

# THE FIRE AND THE WELL

YOU ARE THE TORTURED SOULS LIVING IN A **SMALL TOWN**, OR A BUSTLING COASTAL **METROPOLIS**. A **tragedy** has befallen your community, and it falls to you to learn as much as you can about the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). In so doing, you may uncover **secrets** of a larger and deeper world, or worse yet, yourselves.

## PLAYERS: CREATE CHARACTERS

- 1 Choose a style for your character: **Aimless, Hot-Shot, Insightful, Lawful, Scheming, Sexy, Simple, or Unbalanced.**
- 2 Choose a role for your character: **Blue-collar, Capitalist, Doctor, Officer of the Law, Musician, Politician, Student, or Teacher.**
- 3 Choose your **number**, from 2 to 5. A high number means you're better at **THE FIRE** (passion, violence, quick reaction). A low number means you're better at **THE WELL** (methodical planning, organization, patience).
- 4 Give your character a **bog standard Mid-western name**, like Linda or Roger or something. Even better if it's fifty years out-of-date.

**You have:** The possessions and property appropriate to your character concept, plus something entirely outlandish (describe).

**Player goal:** Stick your nose where it doesn't belong, and quite possibly make a nuisance of yourself.

**Character goal:** Choose one or create your own: **Fall In Love, Fight the Power, Gain (More) Power, Grow Up, Prove Yourself, Save Someone From Themselves, or Uncover Your Secret Past.**

## PLAYERS: CREATE THE TOWN

Choose the following, as a group:

- 1 Is it a **Small Town**, or **Bustling Metropolis**?
- 2 Pick one strength for the town: **Strong Community, Robust Economy, Excellent Schools, Minimal Crime.**
- 3 Also, pick two problems: **Fractured Community, Dwindling Economy, Morally Bankrupt Leadership, Rampant Crime, Infamous Nearby Landmark** (detail).

## ROLLING THE DICE

When you do something risky, roll to find out how it goes. Roll **1d6** if the situation is **desperate**. Roll **2d** if you're **prepared**. Roll **3d** if you're an **expert**. (The GM will tell you how many dice to roll, based on your character and the situation. Remind them of your style and role if you think they apply here.)

↓ If you're using **THE FIRE** (passion, violence), you want to roll **under** your number.

↑ If you're using **THE WELL** (patience, methodical planning), you want to roll **over** your number.

0 If **none of your dice succeed**, it goes wrong. The GM will say how things get worse somehow.

1 If **one die succeeds**, you barely manage it. The GM will inflict a complication, harm, or cost.

2 If **two dice succeed**, you do it well. Good job!

3 If **three dice succeed**, you get a critical success! The GM will tell you some extra effect you get.

! If you roll your number exactly, you tap into the **WELL OF FIRE**. You get a special insight into what's going on. Ask the GM a question and they'll answer you honestly. Some good questions:



*What are they really feeling? Who's behind this? How could I get them to \_\_\_? What should I be on the lookout for? What's the best way to \_\_\_? What's really going on here?*

You can change your action if you want to, then roll again.

**HELPING:** If you want to help someone else, roll. If you succeed, you might turn their desperate situation into a prepared one, or a prepared one into an expert.

## GM: CREATE A STRANGE ADVENTURE

Roll or choose on the tables below.

### THE TRAGEDY...

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Murder               | 4. Opioid epidemic          |
| 2. Destroyed landmark   | 5. Beloved leader deposed   |
| 3. Criminal takes power | 6. Signs of occult activity |

### POINTS TO A THREAT...

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Serial killer        | 4. Rival gangs        |
| 2. Drug trafficking     | 5. Complacency        |
| 3. Political corruption | 6. Possessing spirits |

### THAT SEEKS TO...

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Kill (more) people   | 4. Spread its influence    |
| 2. Consolidate power    | 5. Maintain the status quo |
| 3. Corrupt the innocent | 6. Promote chaos           |

### WHICH WILL...

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Demoralize the people   | 4. Result in many deaths      |
| 2. Taint the land          | 5. Cripple the infrastructure |
| 3. Draw unwanted attention | 6. Pave the way for true evil |

## GM: RUN THE GAME

Play to find out how they deal with the threat, which may or may not involve defeating it. Introduce the threat by detailing the tragedy, and then showing further evidence of its ongoing badness. Before a threat does something to the characters, give oblique and surreal signs that it's about to happen, then ask them what they do. *"A power outage plunges the motel into darkness, while a deep, ethereal humming becomes louder and louder. What do you do?" "As Margaret leans in to kiss you, you notice a mark on her neck – a burn, perhaps? – the shape of which matches the strange symbol you saw on one of the pages of the victim's diary. What do you do?"*

Call for a roll when the situation is uncertain. Don't pre-plan outcomes, but feel free to generate some clues or potential conflicts that might arise. Use failures to push the action forward, and reinforce a sense of foreboding and desperation (though they should never feel completely helpless). The situation always changes after a roll, for good or ill.

Ask questions and build on the answers. *"Have any of you purchased illicit substances in the past six months? Why? What was the name of your dealer?"*

**THE FIRE AND THE WELL** is a Lynchian RPG by Aaron M. Sturgill. Please visit [trailofdice.com](https://trailofdice.com) for more RPG-related content.

Based upon John Harper's **LASERS AND FEELINGS**, which is available at [onesevendesign.com](https://onesevendesign.com).

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