

# The Asylum - Halloween Horror One-Shot, 2011

## Rules/Notes

- Unlike a regular game, there'll be some narration to get the characters set up for the story.
- The only real rule you need to know is to picture yourself in the scene and do what you think the *character* would do.
- *Unliving*: Less vulnerable to *impaling* and *piercing* damage (B380).  
**Imp, Pi++:** x1   **Pi:** x1/3   **Pi+:** x1/2   **Pi-:** x1/5
- *Improvised Weapons*: default is usually DX-5, or melee skill-2.
- *Laura's Protection Talisman*: A small vial of green liquid. Imposes a penalty of -2 to any supernatural creature attacking her, but doesn't last forever. The liquid turns darker each time it protects, until eventually it turns black and worthless.

## Fate Points

Fate Points (FP) are represented by red tokens – you begin the game with **3**, but may earn more as the game unfolds. In a nutshell, your Fate Points are a measure of how much you can influence the events of the story favorably for your character. Specifically, you can spend Fate Points as follows:

- **1 FP**: to add a **minor** detail to the story *that makes sense* (you are carrying a needed item, you remembered to do something earlier, the room has a phone in it, etc.)
- **1 FP**: to completely reroll one of *your* dice rolls (not another character's).
- **1 FP**: to add +1 to your effective skill.
- **1 FP**: to invoke an Aspect and add +2 to your effective skill.
- **2 FP**: to reduce the HP/FP/SP of a single loss to 1 (or to 0 if only 1 would have been lost).
- Explain **Compelling Fate Points**.

## Sanity Points

Sanity Points (SP) are represented by white tokens – you begin the game with **20-25**, and will not recover them once they are gone. Your Sanity Points are a measure of your character's overall mental health and grasp of reality. The effect of low Sanity is as follows:

- **15 SP or less**: You are beginning to show signs of severe mental fatigue, and suffer a -1 penalty to all further Fright Checks.
- **10 SP or less**: You are starting to lose your hold on reality. Suffer a -2 penalty to all further Fright Checks.
- **0 SP**: Once your character runs out of Sanity Points he is completely insane – the GM will use him as an NPC for the rest of the game.

## Fright Checks

Roll against Will. Regardless of actual Will score, a roll of 14+ is *always* a failed Fright Check.

### Margin of

<u>Failure</u>	<u>Effects (min. 1 SP lost, 1 turn lost)</u>		
1	Slight	SP Loss: 1d-3	(Gasp, lose 1 turn, -1 to use item/skill, etc.)
2-4	Minor	SP Loss: 1d	(Loud gasp, lose 1d-4 turns, DX check or drop item, etc.)
5-6	Major	SP Loss: 1d+3	(Scream, lose 1d-2 turns, DX-2 check or drop item, etc.)
7-9	Very Major	SP Loss: 2d-3	(Loud scream, lose 1d turns, drop item, etc.)
10+/Crit. Fail	Critical	SP Loss: 2d	(Freak out for 1d+3 turns)

## Introduction

- **GURPS** in general: shared storytelling, no winners or losers, 3d6 under skill, HP, FP, SP, etc.
- Usually the PCs are heroes, more powerful than average people in some way. Horror games are an exception.
- A Horror game is like a campfire ghost story – it can't scare you unless you *want* to be scared.
- Has less to do with what you describe your characters *doing* than how they are *feeling* when they do it. It's all about atmosphere.

## Asylum Background

- The Stockton Fields Asylum for the Criminally Insane was founded in 1952 by Chester Stockton, a well-respected psychologist and pillar of the community. Secretly, however, Chester was a cultist, a worshipper of the Crawling Chaos, Nyarlathotep. In 1977 his son Arthur took over the asylum, and began using it to experiment with mythos magic.
- In 1999, after more than 20 years of siphoning madness and terror from the tortured patients, Stockton and his staff attempted a powerful summoning spell to allow Xipe Totec, the Skinless One (and Nyarlathotep's avatar), to enter our world. But something went horribly wrong – desperate and raging patients tore the staff to shreds and rampaged through the town for days (12 years ago). 43 people were killed (15 at the asylum, 28 in town), more than 100 injured, and 7 escaped patients were never found. The asylum was closed.
- Today, in 2011, the asylum building is being renovated. A construction surveyor stumbled and suffered a very deep head laceration inside the building a week ago. The resulting blood was enough to spark the never-resolved summoning spell. Xipe Totec cannot physically manifest in our reality, but he is able to influence those most vulnerable to insanity. If he can "feed" on enough madness and fear, he can come through to our world.
- Any time a PC loses Sanity Points within the grounds of the asylum, do not return those tokens to the "pile" - collect them separately. If/when Xipe Totec arrives, his HP will be equal to *all* of the collected SP.

## Before the Nightmare

- For that whole week after the spell is reenergized the PCs will experience strange events in their homes, culminating with a shared dream in which they all feel called to the old abandoned asylum just outside town. Any PC who refuses to heed Totec's call will lose 1d SP for every day they stay away from the asylum (eventually, due to the nature of one-shots, they will all arrive on the same night, at roughly the same time).
- Note to players: remember, *you* may know what is happening to the other characters, but your *characters* do not!
- **Amaya:** Out to lunch and chatting with one of her girlfriends who is complaining of migraines. For just a moment Amaya can suddenly see a small gray creature, like a wrinkled baby with large saucer-shaped yellowed eyes, perched on her friend's shoulder. It has one long finger pressed into her friend's skull, and seems to be feeding on her pain. Looking around, she can see other creatures on nearly everyone - one elderly man has a small pack. They cause our sickness and death, and feed off of it. The one feeding on her friend realizes it can be seen – and doesn't like it. **Fright Check:** -2. She will see these creatures a few more times over the week.
- **Felicia:** Her car is parked in a different spot – and when she gets in, the mirrors are misadjusted, the radio presets are changed, there are cigarette butts in the ashtray. Goes to Wal-Mart, it's huge. While shopping she has a pain in her mouth, and finds a missing tooth – it's in her pocket, in a Tic-Tac case. When she comes out she realizes she's leaving the Wal-Mart two towns over. Her car is not in the parking lot. **Fright Check.** Her car will be used a few more times over the week.
- **Jeffrey:** Comes across some junkie in an alley – smashes his head with a pipe and takes his syringe and two grams of heroin. Goes to sleep in his usual place, a tiny heating duct that only he can squeeze through the bars of, eating half a hamburger rescued from the trash. Goes to sleep, wakes up in a picture-perfect life. Big room, full of toys and bright decorations, clean bed. Mom and Dad are singing together in the kitchen while they make breakfast. The next time he falls asleep he will wake back up in the 'real' world. **Fright Check:** -2. This happens a few more times over the week.
- **Katie:** For a few days she gets strange deposits into her bank account, just a dollar or two here and there, from an anonymous off-shore account. Dropping off some photo prints at her editor's office, she accidentally jostles someone's arm and they burn themselves with coffee. A few minutes later she gets a text message that says "Kaching!", and \$50 has been added to her bank account. A couple days later she drops an extremely heavy frame on an assistant's foot, and it's broken. She gets a text that says "You're great at this!", and \$1,000 has been deposited. **Fright Check.**
- **Manny:** His co-workers are constantly whispering about him and pointing. While talking to his supervisor, the supervisor gets a fax - all it says is "Let's stab him". The television in the break room keeps showing random images of what look like military executions – beheadings, firing squads, electrocutions. No one else sees them. Finally, the TV shows footage of many beating that young punk to death. One co-worker turns and looks Manny right in the eye. **Fright Check.**

- **Sam:** For a week he wakes up in the middle of the night abruptly – the next morning there is news of unsolved murders matching his symptoms (pain in the head, victim shot; burning up, victim set on fire; pain in the throat, victim garroted). One night he hears a strange phone ringing, and finally tracks the sound down to a hall closet with a recliner in front of it. He has the only key. Inside is a black trash bag with about 40 different cell phones, some old, some recent. The one ringing has a man on the other end. "Patrice? Patrice are you there? Honey what's wrong, you never came home last night!" **Fright Check.**
- **Tommy:** He wakes up in his studio apartment. Every single day for three years his mutt Bruno has been at the foot of the bed when he wakes up – that dog saved his life, helped him overcome addiction. Today he is baring his fangs and growling like he's a complete stranger. When Tommy looks in the mirror, sometimes he sees marionette strings on his body leading up into the ceiling. **Fright Check.**
- The Calling: Eventually all of the PCs will have a night of terrible nightmares.
  - **Amaya:** Arrested, beaten, thrown in prison for life.
  - **Felicia:** Sealed into a buried box, concrete poured over it (claustrophobia).
  - **Jeffrey:** Mother and Father there, but he is completely unseen, unheard, powerless. It's as if he doesn't even exist.
  - **Katie:** Torn apart from the inside out (pregnancy).
  - **Manny:** Eaten alive by zombie cops.
  - **Sam:** Forced to balance on a swaying pole hundreds of feet in the air (acrophobia).
  - **Tommy:** Dentist straps him in and gives him heroin "for the pain".

**Fright Check.** As all these nightmares fade to black, the PCs share a single communal dream. It calms them, promises them serenity and healing and relief from the nightmares. They see the asylum at night – it feels like home, as though going there will rid them of all their problems. Perhaps their "enemies" (below) offer forgiveness and beckon them there.
- Once there, they will find their cars no longer start and their cell phones no longer have signal. If they try to walk to safety, they will become disoriented in the fog and keep coming back to the asylum.
- Remember, any PC who refuses to heed Totec's call will lose 1d SP for every day they stay away from the asylum (eventually, due to the nature of one-shots, they will all arrive on the same night, at roughly the same time).

### **Asylum Encounters**

At least 2 cars are parked outside (one for each security guard). Construction hasn't really begun in earnest yet, there's just a single trailer outside the building (empty). Power is on to the building, but it is still very dark and foreboding.

- Each PC will have a recurring 'enemy' confront them throughout the asylum (though usually non-physically):

- **Amaya:** The grandfather she suffocated.
- **Felicia:** Her abusive father, calling her "bad girl". (Or perhaps the "friend" she let die.)
- **Jeffrey:** The mother who hanged herself.
- **Katie:** The little girl in the yellow dress she and Sam killed. Carries lighter and gasoline?
- **Manny:** The 14 year old he beat to death.
- **Sam:** The little girl in the yellow dress he and Katie killed.
- **Tommy:** The old woman he killed (moves like she's on an escalator)
- **Aspects** will also be important to remember!
- Other insane folks have been called to the asylum as well, if human NPCs are needed.
- **Cell Phone 911:** The PCs may attempt to contact authorities. Most attempts will be stalled by "No Signal", but they may get through once: "911, what is your emergency?" "<players>" "One moment, please." <long pause> "911, what is your emergency?" "<players>" "One moment, please."
- **Bug!:** One (and only one) of the PCs sees a large centipede crawl out of an N/PC's ear and into his nose as he's speaking.
- **No Secrets:** If any PCs begin plotting quietly together, away from the others, they may later hear a rebroadcast of their entire conversation on a nearby radio; or perhaps someone will find a verbatim transcript of their conversation, along with annotations in the margins.
- **Crazed Attack:** If things are lagging, or the PCs are moving to Stockton's Office in the basement too quickly, one or more of the other lunatics called to the asylum will brutally attack with broken bottles and sticks with nails, etc. They don't want to kill, they want to slow, and terrify.
- **Lonely Room:** A room, completely empty and untouched for decades. Contains nothing but a single white wooden chair facing the tiny barred window. The feeling of loneliness here is palpable.
- **Jeffrey:** Something occasionally bumping Jeffrey's forehead - waves it away, thinking it's a bug, but it's a dangling human foot. His Mother's foot, hanging above him.
- **Infirmery:** Among the other debris are two full-size CPR dummies. If the PCs look away, and then back again, they may notice that the mannequins are now holding hands. They will not animate at this point, but later examination may discover footprints in the dust that appear to show the mannequins moving, even following the party.
- **Bathroom/Shower Disposal:** There is an 'extra' wall switch in the first floor bathroom. Flipping it turns on a huge, powerful "garbage" disposal in the drain of one of the showers. In the basement room below there are feeding troughs along all the walls (as well as a small 'doggy door' that leads to the **Impossible Room** on the third floor).
- **Dead Junkie:** Find the body of a dead junkie in one of the rooms. A look of terror is frozen on his face; he's missing both arms and most of one leg. There are massive bite marks on his remains (from the hellhounds). Someone has scrawled the word "Mat" in blood near his body.
- **Local Crazy:** In this room stands one of the local mentally ill homeless women. She is weeping, standing on a chair with a piece of shattered mirror in her hand, held to her throat. "They don't

remember me! No one remembers me!" she is muttering, screaming when she sees the PCs. If they interact with her, she will seem relieved and call them by name. If they indicate in any way that they don't know her, she will slit her own throat. If not she's mostly useless: can't even remember her own name, or how long she's been in the asylum.

- **Sam:** Opens a door and almost steps through – there is no floor, only clouds and sky (acrophobia). **Fright Check**.
- **Teleporting Room:** Some rooms may not always let out into the same room every time – the PCs could find themselves entering a room on the 1st floor and exiting on the 3rd floor.
- **Faceless Guard:** From a few rooms away the PCs can hear a faint "Click click click" sound, that just keeps going. Eventually they will discover one of the security guards – he is sitting in a room with blood all over the wall, missing half of his head and jaw. The corpse is continuing to pull the trigger on his revolver with the gun in its mouth, until it "sees" the PCs and attacks. (1d+1 cr, DX 10, HP 10, Unliving). He does have another 3 full clips for this weapon (9mm pistol) on him.
- **Reading Guard:** This guard is sitting at a table, beneath which is a huge pool of blood. It appears as though while reading the book on the table he calmly grabbed a pair of scissors, opened them against the page, and drove his head and eyes down onto the scissors. The corpse will animate and attack if the PCs get close. (1d+1 cr, or 1d+2 cut with scissors, DX 11, HP 10, Unliving). Anyone choosing to read the book must make a **Fright Check** at -4. If they succeed, they learn the words to a spell that costs 1d6 FP to cast. Roll 1d6:
  - **1:** Close extradimensional portals (including the one in the basement)
  - **2:** Heal up to 2d6 HP or SP once per day
  - **3:** Heal up to 1d6 HP or SP once per day
  - **4:** Locate an item or person once per day
  - **5:** Major Protection spell (-2 to supernatural creatures' attacks, lasts for 2d6 attacks)
  - **6:** Minor Protection spell (-2 to supernatural creatures' attacks, lasts for 1d6 attacks)
- **Impossible Room:** On the third floor, one of the many doors opens into a room – a room that should not exist because the door is on the outside wall of the building! Inside there are two "hell hounds," demonic looking dogs with six legs and enormous jaws. Bite - 14, 1d+2 cr, DR 2. Also in the room is a small 'doggy door' that leads to the basement feeding room (beneath the shower disposal).
- **Medical Records:** In the basement, next to Dr. Stockton's Office. The cabinets remain, but most of the records are long gone. PCs may notice if they look through these records that most everything is normal, except for patient Blood Type. Instead of 'A Positive', 'O Negative', etc., the classifications are Unusable, Possible, and Confirmed.
- **Dr. Stockton's Office:** Contains the secret door that leads to the Summoning Chamber. Entire back wall is covered with an Egyptian mural: with the pyramids in the background, a single glowing man seems to be commanding a large group of robed figures; they surround a throng of slaves. Per-5 is required to notice a swiveling plate on the mural – if a finger is placed inside the hole it is deeply cut, and the blood will open the mural.

- **Summoning Chamber:** In this cavernous secret room Dr. Stockton and his fellow cultists would hold rituals and perform spells. The mural across the massive back wall is similar to the one in Stockton's Office – except that all of the robed figures have cut the slaves to pieces, and a sea of blood drenches the entire scene. The glowing man bows prostrate before a tall skinless man (Xipe Totec), and in the sky above Nyarlathotep (picture!) is stepping through a portal. Simply viewing this mural requires a **Fright Check** – it speaks to primal fears, and long forgotten evils. A large brass circle dominates one end of the room. There is also a huge altar made of bone and muscle, and a lectern upon which sits a spell tome bound in human skin (of course!) and written in blood. Anyone choosing to read the book must make a **Fright Check** at -6. If they succeed, they learn the words to a spell that costs 2d6 FP to cast. Roll 1d6:

- **1:** Open an extradimensional portal
- **2:** Heal up to 2d6 HP or SP three times a day
- **3:** Heal up to 1d6 HP or SP three times a day
- **4:** Teleport an item or person to you once per day
- **5:** Major Protection spell (-6 to supernatural creatures' attacks, lasts for 2d6 attacks)
- **6:** Minor Protection spell (-6 to supernatural creatures' attacks, lasts for 1d6 attacks)

If the PCs find the Summoning Chamber, or if there's only about a half-hour left of game time and they still haven't, Xipe Totec will have gathered "enough" sanity and burst through this room's altar, killing anything and everyone in sight. His HP are equal to all of the SP collected from the PCs (possibly more, if that seems weak - he has, after all, also been feeding on other NPCs). Claws - 18, Dmg 3d cut, Unliving, DR 2.