECKS

Suggested decklists for building pregenerated saints for your players.



Alice Moon

- **(Mind Gifts)** Memory Stick, Mondrian Cell, Monstropedia, and Wolfram Cube
- **(Body Gifts)** Bruiser, Extra Shot, and Vice Dog
- **(Soul Gifts)** Charm Bracelet, Grifter, and Magic Mason Jar
- **(Rage Gifts)** Dead Sea Salt
- **(Omens)** Devilry, Extravagance, Judgment, and Starlight



Diana Jones

- **(Mind Gifts)** Bones, Memory Killer, and Wolfram Cube
- **(Body Gifts)** Extra Shot and Muscle Memory
- **(Soul Gifts)** Grifter, Lucky Numbers (2), and Mme. Roux's Elixir
- **(Rage Gifts)** Extra Razor Blades and Pink Tazer
- **(Omens)** Comfort, Extravagance, Poverty, and The Hookup

Dr. Zeez

- **(Mind Gifts)** Bones, Memory Killer, and Monstropedia (2)
- **(Body Gifts)** Mr. Bear and Picks
- **(Soul Gifts)** Charm Bracelet, Sparks, and Mme. Roux's Elixir
- **(Rage Gifts)** Extra Razor Blades and Murder Board
- **(Omens)** Comfort, Feedback, Horrorshow, and Pain



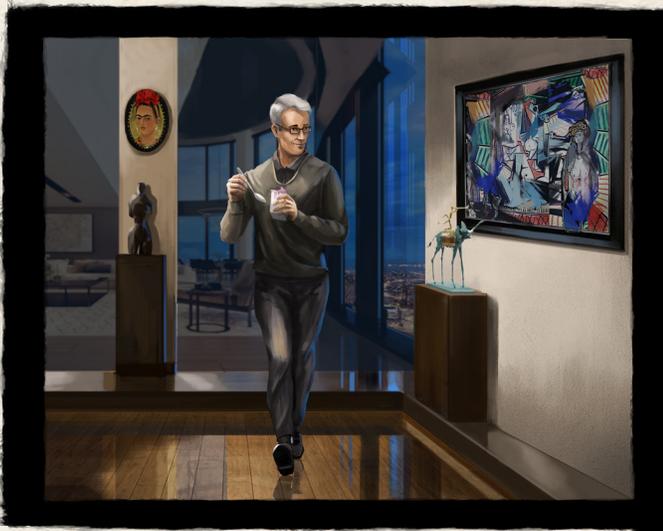


Frank Block

- **(Mind Gifts)** Bones, Memory Killer, and Memory Stick
- **(Body Gifts)** Halligan Bar, Muscle Memory, and Vice Dog
- **(Soul Gifts)** Lucky Numbers
- **(Rage Gifts)** Dead Sea Salt, Murder Board, Pearl Handled Revolver, and Reaper
- **(Omens)** Affliction, Gutpunch, Righteous Anger, and The Hookup

Matthew Lockhart

- **(Mind Gifts)** Elusion, Memory Stick, and Wolfram Cube
- **(Body Gifts)** Extra Shot, Halligan Bar, Mr. Bear, and Picks
- **(Soul Gifts)** Grifter and Magic Mason Jar
- **(Rage Gifts)** Pink Tazer and Sword Cane
- **(Omens)** Curiosity, Extravagance, Good Karma, and Starlight



River Batiste

- **(Mind Gifts)** Bones and Mondrian Cell
- **(Body Gifts)** Mr. Bear and Muscle Memory
- **(Soul Gifts)** Lucky Numbers, Mme. Roux's Elixir, Magic Mason Jar, and Sparks
- **(Rage Gifts)** Dead Sea Salt, Reaper, and Sword Cane
- **(Omens)** Curiosity, Feedback, Hush, and Sustenance