

MISKATONIC UNIVERSITY

(AND THE SURROUNDING AREA)

Welcome to Miskatonic University. Located near the sleepy little town of Arkham, Massachusetts, Miskatonic has become the foremost university in the study of the arcane. Both the believers and the skeptics come to Miskatonic to study and learn. The poison ivy covered halls of Miskatonic are always home to strange and exciting phenomena...

Miskatonic University was formally opened in the year 1813. Arkham was well known at the time to be the focus of eldritch phenomena, and parapsychologists would often set up camp there for glimpses of the unknown on All-Hollow's Eve and Walpurgis Day. Eventually, the camps developed into a set of worn buildings, which grew into the University. Miskatonic University is named after the Miskatonic River, which flows through the town of Arkham and down into the Atlantic Ocean.

Arkham has been described as a small town, a jumble of old buildings, a city that time forgot. Indeed, Arkham and Miskatonic University remain much the same physically today as they did in the 1800s. Arkham has no singular source of income, but does a brisk tourist trade especially during the months of April and October. The Heath Reservoir feeds the town fresh water, and is located just beyond Meadow Hill, opposite a dark ravine.

The only swamp in Massachusetts is located slightly west of Arkham. Big Cypress Swamp — named for its discoverer: Jonas Cypress — is not normally one of the big tourist attractions; it is even shunned by the natives of Arkham. The swamp can be reached by the rarely used Gainsville Pike, a road that — coincidentally — runs past Miskatonic University to the south.

Just north of Arkham, slightly up the coast, east of Ipswich, lies the town of Innsmouth. Innsmouth was a popular trading port, lying on the mouth of the Manuxet river. However, when the B. & M. railroad went through, in the late 1890s, Innsmouth was passed over, and the town began to dwindle. Today, Innsmouth is practically a ghost town with but a few inhabitants.

The natives of Innsmouth must be very proud of their town — for some reason — as they stubbornly refuse to leave the run-down, dilapidated buildings. A few Innsmouth people do venture into the “outside world,” but — in the end — return to Innsmouth. It is said that those from Innsmouth have a queer look about them: dry grey flabby skin, little hair, and bulging eyes, but in the modern day world of political correctness, it is considered impolite to point this out.

The town of Kingsport lies to the east of Arkham. Kingsport is a sharp contrast to both Arkham and Innsmouth; it is a bright, happy town, whose buildings and towers seem

to reach toward the sky. Kingsport is dwarfed, however, by the beautiful cliffs rising up just outside of town. It is said that on lonely summer evenings, when the moon is full and the fog rolls in, the sound of music can be heard coming from the top of the cliffs. The natives claim that it is the fairies dancing. Kingsport is a rustic old New England town, famous for its seafood.

But back to Miskatonic... Miskatonic University is home to many areas of study not found elsewhere. Medieval Metaphysics and Psychology are two of the many unusual majors you will find here at Miskatonic. Our Biology department is second to none, and all departments offer many exciting research opportunities.

The Library at Miskatonic is one of the oldest in the New England area. It contains books and manuscripts not even found at the Library of Congress. Miskatonic University is the perfect place for the study of the weird, the bizarre, and the eldritch.

THE MISKATONIC SCHOOL FIGHT SONG

by Joe Dzikiewicz

Miskatonic Cephalopods
Fighting Old Ones – form up in squads.
Rip their hearts out ruthlessly
Pieces for you and pieces for me!
Meet our foe, men, up on the field.
Stomp them ‘till their blood is congealed.
Show no mercy to their plea.
Cephalopods! We march from the sea!

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The Rules To Live By live skill resolution system was developed by John Kilgallon, Sandy Antunes, and Mike Young. Copyright © John Kilgallon.

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RULES OF BEHAVIOR

1. Don't scare the Mundanes. If people ask what you are doing, explain, but don't bug them. This rule also covers damages. Please do not damage the game room.
2. Follow the Gamemasters' (GMs') instructions at all times. If a GM stands up and yells, "Don't move!" then don't move. Admittedly, if he tells you to do something really difficult, like thumb-wrestle Cthulhu, you are well within your rights to slug him.
3. No physical violence. If you are caught hitting someone, you **will** be thrown out.
4. All real or decorative weapons must be pre-approved. You can either ask a GM before the game, or at the door. If your weapon is not approved, you must leave it in your room or car for the duration. Depending on the venue, realistic props such as live steel and toy guns may not be acceptable. Check with the GM first to be sure.
5. It is the GMs' job to make sure you are enjoying yourself. If you are not enjoying yourself for any reason, please see a GM. Really, we mean this a lot! We **want** you to have fun and will go out of our way to help.
6. No smoking allowed in or around the game room. No alcoholic beverages are allowed within the game area.
7. **Do not leave the game area without alerting the GMs.** If you need to leave the game, that's fine, but please let us know.
8. If this game is running at a convention, all convention rules supersede these. Follow the convention rules at all times.
9. Do not heap unreasonable verbal abuse upon anyone's head. No sexual harassment gamewise or otherwise.
10. Be a good player, but be a good sport. If you see a newer player floundering, feel free to help or alert a GM.
11. All rules not included in this booklet are deemed included. That is, if a GM has to make a ruling decision during the game, that decision is to be considered in effect as if it were included in the rules booklet.

GAME RULES

THE GAMEMASTERS

Gamemasters (GMs) will be wandering around in the game area. There is no “Game Central” per se, but there will be an area designated GMs only. You can identify a GM by the silver button s/he is wearing.

THE SYSTEM

Every skill and ability in Miskatonic Class Reunion uses the same basic system. The rules below describe the general system and combat. The rest of the uses and effects of skills and abilities should be described on your skill sheet, found in your character packet.

STATISTICS

Most characters have 5 statistics -- Strength (STR), Dexterity (DEX), Intelligence (IQ), Will (WILL), and Sanity (SAN). Some characters might have other statistics if they are... special. Players of those characters will find an information sheet explaining the STAT in their character packets.

An average human has a 5 in STR, DEX, IQ, WILL, SAN, and a 0 in any other, secret, statistics.

SPECIAL ABILITIES, SKILLS, TALENTS, & HANDICAPS

Skills and talents add points to a statistic for a particular type of action. For example, someone with the “Ranged Weapon” skill of level 2, can add 2 to his/her DEX when trying to shoot someone with a pistol. Handicaps work exactly the opposite way; they **subtract** points from a statistic for a particular action. We’ve done the addition for you on your skill sheet.

Some abilities can only be used a limited number of times. Check the ability description to be sure.

Skills often have a STAT that is used as a target number to roll against. For example, the “Unarmed Combat” Skill adds to your STR, and your opponent uses his DEX to defend against it. For most skills, this is listed in the skill description, so you’ll have to make sure to tell your opponent what they use to defend with.

The Challenge – Here’s how you use your statistics and skills. If you want to do something, you make a challenge. You can challenge another player, an item, or a GM.

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Here's how you challenge.

1. Declare your intentions. *"I'm going to Hypnotize you."*
2. Announce the value of your personal statistic (STR, DEX, IQ or WILL) that challenge requires, and show your opponent the items and abilities that will modify that statistic. Tell your opponent what statistic is needed to defend in the challenge. *"Hypnotize uses IQ. My IQ is 4, I have a Hypnotize skill of 1, for a total of 5. I also have the Wand of Mesmer, which adds another 1, for a total of 6. The Hypnotize ability description says that you defend with your WILL."*
3. Your opponent declares the value of his personal statistic (STR, DEX, IQ or WILL) that defends in the challenge (this will be listed in **your** skill), and shows you the items and abilities that will modify the statistic. *"My WILL is 3, but here's my Amulet of Protection that adds 1 to all WILL challenges, so my total is 4."*
4. You and your opponent each roll a die and add the result to your challenge total. You have to make the roll for all target numbers, even if it's against an item or a GM. *"I rolled a 3 for a total of 9. You rolled a 4 for a total of 8. The challenge succeeds and you are hypnotized!"*
5. In the case of a tie, the person with the lower challenge total before the roll wins the challenge. (Ties go to the wiener.) If the challenge totals were the same, roll again.

Types of Challenges

There are three main types of challenges: Player vs. Player, Player vs. Item, and Player vs. GM.

- a) Player vs. Player – actions like combat, lying, etc. Just follow the basic procedure above and use each player's STATS, abilities, and items.
- b) Player vs. Item – actions like picking locks or repairing things. A GM or another player plays the role of the item. The item will have a "statistic" used to resist your efforts. For example, a lock would have a "complexity" that you would challenge with your lockpicking skill. Perform the challenge against the GM. Don't forget to roll a die for the target number, too.
- c) Player vs. GM – some things simply require a GM. For example, making a role to research information in a book. A GM will assist you in these Challenges.

Hidden Challenges – often, you'll want to make a challenge without your target knowing you're doing anything. This could be things like using a mind-reading ability, attempting to assassinate someone from across the room, etc. You can always ask a GM to make the challenge for you. That way, your target doesn't know who did it.

COMBAT

The most common type of challenge involves combat. There are some additional rules for this activity:

1. Starting Combat: If you wish to attack someone, announce “Combat!” You must do this loud enough for anyone nearby to hear (especially your target!).
2. Starting Positions: Everyone who hears someone announce “Combat” and start counting should freeze in place until the 5 seconds are counted out.. This establishes the starting positions for the fight. You can, of course, look around to see if someone’s attacking you, but you cannot move around, draw a weapon, duck out the door, etc.
3. Who goes first?

Combat takes place in rounds. The very first round is special. Whoever said “Combat” first gets a special pre-emptive action. After that, combat goes in rounds.

In a combat round, players declare in order of WILL and then roll accordingly. See “Combat actions” below. After everyone has declared and rolled all challenges, the round is over and the next round begins.

Note that damage taken during around (see below) does not affect you until the end of the round.

4. Combat actions. During your turn, you can attack, move, draw an item, or perform a miscellaneous action.
 - a) Attack: Move 1 meter (take a normal sized step), and, using a weapon (or bare hands) and the appropriate STAT/skill, attack someone (it does not have to be the person you pointed at originally).
 - 1) Determine the type of attack (Unarmed, Close Weapons, Ranged Weapons). All attacks are vs. the target’s Dodge. These STAT/Skill combinations are listed in a handy place in the upper right hand corner of your Skill Sheet.
 - 2) To make an unarmed or close weapon attack, you must be able to touch the target, unless the weapon card says something different. For ranged attacks, you can be at any distance as long as you can see the target.
 - b) Move: You can move 2 meters (take two steps) and do nothing else.

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- c) Other Action: You can do anything else, as long as it's quick, and the other players in the fight agree it's reasonable. It takes 1 turn to draw/ready a weapon if it is not in your hand when the combat began.
5. Line of Sight (ranged weapons)
 - a) If you can see your target, you can shoot at it.
 - b) If your target is partially obscured (by cover or another person), the shot becomes more difficult. Subtract 2 from your skill roll.
 6. Joining a fight – lots of people want to join a fight when they see one happening. But while LARP fights take a while, real fights tend to be over quickly before many people notice what's going on. You cannot join a fight in progress until the round after you declare you want to enter.
 7. Running Away. If a fight is not going well, you might want to leave. Here's how:
 - a) When your turn comes, announce "I'm running away." Then move (take two steps).
 - b) When your next turn comes up, if no one has hit you with an unarmed or close combat attack (ranged attacks don't count), you have gotten away! If anyone did hit you with an unarmed or close combat attack, you're still in the fight. You can try to run away again, or perform another combat action.
 - c) If you successfully Run Away, you have left the fight. No one in the fight can attack you again for 15 minutes.
 8. Ending a fight: A fight ends when all sides but one cannot attack any more (they are dead, unconscious, or have run away).

DAMAGE

There are 3 kinds of damage signified by colored stars:

- Stun: Green or Blue Stars
- Temporary: Yellow or Gold Stars
- Permanent: Red Stars

Each time you hit someone, you put the appropriate number of the correct colored stars on your opponent's badge (for example, bare fists do 1 yellow star per hit). Weapon cards will say what kind of damage that weapon does.

For each star on your badge, all of your basic STATS go down by one. This affects all challenges you make in the game. You can have negative STATS and skills because of damage. Note that SAN is not affected by stars. We'll talk a bit more about this later.

Death and Unconsciousness. If your STR or WILL goes to 0, you are unconscious. If STR goes negative, you are unconscious and dying. If your STR goes to negative the STAT, you are dead. That is, if you have a STR of 6, you need to be at -6 STR (twelve stars) to be killed. Negative WILL does not cause death.

Ten minutes after a fight remove all yellow stars received in the fight. For every full 3 yellow stars you remove, add one red star. If your STR is now 0 or above, you're still alive. Congratulations. If your STR is still below 0, you are dead. If your STR and WILL are above 0, you are conscious again. *Example: John has a STR of 4 and a WILL of 5. He has taken 2 red stars and 5 yellow stars from combat. Because this makes his STR and WILL negative, he is unconscious; however, since his STR is at -3 (STAT of four minus seven damage stars), he isn't dead. One more star would kill him though. At ten minutes after the combat, he removes the 5 yellow stars and gains 1 red star for every 3 yellow, or 1 yellow star. He now has 3 stars giving him a STR of 1 and a WILL of 2, allowing him to regain consciousness.*

Special Green Stars. You can also get green stars other ways, such as from drugs - these stars may come off at longer or shorter intervals. The thing that gave you the star will explain how to remove it.

Healers can help remove stars. Their abilities will be listed on their cards.

Note that damage stars and checks for consciousness occur at the end of the round. So, even if you take enough damage to knock you unconscious, you will get an action that round and don't fall until the end of the round.

SANITY

SAN is not affected by damage stars. Your sanity does not change simply because you've taken a little boo-boo.

Some things in the game are so horrifying that they can cause you to lose SAN. There are two types of these:

- a) Automatic Losses – For example, a Creature from Beyond might automatically remove 1 SAN from anyone who sees it. This will be clearly labeled on the item or character that causes the loss. Most often, this occurs in "I look unusual" badges which describe the creature and how much SAN you lose.
- b) Challenges – Some items/monsters have a SAN check value. This is treated like any other challenge. You roll your SAN plus a die vs. the SAN check

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number plus a die. If you lose the challenge, you lose the listed amount of SAN.

- c) Research – If you do research, you will often be told to make a SAN check afterwards. The GM will tell you your target number.

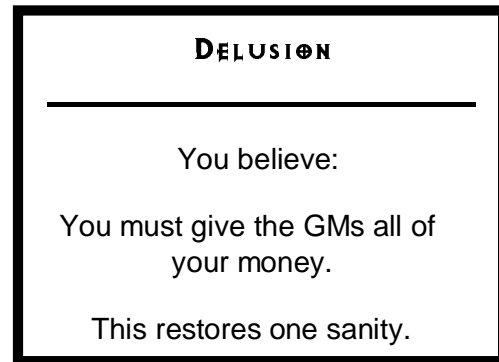
Note that you only lose the SAN the first time you see a particular “I look unusual” button. After that you have become comfortably numb to its presence. However, if you then see someone else wearing an “I look unusual” button, even if it’s the same one, you lose the SAN again as you realize that they’re all around you.

Your SAN is clearly listed with your other stats. When you lose or gain SAN, make sure to keep track on your skill sheet. When you run out of SAN, you are insane. Come see the GMs for a fun insanity sheet. Well, actually, really bad things happen to your character when you go insane, so be careful.

DELUSION CARDS

The simplest way to recover lost sanity is to take a delusion card. Delusion cards can be found near the box by the GMs’ area. If you have a delusion card, your character believes the delusion, no matter how much fact is presented to the opposite. It is very important to roleplay your delusions.

The bottom of the delusion card will tell how much sanity the delusion restores. Take the correct number of sanity chits from the nearby box and add them to your own. (Once per card, please). You can lose them again, later. You may not take more than **three** delusion cards. Delusion cards are not transferable; do not show them to other players.



Some players start with delusion cards in their character packets; these cards count toward the limit of three, and the sanity gained is already in the character packet.

SPECIAL ABILITY RESULTS

Some characters have special abilities that affect your mind. The players may show you a Special Ability Results card. You must follow the instructions printed on a Special Ability Results card as if they were told to you by a GM.

RESEARCH

Characters who have the Research skill may use the library in this building (or convenient tomes) to do research. To do so, tell a GM what you are looking for, where you are doing your research (for example, the *Necronomicon*), and what your Library Use skill total is. The GM roll secretly for you and will send you out of the room for a short time; when you come back, the GM will tell you what you've learned. Please do not interact in a gamewise manner with others outside the room unless they have gone to do research specifically with you.

ITEMS

In the case where a real life item is too difficult or costly to produce, an item card is made with the name of that item and its effects listed clearly on it. Props may be brought for item cards that already exist. Likewise, players may come to the GMs to have item cards made for props they have brought at the GMs' discretion.

Item cards may be marked "non-concealable" or "non-transferable." Non-concealable cards must be shown plainly at all times; nontransferable cards cannot be given away or stolen.

Some cards, such as weapons, list an effect. The effect is what happens when you use the item. The Default, if listed, is what your effective skill in the item is if you do not have an applicable skill. For example, a knife defaults to STR. If you have a Strength of 5, you have a skill of 5 while using a knife. But, if you have the Close Weapons Skill, you use that instead. *For example: if you have a STR of 5, a Close Weapons of 1 and a knife, your skill when using the knife is (STR + Close Weapons) or 6.*

DEAD BODIES

One special type of prop is the dead body. Shaped like a large gingerbread man, a dead body will be brazenly entitled with "the body of <character name>." Attached to the dead body will be an envelope containing the dearly departed's personal effects. Look through the envelope to search the body.

ENVELOPES

Some character packets contain envelopes marked, “do not open until...” These are to add a certain degree of surprise into the game without having to involve the GMs. Please do not open the envelopes prematurely, or attempt to discover their contents. In most cases, the character has no knowledge that certain events will cause the opening of envelopes. Roleplay this. Don’t seek out the envelopes; let them seek you.

MISKATONIC TIME

The official time of the game can be shown by the clock near the GMs’ area. The clock tells the correct time for the time during the game. This might not be the real-world time. All times for game purposes (such as when to open envelopes) are aligned to the game clock. The game starts at 8:00 PM “Miskatonic Time” and ends at Midnight.

Note that the game starts in a “combat moratorium.” No combat or offensive abilities of any kind may be used until the GMs lift the moratorium.

BADGES AND BUTTONS

There are many different types of badges and buttons. A person wearing a GM button is a GameMaster and should be treated as such.

Players have a “Hello! I’m...” sticker badge in their character packets. Please write your character name and major/department on your badge. Player badges must be worn all times you are active in the game. This is also the badge where the Stars go.

A red or pink “I look unusual” button may be gotten from the GMs. All characters who do not look like humans must wear an “I look unusual” button. Any players wearing an “I look unusual” button may be asked what they look like, and must answer truthfully. Some “I look unusual” buttons cause SAN loss. Read them carefully and react accordingly.

Some people have an “I look invisible” buttons. Someone wearing an “I look invisible” button is invisible to all normal human senses. Just pretend the person isn’t there.

THANKS

We’d like to extend a thank-you to each and every one of you. Without you there could not be a Miskatonic Class Reunion. Special Thanks To: Emma Antunes, Sandy Antunes, Brandon Brylawski, Susan Cohen, John Corrado, Jeff Diewald, Paul Dwyer, Rebecca Ellis, Janet Gordon, Carol Johnson, John Kilgallon, Dan Luxenberg, Steve McCann, Doug Milewski, Gordon Olmstead-Dean, Dirk Parham, Moira Parham, Eric Reuss, Ken Rolston, Jeannie Whited, David Wood, The ILF, InterCon, H. P. Lovecraft, and everyone else who I forgot. Now get out there and have some fun!

ABOUT THE GAME

Miskatonic Class Reunion is a rewrite of the first game Mike Young wrote: *The Tenth Year Reunion of the 1979 Graduating Class of Miskatonic University*. It has been run nineteen times in the past ten years and shows no sign of slowing down. *Miskatonic Class Reunion* changed the face of Live Action Roleplaying in its area, being one of the first 4-hour games of its kind to be run over and over again, sparking the whole mini-game phenomenon. When asked about the popularity of the game, insane author Mike Young simply bangs his head into the nearest brick wall until the questioning stops.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hi! I'm Mike Young!

Mike Young started LARPing in 1989 when he played his first game, *Mage Seal's Covention 27*. He wrote his first LARP about six months later, and has gone on, through the auspices of the Columbia Improvisational Theater Association, to run some of the largest and most well known theater-style games including *Tales From The Floating Vagabond I and II*; *Help! The Paranoids Are After Me!*; and *Murder Mystery Weekend*. Mike currently is writing the wildly popular *Dark Summonings* LARP campaign.

Mike has slowed down in his old age and has diversified into other interests, such as padded-weapons LARPs, improv comedy, and co-hosting a television show. While not working or playing in games, Mike also likes to eat, sleep, and work his day job as a video games programmer/writer/ producer.

Mike tried to minor in weirdness in college, but got his application into the Interdisciplinary Studies department too late. They loved the idea, though. Mike collects assorted weirdness, or maybe it is just naturally drawn to him. Mike's proudest achievement is that he has had two of his entries in the Bulwar-Lytton Fiction Writing Contest published in their *Dark and Stormy Night* series of books.