

# *Witch Hunted*

## *Adepts*

The population of the world is divided into normal people and Adepts. Adepts possess a special ability that separates them from the common herd. The exact nature of the Adepts' special ability depends upon the background selected by the GM. Examples might include the wizards of some lost heroic age, the chi-powered Wushu masters of legendary China, the witches and warlocks of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Europe, the mystery men and science heroes of 1930's America or psychics or mutants in some contemporary or futuristic setting.

Each player controls the actions of a single Adept.

## *Witch Hunters*

Recent events have driven a wedge between the Adepts and normal people. The government has decided that Adepts pose a real danger to society. Laws have been passed to make the Adepts' activities illegal and a special organisation has been created to enforce these laws. Examples might include armoured priests, fearsome magistrates, dread witch hunters, stern government agents or implacable robots.

The witch hunters seek out Adepts and strip them of their power and freedom. They will attempt to capture the Adepts alive so that they can stand trial and face the full force of due process. However, murderous Adepts will be terminated with extreme prejudice.

The GM controls the actions of the witch hunters and the rest of society.

## *Power*

The Adepts' special ability (magic, chi, vril, pseudo-science or psi) is measured in Power Points. Each Adept begins with 20 Power Points. If an Adept can amass 100 Power Points he or she becomes an Ascended Master. An Ascended Master can leave the mortal plane to live in a realm beyond physicality, safe from the witch hunters. An Adept who achieves ascension leaves the game and has effectively 'won'.

For the sake of convenience, Power Points can be represented by markers, such as poker chips or glass beads. A player needs to keep track of an Adept's current and maximum Power.

## *Tasks*

Whenever a player wishes to have his Adept perform an action the GM must decide how difficult the action is. The difficulty of an action should take into account the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition, the effects of local conditions and the inventiveness, drama and appropriateness of the player's description.

An action can be Impossible, Improbable, Formidable, Easy or Automatic. The difficulty of the action provides the player with a Target Number (Impossible: 21, Improbable: 16, Formidable: 11, Easy: 6 or Automatic: 1).

If the player can roll equal to or greater than the difficulty on a twenty-sided die, the character is successful and achieves the target set by the player. If the roll is less than the Target Number the character is unsuccessful and suffers a fate determined by the GM.

# *Witch Hunted*

## *Will to Power*

Unlike other mortals, Adepts can bend reality to suit their wishes. By using their Power, Adepts can alter their chances of success and failure.

The effects of an Adept's Power are limited by a number of factors. The Adept must be able to see a target to affect it. The Adept can only affect one target at a time. The duration of the effect is limited by the Adept's concentration; if the Adept's concentration is broken the Power's effect ends.

Before making a die roll, a player can expend one or more Power Points to improve his Adept's chances of success; this represents the Adept unleashing his Power. Each point of Power expended by the player reduces the difficulty of the action by one level (Impossible to Improbable to Formidable to Easy to Automatic).

If an Adept has expended all of his Power, he cannot use it again until he recovers it through rest.

## *Gaining Power*

Whenever an Adept uses Power there is a chance of gaining insight into the secret workings of the cosmos and gaining additional Power. If the result of the player's die roll is greater than 20 minus the number of Power Points expended, the Adept gains one point of Power. This additional Power is added to both the Adept's current and maximum Power Points.

## *Side Effects*

Power is tricky stuff and difficult to effectively control. If a player rolls less than or equal to the number of Power Points expended on an action, the Adept suffers some sort of paranormal side effect.

Common examples of side effects include unexplained odours, glowing auras, cracking lightning bolts, hair and clothing being blown by an ethereal winds, ghosts, demons and poltergeist activity. These side effects will be sufficient to alert everyone in the surrounding area to the Adept's presence and powers. They will also raise the alarm with any local Witch Hunters; bringing them rushing to the scene.

## *Recovering Power*

An Adept recovers Power through rest. If an Adept manages to eat three square meals during a day and spends the night sleeping under shelter, he will recover all of his expended Power. If the Adept is underfed or sleeping rough, he recovers half of his expended Power (round fractions up).

If the Adept has been captured by the Witch Hunters, he will be prevented from recovering Power. The witch hunters will use some form of inhibitor to block the Adept's ability to recover. Examples include spells of warding, shackles forged from cold iron, chi-blocking acupressure, radium lamps, "psi-blocker" drugs and genetic inhibitors.

# *Witch Hunted*

## *Playing the Game*

The GM selects a background for the game and outlines it to the players. Each player creates an Adept by selecting a name and noting down the character's initial Power Points (20 for a starting character).

The game should start with the Adept's discovery by a group of Witch Hunters. The Adepts must escape the Witch Hunters and evade further trouble. The Adepts inhabit a world of fear and suspicion. Everyone is on the lookout for the hated and feared Adepts. Rewards are offered, vigilance committees are convened, the news media is filled with scare stories and anyone who does not conform is suspect.

The Witch Hunters are aided in their search by spells or technology that allows them to seek out Adepts. These tracking powers will allow the Witch Hunters to learn the rough location of Adepts. Further searching will allow them to zero in on any Adepts who do not remain mobile. It may take the Witch Hunters days, weeks or months to triangulate and expose an Adept, but time is on their side. They are also aided by the paranoia of normal folk who will mistrust strangers and report anyone exhibiting paranormal abilities.

As a result of these factors, lying low and attempting to live a normal life is not an option for Adepts. They must remain on the move, avoid contact with authorities and attempt to hide their true nature. Additionally, their only hope of finding lasting peace lies in the repeated use of their illegal abilities. Only through continued exercise of their Power can they attain ascension and the safety of Agartha.

It is the GM's job to constantly throw new dangers at the Adepts; to hound them and to endanger their freedom. It is the players' job to steer their characters' through the minefield created by the GM.

Common problems faced by Adepts include the suspicion of locals, the need to acquire food and shelter and the endless sweeps carried out by Witch Hunters.

*Witch Hunted* is © Euan Smith 12/Nov/2006

This game is typeset in Times New Roman and *JackLanternBB*. *JackLanternBB* was created by Nate Piekos and is available for free download (along with numerous other excellent fonts) from <http://www.blambot.com/>.