Nightmare Eve

Table of Contents

Introduction

It is Halloween, and tonight is the end of the world.

You'll need paper and pencil for a character sheet, and 3 six-sided dice, which are abbreviated "d6".

Characters

Your characters are normal people in the present. This game uses a very streamlined 3d6 system, with just a few randomly-determined attributes.

Attributes

Roll 3d6 six times in order for the attributes. No, you can't change them.

- **Strength** (Str): Physique, lifting weight, endurance, and fighting skill.
- **Agility** (Agi): Running speed, athletics, sneakiness, and balance.
- **Dexterity** (Dex): Hand-eye coordination, precise detail, skill with tools.
- **Intellect** (Int): Perception, reasoning, memory, and liberal arts education.
- **Technical** (Tech): Science, mathematics, and mechanical, electronic, and software engineering.
- **Charisma** (Cha): Personal charm, leadership, and savoir-faire.

Equipment

Roll 3d6 x $10 for starting pocket cash. If you roll triples (666, etc.), roll again and add. Starting cash

$80 or less is poverty; $90–140 is middle class; $150 or more is wealthy.

You can also choose one special item:

- **Vehicle**: Car, truck, or motorcycle, any make or model worth no more than 100x starting cash.
- **Gun**: Pistol, or shotgun, or hunting rifle, worth no more than 2x starting cash. You have ammo for one reload, or 20, whichever is more.
- **Computer**: Laptop, capable of playing modern videogames or doing useful Internet research or programming.

Everyone has the following:

- **Home**: Apartment or house with monthly rent no more than 5x starting cash.
- **Transportation**: If you don't have a good car, choose a bicycle, scooter, bus pass, or a beater car, truck, or motorcycle worth no more than 5x starting cash.
- **Cell Phone**: Every character can be in touch with the rest, as long as they're not in a… dead zone.
- **Personal Items**: If you aren't sure, list what's in your own pockets.

Weapon	Damage	Range	Ammo	Cost	Notes
Unarmed	0	—	—	—	—
Light Melee	1	—	—	$20	knife, baseball bat
Medium Melee	2	—	—	$100	crowbar, machete, fencing foil, fire axe
Heavy Melee	3	—	—	$500	katana, chainsaw
Bow	2	120	1	$150	hunting bow, crossbow
Light Pistol	1	30	6	$200	.22, .38
Medium Pistol	2	40	17	$500	9mm, .45
Heavy Pistol	3	50	6	$800	.44 Automag, .50 Desert Eagle
Light Rifle	2	300	5	$200	.22 LR
Heavy Rifle	4	600	1	$900	.30–06 hunting rifle
Shotgun	3	60	6	$500	Mossberg 12ga

Most people don't have any armor, except maybe bikers with leathers & helmet. Better armor can be looted from cops or crazy survivalists, mostly bulletproof vests. Only military & SWAT will have heavy gear. Most medieval LARP gear is useless, but the higher-quality reproductions are effective, if very heavy.

Heavy armor adds a –5 penalty to any Agi action, in particular Evasion, Sneaking, and Climbing.

Armor	Defense	Covers	Cost	Notes
Leather Jacket	1	AT	$200	thick like a bike jacket
Leather Pants	1	L	$200	bike leathers, not fashion
Bike Helmet	1	SF	$100	—
Medieval Mail	2	ATL	$900	chain or plate, heavy
Medieval Helmet	2	SF	$250	plate, heavy, obscures senses
Bulletproof Vest	2	T	$400	class II, concealable
Body Armor	3	T	$600	class IIIA, not easily concealed, hot
Ballistic Helmet	3	S	$300	class IIIA
Riot Gear	4	SATL	$5000	class IV, heavy

Covers: S: Skull, F: Face, A: Arms, T: Torso, L: Legs

Experience

In the unlikely event that anyone survives an adventure, they can choose an attribute and roll 3d6; if the roll is greater than the attribute, add 1 to it; if the roll is less than or equal to the attribute, there is no improvement yet.

System

Attribute Rolls

To see if you succeed at an action, the GM will ask for a roll against an appropriate attribute, with a modifier from +10 for very easy actions to –10 for very hard actions.

Roll 3d6. If you roll less than or equal to attribute + modifiers, you succeed, with Success Points (SP) equal to the difference. If you roll higher, you fail.

The GM may be merciful and allow a natural 3–4 to always succeed, and a natural 17–18 to always fail. I don't believe in mercy.

Action

When terrible things happen, time slows to a crawl, about 3 seconds per round. In a round, each combatant can take one action, in order from highest Agility to lowest, compare Charisma to break ties (give cheerleaders a little hope before eviscerating them, I always say).

The GM may find it useful to draw out large-scale maps in 10 yard squares for long chases and ranged combat. Up closer than that, just keep a rough idea of where everyone is in relation to each other.

- **Melee Attack**: Choose a target in hand-to-hand range. Make a Str roll; on success, damage equals weapon damage + SP. Unarmed attacks do 0 weapon damage.
- **Missile Attack**: Throwing an item or shooting a firearm or bow, at a target within the weapon's range. Make a Dex roll, with a modifier of –5 if the target is more than half the range away; on success, damage equals weapon damage + SP.
- **Evasion**: Dodging and running. Make an Agi roll; on success, any attack against you until your next action will have a negative modifier equal to your SP. So rolling 10 against Evasion 13 gives a –3 modifier. When running, the furthest you can move in a round is Agi x 2 yards.
- **Sneaking**: Moving quietly and staying out of sight. Make an Agi roll; on success, you cannot be seen or heard until your next action unless someone makes a Search action with equal or higher SP. When Sneaking, the furthest you can move in a round is Agi x 1/2 yards.
- **Searching**: Looking and listening for a target. Make an Int roll; on success, you spot anyone with equal or lower Sneaking SP. You can move up to Agi x 1 yard in a round while Searching.
- **Climbing**: Scaling a vertical surface. Make an Agi roll with a modifier for the surface; on success, you move SP x 1 yard up. On failure, you fall to the ground and take (yards fallen - 3) damage. Modifiers: Ladder: +5. Branch-heavy tree +0. Rope, smooth tree, or rough cliffside or wall: –5. Smooth cliffside or wall: –10.
- **Technical**: Using science and engineering. Make a Tech roll with a modifier for the project. Success adds SP to a success total, and when that reaches a certain level the project is done; failure subtracts 1 from success total. You can usually keep working on a project until it's done or you reach –1 success total.

Basic computer use or wiring electricity has a +0 modifier and requires 5 SP. Hotwiring a car or picking a lock has a –5 modifier and requires 5 SP. Bypassing a security system or hacking computer security has a –5 to –10 modifier depending on how expensive it is, and requires 10 SP. Building a complex booby-trap, alarm system, making drugs or explosives, or programming an app has a –5 to –10 modifier depending on complexity, and requires 20–100 SP, you may be there some hours or days.

Damage

When a character takes damage, roll 1d6 twice to determine which body part is damaged and how it is applied:

First	Second	Body Part	Damaged Attribute
1	1–3	Skull	Int
1	4–6	Face	Cha
2	1–3	Right Arm/Hand	Dex
2	4–6	Left Arm/Hand	Dex
3–4	1–6	Torso	Str
5	1–6	Right Leg	Agi
6	1–6	Left Leg	Agi

Subtract any armor on that body part from the damage. If any is left, subtract it from the damaged attribute.

Example: A character with all attributes 12, wearing a leather jacket (1 armor on Torso and Arms) is attacked by a porcupine-like monster with Str 14, Quills (1 damage). The monster's attack roll is 12 for SP 2, so total damage is 3. Character rolls 2, 4 for left arm, which is covered by the jacket, reducing damage by 1, so now character has Dex (12–2) 10.

When any attribute reaches 0 or less, the character dies. Every time an attribute is damaged to half or less of its healthy value, lower the healthy value by 1.

Example: Above character takes a gaping chest wound for 3 Str, so Str is (12–3) 9. A second hit for 3 Str reduces current Str to 6, and healthy Str to 11. A third hit for 3 Str reduces current Str to 3, and healthy Str to 10.

A character will recover 1 to all attributes for every day of hospital care, or for every week of bed rest.

Background

Secret History

Once a year, on Hallows Eve, the walls between the reality of Earth and the nightmare of Underworld get thinner. Things that once preyed on our world look through and hunger. In Antiquity and the Dark Ages, they came through every year and were worshipped by pagans and witches as the Old Gods, or called Demons and hidden from in fortified churches.

In the 17th century, a secret society of both scientists and clergy, called the Illuminati, created rituals to hold them back, and thus was born centuries of peace and reason. The Illuminati thrived for

centuries, and then splintered but each faction kept to the mission, and then the factions died out without recruiting replacements, or forgetting their mission.

For the last 20 years, a single mad old Illuminati has guarded the world with his barely-remembered ritual, and things still slipped through and left madness and death in their wake. Last night, the old man died in his sleep, and the world is doomed.

Underworld

The Underworld is the basis for our myths of other worlds, of Hades, Arcadia, Valhalla, Heaven or Hell. But these are just stories. The truth of the Underworld is that it is roiling chaos, changing moment to moment with the dreams and madness of the beings that exist there. They hate the dead simplicity and order of Earth, and they hate us for rational, orderly minds and putting patterns on everything. We are poison to them, as they are to us.

The "physics" of the Underworld are incompatible with Earth, and vice versa. For a time, a being can carry its reality with it, but every hour spent in a hostile reality reduces its Stability by 1. Every hour in a being's native reality restores 1 Stability. When Stability reaches 0, the being is destroyed; it can feel how close it is to this limit, and will desperately want to return home when it gets close.

Some beings have the power to transform parts of Earth into Underworld-like reality, or Underworld into Earth-like reality, making temples and lairs for themselves in which they can always survive, and lesser beings can shelter in.

Humans have Stability equal to Int + Tech + Cha.

Antagonists & Allies

Attributes for each being are provided as die rolls or specific values, but the GM should feel free to pick whatever values are appropriate, the rolls are just suggestions.

An Underworld being can use one Attack or other power per round. Most have an innate Defense on all body parts.

Old Gods: We would recognize these as the gods of the old pantheons. They are powerful and vast and ancient, and so far beyond Human understanding as we are beyond an ant. The Old Gods can take any form they want, usually as a giant humanoid, but mythical beasts, giant animals, or even passing as Human are possible. They wreak massive destruction wherever they go. They can transform the Earth within 100 yards with a moment's thought, and can create portals to the Underworld or Earth at will. They do not like sunlight but it is harmless.

Str: 18. Agi: 18. Dex: 18. Int: 18. Tech: 1. Cha: 18. Stability: 12. Defense: 8.
Attacks: Madness Stare (one target makes a Madness roll), Dominate (one target must make an Int roll at –10 modifier; on failure, obeys the Old God for 2d6 rounds), Stomp (Damage 6 melee attack), Lightning (Damage 6, Range 100 ranged attack).

Nightmares: These are mythical beasts and things unknown, because few have ever survived contact with them. They can transform the world if they nest in an area. Most roam looking for vast herds of Human prey, gobbling up all they find. They do not like sunlight but it is harmless.

Str: 1d6+12. Agi: 1d6+12. Dex: 3d6. Int: 2d6+1. Tech: 1. Cha: 1d6+2. Stability: 24 (1 day). Defense: 4.
Attacks: Terrify (one target must make an Int roll at –5 modifier; on failure, flees for 2d6 rounds), Knockdown (all targets within 20 yards must make an Agi roll; on failure, falls and is stunned for

1d6 rounds), Devour (Damage 4 melee attack), Venom Spit (Damage 4, Range 30 ranged attack).

Hunters: Beasts in grotesque parodies of Human form, like mythical werewolves and vampires but infinitely varied in specific appearance and powers. These are feral but intelligent predators. They will catch fire and burn to death in sunlight.

Str: 2d6+6. Agi: 2d6+6. Dex: 3d6. Int: 2d6. Tech: 1d6. Cha: 1d6+2. Stability: 72 (3 days). Defense: 2. Attacks: Howl (all targets within 20 yards must make an Int roll; on failure, flees for 1d6 rounds), Rend (Damage 2 melee attack).

Tricksters: Demons in the form of Humans, like mythical doppelgängers and dybbuks. Tricksters kill a person, and shapeshift to exactly mimic their appearance. If they take time to watch their prey, they mimic speech and behavior, and will study diaries or possibly social networks (not so good with computers, but Tricksters will try). Once they've infiltrated, they seduce, betray, and murder whoever they can, spreading as much confusion and misery as possible. They do not have Human internal organs, only a mass of blood-red slime, with harder slime like cartilage for "bones", but of course people resist being dissected to see if they're Human.

Str: 3d6. Agi: 3d6. Dex: 3d6. Int: 3d6. Tech: 2d6. Cha: 2d6+6. Stability: 168 (7 days). Defense: 1. Attacks: Devour (Damage 1 melee attack), or by Human weapon.

Parasites: Smaller supernatural beasts and lesser demons, no threat to a well-prepared fighter but still horrifying to normal people. Many parasites are chimeras of multiple animals, insects, or human features. They will catch fire and burn to death in sunlight.

Str: 2d6+1. Agi: 3d6. Dex: 2d6. Int: 1d6. Tech: 1. Cha: 1d6. Stability: 72 (3 days). Defense: 0. Attacks: Bite/Claw/Tentacle/whatever (Damage 1 melee attack).

Exiles: Humans who live in the Underworld, carving out parts for themselves. It takes extraordinary willpower (Int, Tech, and Cha 17 or higher) and ritual magic, but one can transform the Underworld into orderly Earth-like reality and survive there. The Old Gods view the Exiles with absolute terror, and send minions after them, but most Exiles have defenses beyond their power. The virtue to this existence is near immortality, and by choosing how to transform the Underworld, they can create anything or anyone they desire. But they are now dependent on the Underworld, and would instantly wither and die of old age if returned to Earth. An Exile could explain much of the Underworld and how to fight it, if you could find a way to one.

Str: 3d6. Agi: 3d6. Dex: 3d6. Int: 1d2+16. Tech: 1d2+16. Cha: 1d2+16. Stability: (Int+Tech+Cha).
Weapon: Heavy Melee, Bow, Heavy Pistol.
Armor: Roll 1d6: 1–4: Leather Jacket, Pants. 5–6: Medieval Mail, Helmet.

Human: By the first night after Halloween, there are three kinds of living Humans: Cowards, running and hiding from everything. Scavengers, brave enough to go out looting, may rob anyone they don't know but will run from any Underworld being except Tricksters. Guardians, patrolling for Tricksters and Hunters and fighting from ambush, generally friendly to other Humans.

Str: 3d6. Agi: 3d6. Dex: 3d6. Int: 3d6. Tech: 3d6. Cha: 3d6. Stability: (Int+Tech+Cha).
Weapon: Roll 1d6, –2 for Cowards, +1 for Guardians: 1 or less: Light Melee, 2–3: Medium Melee, 4: Heavy Melee, 5: Bow or Light Pistol, 6: Medium Pistol, 7: Light Rifle or Shotgun.
Armor: Roll 1d6, same modifiers: 2 or less: None, 3: Leather Jacket, 4: Leather Jacket, Pants, Bike Helmet, 5–6: Bulletproof Vest, 7: Body Armor & Ballistic Helmet.

Story

The game starts on Halloween. This first part is played freeform. The players should establish who they are and what they're doing. Most will be either trick-or-treating, staying at home for kids to come by, or at a party. Try to get them together but if someone goes off alone, they can be an easy victim. You should have collected a number of places and incidental NPCs from the players after a short while. Now the invasion really starts.

The first Trickster replaces someone's NPC friend or family. Play the characterization odd, since the shapeshifter didn't have time to study the victim. Once a character is alone with the Trickster, it attacks with whatever improvised weapons are convenient. For the first enemy, I'd roll the attributes but lower any that are higher than the player character's, since I want this one to die.

Now the characters have an obviously inhuman body to clean up, and this can unify them or tear them apart. If the characters hole up and defend themselves, they'll have a few hours to prepare, but will be found and besieged by midnight. If they go out, they'll immediately face threats. The following encounters can happen in any order, roll a d6 every half-hour hiding out, or every few blocks travelled.

1. **The Last Trick or Treater**. Six kids in costumes are looking for treats. Five of them are Tricksters, one is Human. Mikey in the Dracula costume went off with his "friends" at the last house, but already he knows something's wrong. When he sees the characters, he bursts into tears, and the friends try to drag him away to find a Trickster to take his place. If stopped, they attack the characters. Kid-sized Tricksters have normal stats.
2. **Sexy Costume Dinner Party**. A pack of Tricksters appearing as women in sexy nurse, police, witch, and nun costumes pick one male victim at a time, chase him down, and bite and tear him to death. They use their appearance to distract, anyone attracted to women will need to make an Int roll to attack first. Once attacked, anyone can fight for their life.
3. **Bugs**. A dozen Parasites in the form of foot-long cockroaches boil out of a car, leaving behind a stripped skeleton. The characters or a liked NPC are next on the menu.
4. **Ratman**. A Hunter in the form of a Human-sized rat-man, a vile thing with buck teeth and red eyes. It follows the characters silently and attacks anyone isolated.
5. **Sadists**. A group of three Hunters, in the form of Humans in BDSM gear. They use whips, chains, and knives to cause pain to anyone they find, they rarely kill but leave their victims immobile or bind them in ropes for Tricksters to come by and take later.
6. **The Nightmare**. A group of maybe a dozen people have holed up in an alley or broken storefront, having run from something. When the characters approach, the survivors try to warn them off. Then the Nightmare comes back. A thing the size of an elephant, with spider's legs and a huge Human baby head. It starts screaming, but runs right at the characters. It can't get into the hidey-hole, but it can wait outside, and try to draw attention from Hunters and Tricksters. You won't be safe here long.

The Day After

Assuming the characters survive the first night, dawn comes as a relief. A few Parasites and Hunters die in sunlight, but most find somewhere to hide. Now every dark space is a potential nest. The Tricksters are still among the Humans, and clean themselves up and infiltrate any survivor groups, waiting for nightfall.

Electricity, water, phone, and Internet are out. There's nothing on radio, except perhaps some CB or ham radio from other survivors. They fall silent soon.

The Old God who brought them through has nested in a nearby sports arena and turned it into

Underworld reality. I use the local god Coyote, not as the friendly trickster of myth but an all-devouring deceitful scavenger. You should customize the Old God for your locale, or use one from fiction. Coyote's Underworld turns into a dark forest, impossibly tall trees of black rotten wood, the forest floor lined with bodies of its prey. Only outlines remain of the Earth buildings replaced.

Every night after Halloween, the Old God will expand out from its nest and take a few more blocks. Expanding too fast destroys the prey, so it takes it slow. It will eventually encircle "farms" of Earth reality with impassable Underworld borders, and then the predators will kill or replace everyone inside.

There's no happy ending here.

Suppose a group of characters arm up, get as much help as possible, and charge in. They'll still be torn apart by the predators and the Old God. Even if they "kill" it on this side, it is reborn in the Underworld and returns.

Military support is pretty much gone, officers were the first targeted by Tricksters, and then infiltration was fast and total. Bombs will kill as many civilians as enemy, but maybe bombing an Old God would at least push it back to the Underworld until it could make another portal. You'd still be surrounded by converted Earth.

If characters find the Old God's portal to the Underworld, and sneak through while it's away, they could make contact with an Exile. It may take months or years on the other side to learn how to convert Earth back to normal. The Old God would have to be lured back and defeated with the Exile's help, to have any chance of permanently killing it. When they returned to Earth, they would find a monstrous, transformed world, but pockets of post-apocalypse survivors would remain. But that's a story for another time.

THE END