

# BODY AND SOULS

## Creating Mortal Player Characters for *Lost Souls*

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### Introduction

The *Lost Souls* roleplaying game approaches supernatural adventure from the unique perspective of the dead. But for a change of pace, Players and Narrators might want to experience the trials and tribulations of the living world. This supplement provides a simple set of rules for creating Mortal heroes, while hopefully retaining the breezy charm of the original game.

Some of the rules in this supplement make use of the bonus and penalty dice rules in the 'Rolling the Bones' supplement for *Lost Souls*. If you don't use those rules in your game, simply replace any reference to 'bonus die' with '+1 Column', and 'penalty die' with '-1 Column'.

### Overview

Mortals choose a Profession, just like *Lost Souls* do. They get the Profession's basic starting Gear, but they don't get the Talent. Instead, they get the Mortal Talent described below.

Mortals get a flat +3 bonus to all Attributes (as opposed to the variable bonuses granted by *Lost Soul* Types), and can choose six free Specialties.

Mortals have a new Skill, *Lifestyle* (it falls under Fate), and may choose it as a Specialty. They possess *Attunement* and *Mindset*, which are described below.

Mortals can acquire and use Supernatural Powers, and they have access to two Powers which *Lost Souls* don't: *Astral Projection* and *Ghost Vision*, both of which are described below.

Mortals usually have a Consistency of 'material', but there are exceptions detailed below.

Instead of a Ghostly Visage, a Mortal has an *Aura*.

And finally, Mortals can gain and spend *Karma*.

At the end of the article are some guidelines for converting a Mortal into a *Lost Soul*, for that sad day when he finally shuffles off this mortal coil to explore the mysteries of the Spirit World firsthand.

### Mortal Talent: Adrenaline Rush

Talent: Adrenaline Rush

Uses per Day: Stamina/5 (minimum of one)

Duration: Immediate

Range: Self

Effects: The blood pumping through their Mortal forms gives the living an advantage forgotten by the dead. In an exciting or stressful situation, a Mortal can take a bonus die on any roll which the Narrator agrees involves gross physical power or heightened wakefulness (generally any use of Agility, Alertness, Stamina, and Strength Attributes and Skills).

If a Player wants, and if he has more than one use available, he can burn up multiple uses of Adrenaline Rush for more bonus dice applied to a single action.

At the Narrator's discretion, any action which requires fine motor skills or a calm state of mind (generally Dexterity, Intelligence, and Knowledge Attribute and Skill rolls) may be penalized by a number of penalty dice equal to any bonus dice received, if the action is performed soon after a use of Adrenaline Rush.

### New Skill: Lifestyle

This Skill represents the character's ability to function on a daily basis in the world of the living. It encompasses social standing, credit rating, employment prospects, financial wealth, and access to material possessions. If you wish to purchase an item in play, determine whether or not your character has access to a resource, or see if he has the means to pay for a service, your Narrator will tell you to roll vs Lifestyle. Inexpensive goods and services will call for Feeble or Inferior rolls, while more pricey or restricted things such as computers, high-end cameras, and weapons would be Passable or Good. Major purchases, like impressive vehicles or houses, will call for Superior or Awesome rolls. Lifestyle is a Fate Skill.

## Character Creation Tables

To create a Mortal player character, roll six times on the Life & Death Table (p 19). However, a few entries need to be changed:

- The 'Age at Death' Table (p16) becomes the 'Starting Age' Table
- Don't roll on the 'Unfinished Business' Table
- On the 'Life & Death' Table (now just the 'Life' Table), change the following entries:
  - 10- Becomes 'Suffer painful flashbacks of traumatic incident'.
  - 13- Becomes 'Pet accompanies you wherever you go.'
  - 15-Becomes 'RELATIVE responsible for injuring you'.
  - 16-Becomes 'FRIEND responsible for injuring you'.
  - 17-Becomes 'LOVER responsible for injuring you'.
  - 25-Becomes 'Employer fired you unjustly'.
  - 46- Becomes 'A stranger is following you.'
  - 61- Becomes 'Coworker responsible for you losing your job'
  - 96- Becomes 'ENEMY responsible for injuring you'.
- On the 'Lover' Table, entry 47-50 becomes: 'LOVER declared celibacy'.
- On the 'Child Information Table', change the following entries:
  - 67-70- Becomes 'Child saw you two-timing partner; blames self'.
  - 71-75- Becomes 'Child is developmentally disabled'.
  - 76-79- Becomes 'Child ran away, and never returned'.
  - 92-95- Becomes 'Child is estranged from you'.
- On the 'Strange Belief Table, change the following entries:
  - 21-30- Becomes 'You think you're destined to die young'.
  - 51-60- Becomes 'You think you're the reincarnation of a famous historical figure'.
  - 61-70- Becomes 'You think you're watched over by a guardian angel'.

## Attunement

*Attunement* represents how 'in-touch' the character is with the Afterlife. There are three choices: *Oblivious*, *Aware*, and *Connected*.

*Oblivious*: Your character has no ability to perceive the immaterial world, except through the use of certain Supernatural Powers (like *Ghost Vision*, which is described below). The character's Consistency is 'material'.

The vast majority of Mortals are Oblivious, even those who dabble in the Occult and possess Supernatural Powers.

*Aware*: Your character can see and hear ghosts, spirits, and immaterial objects, but cannot touch or otherwise physically interact with them (except through the use of Supernatural Powers). The character's consistency is 'material'.

Aware Mortals are reasonably common. The most numerous are Sabbatarians, people who were born on a Saturday. However, most of them are without formal training in the Occult or Folklore (they have scores of 12 or lower in those Skills), and thus they often mistake spirits for other Mortals, or otherwise discount the strange things they see.

*Connected*: Your character has the innate ability to see, hear, and fully interact with Lost Souls, incorporeal beings, and immaterial objects. The character's consistency is 'semi-material'.

A Connected Mortal is extremely rare. The most common cause of this condition is a near-death experience, which creates a character who exists in both the Mortal and Spirit Worlds simultaneously.

Your Narrator may wish to dictate your character's Attunement, or he could allow you to choose it for yourself. However, you or your Narrator may prefer to randomly determine Attunement. To do so, roll percentile dice:

-If you roll between 01 and 80, your character is Oblivious.

-If you roll between 81 and 95, your character is Aware. He might be a Sabbatarian, a natural psychic, or anything else you and your Narrator agree upon.

-If you roll 96 to 00, your character has somehow become Connected. He probably has a really good story to tell at cocktail parties, too.

## Mindset

*Mindset* represents the character's level of belief in the Spirit World. There are four choices: *Skeptical*, *Unconvinced*, *Convinced* and *True Believer*.

**Skeptical:** Your character has an active and deep-seated disbelief in the Spirit World, so strong that any Supernatural Powers used in your character's presence suffer a one-die penalty. Additionally, your character gets a bonus die to Sanity and Will rolls. A Skeptical character can never gain or use any Supernatural Powers.

If a Skeptical character is ever confronted with clear, compelling, and undeniable evidence of the Supernatural, the player must immediately roll (Passable vs Sanity). Penalty dice will be inflicted based on how strong the evidence is, as determined by the Narrator (using the examples in the Sanity skill description as a guide). If the character passes the check, he remains Skeptical, and either rationalizes the evidence to himself, or blocks the whole event from his memory.

If the player fails the check by rolling Poor to Pathetic, the character becomes *Convinced* (see below). They must also roll once on the Mental Illness Table. If the player fails the check with a Catastrophic roll, the character still becomes Convinced, but *two* rolls on the Mental Illness table are required.

Truly Skeptical mortals are fairly rare. Most people, even those who scoff at the idea of ghosts and goblins, fall into the Unconvinced category.

**Unconvinced:** Your character doesn't really believe in magic and ghosts, but is reasonably open to the idea that there may be things in the world currently unknown to science. This character gets no bonus to Sanity or Will rolls, can't gain Supernatural Powers, and has no effect on Powers used in their presence.

If an Unconvinced character is ever confronted with clear, compelling, and undeniable evidence of the Supernatural, they must make a Sanity roll with penalty dice inflicted based on how strong the evidence is, as determined by the Narrator (using the examples in the Sanity skill description as a guide). If the character passes the check, they remain Unconvinced, and manage to rationalize the evidence to themselves. However, they *do* remember it, and any future Sanity checks made in the face of fresh Supernatural evidence suffer one penalty die (non-cumulative).

If a character fails this Sanity check by rolling between Poor and Pathetic, they become Convinced. However, unlike Skeptical characters, they needn't roll on the Mental Illness Table, since their worldview hasn't been altered quite so radically. If they roll Catastrophic, however, they are required to make one roll on the Mental Illness Table, in addition to becoming Convinced.

The vast majority of Mortals are Unconvinced, even the ones who buy into astrology, psychics, and Ouija boards. The smallest shred of doubt is all that is required to separate the Unconvinced from the Convinced.

**Convinced:** Your character knows that *something* is out there, but those with low scores (12 or less) in Occult and/or Folklore have a lot of false impressions. They are capable of gaining and using Supernatural Powers, but they might mistake them for psionic talents, superpowers granted by aliens, or something having to do with fluoride in the drinking water. No power can be selected more than once (see the section on **Supernatural Powers** below for more details on how Mortals gain and use Powers).

Very few Mortals are Convinced of the existence of the Supernatural, and even the ones who are have only a spotty and incomplete understanding of the mysteries of the Spirit World. It takes a zealous determination, bordering on the fanatical, to rise from the ranks of the Convinced into the rarefied realms of the True Believer.

**True Believer:** Your character possesses full knowledge and acceptance of the Spirit World. To be a True Believer is to devote one's life to delving into the mysteries of the Afterlife. Your character's in-depth study of the Occult means that they have no restrictions on gaining Supernatural Powers. However, this research has also brought your character face-to-face with horrors beyond Mortal comprehension, which results in your character suffering a penalty die on all Sanity and Will rolls.

True Believers are rare in the general population; your average tinfoil hat-wearing conspiracy theorist is merely Convinced. It takes a special kind of intense focus to be a True Believer.

Your Narrator may dictate your character's Mindset, or allow you to choose it. Random determination is also possible, by rolling one ten-sided die:

- If you roll 1-2, your character is Skeptical.
- If you roll 3-7, your character is Unconvinced.
- If you roll 8-9, your character is Convinced.
- If you roll 0, your character is a True Believer.

## Supernatural Powers

Mortal characters with Mindsets of Convinced or True Believer can choose and use Supernatural Powers, like Lost Souls do. However, there are some differences:

*Fewer Powers-* Mortals gain Powers on a more restrictive Karma table, which is printed on the Mortal character sheet.

*Using Powers-* For a Mortal to use a Supernatural Power, their Player must first roll (Passable vs Occult). If the roll is successful, the Power may be used normally.

If the roll is failed, the Power cannot be used, though the attempt still burns up one of the Uses Per Day.

If the roll is Catastrophic or Awesome, the character has been granted an insight into the true nature of the Spirit World, and must immediately roll (Passable vs Sanity). A failure forces a roll on the Mental Illness Table.

*New Powers-* In addition to all the Supernatural Powers available to Lost Souls, Mortals also have access to two brand-new Powers: *Astral Projection* and *Ghost Vision*.

### **Astral Projection**

Uses Per Day: One

Duration: As long as the user chooses

Range: Self

Effects: the user goes into a trance and creates an ectoplasmic body. This ectoplasmic body is just like a ghost.

The user makes ectoplasmic copies of his clothes and whatever he is carrying, at no Karma cost. His spirit leaves his body behind and roams the world as a Lost Soul. He can see other Lost Souls, and interact freely with them. When using Astral Projection, the user's body is left behind in a deathlike coma. It is at the mercy of its surroundings; a house could burn down around it and the user wouldn't know it until he tried to return and found that he couldn't. If the user's material body is destroyed, he can never return to it. He becomes a Lost Soul (see **crossing Over**, below). Mortals traveling by means of Astral Projection can be spotted by other immaterial beings because of the warmth that they radiate.

### **Ghost Vision**

Uses Per Day: Six

Duration: (Passable vs Alertness) x 10 minutes

Range: Too Far Away

Effects: Allows user to see and hear ectoplasmic beings and objects. This Power does not allow the user to touch or manipulate immaterial beings or objects.

## **Aura**

An Aura is a field of colored energy which surrounds people, both living and dead. The color of the Aura reveals things about the person, as detailed in the entry for the *True Sight* Power (page 120 of *Lost Souls*). For your convenience, here's a quick rundown of the colors most common to Mortals:

**Black:** The person is evil, or dying (or both!).

**Blue:** The person possesses the ability to heal. Such a Mortal might have the Healing Hands Power (p. 108 of *Lost Souls*), or a Medical skill of 13 or higher.

**Green:** The Mortal is happy and psychologically well-adjusted.

**Grey:** This Mortal is in pain, either spiritual or physical.

**Pink:** This color connotes physical health. It could also indicate Strength and/or Stamina scores of 13 or higher.

**Purple:** A high degree of psychic ability. This Mortal will have an Empathy score of 13+, or an Attunement of *Aware* or *Connected*.

**Red:** This Mortal is extremely angry, or lying.

**White:** Absolute purity and innocence. This color is rare in adults, and is more often seen in children.

**Yellow:** This Mortal is mentally ill.

## **Karma**

Mortals gain Karma by setting and achieving Goals In Life, which are analogous to Ghostly Vows. They can also use Karma to buy bonus dice, as detailed in the Rolling the Bones rules variant (or, if your game doesn't use bonus dice, they can buy column shifts, as described on p. 71 of *Lost Souls*). If they are Connected, or have the Astral Projection Power, they can spend Karma manipulate ectoplasm and create immaterial Gear the same way Lost Souls can.

## **Crossing Over**

If a Mortal PC ever loses all of his Will To Live, the Narrator will determine what happens next. The character might simply pass onto his next incarnation in the cycle of death and rebirth, or, if he died suddenly and has unfinished business, he might become a Lost Soul.

If a Mortal becomes a Lost Soul, follow these steps:

- Subtract 3 from all Attributes.
- The character loses Adrenaline Rush, but gains his Profession's Talent .
- The character loses the Lifestyle Skill, and gains the Faith Heal Skill.
- The player chooses or rolls for a Lost Soul Type. He modifies his Attributes accordingly, and then recalculates his Skills. Note which Skills had been increased during play, and carry these increases over. However, don't take the Lost Soul Type's two Specialties.
- Attunement and Mindset are no longer applicable.
- Use the character's Karma total to recreate any gear that the player wants to have cross over with the character. He doesn't have to recreate everything he was carrying, just the items his character was particularly attached to.
- Unfinished Business can be decided upon by the player and Narrator, working together.
- Life & Death events can stay the same. If the Mortal Character had some of the Life & Death events which were changed in the **Character Creation Tables** section of this document, they can be changed back if the player or Narrator wish.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully, these suggestions will help you to populate your *Lost Souls* game with Mortal PCs who are every bit as much fun to play as their ectoplasmic counterparts. Enjoy, and remember: Every day above ground is a good day!