

SLASHER FLICK

The Horror Movie Roleplaying Game



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Contents

Chapter One:		
	Introduction	pg. 4
Chapter Two:		
	Slasher Films	pg. 12
Chapter Three:		
	The Game Rules	pg. 26
Chapter Four:		
	Creating Characters	pg. 48
Chapter Five:		
	The Players	pg. 62
Chapter Six:		
	The Director	pg. 72

Warning!

This game contains violence, gore and sexual themes. As such, our target audience is the 18+ year old demographic. Parents should seriously think twice before allowing their children to read or play Slasher Flick.

On the darkest of nights...
... he waits for you!



GRAVE DANGER

Thomas Vrong and Fireside Productions, Inc. present
A Terrance Howard Film "Grave Danger" Starring Mary Yor Martin Tom
Music by Arthur K. Matrell Written and Produced by Thomas Vrong
Directed by Antonio DeMarcus
1983 Artistic Endeavors

Chapter One

Introduction

"But Seth is bringing back help."

"Seth isn't coming back."

Marti and Jeff -- Hell Night (1981)

The Meaning of Fear

What is it about slasher flicks that keep us, as moviegoers, coming back for more? Is it the masked killers? The gore? The plots? Certainly these things play a part in the appeal of horror films, but there's more to it than that.

How many times have you been awake all alone at night and heard a sudden and unfamiliar sound emanating from outside your house? And when it happens, what goes through your mind? Usually, your first thought is that some psycho killer is out there, stalking you, waiting for just the right moment to strike. Even though deep down you know that there's a probably a more mundane reason for the noise, your base instinct tells you that something sinister may be afoot. But for that split second, fear shoots through you as your heart pumps like a machine gun and your imagination runs amok.

I'm no psychologist, but I would say that it's quite telling that our minds immediately gravitate toward the most malevolent possibilities when faced with uncertainty. It's like the human brain is wired to think about these things, even on a subconscious level. If you take a look at some of the ways that we derive pleasure from fear, it should come as no surprise that we love slasher flicks. From roller coasters and skydiving to spook houses and speeding in

Chapter One

vehicles, the human race enjoys facing terror, even if in a controlled environment.

And really, isn't that what slasher flicks are all about; facing terror in a controlled environment? We are able to experience this terror vicariously through the characters in the movies, all the while remaining safe inside the theater or even our own home. This is, as far as I'm concerned, why we keep coming back for more.

Slasher Flick: The RPG

Slasher Flick is a role-playing game that brings all the thrills of slasher movies from the screen to the tabletop. It's not a universal game that can easily be used for other genres. Every rule was designed with the sole purpose of capturing all the tropes and nuances of the source material.

Players take on the roles of potential victims for the psycho killer(s). This may be overly blunt, but that's the truth of the matter. It's very, very possible that any given character will



Introduction

be stabbed, strangled, eviscerated, decapitated, chopped into pieces or otherwise disposed of by the time the game is over. That's okay though, as Slasher Flick isn't a game about winning or losing. It's a game about cooperatively telling an entertaining story. Besides, players will be controlling multiple characters, so they won't have to wait around long.

Despite the fact that Slasher Flick focuses on the notion that a serial killer is on the loose, there is another very important aspect of the game: character interaction. Each character has his or her own distinct personality and likely has some manner of link to the other characters (friends, roommates, acquaintances, etc.). All the best slasher films make the audience care about the characters by playing up these personalities and relationships between them. Otherwise, nobody is going to give a damn whether or not the characters live or die. Since this is the case, it's only logical that characters in the game should be treated the same way.

In order to play, you'll need to acquire a handful of dice: six-sided dice, eight-sided dice and ten-sided dice. Four to six of each type will be fine. These dice can be purchased from your local game or hobby store. You should also get your hands on some paper and pencils as well.

Role-Playing Basics

For those of you who have role-played before, feel free to skip over this section. This will be old hat for you. However, if you're new to the hobby, you're probably wondering how this all works. If this is the case, this section is a must-read.

Chapter One

Let's start with a quick definition. A role-playing game is an interactive storytelling game. Now, let's expand upon that definition with some explanations.

The Director and the Players

There are two types of participants in the game: the Director and the players. One participant acts as the Director; everyone else acts as players.

- The Director is the participant who set the game up and knows the overall framework of the story. In fact, the Director usually writes it. She plays the roles of any characters not portrayed by the players and also adjudicates the game rules.
- The players each play the role of a character of their own creation, and share the lesser characters. They aren't privy to what's going on in the game and must find out as the story unfolds.

Flicks

Each game is known as a flick. A flick can be played in one full-length session or divided up into several shorter sessions; whichever is more convenient for you and your fellow participants. Like an actual horror movie, a flick ends when the story is resolved in some fashion. Just because the story ends, it doesn't mean the Director can't start planning out a sequel. Sequels are part and parcel of the slasher film sub-genre, so it's feasible for numerous sequels to be made.

How it Works

The Director kicks a flick off by describing the opening scene. This scene often involves some or all of the players'

Introduction

characters. The players describe what their characters are doing. In most cases, this doesn't require any rules. It's like verbal improvisational acting. The Director tells them the results of their actions using common sense and his notes about the flick as her guide. This verbal interplay goes back and forth, spinning a story in the process.

If a character does something that could result in failure (climbing a cliff, conning a shop owner, sneaking around, etc.), the rules must be used to determine if the character can pull it off.

Below is a brief example of a typical scene in progress:

Director: As you walk into the creepy old graveyard in the moonlit night, the stout autumn wind whips the nearby tree branches around, making them look as if they are grasping at you wildly. You see graves jutting up from the ground, leaning in all different directions. At the far end of the cemetery stands an imposing mausoleum.

Player #1: Judging by what the crazy old man told us earlier, that mausoleum looks to be where we need to go.

Player #2: You bet. I start making my way toward it.

Player #1: Same here. We need to see what the old man

A Note About Personal Pronouns

For the sake of clarity, we have adopted the system of using feminine pronouns for referencing the Director and masculine pronouns for referencing players. If referencing anyone else (characters that aren't required to be a specific gender, both the Director and players collectively, etc.), we use male pronouns.

Chapter One

thought was so important.

Director: You trudge through the muddy ground toward the mausoleum when suddenly, a dark figure steps from the woods, blocking your way to the building. You can't see what he looks like, though, due to the distance and darkness, but you can see that he's wielding an axe. He stares right at you for a moment and then determinedly begins walking toward you at a brisk pace. What are you going to do?

See how it works? It's just a verbal give-and-take, with everyone doing their part to tell a scary story.

Important Terms

What follows is a short list of terms that are used throughout this book.

D3: Roll a d6, counting the results of 1-2 as "1", the results of 3-4 as "2" and the results of 5-6 as "3".

D6: A standard six-sided die.

D8: An eight-sided die.

D10: A ten-sided die.

Director: The primary storyteller. She's the one who runs the game.

Player: The participants (excluding the Director).

Flick: The story that unfolds during a game session; usually one complete story.

Primary Characters: The players' main characters. They usually survive longer than secondary characters.

Secondary Characters: The players' less important characters. These characters tend to drop like flies.

Tertiary Characters: The minor characters played by the Director.

Introduction

Killer: The murderous psychopath.

Stats: Each character (except the killer) has four stats (Brawn, Finesse, Brains and Spirit) that measure a character's overall abilities. Each one is rated Poor, Normal or Good.

Positive Qualities: Skills, knacks or perks that characters possess.

Negative Qualities: Disadvantages, weaknesses or flaws that characters possess.

Genre Points: Points that characters acquire during the game by acting true to the genre. They can be spent to help characters out.

Stat Check: A roll that determines whether a character succeeds in a task or not.

Kill Scene: A tense series of narration and stat checks that begins when the killer appears and attacks one or more character.

Survival Points: Points that are gained or lost during a kill scene. If a character's survival point total equals or exceeds eight, the character escapes or temporarily defeats the killer.

What Lies Ahead

Chapter 1: Introduction – This is the section you're reading right now.

Chapter 2: Slasher Films – Want to learn more about the slasher film sub-genre? If so, then this chapter is for you.

Chapter 3: The Game Rules – Learn all the rules you'll need to know in order to play or direct the game.

Chapter 4: Creating Characters – The rules for creating primary and secondary characters.

Chapter 5: The Players – Hints and tips for players who want to make the most of the game.

Chapter 6: The Director – This section has advice for directing the game and creating flicks. It also contains rules for creating tertiary characters and killers.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE SORORITY



CHAPTER TWO

Slasher Hicks

"There are certain rules that one must abide by in order to successfully survive a horror movie. For instance, number one: you can never have sex."

Randy -- Scream (1996)

What Slasher Films Are!

The slasher film is a type of horror film that involves a psychopathic killer who systematically murders a series of victims in a brutal fashion. Let's look at some of the core elements that make these movies unique.

Slasher films often...

- ... have a single killer, though it's not unknown for them to have more.
- ... focus on teenagers or college-aged adults who are somehow isolated from civilization.
- ... deal extensively with the relationships, friendships and conflicts of the characters, making it the focus of much of the film (especially the first 1/3 of it).
- ... feature gratuitous sex scenes.
- ... showcase morbidly creative methods of dispatching victims.
- ... emphasize excessive gore.
- ... begin with the murder of a female and end with a lone female survivor, though it's also common for one male to survive as well.

Obviously, the above elements are generalizations and

Chapter Two

don't necessarily have to apply to every slasher film. Still, they represent the most common aspects of the sub-genre.

The Killer

What would a slasher flick be without a slasher? Something else entirely! Every slasher film has one, and some have more than one. At any rate, the killer is at the (ripped out) heart of the sub-genre. It's time to reflect on some of the more common features of slasher film murderers.

A Slasher film killer often...

- ... seems more like an unstoppable force of nature than a human. Of course, sometimes, the killer *isn't* human.
- ... either wears a mask of some sort, has a hideous face or has a hideous face covered up by a mask.
- ... prefers to do away with teenagers or college-aged adults... especially ones that are having sex and partying.
- ... has a twisted (and sometimes sad) backstory that explains why he's a murderer.
- ... has "mommy issues".
- ... is more cunning than one might think, even the ones that supposedly have a low intellect.
- ... foregoes the use of firearms in favor of up-close weapons, primitive ranged weapons and improvised weapons.
- ... confines his murderous activities to a specific location or region.

Tropes and Clichés

Slasher films are rife with their own conventions and trademarks. This fact has resulted in harsh criticism of the sub-genre, with detractors claiming that the films are too clichéd to be entertaining. The fact is, there are many clichéd elements in slasher films. Nobody can deny that. However, the same can be said of any style of movie. Besides, it's all about telling a fun, violent and suspenseful story... and the slasher film tropes help with that.

Below is a list of common tropes, many of which are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

- Parents/authority figures/police never believe kids/teens/college students.
- Victims-to-be always travel in groups.
- Killers often look to be dead, but the audience sees his eyes pop open (often followed by him sitting bolt upright while nobody is looking).
- Characters always check out noises.
- Phone always seem to be out of service (cell phones never get signals either).
- Windows often jam.
- Vehicles seldom start and when they *do*, it's never easy.
- Perfectly ordinary people suddenly become master trap-setters, especially late in the film.
- Even though there's a maniac on the loose, people somehow manage to be intimate with each other.
- When somebody comes up missing and his/her friends fear that something bad has happened, they always holler their names... which only alerts the killer to their presence.
- When someone gets a killer down, they never finish him off.

Chapter Two

- When it looks like the killer is dead, people drop their weapons.
- Any characters having sex are sure to be killed either during or after.
- When making out, a noise can be heard, but the guy always insists that it's just the wind. It's never the damn wind!
- Cars often break down or have a flat near a killer's "area of operation".
- There's always a "crazy" individual who knows what's really going on, but nobody believes him/her.
- Characters ask for directions to their destination, but the person they ask is one of the bad guys.
- Assholes and bitches never survive.
- Characters (especially women) are prone to falling while running.
- Couples who are having relationship problems seem to bond and realize how much they love each other after facing death throughout the movie.
- "I'll be right back." No, you won't. Trust me.
- Killers often have "mommy issues" (Psycho, Friday the 13th, Black Christmas, etc.).
- Females cry and



Slasher Films

scream a lot.

- The classic cheap thrill: a character hears a noise and investigates... and a cat jumps out at them. Damn, there seem to be a lot of cats in slasher films.
- There often seems to be an over-use of coincidence.
- Characters often have dream/daydream sequences.
- There's always suspenseful music while the killer is approaching.
- Killers deliver several quick stabs... but the final stab is almost always delayed for a few seconds while the killer holds the weapon up into a dramatic position for the camera.
- Minorities seldom live through a slasher movie. This may not be politically correct, but it's true.
- Toward the end of the movie, the final girl somehow runs into or sees the bodies of everyone who dies during the movie, one right after another.
- Killers can walk and still manage to catch their prey.
- Nobody in slasher films has ever heard the term "strength in numbers", resulting in them inevitably splitting up or going off alone.
- Whenever a character finds a dead body and brings someone else back to see it, it's gone by the time they return.
- At some point, most movies have a character see something horrific (usually a body) and back up, running directly into the killer, who has been standing behind them.
- When being pursued by a killer, people feel the urge to run upstairs, effectively trapping themselves.
- Many horror films often have some manner of legend ("Thirty years ago, there was a murder at this camp.").
- For some reason, characters get close to a killer's

Chapter Two

“body” when they think he’s dead (usually to look under his mask). This leads to the killer reaching up and grabbing a leg.

- Slasher films are thinly veiled precautionary tales.
- It’s common for assholes to turn out to be valiant in the end.
- There seem to be a lot of deaths in bathtubs and showers.
- Hillbilly cannibals are a dime a dozen in slasher flicks.
- Clowns and dolls are used to creepy effect.
- Characters often find cryptic messages/warnings written in red on mirrors.
- Killers are partial to masks.
- Teenagers are the preferred victim of psycho killers the world over.
- Many killers are compelled to stay/operate within a certain region.
- Oftentimes, movies have at least one scene shown through the eyes of the killer.
- Slasher films tend to center on a particular holiday or event.
- Disturbing and/or threatening phone calls that turn out to be coming from inside the house where the characters are.
- If there is only one survivor, you can almost bet the mortgage that it will be a female.
- Locations in slasher films typically have thematic names/nicknames (e.g., Valentine’s Bluff, Camp Blood, etc.).
- A lot of slasher movies begin with a death sequence.
- There seems to be a lot of reliance on women’s intuition.
- Flashlights are unreliable devices, cutting out at

Slasher Films

the most inopportune times.

- Killers enjoy grabbing victims through glass windows.
- Many killers feed on fear and are harmless to those who don't fear them.
- When a character barricades him/herself in a room, the killer is certainly either already in the room or finds another way in, thus trapping the victim in there with him.
- Slumber parties are perfect venues for slashing.
- Creepy phone calls are ALWAYS coming from inside the house.
- Killers often memorize their hunting grounds to the extent that they can navigate them blindfolded, and they often install tunnels and/or secret doors to allow them to sneak up on people.
- Killers can usually hold their breath a long time underwater, even if they're normal humans. Supernatural slashers rarely need to breathe.
- Killers can almost always remain absolutely motionless whenever they need to. They can even feign death.
- The longer a killer operates, the more supernatural his storyline becomes. It then gets out of hand, making the killer too powerful. This prompts the filmmakers to bring him full circle in an effort to restore believability.
- Killers are fearless except when presented with their special weaknesses or phobias.
- Some killers are amazingly good at hiding evidence of foul play, simultaneously butchering people in obvious ways and discrediting or framing his future victims so that the police won't try to help.
- The victim traps the killer in a small space or the

Chapter Two

victim will find a small hiding place too small for the killer to get into. Even still, the killer continues to slash at thin air while still trying to get his victim, who is always 'just' out of reach and usually sitting their crying instead of...you know...escaping.

- After being trapped, the killer always backs away and looks ominously at the victim, before calmly 'disappear'. The victim continues to sit there crying and just when she thinks it's safe, it becomes obvious that it's anything but safe.
- A group of friends will be engaging in their teenage shenanigans, but one friend always has his back to



the approaching killer. The rest of his friends point fingers and freak out in an attempt to warn him... but he fails to understand what they're trying to say. When he finally lets it sink in, he turns around just in time to get murdered by the killer.

- Killers tend to cock their head to the side when confused or thinking.
- Blood often drips from above... onto a character.

Essential Movies

Rather than list every slasher film ever created, you'll find a selection of the ones we feel are most important and iconic.

The entries are listed in chronological order.

Black Christmas (1974)

Widely credited as the movie that invented the modern slasher genre, *Black Christmas* presented an astoundingly scary story that pulled no punches. The story revolves around a handful of college girls in a sorority house during a Christmas party. They begin receiving unnerving phone calls that escalate to murder, as the killer is already lurking in the house.

Cynthia's Commentary: I'm hesitant to call any movie flawless, but I'll go out on a limb and do exactly that with *Black Christmas*. Director Bob Clark (of *A Christmas Story* fame) uses every visual and audio tool at his disposal to create a tension-filled atmosphere unlike any other movie I've ever seen. And wait 'til you see



Chapter Two

the ending. The movie was given the re-make treatment in 2006, which was a solid film in its own right.

Halloween (1978)

This low-budget masterpiece is the ultimate movie of the sub-genre. It centers on a vile man named Michael Myers, who is described as being pure evil by the well-meaning psychiatrist, Dr. Loomis. Myers escapes from the institution and heads directly toward his old hometown, Haddonfield, where he proceeds to stalk teenager Laurie Strode and her friends. Loomis follows him to Haddonfield in an effort to stop his killing spree.

Cynthia's Commentary: This is my all-time favorite slasher film. Director John Carpenter created the perfect blend of moody music and on-screen atmosphere, the likes of which have yet to be matched, in my opinion. The movie spawned multiple sequels and a remake. Some of the sequels were good (especially Halloween II, which picks up exactly where the original left off) and the remake was good as well, though many horror movie fans will disagree with the latter.

Friday the 13th (1980)

Even though Halloween basically invented the sub-genre, Friday the 13th took the formula and ran with it, grossing a vast profit at the box office. The action here takes place at Camp Crystal Lake, where the counselors are trying to refurbish the cabins before the first campers arrive. As it turns out, a young boy named Jason Voorhees supposedly drowned in the lake back in 1957, one year before a double murder occurred there. Some folks think that Jason didn't truly drown and was responsible for the murders. Whatever the case may be, the counselors start getting murdered one by one.

Cynthia's Commentary: I'll be honest; this is not my favorite movie of the Friday the 13th series, due to what I feel is a really lame climax. I prefer Friday the 13th 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 10. Still, this movie is the most important of the lot and is definitely worth watching. As I mentioned, it inspired a ton of sequels and a 2009 re-imagining.

A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)

In this film, the demon-like ghost of a child murderer named Freddy Krueger terrorizes several teenagers in their nightmares. Things go from bad to worse when it's revealed why he's targeting these particular teens. Despite the fact that the sequels basically turned Freddy Krueger into a darkly comedic figure, the original movie was a terrifying, terse, and claustrophobic roller-coaster ride.

Cynthia's Commentary: The original film was possibly the best example of how to effectively meld supernatural elements with the slasher movie formula. The filmmakers did a fantastic job making the viewer vicariously dread the characters falling asleep. They toyed with my mind by blending dream and reality in a seamless manner. The viewer could hardly tell what was real and what wasn't.

Child's Play (1988)

Dolls are creepy and this movie (and even its sequels) plays heavily off of this fact. The premise is that a vile bastard named Charles Lee Ray is killed, but as he's dying, he uses voodoo to place his soul in the body of a doll. He wants to be in a human body, though, so he wants to transfer his soul into the one belonging to a young kid named Andy.

Cynthia's Commentary: Child's Play was a scary movie, plain and simple. Sure, Chucky (the doll) was snide and

Chapter Two

often humorous as a result, but it didn't detract from the fright factor at all. The pacing on the film was tremendous as well. The sequels were okay, but the original was the real deal. Tinsel Town is set to churn out the obligatory remake in 2010.

Scream (1996)

Heralded as the movie that revitalized the slasher movie sub-genre, *Scream* brought to the table a self-aware, satirical vibe that made it hip and fresh to younger audiences. In the film, a serial killer wearing a Halloween costume attempts to kill teenager Sydney Prescott along with her circle of friends. The plot is far more intricate than this write-up might indicate.

Cynthia's Commentary: It's all about the big reveal! But that's not the only element of *Scream* that I enjoyed. The acting was first-rate and the characters were far more than generic cardboard cutouts. Furthermore, the plot was a twisting and turning mystery that kept me guessing all the way throughout. Oh, did I mention the big reveal? *Scream* was given the sequel treatment on two different occasions and a relaunch is on its way in 2010.

Almost Essential Movies

The movies listed below in an abbreviated format are highly recommended as well. The only reason they didn't make the "essential" list is because they either didn't necessarily move the sub-genre forward or because they are so obscure that they didn't create as much of an impact.

Prom Night (1980): A creepy little movie that features one of the best examples of a kill scene (see pages 35 – 43 to this day (Wendy's sequence).

Slasher Films

Terror Train (1980): Jamie Lee Curtis is great in this claustrophobic film set aboard a passenger train on New Years Eve. I dare you to guess the killer's identity.

Happy Birthday To Me (1981): A mind-twister with a shocking ending. Highly underrated.

My Bloody Valentine (1981): Has insane coal miner Harry Warden returned to get his revenge on the people of Valentine's Bluff?

Slumber Party Massacre (1984): A satirical look at the role of women in slasher films.

April Fool's Day (1986): A great little film that is best known for its extremely odd ending that leaves viewers scratching their heads.

Slaughter High (1986): Small budget... big fun. A nerd comes back to exact revenge on his tormentors. Or does he?

Leprechaun (1993): An evil mythical creature wants his bag of gold back and will go to any length to do so.

I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997): When some teenagers run over a man, their lives become hellish. Has he returned to kill them off?

Urban Legend (1998): A killer uses urban legends to dictate how he offs his victims on a college campus.

Cry_Wolf (2005): An Internet prank goes disastrously wrong and people start dying. But who is the killer and why is he/she doing it? The answer may well surprise you.



SUMMER
SCAMP
NIGHTMARE

**Don't bother running.
Don't bother hiding.
There is no hope.**

Ranolph Varga presents Amy Manning in David Mahr's "Summer Camp
Nightmare" with Al Brunner, Megan Kell • Written by David Mahr
Executive Producer Irwin Hargrove • Directed by David Mahr
Produced by Avis Johnson; Released in Panavision 1981

CHAPTER THREE

THE GAME RULES

"This place is cursed. Cursed! It's got a death curse!"

Crazy Ralph -- Friday the 13th (1980)

Characters in the Game

From hapless victims to vicious psycho killers, characters are what drive the game. Without them, there would be no game at all. That's why this section focuses exclusively on the various souls that inhabit the world of *Slasher Flick*.

Types of Characters

There are four types of characters in the game:

Primary Characters: Primary characters are the characters that, when watching a slasher film, you just *know* will either be the ones who survive or will be the last ones to die.

Secondary Characters: Secondary characters represent the major characters in a slasher film who will probably die.

Tertiary Characters: These are minor characters that are sprinkled throughout a slasher film (the old guy at the gas station, the sheriff who tries to tell the kids not to cause trouble, the "crazy" old man who warns people that they're doomed, etc.). These characters may or may not be victims.

The Killer: The killer is only marginally a character; he's more like a force of nature. In fact, killers don't have the same types of game statistics as other characters in the game. Some flicks feature more than one killer.

Chapter Three

Who Plays The Characters?

Given that there are so many character types, one might wonder who is playing them all and how it all works.

- Each player plays one primary character.
- The players share the secondary characters.
- The Director plays the tertiary characters as well as the killer.

Sharing Secondary Characters

In slasher films, the body count has a tendency to be high. This means that if the Director was to play the secondary characters (who die a lot), the inevitable death sequences would be nothing more than her describing them to the players, who would have no impact on anything. They would be reduced to acting as static bystanders. How boring would *that* be?

In order to avoid this unrewarding style of play, the players get to step into the roles of the secondary characters, thus making the players more entrenched in the story. This raises the question of who plays which secondary characters.

The truth is that it's up to the group as a whole. There are two common methods of determining who plays the various secondary characters:

The "Set-in-Stone" Method: Before the game begins, the players amicably determine which secondary characters each of them will play. The players will play these (and *only* these) secondary characters throughout the game. This method encourages more consistent characterization of the secondary characters, but also lacks the flexibility of the "Free-Flowing" Method (see below).

The Game Rules

The “Free-Flowing” Method: When a scene starts, the secondary characters involved should be placed in the center of the playing area. Players can decide amongst themselves who is going to play which secondary characters for this scene. After the scene is over, the characters are returned to the center so that they’re ready for the next scene if need be. This method allows the players to experience numerous secondary characters during the game, but at the expense of truly letting them get too attached to any of them.

Stats and Qualities

Primary, secondary and tertiary characters all possess stats and qualities. Together, they define what a character can do well and not so well.

Stats

Every character has four stats:

Brawn: Physical strength, resilience, toughness and stamina.

Finesse: The character’s agility, coordination, balance and reflexes.

Brains: The character’s intelligence, perception and knowledge.

Spirit: The character’s willpower, charisma, leadership and luck.

These stats are rated according to how adept the character is in those areas. Each stat will have one of three ratings:

Poor: The character is inept or underdeveloped in the stat.

Normal: The character is roughly average in the stat.

Good: The character is adept or developed in the stat.

Chapter Three

Qualities

Characters possess specific things that he or she is particularly good or bad at within a given area. Each quality is directly related to one of the stats.

- The good things are called positive qualities and can represent special skills, spheres of knowledge, knacks or interests. Examples include: “scrappy fighter” (Brawn), “sneaking around” (Finesse), “wilderness survival” (Brains) and “cool under pressure” (Spirit).
- The bad things are called negative qualities and can represent specific ineptitudes, weaknesses, or flaws. Examples include: “runs out of breath easily” (Brawn), “trips a lot” (Finesse), “unperceptive” (Brains) and “acts like a bitch” (Spirit).

Stat Checks

Whenever a character attempts an action that could feasibly fail, a stat check must be made. Using logic, the Director decides which of the four stats is being tested. The player then rolls four dice. The type of dice rolled depends on the stat’s rating:

- **Poor:** d10
- **Normal:** d8
- **Good:** d6

If at least two of the dice roll identical numbers (called “matching results”), the character is successful.

The Game Rules

Separated Matches

Sometimes, the dice will produce two or more sets of matching results. For example, let's say that you roll a 2, 2, 5 and 5. There are two sets of matching numbers here (the 2s and the 5s). When this happens, they all count toward your total matching results. So, in the example above, there would be four matching numbers.

Applying Qualities

The character's qualities can affect how checks are made.

- If one of the character's positive qualities would logically be useful to the situation, the Director may instruct you to roll an additional die of the same type for the check. A character can never receive more than one extra die from positive qualities (i.e., if the character has two helpful positive qualities, he only gains one die).
- If one of the character's negative qualities would logically be a hindrance to the situation, the Director may instruct you to roll one less die for the check. A character can never lose more than one die from negative qualities (i.e., if the character has two hindering negative qualities, he only loses one die).

Task Difficulty

Some tasks are more or less difficult than others.

- If the Director deems a task to be particularly easy, she may instruct you to roll an additional die of the same type for the check.
- If the Director deems a task to be particularly hard,

Chapter Three

she may instruct you to roll one less die for the check.

Toppers

The term “topper” refers to the highest possible number on a die – a 6 on a d6, an 8 on a d8 or a 10 on a d10. Likewise, the term “matching toppers” refers to rolling multiple toppers.

In most cases, rolling toppers is irrelevant and has no further game effects. That is, rolling matching 8s on a d8 is no different than rolling matching 4s on a d8. However, there are instances where it does make a difference (during kill scenes, the effects of a killer’s components, etc.).

Opposed Checks

Sometimes, a non-killer character’s actions will be resisted by another non-killer character. For example, when a character tries to:

- sneak past another character (Finesse vs. Brains).
- wrestle another character to the ground (Brawn vs. Brawn).
- convince another character to do something (Spirit vs. Spirit).
- Seduce another character (Spirit vs. Spirit).

These situations require an opposed check. The character trying to perform the action is referred to as the *acting character*. The character being acted against is referred to as the *resisting character*. Only the acting character actually makes a stat check.

The Game Rules

An opposed check is made like any other check, with one exception: the resisting character's opposing stat rating may modify the number of dice rolled by the acting character. The Director determines which stat the acting character uses and which stat the resisting character uses.

Compare the two character's stat ratings.

- If the ratings are the same, there is no adjustment to the number of dice rolled.
- If the acting character's rating is better, add a number of dice equal to the difference (e.g., Good [acting] vs. Poor [resisting] = 2 additional dice).
- If the acting character's rating is worse, subtract a number of dice equal to the difference (e.g., Normal [acting] vs. Good [resisting] = 1 less die).

Once the number of dice is adjusted accordingly, apply any other adjustments (qualities, situational modifiers, etc.).

Opposed Checks Vs. The Killer

Characters technically never engage in opposed checks against the killer, as killers don't have stats. However, killers have special rules called components that can alter the number of dice rolled under certain circumstances.

Lending a Hand

If a character specifically helps another character (to the extent of doing nothing else), the character being helped rolls an additional die of the same type he would normally roll for the check. A second helper grants yet another die. Three or more is a crowd, though, which means that further helpers are redundant and will not add dice.

Chapter Three

Freak-Out Checks

Fear plays an important role in *Slasher Flick*. If the characters fear nothing, then what's the point of running a horror game? This is where freak-out checks come into play.

When a character faces something frightening (confrontation with the killer, finding a friend's dead body, seeing someone chopped into itty-bitty pieces, etc.), the Director will instruct the player to make a freak-out check to avoid letting fear wrap its cold, dead hands around the character. A freak-out check is a Spirit check. The check should be made immediately upon seeing (or otherwise sensing) the source.

If the character succeeds, he keeps his composure and suffers no ill effects. If the character fails, the character becomes *freaked out*. A freaked out character doesn't always behave rationally. The player should role-play the character as such.

Also, the Director may ask the player to make a Spirit check when a freaked out character is faced with a decision. If he succeeds, the player can choose the character's course of action. If he rolls matching toppers, the character snaps out of the haze he's in and is no longer freaked out. However, if the check is failed, the Director gets to make the decision for the character... and more often than not, it will be a bad decision.

A freaked out character comes out of being freaked out at the beginning of the next scene he's involved in, so long as nothing else freaky is going on and at least 15 minutes have passed since the last scene.

The Game Rules

Kill Scenes

Whenever the killer appears and tries to attack a character (or vice versa), a kill scene begins. A kill scene is a stream of narration, sprinkled with a series of stat checks. The character's goal during the sequence is to gain eight survival points before dropping below zero survival points. The character starts the game with a set number of survival points: one for primary characters and zero for secondary characters.



Survival points are acquired (or lost) by making checks. Here's how it works:

On the first turn of the kill scene, the character makes a Finesse check (called an initiative check). If he succeeds, he is said to have initiative. If he fails, the killer has initiative.

Step One: The controller of the character with initiative can choose whether to declare his character's actions first or second. Both sides (in order) declare what they're doing. The Director may decide that the killer automatically gets the initiative over the characters (or vice versa), forgoing the check altogether.

Chapter Three

Step Two: The Director declares what stat is being used and declares any modifications to the number of dice rolled (due to qualities, situational issues, etc.).

Step Three: The player makes the check.

Step Four: The Director narrates the result of that check.

Step Five: The character's survival point total is adjusted (see "Gaining and Losing Survival Points" below).

After Step Five, a new turn begins, starting over at Step One.

Survival Points

Survival points act as an abstract measure of how well a character is doing, not just physically, but mentally as well. It can also measure how well positioned he is.

Gaining and Losing Survival Points

After each crucial check (see "Crucial Checks" below), the character's survival points are adjusted. Here's how to determine how the total is adjusted:

- Each matching result you roll in a given check increases the total by *1 survival point*.
- Each matching topper result you roll in a given check increases the total by *1 survival point, plus an additional d3 survival points*.
- A check that generates no matching results reduces the total by *1d3 survival points, as well as one additional survival point for each "1" rolled*.

The Game Rules

There are a few other variables for crucial checks:

- For secondary and tertiary characters, each “1” rolled cancels out a matching result.
- If a check generates four matching toppers, the kill scene immediately ends favorably for the characters.
- If a check generates all “1s”, the kill scene immediately ends unfavorably for the character.

If the character’s survival point total reaches a certain number (usually 8), the kill scene ends favorably for him (the killer goes down, the character escapes, etc.). If, however, the character’s survival point total drops to *below* zero, the kill scene ends unfavorably for him (the character dies or is otherwise out of the scene).

Matching 1s in Crucial Checks

It must be noted that, unlike regular checks, 1s never count as matching results for purposes of gaining survival points during crucial checks.

Losing Survival Points Outside of Kill Scenes

While not common, it is possible for a character to lose survival points while not in a kill scene. This can be from falling into a damaging trap, falling off a cliff, getting in a car wreck and so forth. The Director determines how many survival points are lost in such situations.

Primary Characters and Survival Point Loss

A primary character automatically ignores his first loss of survival points per flick, regardless of the amount that would have been lost. For example, if the primary character’s first loss would have normally been three survival points,

Chapter Three

that amount would be ignored altogether.

Crucial Checks

Most checks made during a kill scene are crucial checks. That is, the result of the check in question is pivotal to how the kill scene will end. A crucial check can cause a character to gain or lose survival points. Unless otherwise noted, a check made during a kill scene is a crucial check.



However, there may be instances where the Director may not feel that a check's result will affect the kill scene as a whole. For example, if a character is required to make a Brains check to spot a shovel laying on the ground, the Director may determine that the check will not cause the character to gain or lose survival points... but the Finesse check to see if the character can reach it before the killer closes in on him *will*.

Checks that don't affect survival points are called non-crucial checks.

Important: Freak-out checks and initiative checks are always considered non-crucial.

The Game Rules

Retaining Survival Points Between Scenes

Characters that survive a kill scene get to keep 1d3 survival points for use later on in the game.

Kill Scenes Involving Multiple Characters

Kill scenes that involve multiple characters (in addition to the killer) are simple to run.

For initiative purposes, all non-killer characters act together. When making initiative checks, the players choose which character makes the check itself.

Each character's survival points are tracked separately. If a character reaches the required total to end the kill scene in his favor, the Director determines whether the kill scene is over for everyone or just for that character. This is largely circumstantial.

If a character's survival point total drops below zero, it ends badly for that character, but the kill scene continues for everyone else, though the Director can make an exception if the situation warrants it.

Kill Scene Example

The following example should clear up any issues you may have with resolving kill scenes. In this example, the player is playing a camp counselor named Josh (secondary character), who is currently checking out an abandoned house for a missing camper.

Director: As you search the house, you glimpse a shadow moving outside the window.

Player: I creep over to the window for a closer look.

Director: You step quietly and slowly over to the window,

Chapter Three

your heart pounding with fear. You get closer... closer... closer. That's when you notice a reflection of a huge man with a burlap sack over his head in the window: he's right behind you! It's time for a kill scene. Make an initiative check.

[The player makes an initiative check (non-crucial), which uses his Normal Finesse. He rolls 4d8 and gets a 1, 2, 4 and 4. Since he rolled matching results, the player gains initiative.]

Director: Okay, you have initiative. Do you want to declare first or do you want the killer to declare first?

Player: He can declare first.

Director: Okay. The killer, who wields a machete, takes a wild swing at you.

Player: I'm going to attempt to duck underneath and run out the door I entered the room through.

Director: Okay, this is going to be a Finesse check. You have the "quick mover" quality, so that will grant you an additional die. Roll 5d8.

[The player rolls and gets a 1, 3, 5, 5, and 7. Since he rolled two matching results (matching 1s don't count), he gains 2 survival points.]

Director: The killer swings his machete forcefully, but you slip beneath its path of destruction and run past him and out the door. On to the next turn. The killer chases after you, surprising you with his speed.

Player: I'm heading back into the woods, trying to make my way back to the camp.

Director: Another Finesse check with another bonus for your quality.

The Game Rules

[The player rolls a 3, 6, 7, 8 and 8. He rolled two matching results, but they aren't just regular matching results; they're matching toppers. Each matching topper is worth one survival point each, but the player also gets to roll a d3 and add the result to the total. He rolls a 4, which means a 2 on a d3, bringing his total up to 6 (2 from last turn and 4 for this turn)]

Director: You are keeping a very good pace, staying well ahead of the killer. So far ahead, in fact, that you can no longer see him. New turn. You can't see what the killer is doing, so you have to declare your actions.

Player: I'm not stopping now. I keep running.

Director: Your Finesse sure is getting a workout today. Make your check, same as before.

[The player rolls a 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8. Since he didn't roll any matching results, he loses 1d3 survival points. Also, he rolled a 1 on the check, so he'll add that to the total amount lost. Luckily, he rolls a 2, which means a 1 on a d3. His survival point total is dragged down to 4.]

Director: You run through the woods at breakneck speed, but suddenly realize that you're lost. Just as you pause to get your bearings, the killer climbs out of what looks like a large hole in the ground. He apparently has ways of getting around in the woods. New turn. The killer comes charging at you with his machete held above his head.

Player: To hell with running! I'm going to try to pick up a rock or something and smash him in the head with it as he nears me.

Director: This is going to be hard because his machete has a better reach and he has momentum. So, you're making a Brawn check with only three dice.

Chapter Three

[The player's Brawn is Good, so he rolls 3d6. He rolls a 2, 5 and 6. He loses 1d3 survival points because he failed to score any matching results. He gets lucky again and rolls a 3, which means a 2 on a d3. He now has 2 survival points.]

Director: Before you can connect with the rock, the machete bites into your shoulder, causing blood to splatter everywhere. You fall to the ground. New turn. The killer is going to grab your feet and swing you into a nearby tree.

Player: Holy crap! I'm going to try to kick him in the face.

Director: Another Brawn check, but this time you get to roll all four dice.

Rules For Faster

The kill scene rules can produce sequences that last for only one check, but they also have the capacity to produce sequences that last for a good amount of time. You can opt to use a slightly different approach if you want more control over the length. This method is not recommended for primary characters.

It works much like a regular kill scene, except that the character will have to survive a certain number of crucial checks in order for the scene to end favorably for him. This number is normally 5, but you can adjust it based on how difficult you want the scene to be.

A relatively easy kill scene should require the character to survive only 3 or 4 crucial checks. A particularly difficult

The Game Rules

[The player rolls 4d6 and gets a 2, 6, 6 and 6. He not only rolled three matching results, he rolled three toppers. He rolls a d3, and gets a 6, which means a 3 on a d3. Adding one for each topper rolled gives him 3 more survival points. That's six survival points gained this turn! This, plus the two survival points he already obtained, brings his total up to 8 (the number required to win the kill scene).]

Director: He tries to grab your ankles, but as he leans in, your foot meets his face and sends him reeling backward... right into the hole he came out of. You're not sure if he's dead, but the kill scene is over. What are you going to do now?

Kill Scenes

kill scene should require the character to survive 6 or 7 crucial checks.

If the character's survival points drop below zero before the designated number of checks has been made, the scene ends badly. If the character has 0 or more survival points, the scene ends positively.

This method of playing out kill scenes might bring about some anomalies regarding the killer's components and other such rules. When these anomalies arise, the Director will need to either disregard the rules causing the anomaly or alter them so that they better fit the sped-up kill scene system.

Chapter Three

Genre Points

Characters in slasher films tend to behave differently than people in the real world do. Oftentimes, this behavior includes taking a course of action that could be construed as stupid. Traditionally speaking, this kind of behavior is inadvisable in roleplaying games, where a character's survival is of utmost importance. In *Slasher Flick*, however, it's not only advisable, it's downright encouraged by the game system... especially for secondary characters.

Whenever a character does something that is particularly appropriate to the genre, the Director may award the player a genre point on the spot. Players accumulate these points and can spend them to help out their characters later on in the game. Below, we discuss the ways that genre points can be spent.

Try It Again (3 Genre Points)

When you roll no matching results on a stat check, you may spend three genre points to re-roll the same amount and type of dice for another attempt. You may not re-roll this new result. You're stuck with it for better or worse.

Temporary Reprieve (3 Genre Points)

When you lose one or more survival points during a kill scene, you can spend three genre points to reduce the loss by one. This option can only be used once per character in any given kill scene. You should also come up with some reason for the temporary reprieve. For example, a character failed a Finesse check to climb out the window before the killer got to him, causing the Director to declare that the killer grabs his leg before he can escape. The player then spends the genre points for the "Temporary Reprieve" option and states that his character uses the other foot to batter the killer in the face until he lets go.

The Game Rules

Just What I Needed (3 Genre Points)

By spending three genre points during a scene, you can make some minor alteration. For example, a character is exploring a dark house and his flashlight goes out. The player spends the genre points for the “Just What I Needed” option to make it start working again. Of course, the Director can deny you an alteration. In such a case, you won’t have to waste your genre points.

What Are *You* Doing Here? (4 Genre Points)

If your character is involved in a kill scene, you can pull any other primary, secondary or tertiary character into the scene by spending four genre points and coming up with a plausible explanation for how they become involved.

Wrong Character! (4 Genre Points)

If your primary character suffers a loss of survival points while in the same kill scene as a secondary or tertiary character, you may force one of them to lose the survival points instead. You must concoct a plausible explanation for how this happens in the game.

The Killer

The killer is, in many ways, the focal point of the flick. Without his presence, you would essentially be watching a teen/young adult drama. But add the killer to the mix and you’ve got yourself a full-blown slasher movie. As has already been mentioned, the game system deals with the killer differently than other characters. Let’s look at these differences in more detail.

Components

The killer is comprised of multiple “building blocks”

Chapter Three

called components. Each component reflects one particular aspect of the killer, often granting him special abilities or sticking him with disadvantages. The Director should never reveal the killer's components to the players under any circumstances. The exception is the killer's weaknesses, which should be learned as the story develops.

Success and Failure

Since killers don't have stats, they obviously can't make stat checks. The game system assumes that the killer succeeds in whatever he does, though the Director should use common sense when dictating what the killer can do.

The only time a killer can fail is if the Director wants him to or if a character opposes him. In the latter case, the player must declare how he's going to oppose the killer and must then make a stat check. The Director determines which stat should be used. If the check is successful, the killer is denied.

Even though normal actions are automatically successful, certain components require the Director to make die rolls for the killer. This is simply an exception to the rule.

Damaging the Killer

Generally speaking, the killer is all but physically invulnerable throughout most of the movie. The amount of damage a killer can take is astounding. Some of them can take a shotgun blast at point blank range and remain standing. Granted, this is an extreme case, but it has happened in slasher movies.

The killer is nearly indestructible until "X" number of primary and (or) secondary characters have been slain by

The Game Rules

the killer (or killers, if the flick has more than one).

$X = \text{the number of starting primary characters} + \text{the number of starting secondary characters} - 2$

Therefore, if the flick began with three primary characters and four secondary characters, the killer would be nigh invulnerable until he slew five of the characters ($3 + 4 - 2 = 5$).

- Until the killer kills that number of primary/secondary characters, he is considered to be *invigorated*.
- Once the killer kills that number of primary/secondary characters, he is considered to be *exerted*.

Damaging an *Invigorated* Killer

When invigorated, the killer is almost impossible to hurt. If, during a kill scene, a character rolls at least three matching toppers, the killer gains a damage token (you can use a bead, coin, etc.).

Damaging an *Exerted* Killer

An exerted killer is more prone to damage, but is still a very tough cookie. If, during a kill scene, a character rolls matching toppers, the killer gains a damage token (you can use a bead, coin, etc.) for each matching topper rolled.

“Final” Death

Each Killer has a score called Damage Threshold. Once he gains a number of damage tokens equal to his damage threshold, he dies. Or at least he dies *for now*. He’s sure to be back for the sequel.

A Roger Beaumont Film

SCREAM BLOODY MURDER



Parafield Pictures Corporation Presents 'Scream Bloody Murder' Starring Ray Arnold
Music by Armand Azerneth, Edited by Sal Archer, Production Supervisor Alfred Rye
Story Concept Tana Mumblum, Written by Edgar Appleton, Produced by Roger Beaumont
Directed by Roger Beaumont
Parafield Corporation 1982

CHAPTER FOUR

Creating Characters

"You're miles away from anyone. What better place for a group of young interns to come and relax?"

Freddy -- Evil Laugh (1988)

Before We Get Started

The rules in this section are for creating primary and secondary characters only. The Director creates tertiary characters and killers, using rules found in Chapter 6.

Step One: Getting Ready

Creating characters is a group activity, involving all the players and the Director. The participants will collaborate on the creation of the flick's primary and secondary characters.

The Order

Everyone sits in whatever order they choose, preferably around the table. Once the order is established, it cannot be changed.

Director's Information

The Director will tell the players how many secondary characters will be created and will lay out any requirements. The requirements could be anything from "Characters must be college-aged friends who are going to a party in an old house" to "Characters must all have a background in computers". Requirements simply ensure that the characters will fit the flick's concept.

Character Sheets

Each player should have one character sheet for his primary character. Additionally, divide the sheets for the secondary characters among the players as evenly as possible, giving them a corresponding number of extra character sheets. So, if there are four players and the Director has stated that there are four secondary characters, each player will be given one extra character sheet.

Step Two: Assign Stereotypes

In the slasher films, the writers have to introduce a lot of victims... err, I mean characters. In order to make the viewer quickly connect with and get a grasp on these characters, the writers almost always utilize stereotypes. From the bookish prude and the silly prankster to the snotty bitch and the motorcycle-riding bad boy, slasher films get a lot of mileage from stereotypes. Since this is a game about these movies, each primary and secondary character must be given a stereotype. You're in charge of giving your own primary character his stereotype, as well as giving one to any secondary characters you currently have in your possession.

This book doesn't contain an exhaustive list of stereotypes that must be selected from. You'll find a selection of examples at the end of this chapter, but you're not required to choose from them.

Your best bet is to think of a word that describes the character's overall attitude or personality (cocky, fun-loving, quiet, grumpy, etc.), and then think of a word that describes the character's basic role or occupation (cheerleader, biker, slut, athlete, tomboy, etc.). Or if you'd rather keep things simple, just choose one word that

Creating Characters

sums up your character's role or occupation and skip the personality/attitude part.

Important Note: The Director has the right to veto stereotypes that don't fit into the flick's concept.

Once stereotypes have been created, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Step Three: Determine Stat Ratings

Now, it's time to determine the ratings for each character's stats. At this stage, every character has a rating of Poor for all stats. Don't worry, though; this will change soon.

Primary Characters: Each primary character receives four stat boosters.

Secondary Characters: Each secondary character receives three stat boosters.

Stat boosters are spent on increasing the stat ratings. Each player determines the stat ratings of his own primary character as well as all secondary characters currently in his possession.

- Spending a stat booster increases a stat rating of your choice from Poor to Normal.
- A stat that has been increased to Normal can be pushed up to Good for the expenditure of another stat booster. That is, bringing a stat from Poor to Good costs two stat boosters.

Once stat ratings have been determined, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Chapter Four

Step Four: Create Positive Qualities

With the characters' stat ratings in place, each player gets to assign positive qualities to the characters in his possession.

Primary Characters: Each primary character receives four positive qualities.

Secondary Characters: Each player receives a certain number of positive qualities to divide among the secondary characters he currently possesses. That number is equal to the amount of secondary characters he possesses multiplied by three. A single secondary character cannot have more than four positive qualities at this stage.

Coming Up With Positive Qualities

There is no authoritative list of positive qualities to choose from. Rather, you are free to make them up yourself, though there's a list of examples at the end of this chapter. Once you create them, you must use common sense to determine which stat each one is linked to.

Once positive qualities have been assigned, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Step Five: Create Negative Qualities

Each player now assigns negative qualities to the characters in his possession.

Primary Characters: Each primary character receives one negative quality.

Secondary Characters: Each player receives a certain

Guidelines For Creating Qualities

Don't try to cover too much ground with a single positive quality! Try to be specific, as the Director can (and should) veto any positive quality that she feels unbalances a character. For example, a quality that makes a character great at brawling is fine; a quality that makes a character great at both brawling and shooting is just too much. When in doubt, ask the Director.

Negative qualities should actually affect the character negatively! In other words, don't create negative qualities that won't really impede the character ("has bad hair days a lot", "dislikes cherry flavored candy", etc.).

Look to the stereotypes! Each stereotype is ripe with possible qualities. Just think back to the movies that featured characters that belong to the given stereotype and use them as inspiration.

number of negative qualities to divide among the secondary characters he currently possesses. That number is equal to the amount of secondary characters he possesses, plus one.

Coming Up With Negative Qualities

As with positive qualities there is no authoritative list of negative qualities to choose from. You are free to make them up yourself though there's a list of examples at the end of this chapter. Once you create them, you must use common sense to determine which stat each one is linked to.

Once negative qualities have been assigned, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Chapter Four

Step Six: Perform Alterations

At this point, the characters can be tweaked a bit. Such tweaks are called alterations.

Primary Characters: Each primary character receives two alterations.

Secondary Characters: Each player receives a certain number of alterations to spread out amongst the secondary characters he currently possesses. That number is equal to the number of secondary characters he possesses, minus 1 (down to a minimum of one).

List of Alterations

Presented in this section is a list of alterations that can be made to characters.

- Increase a Poor stat rating to Normal.
- Increase a Normal stat rating to Good.
- Gain an additional positive quality.
- Gain a special ability (once per character; primary characters only)
- The character begins the flick with two genre points.

Special Abilities

The following are the special abilities that you can choose from if you give your primary character the appropriate alteration. In order to use a special ability during the game, you must spend genre points. The amount necessary is specified in the write-ups. You cannot use a special ability more than once per check, unless noted otherwise.

Creating Characters

Adrenaline Boost (2 Genre Points)

Use before making a check. Roll an additional die of the same type that you're rolling.

Back For More (8 Genre Points)

When the character is killed, you can use this ability. Then, roll a die. If you roll a 4-6, the character wasn't as bad off as it first appeared. He now has one survival point and can enter another scene, though you can't enter the scene that follows the scene in which the character was "killed". This can only be used once per flick.



Dumb Luck (2 Genre Points)

Re-roll any one die after you make a check.

Let's End This (8 Genre Points)

The character doubles the amount of survival points he gains from a crucial check that generates at least one topper.

Chapter Four

Steel Yourself (3 Genre Points)

Use before making a freak-out check. You automatically pass the check.

Scream Queen (Females only; 0 Genre Points)

Once per game, when the character sees something horrific, you may declare that your character unleashes a bloodcurdling scream. Upon doing so, you gain 4 genre points.

Stupid Action (0 Genre Points)

Twice per game, you may choose to let the Director control your character momentarily. The Director should have him do something very unwise. You immediately gain 2 genre points.

Once the alterations are performed, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Step Seven: Equip the Characters

Each player picks out some items that each of the characters in his possession would logically have. Unless there's a really good reason (i.e., the character is a cop, a hunter, a street ganger, etc.), don't give characters weapons. In the slasher films, hardly anyone packs a weapon, so why should characters in a game based on those films be any different? As a rule of thumb, no more than one or two characters should be armed.

Once the characters are equipped, all players pass the secondary characters to the player on their left.

Step Eight: Work Out Details

As far as game statistics go, the characters are now finished. However, something equally important remains to be done. Characters are more than just game statistics. They are supposed to represent real people, each with his own personality, personal history, ties to other characters, and so forth. While characters are based on stereotypes, they should be given a bit of depth in order to make players have some manner of emotional investment in them. That's where this step comes in.

Each player should consider the following for his primary character as well as for all the secondary characters he currently possesses:

Name

Every character needs a name. After all, if the character didn't have one, his friends wouldn't have a name to yell out while wandering around looking for him after he has been brutally murdered.

Links to Other Characters

Most or even all of the characters should know each other. As such, you need to collaborate with the other players (and even the Director) in order to tie the characters together somehow. Some ideas:

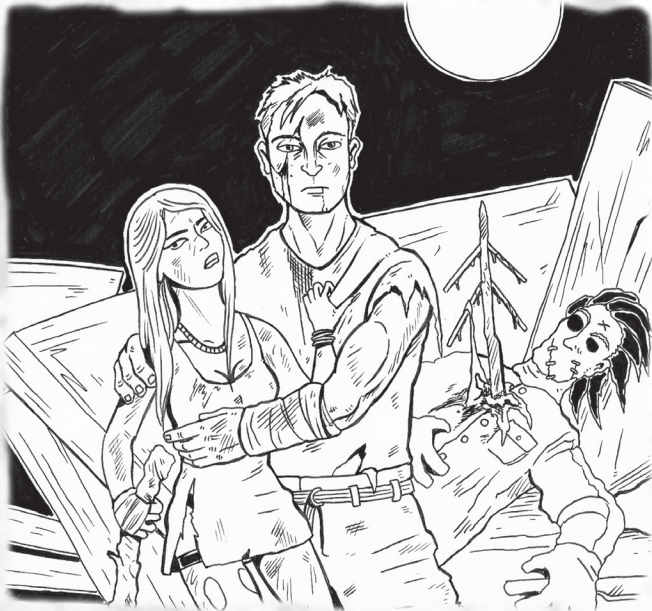
- The character is related to another character.
- The character is related to another character, but they don't like each other much.
- The character is a friend of one or more of the other characters.
- The character is romantically involved with another character.

Chapter Four

- The character is romantically involved with another character while having an affair with yet another character.
- The character is in charge of another character.
- The character has a crush on another character.
- The character is a rival of another character.
- The character was picked up by the other characters while hitchhiking.
- The character didn't want to be with the other characters, but one character convinced him to come along.
- The character is trying to protect one or more of the other characters.

Character Tidbits

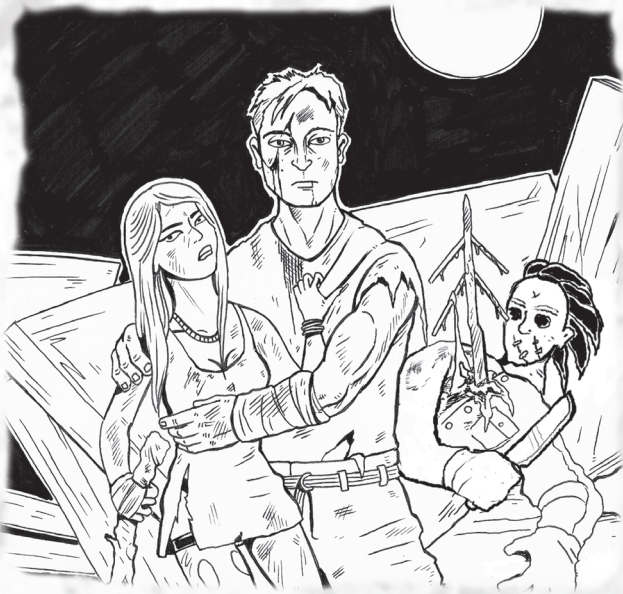
Jot down a few interesting things about each character's personality or past. You don't have to go into great detail.



Creating Characters

Some ideas:

- The character used to (and maybe still does) have strange nightmares.
- The character has a severe phobia.
- The character had a miserable childhood.
- The character has a hatred of something (a situation, a type of person, etc.).
- The character enjoys a particular activity or hobby.
- The character has a particular quirk (e.g., saying “totally” all the time).
- The character suffers from a mental problem (paranoia, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, etc.).
- The character suffers from a physical problem (paraplegia, blindness, asthma, etc.).
- The character harbors a dark secret.



Chapter Four

Sample Stereotypes

There are two separate lists of examples. The first list contains attitudes and personalities, while the second list contains basic roles and occupations. Feel free to mix and match from the two lists or even swap things around by using an attitude as a role (or vice versa). For example, you could take "Airheaded" from the personalities list and use it as a role by dropping the "ed" from the end, making the character a "[insert personality] Airhead".

Attitudes / Personalities

Abusive	Humble	Seductive
Adorable	Humorous	Sensitive
Airheaded	Introspective	Shy
Bitchy	Likeable	Silly
Brave	Logical	Sleazy
Bubbly	Macho	Smarmy
Callous	Manipulative	Smart-Assed
Charming	Mellow	Sneaky
Cheerful	Mysterious	Stinky
Clingy	Naïve	Studious
Demanding	Obnoxious	Sweet
Desperate	Pacifistic	Uncouth
Easy-Going	Prissy	Unpredictable
Fun-Loving	Prudish	Weird
Gentle	Quiet	Wild
Hateful	Romantic	
Hot-Tempered	Rowdy	

Basic Roles / Occupations

Actor	Gold-Digger	Rebel
Athlete	Hippie	Redneck
Babysitter	Hobo	Scientist
Basketcase	Kid	Security Guard
Biker	Mechanic	Shrink
Bully	Metalhead	Slut
Businessperson	Musician	Soldier
Camp Counselor	Nerd	Stoner
Cheerleader	Outcast	Student
Criminal	Party-Animal	Surfer
Debutant	Pervert	Survivalist
Doctor	Police Officer	Tough-Guy/Girl
Farmboy/girl	Prankster	Vixen
Gangbanger	Prep	
Girl/Guy-Next-Door	Prostitute	

Sample Qualities

Below are some sample qualities, both positive and negative for you to use as inspiration.

Positive Qualities

Attractive (Spirit)	Marksman (Finesse)
Bluff (Spirit)	Martial Artist (Brawn)
Brawler (Brawn)	Natural Leader (Spirit)
Breaking and Entering (Finesse)	Nobody's Fool (Spirit)
Climbing (Brawn)	Perceptive (Brains)
Common Sense (Brains)	Persuasion (Spirit)
Con Artist (Spirit)	Psychology (Brains)
Consume Alcohol (Brawn)	Repair Vehicles (Brains)
Courageous (Spirit)	Resourceful (Brains)
Detective (Brains)	Rugged (Brawn)
Driver (Finesse)	Science (Brains)
Fast Runner (Finesse)	Scrapper (Brawn)
Flexible (Finesse)	Seduction (Spirit)
Hard to Hurt (Brawn)	Stealthy (Finesse)
Healthy (Brawn)	Street Fighter (Brawn)
Hiding (Finesse)	Strong (Brawn)
Individualistic (Spirit)	Sweetheart (Spirit)
Innocent Charm (Spirit)	Swimming (Brawn)
Intimidate (Spirit)	Tactical Mind (Brains)
Knowledge of "X" (Brains)	Witty Remarks (Spirit)
Leaping (Brawn)	

Negative Qualities

Annoyingly Perky (Spirit)	Half-Witted (Brains)
Bad Driver (Finesse)	Impatient (Spirit)
Bad Eyesight (Brains)	Inaccurate Aim (Finesse)
Bad Under Pressure (Spirit)	Sadistic (Spirit)
Birdbrain (Brains)	Slow Reflexes (Finesse)
Bossy (Spirit)	Slow-Moving (Finesse)
Butterfingers (Finesse)	Stumbles (Finesse)
Cowardly (Spirit)	Terrible Swimmer (Brawn)
Easily Frightened (Spirit)	Uncooperative (Spirit)
Fear of "X" (Spirit)	Unhealthy (Brawn)
Foolhardy (Spirit)	Unperceptive (Brains)
Forgetful (Brains)	Weak Back (Brawn)
Frail (Brawn)	Weak-Willed (Spirit)
Greedy (Spirit)	Wimpy (Brawn)
Gullible (Spirit)	

When the bough breaks... the baby will kill.



BABY DOLL

Sullivan 269

Chapter Five

The Players

"All right, we'll all split up and search this whole area."

Todd -- The Burning (1981)

Understanding the Sub-Genre

Chapter 2 presented a lot of solid information about the genre, including an extensive list of common tropes. If you haven't read that section, you should go back and do that before continuing.

The good thing about the slasher film sub-genre is that nearly everyone is at least somewhat familiar with how it works, at least on a fundamental level. If you go up to the average person on the street and ask them about slasher films, they will almost certainly mention that they involve killers who prey on promiscuous teenagers. And, in a nutshell, that pretty much pegs the sub-genre.

This chapter is aimed at the players (hence its title). As a result, any mention of "you" refers to the player rather than the Director.

Still, there's more to it than that. In order to get the most out of *Slasher Flick*, you should immerse yourself in the source material by watching a handful of the movies. There's no substitute for the real thing. However, this chapter attempts to present you with all the most important aspects, for ease of reference.

The more you understand the sub-genre, the more you'll get out of the game... and the more you'll be able to put back into it as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

Top 5 Tips for Playing *Slasher Flick*

This section offers general advice for participating in the game as a player.

Tip #1: Interact!

If you take a good long look at any slasher flick, you'll find that a large chunk of it involves interaction between the characters. This gives the audience a chance to form opinions on the characters and view them as living, breathing people before they *stop* living and breathing. If the audience doesn't form opinions on the characters, then it means absolutely nothing when they die, which makes the death sequences meaningless.

As a player, you should follow suit. Don't just have your characters sit around and wait for the killer to come for them. This is especially true early on in the flick. There will be enough time for getting killed later on. The earliest stages of the flick should be about communicating and establishing relationships between the characters.

Tip #2: Play Dumb!

How many times have you seen characters in slasher films do something stupid, prompting you to yell, "Oh, come on! Don't go outside to check out the noise!"? Well, guess what? *You* now get to be the one who does these stupid things.

Sure, you can have all your characters stick together in a big mob and stay inside for the entire game. Yes, you can ignore that noise coming from the darkness. You bet you can stay the hell away from a downed killer's "body". But where's the fun in that? Don't hesitate to do something stupid if it will make a scene interesting.

We're not advocating having your characters always making bad decisions. Far from it. If characters always do dumb things, the flick would probably be over in thirty minutes. Just use your gut instincts to figure out when your characters should play to the genre when such decisions are involved.

Tip #3: Accept Death!

Characters are going to die. Period. In fact, quite a few characters are going to die. Some of them might even be primary characters. The simple fact is that you need to go into the game knowing that some or even all of your characters will meet their disgustingly bloody end before the game wraps.

Once you come to terms with this, you'll find that character deaths can be fun, in a morbid kind of way. Sure, you should try to keep characters you control from dying, but not at all costs. This is especially true of secondary characters. In case you haven't figured it out (though we're sure you *have*), secondary characters are created to die. That's kind of their job. They give the killer a chance to pad up his body count, all the while making his way toward a final showdown with the last remaining character(s).

In some ways, it's best to think of secondary characters as resources. After all, you can use them to help you gain genre points that you can assist your primary character with later on. If they die, so be it; you even gain two genre points for the death. They've served their purpose.

CHAPTER FIVE

Tip #4: Contribute to the Horror!

The Director will be working hard to maintain an appropriately horrific mood during the game. But it's not just up to her. You can do your part too. First of all, keep your mind on the game. In other words, don't break out your cell phone and start text messaging your friends in the middle of the flick. Similarly, refrain from excessive "out of game" talk. You may have had something interesting happen to you at work that day, but surely you can wait until after the game to talk about it.



Basic politeness aside, you can contribute to the atmosphere of the game by putting your "all" into portraying the characters. Don't be afraid to get into character and give your fellow gamers a performance that they'll remember for many years to come. If your character is frightened, play it to the hilt. If your character screams, don't just say "I scream" when you can let out a blood-

The Players

curdling scream of your own (unless, of course, there are kids or parents sleeping in the other room).

Lastly, keep a close check on the humor. Most slasher films have humorous spots (even in tension-filled scenes), so it's acceptable to let some humor creep into the game at times. Just be careful not to overdo it or else the horror will drain from the game's atmosphere in a big hurry.

Tip #5: Narrate!

It's all too easy to say, "I pound on the door and try to wake up the residents." This is fine and all, but it hardly adds anything special to the game as an overall experience. And that's what a game of Slasher Flick is: an experience. Instead of describing what your character is doing in such a mundane, utilitarian way, how about spicing up your description a bit? Try something more akin to, "I start frantically pounding on the door, constantly looking behind me to see if the killer is coming. I yell out, "Help me! Please!" This doesn't require much more effort and makes your character's actions seem more engaging. It helps the other participants more vividly visualize the scene that's playing out.

You don't have to be a master storyteller in order to add some color to your narration. Nobody expects that. You aren't a professional actor or orator, after all (well, most of you aren't anyway). So don't fret your descriptions too much. As long as you help the Director set the scene and entice the imagination, you're doing your part to enhance the experience for everyone involved.

Earning Genre Points

As you know by now, genre points are handy to have around. They can pull your character's butt out of the proverbial fire in numerous ways (see pages 44-45). This makes them desirable to obtain.

The nice thing is that individual characters don't accumulate genre points; individual players do. This means that you can use secondary characters to put themselves in excessive danger (by taking unnecessary risks) in order to gain genre points for you. You can then take these points and use them for your primary character. As mentioned in Tip #3, secondary characters are a resource.

Just don't abuse the resource. By that, I mean that you shouldn't just purposely get your secondary characters killed right off the bat just so you can acquire a quick burst of genre points. Besides, doing this can actually deprive you of genre points. If a secondary character bites the dust early on in the flick, you won't be able to use him to gain genre points for you later on.

Also, you should consider spending your genre points on your secondary characters from time to time. Yes, this sounds like a contradiction to what was discussed in the above paragraph and in some ways, it *is*. After all, secondary characters are resources, right? Well, yeah, they are. But they're also characters that represent living beings. If you can keep them alive while still adhering to the conventions of the genre, then so much the better. But if not, it's no big deal.

Ways to Acquire Genre Points

What follows is a list of actions that might prompt the

The Players

Director to throw genre points your way. Much of what you'll find here revolves around the tropes and clichés found in Chapter 2.

Investigating Strangeness: Did your character hear an unexplainable noise? Did he think he saw someone standing outside the window? Well, what are you waiting for? Have him check it out!

Going Off Alone: Strength in numbers is overrated. Maybe your character needs to relieve himself. Perhaps he's tired and wants to turn in early for a good night's sleep (yeah, good luck with that). Or it could be that he needs something out in the garage. By going off alone, you are practically inviting the killer to take action, but you'll probably be well rewarded for it.

Neglecting to Finish Off the Killer: You have the killer at your mercy. He's flat on his back and appears to be dead. Logic dictates that you should take that opportunity to chop him up into little bitty pieces. Don't. The Director will likely find a way to avoid that anyway, so you might as well do the right thing by having your character turn away from the "body", drop his weapon and sigh in relief.

Say Genre-Appropriate Things: "I'll be right back", "It's only the wind", "What's the worst that can happen?", "We'll be fine", "It's just your imagination". All these things are perfect lines to have your character say. Watch a lot of slasher films to expand your catalog of phrases.

Be True to Your Character's Personality: Avoid doing or saying things that go against the character's established personality unless there's a damn good explanation for it.

CHAPTER FIVE

If you roleplay your characters consistently (even when doing so isn't technically a good idea), the Director is sure to take notice.

Having a Character Die: When a character you control dies, you gain two genre points.

Playing Secondary Characters

Most roleplaying games encourage each player to play one character. This works great for other games, but not for Slasher Flick. This is why there are primary and secondary characters.

Throughout the book, you've been given what could be construed as mixed messages. At one point, the text will give you the impression that you should take a lot of risks with secondary characters in order to stockpile extra genre points. Then at another point, you're being told to treat them with some caution and even to spend genre points on them.

So, which is it? Should they be treated as expendable resources or as valued characters?

To be honest, it's kind of a fine line to walk and once you start playing, you'll find your groove. Until you find that groove, here's a piece of advice that should be of at least some assistance to you: Until a secondary character has a kill scene, take all the unnecessary risks you want so you can accrue genre points; but once the character is in a kill scene, do your best to get him out of it alive... within reason.

The Players

The above advice is best taken only until you find your natural inclination toward developing your own play style. Each player's play style will emerge soon enough. Some players will lean toward letting the secondary characters die, while others will spend genre points to keep them alive. There is no right or wrong way to do it.

Playing Primary Characters

As has been mentioned previously, primary characters are meant to be the ones that live until the last portion of the movie and maybe, just maybe, even survive the whole film. That's reassuring and all, but it doesn't always work out this way. In any game that involves random die rolls, the unexpected can happen at any given moment. And you know what? That's okay. It's *better* than okay, actually, because that's what builds suspense. Whenever there's uncertainty, suspense can't be far behind.

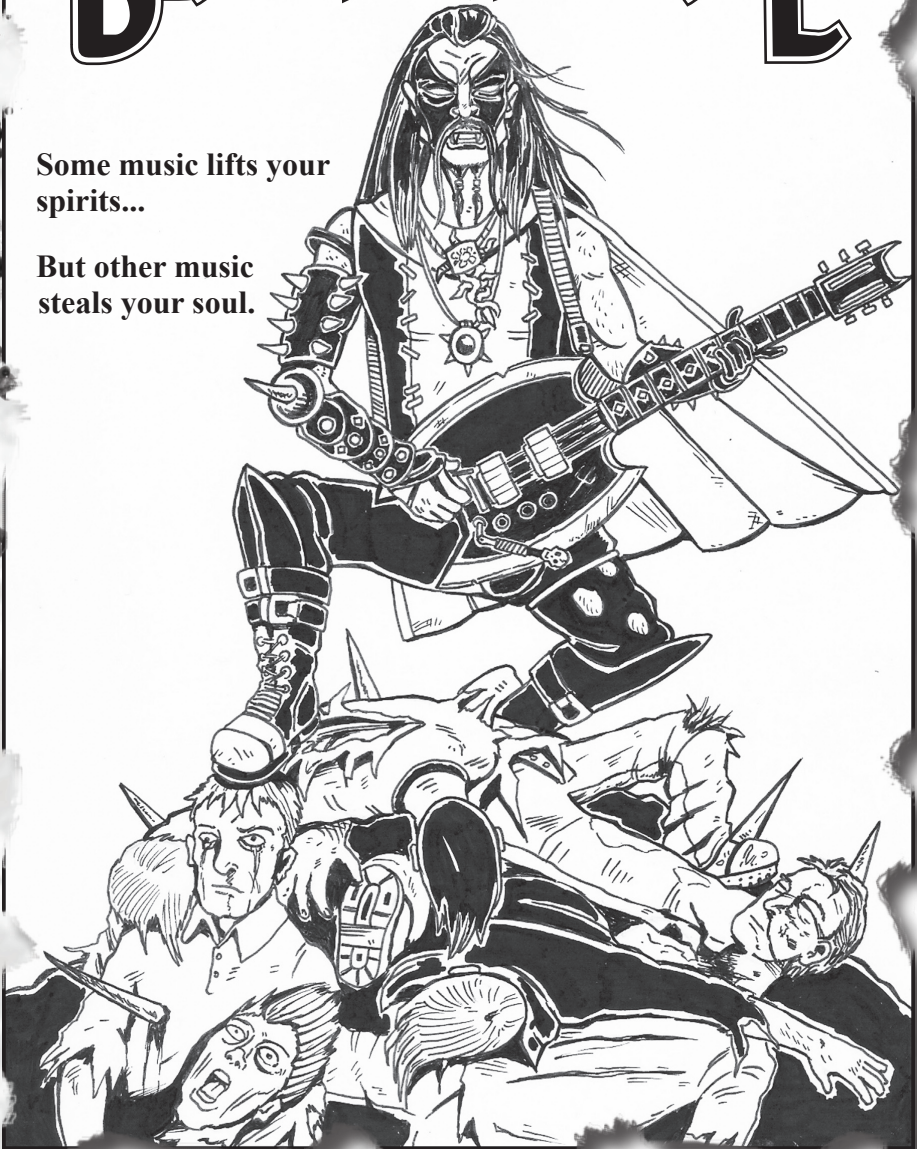
That having been said, the game is certainly slanted toward the primary characters making it to the last segments of the flick. With a bit of care (and strategic use of genre points), the chances of having your primary character survive all or almost all of the flick are quite good.

It may be tempting to have your primary character play it extremely safe in order to keep him breathing. Avoid this temptation. Avoid it like the plague. If you watch the slasher flicks, you'll notice that the primary characters tend to be in the middle of the action on many occasions. They are the main characters (though some might argue that the killer is the main character), so get them into the fray. Don't hold them back just so they won't buy the farm. The rules are weighted in their favor, so don't be timid with them.

BLACK METAL

Some music lifts your
spirits...

But other music
steals your soul.



Chapter Six

The Director

"Was it the boogeyman?"

"As a matter of fact, it was."

Laurie and Dr. Loomis -- Halloween (1978)

The Basics of Directing

Being the Director is not an easy job. It's a fun job, but not an easy one. This section describes the basics of directing a game. Each subsection below discusses one of the jobs you must do.

Pre-Game Jobs

Before you sit down and actually play the game, you'll need to do the following jobs:

This chapter is aimed at the Director (hence its title). As a result, any mention of "you" refers to the Director rather than the players.

Preparing the Flick

It's time to prepare a flick to run. This can be as involved or as uninvolved as you like. You could carve out an elaborate plot, rife with secrets and an intricate backstory that interweaves all the characters into the overall story. Or you could just concoct a quick reason for the characters to be at the camp (or wherever) and let the fun begin. There's no wrong way to do it. See "Preparing the Flick" for more information.

Creating Tertiary Characters

Most flicks should have at least a small handful of tertiary characters to fill them out. Thankfully, you can create these characters in just a few minutes each, freeing up your

Chapter Six

time for more important matters. See “Creating Tertiary Characters” for more information.

Creating the Killer

Your flick isn't going to be very exciting if there's no murderous psychopath to terrorize the characters. It falls on your shoulders to create the killer's game stats, which are entirely different than the game stats of other characters. See “Creating the Killer” for more information.

In-Game Jobs

These are the jobs you take on while the game is being played.

Narrating

One of your main duties is to narrate the game. You are the primary storyteller in this flick, so it's up to you to verbally bring it to life. See “Narrating” for more information.

Rules Adjudicating

As Director, you should know the game rules backward and forward. Failing that, you should at least know the biggest chunk of the rules and be familiar enough with the book to be able to find any rule you don't know. See “Rules Adjudicating” for more information.

Playing Tertiary Characters

You are the one who gets to roleplay the minor characters the primary and secondary characters interact with. See “Playing Tertiary Characters” for more information.

Playing the Killer

You created the monster, so you get to play him. See “Playing the Killer” for more information.

Preparing the Flick

Nearly every slasher movie aficionado has, at one time or another, had the urge to write his own movie. Raise your hand if you've mumbled that you could create a better film than the one you were watching. I'd bet that there are quite a few of you with your hand held high in the air. As slasher movie buffs, we know the sub-genre better than anybody, right? We know all the ins and outs of these films. We know what makes for riveting horror. And we know what scares the bejezus out of audiences.

That's just grand, because now you get to show the world (or at least your game group) just how good a movie you can dream up! Well, more or less. You can devise a plot, create a killer, pace the scenes, and create a mood. No, you don't have total control over what happens, but you do have a lot of say in the matter. The players will be having a lot of say as well.

There's no "one true way" to craft a flick. Every Director has her own approach, each one as valid as the next.

Flick Type

One of the first things you should consider is what type of flick you're going to run. Most slasher films fall into one of two general types, though it's not unheard of for there to be a bit of crossover between them.

Location-Based Flicks

The simplest type of flick, this involves basically cooking up an excuse for the characters to go to a remote location and then letting the fireworks begin. This is an oversimplification to be sure, but it can actually be that simple. Location-based flicks can be more extravagant than

Chapter Six

the above description would have you believe though. You can liven it up as much as you'd like by adding elements of event-based flicks (see below).

Location Ideas

- A summer camp
- A ski lodge
- An old asylum
- A run-down mansion
- A back wooded area
- An old school
- A ghost town
- An abandoned hospital
- A sorority/fraternity house
- A dilapidated department store
- A Civil War era army fort
- A mountain resort
- A coal mine
- A remote research station
- Long-forgotten subway tunnels
- A passenger train
- An island
- A funeral home
- A house in the wilderness
- A plantation
- An old foundry
- A shopping mall (after hours, of course)
- A castle
- A farm

The key to this type of flick is selecting just the right location. The best locations have certain qualities, such as being isolated from civilization, having a creepy vibe, and boasting numerous interesting areas/sites for suspenseful or scary scenes. Not every location has to be a long way from civilization if you're creative. For example, it could be a burned-out department store that is isolated from civilization due to the fact that the windows are boarded up and the killer has bolted all the doors shut.

Event-Based Flicks

Event-based flicks require more work on your part than location-based flicks, but the results can be well worth the extra effort. Rather than simply dumping the victims-to-be at a locale and letting the killer carve them up, you'll actually be arranging a sequence of events that will transpire. This can be incredibly tricky.

The Backstory

In almost every slasher film, something has happened in the past (recent or distant) that prompts or leads up to what goes down. The same can be said of flicks in the game. The

backstory can be as simple or elaborate as you like, as long as it's interesting.

The main point of a backstory is to give the killer a motivation for slaying people. It's also handy for tying one or more of the characters into the story, should you decide to do so.

Once you come up with the backstory, you'll need to decide how you will reveal it. There are three common ways to do this:

Prologue

A partial prologue is the opening scene of the flick wherein a small piece of the backstory is presented or hinted at. In some cases, you can even have everything revealed during the prologue. If you want the backstory to be a mystery at first, the former option is the route to go, as you only give one or two pieces of the puzzle; just enough to make the players wonder what the heck is going on.

Generally speaking, the prologue is simply you describing the scene or scenes that take place. This is one of the rare instances that the players aren't actively involved. They're just sitting back, listening to your narrative. Since this is the case, keep the prologue brief. Players want to play. They don't want to hear you drone on for thirty minutes.

Alternately, you can run the prologue as a normal scene. If none of the primary or secondary characters are involved, toss some tertiary characters the players' way and let them experience the prologue first-hand. Keep in mind, though, that you may have to be a bit more heavy-handed with running a prologue than when you're running a regular

Chapter Six

scene. After all, you really can't afford to have your backstory drastically altered by the tertiary characters' actions, unless you're one of those Directors that enjoys having to ad-lib, even in the face of overwhelming changes to the story.

In-Game Reveal

Using this method, the flick's backstory is revealed either all at once or gradually during the game itself. That is, the players go into the flick not knowing anything at all about what's going on, but will find out as the game progresses, or even at the very end.

This method is trickier to pull off, as you need to figure out what the clues are and how to give them to the players. This isn't as easy as it sounds. If you aren't careful in your placement of the information, it will feel artificial. That's never good. Aim for integrating the information in a logical manner and pull the players deeper into the backstory.

Plotting it Out

Every flick needs a plot, even if it's paper thin... and believe me, a lot of slasher movies have plots that are thinner than paper. If you want to go light on plot, that's perfectly fine. Location-based flicks are perfect for that.

Plotting a Location-Based Flick

Taken at its most simplistic form, you can formulate a location-based flick in minutes. Once you get the characters to the location you've worked up, it's just a matter of devising some possible scenes or ways for the characters to be lured away and (or) killed. These can tie directly into the sites that you've sprinkled around the location. You can even add some events (see "Plotting Event-Based Flicks")

below) to keep the game from getting too predictable.

Plotting an Event-Based Flick

Plotting an event-based flick is more demanding than plotting a location-based flick. You'll need to develop various events to spring on the players. There are two types of events to consider: floating events and concrete events.

- Floating events are flexible and can be made to revolve around the characters, or at the very least be easily altered by their actions. The only thing you need to worry about is the order in which the floating events occur. Example floating events: "Lori asks if the primary characters want to come over for a slumber party", "Dr. Russell calls [*insert primary character here*] and tell him that his mother is in the hospital", "James asks [*insert primary character here*] out on a date".
- Concrete events are etched in stone and will happen at a specific time, almost regardless of what the characters do. These should always be accompanied by a day and time. Example concrete

Scene Ideas

- The power goes out and the power generator is in the basement.
- Something breaks down and the tools are in a tool shed.
- A pet disappears, prompting the owner to go looking for it.
- One of the characters sees someone outside, but by the time he tells the others, the person is gone.
- A tertiary character drops by and gives a cryptic warning.
- A noise is heard in the woods.
- A character has to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, but there's no bathroom... only an outhouse.

Chapter Six

events: “Saturday, 7:30 pm to 8:00 pm: a hitchhiker walks down the old road”, “Thursday, 2:17 am: a car wreck happens on the edge of town”, “Wednesday, 5:12 pm: the police pick up a suspect named Garvin Mueller”

By setting up the events you want to happen, you’ll essentially be creating a flowchart of how the flick should progress. Keep in mind, though, that sometimes, floating events won’t have a chance to occur due to the players’ actions.

Props

You can heighten the immersion factor of the flick by giving the players props. A prop is basically just an object that the players can hold, touch, read, look at or interact with. If the characters are supposed to find a letter in the flick, recreate it and give it to the players to read. If the characters are slated to come across an amulet, go to the thrift store and buy one to represent it. If the characters are going to spend most or all of the flick at a camp, work up a map of the area for the players.

Mood-Setting Methods

There are ways to amplify the mood without expending much effort. This will make your job much easier later on. Relying on your narration alone to create a creepy vibe is certainly possible, but why not go that extra mile. There are two main ways to do this: lighting and music.

Lighting is simply a matter of breaking out the candles or kerosene lamp. Make sure that you have enough light to see your die rolls and notes/character sheets by, though be careful not to have too much light.

You can create ambience by playing music in the background. Ideally, you should assemble your own custom-made soundtrack by using music from various sources. The most obvious source is soundtracks from slasher movies, but you can look to other sources as well. Just make sure to include a few tracks for non-suspense scenes in addition to the more standard horror-themed tracks.

Creating Tertiary Characters

Tertiary characters may be minor characters, but together they play a vital role in a flick. Actually, they play several important roles (see “Playing Tertiary Characters” on pages 101-102).

There is no system for creating tertiary characters. There’s no need for you to spend a lot of time on characters that will, in all likelihood, have only a few minutes of screen time each. You’ve got more important things to do.

Follow these steps for creating a tertiary character:

Step One: Name the character.

Step Two: Write a few notes about the character (occupation, secrets known, motives, role in the flick, etc.).

Step Three: Assign whatever ratings seem appropriate to the character’s stats.

Step Four: Give the character whatever qualities seem to fit him.

Creating the Killer

At the center of every slasher flick is the killer. The killer is not created the same way other characters are. In fact, he

Chapter Six

doesn't even have stats or qualities. A killer is defined by the following:

Basic Information: This gives us a few scraps of information about the killer.

Damage Threshold: This determines how much damage the killer can take before being slain.

Components: Components are like “building blocks” that flesh out the killer’s capabilities, advantages, disadvantages, and other such factors.

There’s really not a “killer creation” system that you must abide by in *Slasher Flick*. It’s just a matter of choosing the damage threshold and selecting whatever components you feel fits your vision of the killer.

Basic Information

A killer should be more than a collection of components. He should be fleshed out and given some depth in order to make him truly memorable. You’ve got sequels to think of, after all.

Name

Most killers have normal-sounding names like Harry, Jason, Michael and Freddy rather than exotic, overly sinister names like Kaine, Damian and Vlad.

Backstory

The most compelling reason to fabricate a backstory is to give the killer a reason for being the way he is. Was he picked on as a child? Was he turned into a demon-like being after being slain by a group of people? Or is he simply the living embodiment of pure evil? The more detail you give his backstory, the more interesting he will be as a character.

Personality

We know he kills people. We even know why he does it. But so far, that's all we know about him. We still don't know any of his idiosyncrasies or patterns of behavior. Every killer should have a distinct personality and modus operandi. Otherwise, he will be a forgettable cardboard cutout rather than a memorable character that players want to see come back for the sequels.

Damage Threshold

Most killers have a threshold of 3, though you can adjust it to reflect tougher or weaker killers.

Components

As mentioned previously, components can be likened to building blocks for the killer. Select the ones that fit how you envision the killer. Or you can create your own components to use if the ones here don't fill your needs.

Dark Secret

The killer has a severe weakness that can kill him.

Choose a dark secret that can give the killer damage tokens. Perhaps making the killer look into a mirror can slay him. Or maybe exposing him to sunlight will do the trick. How about burning a particular object? Use your imagination to come up with something interesting. It should never be easy to use the dark secret against the killer.

If the dark secret is discovered and used against the killer while he is still invigorated, he simply gains a damage token. The Director should ensure that the killer doesn't die too early in the flick. Once the killer is exerted, using the secret against him should kill him.

Chapter Six

Extradimensional

The killer lives in another dimension, parallel world, alternate reality or plane of existence, and prefers to pull victims into his realm before killing them. He may be able to enter our dimension under certain circumstances.

You must define how the killer draws people into his realm (through dreams, by tricking them, etc.). You may or may not require the characters to make a successful Spirit check in order to keep from being pulled in.

Familiar Face

One of the female characters looks like a loved one from the killer's past (his mother, wife, sister, etc.).

How he reacts is entirely up to you, but in most cases, he will be hesitant to kill the character and may even attempt to connect with her in a morbid way (capturing her, etc.). Unfortunately for him, this makes him vulnerable to any attacks made by her. The first time this character attacks him, he automatically gains a damage token. After that, though, he's no longer affected by her appearance... unless the character purposely attempts to confuse him by pretending to be his loved one. This will require a Spirit check to convince him, though. If the check is successful, any successful attacks by the character will cause an extra damage token. Then, the illusion is broken again.

Fearful Visage

The killer is particularly gruesome or intimidating in appearance.

Characters that make freak-out checks due to the killer's presence must roll one less die for the check.

The Director

Feeds on Fear

The killer thrives on causing fear in his victims.

You'll need to determine what boon the killer gets when a character is freaked out (see "Freak-Out Checks" on page 34). The default boon is that a character who is afraid rolls one less die for checks during kill scenes.

As an option, you may decide that the killer cannot harm a character who is not freaked out.

Hard To Kill

The killer has a tendency to not stay dead very long. Even when it looks as if the characters have finished him off, he could very well be back in their lives in no time.

If the killer meets his doom while invigorated, there's a chance that he'll be back. The Director rolls a d6. On a result of 1-2, he's dead, but on any other result, he returns to the game. Remove one damage token. When a killer returns, it should be done dramatically (he sits bolt upright, he vanishes when the characters are distracted, etc.). These rules also apply if the killer dies while exerted, except that he stays dead.

Linked Item

The killer has some sort of link to an object that gives him power. Without it, he's less effective.

You'll need to decide what the object is and how being without it negatively affects the killer. The default effect is that a character rolls an extra die (of the same type he normally rolls) for checks during kill scenes whenever the killer doesn't have possession of the item.

Chapter Six

Linked Location

The killer has some sort of link to a specific location or region. While away from the locale, he's less effective.

You'll need to decide where the location is (a specific street, a specific forest, etc.) and how being away from it negatively affects the killer. The default effect is that a character rolls an extra die (of the same type he normally rolls) for checks during kill scenes whenever the killer is not at or near the location.

Low-Intelligence

The killer is slow on the uptake and relies mostly on animal cunning and survival instinct to get by.

When attempting to outsmart or trick the killer, a character rolls an extra die (of the same type he normally rolls) for Mind or Spirit checks.

Miscellaneous Advantage

The killer has some kind of edge that increases his effectiveness.

You'll need to determine the nature of the advantage ("doesn't need to breathe", etc.) and how it positively affects the killer. This is a catchall category that covers too much ground to present you with a default effect.

Miscellaneous Disadvantage

The killer has some manner of Achilles heel that can hinder him severely...or possibly even lead to his downfall.

You'll need to determine the nature of the disadvantage ("never attacks children", etc.) and how it adversely affects

The Director

the killer. This is a catchall category that covers too much ground to present you with a default effect.

Mysterious Disappearance

The killer tends to disappear when things start looking bad for him. This can be attributed to the classic “when the characters look up, he’s gone” schtick or it might be true teleportation. Feel free to create an explanation for it.

Every time the killer gains a damage token, roll a d6. On a roll of 5 or 6, the killer vanishes enigmatically. The kill scene is over.

Normal Person

The killer isn’t an undead monster, a physical manifestation of evil incarnate, a demonic entity or anything like that. Instead, the killer is just an average person with bad intentions.

When it comes to receiving damage tokens, treat the killer as if he’s exerted at all times. Also, use common sense when giving the killer other components; only take the ones that aren’t supernatural in some way.

Possessing Spirit

The killer is a spirit and has to possess others to function.

The nature of possession is up to you. By default, it requires a successful Spirit check to resist possession, though you will need to determine the means and methods. Once possessed, you can opt to take over the character or allow more experienced role-players continue playing the character while possessed. Possessed characters should be given a chance to regain control every so often. This

Chapter Six

requires a Spirit check, but the character rolls one less die than usual.

Punish the Promiscuous

The killer doesn't stand for fornication and will go out of his way to kill those who engage in sexual acts.

The killer should target any character that partakes in sexual relations during the flick. Furthermore, a character that has done so rolls one less die for all checks (except freak-out checks) during kill scenes involving the killer.

Signature Weapon

The killer always uses a particular weapon when doing away with his victims.

When attacking with this weapon in a kill scene, any survival point loss is increased by one.

Situational Boost

The killer gains an advantage under certain circumstances.

You'll need to determine what the circumstance is (while in the dark, when in water, when a victim is sleepy, etc.) and what advantage the killer gains from it. The default effect is that a character rolls one less die for checks during

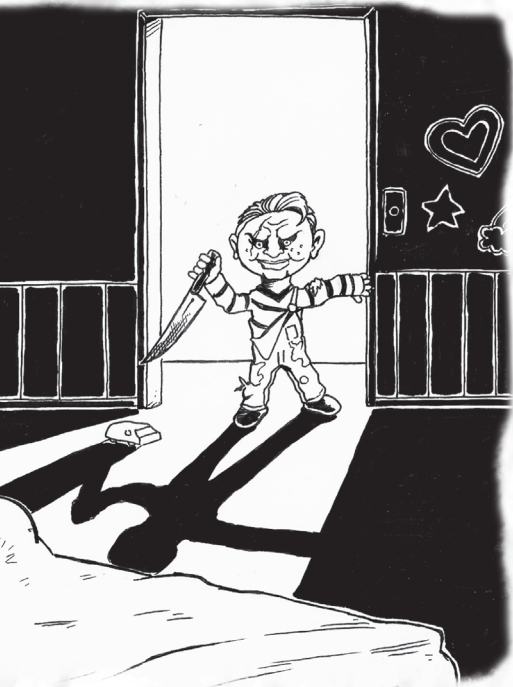


The Director

kill scenes whenever situation arises.

Small Stature

The killer is very small in size. He might be a sentient doll, a miniscule creature of legend or just a very short dude.



Although the killer will be knocked back further than normal-sized characters, he is harder to damage by way of blunt impact-based attacks (being thrown, being punched, etc.). Whenever the killer would gain a damage token from such an attack, roll a die. On a 4-6, the killer doesn't gain the damage token.

Stalking the Prey

The killer is inclined to watch his soon-to-be victims before moving in for the kill and often does so long before

moving in for the kill. Even though he might sometimes be only marginally concealed, the victims seem to have a hard time spotting him.

When a character makes a Brains check to see or hear the killer, he must roll one less die for the check.

Chapter Six

Superhuman Strength

The killer possesses physical strength beyond that which a normal human can possess.

If, during a kill scene, a character makes a check that involves the killer's brute strength (trying to rip the character's face off, bust through a door to grab the character, etc.), one matching result is disregarded.

Tidy

The killer cleans up his mess after a kill in a very short span of time, quickly moving bodies and cleaning up blood. He usually does this when a character sees a body and goes to get the other characters. The killer often likes to ensure that the bodies are found later, at a dramatically appropriate time.

When a character brings others to see a body that is no longer there, the character rolls one less die on the Spirit check to convince them that there was really a body present moments before.

Trap-Setter

The killer knows how to make and use traps effectively, especially ones that inflict gruesome wounds (bear traps, guillotine traps, spiked pits, etc.).

During kill scenes, you can use traps as a means of a character's survival point loss. Aside from that, characters may stumble into the traps when not in kill scenes. Spotting these traps requires a successful Brains check. A character falling into such a trap must make a successful Brawn check or Finesse check (whichever you deem appropriate) or lose a survival point.

Was Always Such a Nice Person

This is typical of the classic serial killer. The killer is highly intelligent and extremely good at planning ahead and covering his often-bloody tracks. He's also a master of misdirection and manipulation, allowing him to send the characters completely down the wrong path.

If a character starts to suspect anything weird about the killer and attempts to make a Mind or Spirit check to get info out of him, they may only succeed by rolling matching toppers.

Narrating

“Narrator” is the hat you’ll be wearing the most. It is your duty to act as all the characters’ senses, which may seem daunting at first, but is surprisingly easy, especially once you direct a game or two. In fact, it will become second nature to you. This section is full of advice, which will hopefully help make your job a great deal easier.

Tone

Before we can get into any specifics of narration, you should decide upon the tone you want the flick to have. There are basically two tones to choose from, though there’s nothing stopping you from doing a hybrid of the two.

Tone #1: Horrific

This is the default tone for *Slasher Flick*, so the advice given in this chapter will be focused on it. The flick is all about being frightening, and almost everything that happens should be intended to enhance the suspense and scariness. There can be some light humor here and there, but by and large, things need to be serious. Emphasize mood by giving evocative scene descriptions and by carefully pacing scenes.

Chapter Six

Tone #2: Schlocky

With this tone, you should be aiming toward the feel of a cheesy B-movie. It can still be scary, but it takes a backseat to being good, old-fashion, campy fun. Play up the fact that it's supposed to be a movie by making note of the bad special effects and plot holes. Likewise, encourage players to ham it up and over-act.

The Basics of Narration

Describing what's going on in the game world (especially what's going on near the characters) is critical to the success of your flick. If you fail to set the scene for the players, they will inevitably grow tired of trying to piece together sloppy narratives and give up on the game. The good news is that, by following the basic advice below, you should have no problem keeping the game lucid for the other participants.

Tip #1: Don't Over-Describe... But Don't Under-Describe Either

The last thing you should do is drone on and on about the scene at hand. Over-describing a scene is a quick way to make players lose interest. On the other hand, you shouldn't be so brief that important information is left out. Find a happy medium and stick to it.

Example #1: "You step into the kid's bedroom to check on him and he's gone."

While the above description adequately tells you the most important information, it lacks excitement, drama or pizzazz. It's utilitarian at best; staggeringly boring at worst. Let's try this again.

The Director

Example #2: *“You step into the kid’s bedroom to check on him and see that the room is covered in blue wallpaper with Jimmy Mouse designs on it. The floor is a dark wood, covered only partially by a throw rug in the center. On the left wall, you see a toybox overflowing with cars, action figures and other such toys. A tall, white dresser stands next to it. On the other side of the room is an orange and yellow kiddie table with matching chairs. Above it is a window. Straight ahead of you is where the bed is located. It’s taller than one might expect for a kid’s bed and has a colorful blanket. The child is not in the bed.”*

Damn! That’s what you might call “information overload.” Not only would this bore the hell out of players, it has an even worse effect: it sucks the drama out of the fact that the kid is gone. By the time the description gets around to mentioning the kid’s apparent disappearance, it comes off like little more than an afterthought, which is definitely counterproductive. Let’s have one more whack at it.

Example #3: *“Deciding that you need to check in on the kid, you open the door and peer into his toy-laden room. The lights are off, but the window filters in enough moonlight for you to see his rather large bed. But it’s not the bed itself that attracts your immediate attention: it’s the fact that the kid isn’t in it!”*

See? The above example provided all the necessary information without bogging the game down. Moreover, it was told with a sense of drama and pacing, which we’ll discuss later. The players would be able to quickly get a feel for the room and still understand that the most critical part of the description is that the kid had pulled a vanishing act.

Chapter Six

Tip #2: Learn To Pace a Scene

Pacing is the art of keeping the game moving at an appropriate speed. If you're running a heartfelt scene that involves two siblings reminiscing about their mother who died a few years ago, you should let the scene develop slowly. Let the players savor the drama and perhaps feel the emotion emanating from the scene.

Contrarily, if you're running a frantic, edge-of-your-seat kill scene, keep the pace brisk and tense. Keep the descriptions minimal in order to reflect the fact that the players involved wouldn't have much time to notice as much about their surroundings. Make it snappy and don't let the players have a whole lot of time to ponder their characters' actions.

Tip #3: Evoke a Mood

Use Tips #1 and #2 to help you evoke an appropriately spooky mood. If you're building suspense (e.g., when a character thought he heard a noise and is carefully moving around the house to see what's going on), speak softly and slowly, pausing between certain words for effect. Then, when something startling happens, suddenly get loud!

Choosing the right words can go a long way toward evoking a mood with your narration. Words like hideous, grotesque, appalling, grisly, loathsome, revolting, putrid and ghastly can be used to describe gross things (the killer's face, a dead body, etc.), while words like dingy, macabre, shadowy, gloomy, run-down, looming, foreboding and bleak can be used to describe sinister settings. Develop a list of go-to words that you can throw at the players when needed.

Tip #4: Improvise Wildly

There's simply no way to predict what your players are going to come up with. This often means that their ideas and actions will threaten to derail your carefully created plot. How do you deal with it? By improvising like crazy! The worst thing you can do is tell the players that they can't do something because it goes against your plot. Players cherish the notion that they have some measure of control over their characters' actions. If you take that away from them, you'll risk making them disinterested in the game.

When the players deviate from the plot, run with it. Make stuff up on the fly and let them carry out their ideas. You can always nudge them back on track eventually if they go too far off course, but don't let them know that's what you're doing.

Narration Techniques

Now that you grasp the basics of narration, you should familiarize yourself with some of the more advanced techniques. Most of them are insanely simple to use, so don't let yourself become intimidated by it.

Cutting Away

The status quo in roleplaying games is for the characters to stick together in one big group. This doesn't usually work in *Slasher Flick*. Characters in the game will spend a lot of time being in separate locations, which keeps to the spirit of the sub-genre. If the players instinctively stay together all the time, you should hit them with reasons to split up. In order for the game to work like the movies it emulates, characters have to spend some time apart.

Chapter Six

This raises a question. How do you handle running the game for characters that are scattered out? By switching back and forth between them, of course. This is known as cutting away.

You should strive to give all the primary characters equal time when cutting scenes, though you shouldn't worry too much about doing the same for the secondary characters. Generally speaking, try to cut to a different scene every five to ten minutes. Otherwise, you'll have a lot of bored players on your hands.

A scene doesn't have to be finished for you to cut away from it. This is even true of kill scenes. Just get to a good temporary stopping point and switch over.

Cut Scenes

The "camera" doesn't need to be focused on the primary and secondary characters all the time. The slasher movies often employed a method of showing what's going on elsewhere. This method is called the *cut scene* and it can be a handy tool for you to use during the game.

A cut scene is simply a scene that takes place solely with tertiary characters and (or) the killer. The players get to hear what happens, but it's important to stress that their characters have no knowledge of the events that transpire during a cut scene. It's just a narrative device that is used to make things more interesting. It also lets the players see that there's more going on than their characters are experiencing.

The most common use of cut scenes in slasher movies is for showing minor characters' deaths. Normally, this would

be a full-blown kill scene, but you needn't waste your time rolling dice for it. Just narrate what happens, using as much drama as possible so as to not bore the players.

In practical terms, you will be playing the roles of all the characters involved, unless you want to let the players take on the roles of the tertiary character(s). If you go that route, you can opt to use the full kill scene rules where applicable.

Should you decide to play all the roles yourself, you may feel awkward talking to and answering yourself in character. Don't give up on it though. It'll become more natural over time.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks are a relatively common occurrence in slasher movies, especially for characters that have traumatic pasts. This can be a fun way to take a character's tidbit and bring it to life, making it a part of the game rather than reducing it to being just another tidbit about the character's past.

Running a flashback isn't too unlike running any scene when it comes right down to it. The main difference is that you may need to reel things back into a particular direction if the scene strays too far off course. After all, you don't want to change the character's history.

Dream Sequences

Another staple of the sub-genre, dream sequences come in two varieties: standard or covert. In a standard dream sequence, the player knows that it's a dream sequence. You can get pretty wild with these scenes, since the player is under no delusions that the scene is nothing but a dream.

Chapter Six

With a covert dream sequence, the player should be led to believe that it's just another scene. Most of them start with the character "waking up" and doing something normal (taking a shower, getting a bowl of cereal, making a phone call, etc.). Then, things start to get scary and (or) strange. Just when it looks inescapable, the character wakes up and realizes that it was all just a nightmare. Obviously, you can throw that formula out the window and try new things, but that's the standard way that covert dream sequences occur.

Sexual Scenes

Name one slasher film that doesn't have any sexual scenes. Go on, I dare you. Okay, so maybe a few sexless slasher movies exist, but they are in the minority. Vastly in the minority, I might add.

In the world of roleplaying games, however, sex has always been something of a touchy or controversial subject. Many gamers find it uncomfortable to address sex in a game, which is decidedly understandable. For this reason, you may choose simply to leave it out or at the very least, lean toward innuendo and implication.

If the players have no issues with including scenes of a sexual nature in the game, then you have a couple of options. The first option is to include sexual scenes, but gloss over them so that they aren't very detailed. This is probably the best option for most game groups. The other option is to go into more detail with sexual scenes, though you should try to keep things from getting too terribly out of hand in terms of sheer sexuality.

Talk to your players before a flick and find out what their comfort level is for this sort of thing. Alienating your players is never a good idea. Ever.

Brutality and Gore

Extreme bloodshed is one of the key elements of the slasher movie sub-genre. Some films make use of it more so than others, but it plays a part in nearly all of them. The amount of gore you include in a flick should depend on how you and the players feel about it. If some of your players object to too much blood and guts, you should consider toning it down a little. If the players don't mind, you can get as graphic as you want.



Rules Adjudicating

In order to adjudicate the rules, you'll need to *know* the rules, preferably backward and forward. The better you know the rules, the easier adjudicating them will be.

Awarding Genre Points

Players expect to be rewarded with genre points when they go out on a limb to act in the spirit of the genre... especially if doing so potentially puts a character in danger. Since this is the case, you should be somewhat generous when doling them out. By and large, you should only reward one genre point per genre-appropriate action that actually adds something to the game.

Chapter Six

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide when an action warrants a genre point. As a guideline, you should award a genre point if an action is:

- a) something that you often see in slasher movies.
- b) something that puts the character in danger *or* adds to the entertainment of the game.

Character Deaths

When a character dies in the game, the player controlling him receives two genre points.

Rules Disputes

It doesn't happen often, but there are instances in which one or more player will disagree with how you have implemented a rule. Perhaps he feels that the rule is unfair or maybe he thinks that you have interpreted it incorrectly. Whatever the case is, you should listen to the player's argument and consider what he's saying. If you agree with him, don't hesitate to change things accordingly, even if it means tossing out or altering an existing rule. If, however, you don't agree with his viewpoint, explain politely that the rule/implementation stands. Your word is final.

Knowing When to Use the Rules

The rules presented in this book are guidelines for you to use in your collaborative storytelling experience. They are not the gospel. Should one or more rule get in the way of the story, toss it to the wayside and move forth. The story is more important than adherence to the rules. The rules should be stuck to primarily when they actually add to the drama, such as during kill scenes.

Playing It Loose With Kill Scenes

The only part of the game that has much structure is the kill scene system. The system is the cornerstone of *Slasher Flick* and requires the added structure in order to keep things dramatic, exciting and organized.

That having been said, you can yank some of the rigidity out of the kill scene system if it makes sense to. Bend the rules if necessary, as long as it enhances the fun-factor and makes more sense.

For example, let's say that the characters are at a cabin by a lake. They hear something outside and investigate. Stepping out onto the porch, they see the killer on their boat, getting ready to tamper with the engine. This prompts a kill scene. One of the characters takes out a gun and shoots, missing badly and losing four survival points as a result. This would lower his total to a negative number, which would kill him. The Director might decide that it would be anticlimactic for the gun to blow up in his face and put him in the grave. Further, he sees no logical way for the killer to retaliate and kill the character. And lastly, he dictates that it really puts the character in no worse a position than he was already in. All these things make him decide that this check wouldn't be counted as a crucial check.

Playing Tertiary Characters

Tertiary characters can be a great amount of fun to play. More importantly, they fulfill several critical roles in the game.

Your In-Game Voice

Tertiary characters act as your voice in the game. That is, they are your key to communicating with the primary

Chapter Six

and secondary characters, giving them information, clues and red herrings. They can be great tools for conveying whatever it is you wish to convey.

Victims

Need to establish the killer as a powerful force to be reckoned with early on in the flick? Want to make the players cringe with terror at a brutal murder? Want to make the characters cheer when an asshole/bitch gets slaughtered mercilessly? Tertiary characters can do all this and more.

Mood-Setters

You can use tertiary characters to augment the mood. Perhaps the character is an escaped lunatic who is lurking in the woods at the same time the killer is. Maybe he's a crazy old drunk who becomes a self-proclaimed "messenger of God" whenever he's tanked up on whiskey. Or he could be a charismatic psychologist who knows that the killer is nearby and tries to warn everyone. These types of characters can help set the tone of the flick.

Playing the Killer

Ah, yes. The murderer. The vile fiend. The slayer of teenagers. The lunatic on the loose. Whatever label you want to slap on him, the killer is the most relevant character in the flick. Without him, you don't have much of a flick.

Play To the Concept

When you create the killer, you should develop some idea about his personality and how he behaves. When roleplaying him, stick to the established personality like glue. The more you deviate from it, the less believable and chilling his presence will be. If he's supposed to be a smart

ass that slings morbid one-liners, don't make him silent during a kill scene. If he's an emotionless killing machine that never speaks, don't make him talk.

Don't Over-Use Him

So far in this book, we've stressed how absolutely important the killer is. And we're still stressing that. However, now we're going to stress that the primary characters are the stars of the show. They are the protagonists; the ones who get the most "camera time". There is a strong tendency amongst Directors to insert the killer into almost every scene. Fight this tendency with every ounce of your strength.

The less you show the killer, the more imposing he becomes. If he's running amok in every scene, the players will become too familiar with him, and familiarity breeds complacency. You want the players to dread seeing the killer step out from the shadows, not *expect* him to do so. Some slasher movies never even allow anything more than a quick glimpse of the killer, which works well for making him mysterious.

We're not recommending that you never use the killer. We're just saying to pick your spots for maximum drama.

Learn the Art of Teasing

Sometimes, teasing a kill scene can be just as unnerving and suspenseful as actually having one. Just when it looks like the killer is going to attack the girl who's going out to feed the dog, the phone rings, prompting her to go back inside the house, thus denying the killer his golden opportunity to slash her throat.

Chapter Six

If you tease too much, though, the players will probably grow weary of it and spoil the game for them, so please be careful not to overdo it.

Methods of Murder

Slasher film killers can be roughly divided into two camps: the ones that just get the job done and ones who get creative with their kills.

Killers belonging to the first category aren't out to be flashy with how they kill their victims. A stab with a knife gets the same result as using a weed eater on the victim's face. These killers are perfect for low-gore flicks, as the bloodshed can be easier to imply rather than describe in full detail.

Killers belonging to the second type seem to savor coming up with unique and colorful ways to dispatch their victims. This allows you to flex your own creativity with devising such methods, which can provide a lot of fun for the morbid-minded. These methods lean toward the exceedingly brutal.

Embracing the Slasher Movie Sub-Genre

Chapter Two of this book contains an exhaustive list of tropes relevant to the slasher movie sub-genre. In this section, we take a look at some of the more important of these tropes and analyze them from the Director's perspective.

Sequels

When a slasher movie makes a wad of cash (and sometimes even when it doesn't), the filmmakers start banging out a sequel. And then another. And another. And... well, you get the idea. The point is that sequels are awfully common, which is great news for you.

The reason this is great news is that it allows you to use the same killer and backstory multiple times, which saves you a lot of work and lets you do some wacky things that just wouldn't be possible with just one flick.

A sequel can be handled in several different ways. Let's start with the bad man himself (or the bad woman herself):

- The same killer returns.
- On the surface, it looks like the same killer returns, but it is actually someone else.
- A different, but similar killer is introduced.
- An entirely different killer is introduced.

Now for the protagonists:

- The surviving primary/secondary characters return.
- One or more of the surviving primary/secondary characters return, in addition to some new ones as well.
- An entirely new cast of primary/secondary characters is introduced.

Just be aware that sequels are known for being worse than the original movie. Buck this trend. In *Slasher Flick*, there's no reason for the sequel to be inferior. In fact, if you put

Chapter Six

some forethought into it, the sequel can actually surpass its predecessor(s). Just be sure to put a different spin on the story without simply rehashing what has come before.

Mystery Killer

Some slasher movies make no mystery of who the killer is. Others, though, make figuring out the psycho's identity a major plot point. Should you wish to go with the latter option, you should take some extra time and work in some clues to help the players solve the mystery. Clues can be easy to discern or extremely subtle. Ideally, the flick should have both.

You should also take great care not to screw up continuity within the film. If the character who is secretly the killer is with the other characters when a murder takes place, then you'll throw a monkey wrench in your own plan (unless you pull off something truly ingenious). Coordinate where the character is at all times, so as not to make it impossible for him to be the killer. Players are a perceptive lot and will likely call you on such errors.

Who Plays the Mystery Killer?

The most obvious answer is for the killer to be a tertiary character. If this is the case, you should consider introducing quite a few of them as potential suspects. This gives you the most control over the plot.

Another option is to secretly talk to a player beforehand and inform them that his primary character (or secondary character if each player controls specific secondary characters) is actually the killer. Do this before you start plotting anything out, because if you don't and the player is uncomfortable with the idea, you'll have to go back and re-

work the plot. If you let the player's character be the killer, you will still control him while he's in "killer mode".

Checking Out The Unknown

A twig snaps outside the tent. A shadow is seen moving through the window. A barking dog suddenly yelps and then goes silent.

What's a character to do? In the movies, they habitually go outside, against their better judgment. In roleplaying games, players know jolly damn well that there could be (and probably is) something dangerous awaiting them, so they might be hell bent on staying inside and saying to hell with the unknown. And in a horror-based game, such an inclination could be troublesome.

The rules are set up to encourage walking right into a potentially dangerous situation by way of awarding players genre points. For some, however, this is not enough. They just want their character to be safe, even if it means not playing to the genre. Fortunately, you have a fantastic tool at your disposal. I'm speaking, of course, of the freak-out check. If the character fails the freak-out check, you're free to send him to check out the problem.

The other option is a bit less intrusive, but still very potent. If you want to lure the character away, you can put one or more of the character's friends in jeopardy. Perhaps he hears his girlfriend scream in the distance or maybe he learns that his best friend went out into the woods twenty minutes ago. If you make it personal, you may find that the players will have their characters jump into potentially nasty situations more readily.

Chapter Six

Sex, Drugs and... Well, Just Sex and Drugs!

The quickest way to die in a slasher movie is to engage in premarital sex and, to a lesser degree, partake in some drugs. These two things will get characters killed lickety-split in most cases. Killers just can't stand this kind of raucous behavior, especially ones with the "Punish the Promiscuous" component.

To represent this, you can opt to subtract a survival point from the guilty characters' totals whenever they have premarital sex or use drugs. In many cases, especially with sex, the killer will show up either during fornication or after it takes place and kick off a kill scene.

The players should get some incentive for their characters getting down and dirty or toking up. Give them a total of two genre points immediately. A character can only be given this award once per flick.



The Last Girl

The “last girl” is a well-known slasher film trope that suggests that the last remaining character is inevitably going to be a female. This theory rings exceedingly true in the sub-genre.

If you choose to hold true to this trope, give any surviving females two additional survival points each as soon as the killer becomes exerted.

The Camera is Your Friend

Cinematographers utilize cameras to heighten the effect of whatever scene they’re shooting. They use different angles, movements and other tricks to immerse the viewer in the world he’s attempting to visually bring to life.

You can do the exact same thing! The players know that the game is supposed to represent a film, so you can play to that aspect by describing the “camera work”. This is also a good way to show the killer’s activities to the players without their characters being any the wiser.

Here’s an example: “As the two of you chat by the lake, the camera moves backward, making you smaller and smaller until it reaches a figure that silently watches your every move.”

index

- Adrenaline Boost 55
- Alterations 54-56
- Back For More 55
- Brains 29
- Brawn 29
- Brutality and Gore 99
- Camera 109
- Checking Out the Unknown 107
- Components 33, 45-46, 82, 83-91
- Crucial Checks 36-37, 38, 101
- Cut Scenes 96-97
- Cutting Away 95-96
- D10 10
- D3 10
- D6 10
- D8 10
- Damage Threshold 47, 82, 83
- Damage Tokens 47, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89
- Dark Secret 83
- Director 8, 10, 73-109
- Dream Sequences 97
- Dumb Luck 55
- Equipment 56
- Event-Based Flicks 76, 79-80
- Exerted 46-47
- Extradimensional 84
- Familiar Face 84
- Fearful Visage 84
- Feeds On Fear 85
- Finesse 29
- Flashbacks 97
- Flicks 8, 10, 75-81
- Freak-Out Checks 34, 38, 107
- Genre Points 11, 44-45, 68-70, 99-100
- Hard To Kill 85
- Initiative Checks 35
- Invigorated 46-47
- Kill Scenes 11, 35-43, 101
- Killer 10, 14, 27, 45-47, 74, 81-91, 102-104
- Last Girl 109
- Let's End This 55
- Linked Item 85
- Linked Location 86
- Location-Based Flicks 75-76, 78-79
- Low-Intelligence 86
- Matching Results 30, 31, 36, 37
- Miscellaneous Advantage 86
- Miscellaneous Disadvantage 86-87
- Mood-Setting Methods 80-81
- Mysterious Disappearance 87
- Mystery Killer 106-107
- Narrating 74, 91-99
- Negative Qualities 10, 30, 31, 52-53, 61
- Normal Person 87
- Opposed Checks 32-33
- Players 8, 10, 63-71
- Positive Qualities 10, 30, 31, 52, 61
- Possessing Spirit 87
- Primary Characters 10, 27, 37-38, 49-61, 71
- Props 80
- Punish The Promiscuous 88
- Role-Playing Game 7-11
- Rules Adjudicating 74, 99-101
- Scream Queen 56
- Secondary Characters 10, 27, 28-29, 49-61, 70
- Separated Matches 31
- Sequels 105-206
- Sex and Drugs 108
- Sexual Scenes 98-99
- Signature Weapon 88
- Situational Boost 88
- Small Stature 89
- Special abilities 54-56
- Spirit 29
- Stalking The Prey 89
- Stat Checks 10, 30-34, 38
- Stat Ratings 29
- Stats 10, 29, 51
- Steel Yourself 56
- Stereotypes 50-51, 60
- Stupid Action 56
- Superhuman Strength 90
- Survival Points 11, 35
- Tertiary Characters 10, 27, 81, 101-102
- Tidbits 58-59
- Tidy 90
- Toppers 32, 47
- Trap-Setter 90
- Tropes and Clichés 15-20
- Was Always Such A Nice Person 91

SLASHER FLICK Character Sheet

Name: _____
Player: _____
Stereotype: _____

Primary Secondary Tertiary

Brawn

Qualities: +/-

Finesse

Qualities: +/-

Survival Points

Dead 0

1 2

3 4

5 6

7 8

Genre Points:

Brains

Qualities: +/-

Spirit

Qualities: +/-

Special Ability (Primary Characters Only):

Equipment:

Misc. Notes:

Tidbits:

SLASHER FLICK

Unstoppable Maniacs
Gratuitous Violence
Nail-Biting Suspense
Horny Camp Counselors

Slasher Flick is a roleplaying game that allows you and your friends to step out of the theater seats and into the movie itself!

With a game system designed to create and build suspense, Slasher Flick offers a fresh take on the genre.

This rulebook includes:

- Group-based character creation rules.
- "Kill scene" rules that will keep you on the edge of your seat.
- A system that rewards players for playing to the genre ("Hey, what's that noise? I'll go check it out!").
- Tons of advice for players and Directors alike.

For mature audiences!

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