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Module

Introduction

Welcome, players and game masters, to the world of Post-Mortem! Post-Mortem is a brand new tabletop role-playing game from the devious and diabolical mind of John Archibald. If you're a fan of other systems, such as Dungeons and Dragons Fifth Edition or Call of Cthulhu, or if you're brand new to the realm of role-playing games, Post-Mortem provides an easily adaptable system of mechanics to create endless possibilities within your worlds.

Post-Mortem takes place among the black gothic streets of Richmond, Virginia in 2018. Creeping around every corner are abominations of the mind, body, and soul, threatening to ravage players from the inside-out. Inspired by Lovecraftian horror, game masters will guide players through the various settings provided by the very module you read! The players' sole purpose is to survive and, by sheer willpower and materials found throughout the world, prevent themselves from becoming **stricken**.

The Lore of Post-Mortem

Players will take on the roles of teenage students from the ages of 14 to 18 that attend Trinity Episcopal School, a small private educational institution just outside of Richmond. In Post-Mortem, player classes do not exist; all characters and non-playable characters (NPCs) are normal, mortal human beings. However, players will want to allocate their stats to prepare for what psychological dangers await in the world.

On Monday, February 11th, a classmate of the players', Christian Wood, embarked on a kayaking trip along the James River. After splitting his head open on a rock, he was pulled out of the water by friend of the player characters (PCs), George Bundy. The **comatose** condition was applied to Christian by the NPCs working in the VCU Medical Center to prevent death saving rolls from occurring. It is encouraged that players creating their PCs ponder the relationship they have with Christian. Beyond character motivations and goals throughout the campaign, backgrounds are an important aspect of worldbuilding and immersion. For example, perhaps PCs were close friends with Christian, having known them all their life. From being children together and playing on the playground, going throughout their careers of academia alongside one another, spending countless nights sitting beside him at bonfires and joking with him during classes. Think about the flaws of your character and the lasting effects his death will have on you.

Starting the Adventure

Players will start their adventure at the VCU Medical Center on Tuesday, February 13th at 6:00PM. Players will have six hours to explore the hospital and uncover its secrets. Upon arrival, players will navigate through the white halls of A1, interacting with the desk clerk. The desk clerk has a coarse personality. Passing a difficulty class (DC) 10 persuasion check will finally convince the nurse to direct you to the correct room.

After using the elevator, players will arrive in the lobby of the tenth floor (A2). Players are greeted just outside the door by peers weeping and sobbing. Describe the following scene below:

The party sees a bald middle-aged man addressing familiar friends and family. His arms are expressive and quick. You don't catch what he says, but he finishes and shuffles away, his hands in his pockets. You recognize him as George Bundy's father. The crowd bursts into wailing moans and tears.

After a successful DC 10 investigation check, players can determine that the man said the medical staff deduced that Christian's brain is clotting with blood and that he will not make it. Upon learning this, players must succeed a DC 15 wisdom saving throw. On a fail, characters take 12 points of psychological damage and must roll on the **stricken** table for a permanent effect.

Players may then take the time to interact with the room and the NPCs, such as the PCs' advisor, Michael Stratton, the head of the school, Rob Short, members of George and Christian's families, amongst others. Players may also interact with Reed Bundy, George's brother. Reed is a student athlete and bodybuilder. He is distraught. Upon a DC 13 persuasion check, players may convince Reed to take the players to Christian's room (A4).

Upon arrival, players will meet Christian. Describe the scene as follows:

As you enter the room, the immediate smell of river water hits your nostrils. The room is dark and cold. Lying motionless on a white bed is your friend, Christian Wood. He is wrapped in blankets and dressed in a polka-dot gown. Long white plastic tubes feed various liquids and chemicals into his mouth and nostrils. His hair still has flecks of dried blood.

Players who choose to look at Christian must succeed a DC 15 wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, players take 26 points of psychological damage. In addition, players will roll on the **stricken** table for a permanent effect.

Christian's mother, father, and sister sit in a solemn quietness in the corner of A3. Interacting with Christian prompts no response. However, players are able to hold his hand and feel the warmth of his skin, a stark contrast to the expected feeling of a cold corpse. Players should never forget this feeling, and it should haunt them for the rest of their lives.

At 12:00AM, players are prompted to go home by the medical staff. This should be used as an opportunity for characters to reflect and be alone with their thoughts. None of the players will be able to sleep.

Continuing the Campaign

Players will move through various locations, such as Trinity Episcopal School and the local therapy office. Over time, characters will experience **fatigue**. If a player's fatigue level becomes too high, they will take 1d6 psychological damage and roll on the **stricken** table for a lasting effect.

Players must roll to maintain grades in school, a social life, and their sanity. All of these interactions increase fatigue levels. It is encouraged that players should change role-play accordingly depending on the condition of their character. **Fatigue** will change them forever.

The Stricken Effect

The **stricken** effect can be acquired by characters who have up to or over five conditions gained through rolling on the **stricken** table found at the back of the module. These conditions can be removed over time by the various emotional outlets found throughout the world. Once a player reaches this threshold, however, they must roll a d20 after every in-game day. If a player rolls at or above a 10, the player becomes **stricken**. Immediately after, read the following text:

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I couldn't be there for you. You weren't even there; you couldn't even open your eyes. I didn't even know if you could hear me. But I cried for you, gripping your hand. It was so warm. It was so, so warm. I hated it. I hated how you were still there, how life was still burning through you. I just wanted you to say goodbye. I wanted you to say goodbye to me. But you didn't. You didn't say anything. And now, for the rest of my life, I'm going to wonder what you would've said. What you were able to hear. Could you hear when the doctors told your family that you were going to die? Could you feel those fucking quacks rip the tubes from your insides as you forgot how to breathe? And God, I hate them. They couldn't save you and I fucking hate them. And when life wasn't ripping through your veins, when I was looking down at you in your open casket, I hated myself. I never should have looked at you, neatly rested on a pillow, your hands on top of one another over your stomach. Your upper forehead caked in embalmer, covering the once lively wound. And yet, I did. I looked. And I looked as your family surrounded you at the front of the altar where you laid. I was trying so hard to look. I was trying so hard to remember your face and all of its features. But I couldn't because my eyes were flooded by the murkiness of my own tears, knowing that I'd never see you again. Knowing that I'd never see my friend again. But time was fleeting, and I couldn't stop sobbing. And then, your mom kissed you on your cheek and closed the lid on top of you, and I couldn't look at you anymore. And I couldn't hear anything anymore. And I couldn't feel anything anymore. And I still can't.

Winning the Game

Like many other tabletop role-playing games, there aren't "winning conditions" in Post-Mortem. The game continues at the discretion of the game master. However, May 25th, the last day of school, is considered among playtesters and game masters to be a suitable end. The goal of players should be to stay alive and successfully graduate by this date.

Good luck and have fun!