

# ESPECULATÓRIO

## CHAPTER II

### "Looking for Horror"



OCTOBER 2016

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## Technical Sheet

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Because we recognize gender equality as a Human Right and wish to promote its achievement even in writing, where it reads "he", should read "she" as applicable, and vice-versa.

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## EDITORIAL - LOOKING FOR HORROR

*«The traditional conception of horror emotions, coupled with the popularity of the genre, gives rise to a paradox: why are audiences attracted to horror if it generates emotions that we avoid in real life?»*

*[The Paradox of Horror: Fear as a Positive Emotion, Katerina Bantinaki]*

This is the question which will guide us this month: as readers, players and fans, what is it that attract us so much to the Horror genre? Why do we want to discover more about what distinguishes it and the different ways to experience Horror?

Its facets are limitless, even being viewed by some as something that runs across all speculative fiction.

Regardless of media, there is something that is central to Horror – its ability to awaken in all of us terrified visions and make us experience one of most basic emotions – fear.

Being Halloween month we want to pay homage to this genre, showing you that fear can be exciting to share.

Come with us on these frightening journeys, looking for Horror!

# FACTS AND FICTIONS: WHY DO WE LIKE TO BE SCARED?

Since the beginning of time we, humans, like to scare ourselves.

Either by stories told by the fire, books and, more recently, games or movies, there were always people who thrive under the feeling of fear.

But what exactly happens when we see, read or hear something scary?

It all starts in our cerebral cortex, which processes what we see and hear and, when confronted with something scary, alerts the amygdala that it spotted a threat.

The production of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin then springs into action, amplifying our responses and helping us escape the danger, which can be very important when the threat is real.

Some of us control their fear response better

and, therefore, respond a bit more slowly to the scary stimulus, giving the cerebral cortex more time to process all the available information and realize that the threat isn't real, it's just the scary soundtrack your Dungeon Master picked for tonight's game session.

It is at this time that the neurotransmitter gamma-Aminobutyric acid (GABA) is produced and the brain, and your body, relaxes and everything goes back to normal.

But, even when the threat isn't real, the signal travels to the hypothalamus, which communicates with our glandular system, and the suprarenal glands, situated above the kidneys, which immediately start to produce the hormone epinephrine, or adrenaline.

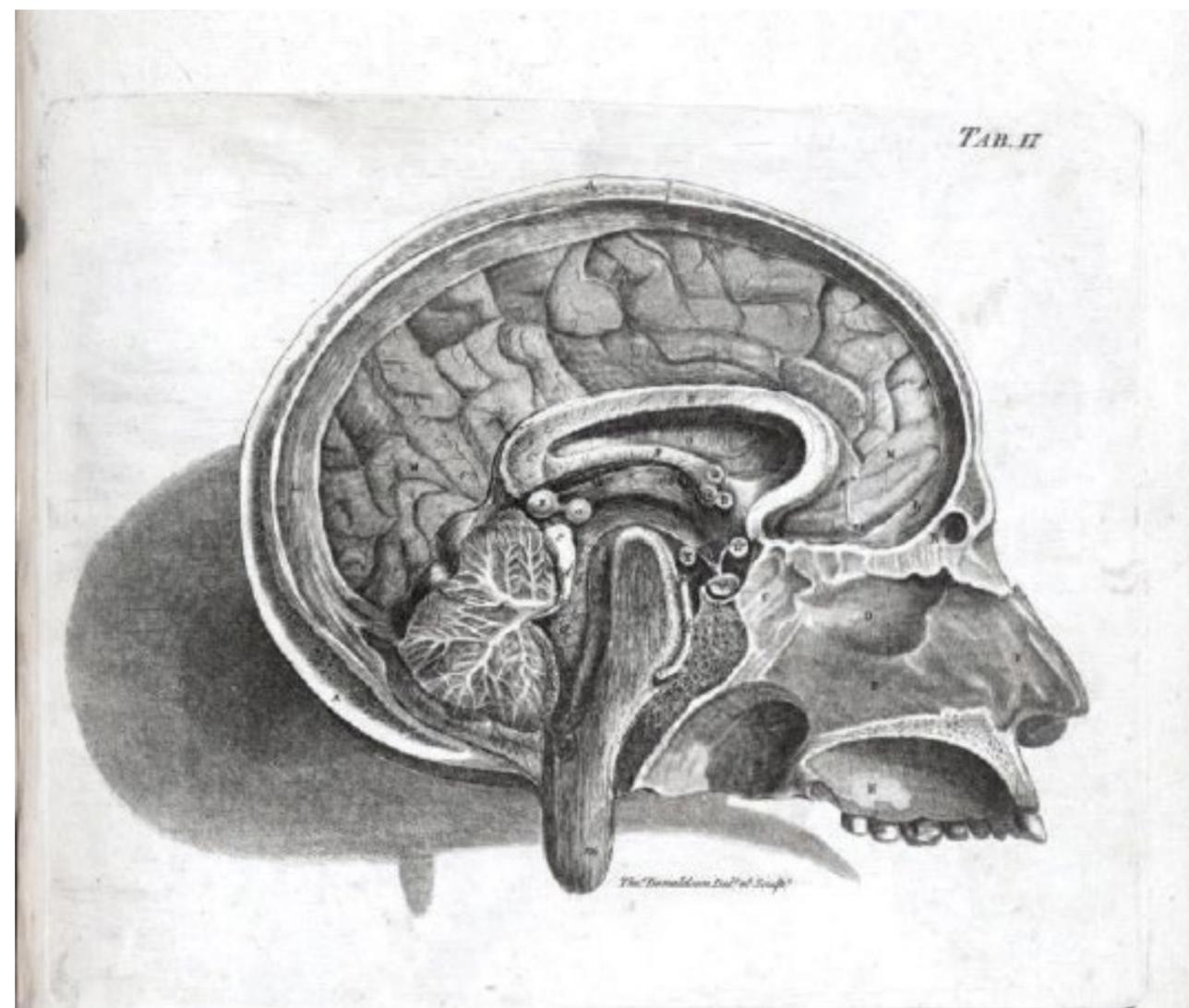
Epinephrine raises our heart rate, the volume of blood per heartbeat and the sugar levels in our blood, minimizes the blood flow

flight-or-flight response.

Epinephrine also stimulates the production of endorphins, which reduce our response to pain and are also associated with the feeling of pleasure.

Endorphins are also released during exercise, sex or moments of anticipation of pleasure, which means that, as long as the fear response shuts down at this point, being scared (in the safety of a cinema theatre) could

in our intestinal system and maximizes it to our leg and arm muscles. This is what is called the



lead to very positive experiences.

So, why don't all people like scary fictions?

As we mentioned above, dopamine is released during the fear response.

This hormone is also associated to mechanisms of conditioning of responses to certain stimuli and can help us produce consistent fight-or-flight responses to things we already know we should be scared of.

When the hormones rush to our brain, receptors, called autoreceptors, in our neurons evaluate the amount of dopamine present and are responsible for regulating its production.

People with less autoreceptors tend to seek more dangerous situations, possibly because they have a bigger production of dopamine during a state of fear.

People who scare easily (like me, I must confess) do not control their fear response



very well and, as such, their suprarenal glands start producing cortisol, the so-called stress hormone, and the body prepares for the worst, suppressing its normal metabolic processes and causing an homeostatic imbalance, which is really not comfortable.

When one studies the phenomenon of fear one can conclude that, even though there are some universal fears, one can learn to be afraid of everything and anything, regardless of culture.

A good example of this is the experiment carried out in the 20's by Watson and Rayner, in which they conditioned a child, known as "Baby Albert", to develop a fear of white rats, and afterwards to generalize that fear to other similar animals or object (originally cute and fluffy).

The child was exposed to a white rat and allowed to play with it. In the exact moment the child would touch the animal, one of the researchers would produce a loud bang behind his head, by hitting an iron beam with a hammer, causing a fear reaction. After several repetitions, they simply had to show the white rat to little

"Albert" to scare him.

Glossing over the obvious ethical questions involved in an experiment like this, it is easy to see that we can learn to fear anything.

However, some fears are culturally pervasive.

Every culture has its own monsters but they all have something in common.

The monsters that haunt us always challenge the natural laws in some way, either by being somehow non-human or semi-human, like the "Frankenstein" monster, or by returning to life after death, like ghosts or other spirits.

We are specially obsessed with death and, as such, we have various monsters of the undead variety, like zombies or vampires.

The names might change, but the motivation behind our fears is always the same.

Now that you know a bit more about the processes behind our primal fears, we hope it can help you write your horror story or choose a scary board game for your next game night.

Catarina

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# HORROR IS OUT THERE...

To make someone feel something when reading a book, watching a movie or a work of art, or playing a game is not an easy task. In order for it to work, we need to completely immerse the person in the world or scenario we are creating.

Notwithstanding, of course, that some emotions are more easily conveyed than

others, or that some people are more likely to experience specific emotions.

Terror, or Horror, differs somewhat from other genres because the creator has a difficult balance to achieve. In order for the audience to be affected by the horror, the author has to balance reality and imagination, so that the scenario is plausible enough to happen, but at

the same time it has to keep people completely focused on history. No one can be thinking: "This could never happen!", because if that happens, the author has lost his public.

The Especulatório team went on a quest for books, role-playing games (RPGs) and boardgames that made our hearts jump, step lightly in dark corridors or rooms and check under our beds late at night.

There is no doubt that a good horror book will put everyone jumping at shadows and make our hearts beat hard in our chests at every turning of the page. This is not accomplished only through a good description of a bloody scene. Actually, there are several horror books in which there is never even a description of a drop of blood. It is all about maintaining everything in suspense, scene after scene, keeping the reader with his chest tight and his heart in his hands all the time.

Some of the books we found that are known and renown for their ability to keep us awake at night are: "Dracula" by Bram Stoker, Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein", "The Shining" and "Carrie" by Stephen King, "The Fall of the House of Usher" by Edgar Allan Poe, the anthology "A Sombra sobre Lisboa" edited by Luís Corte Real, Anne Rice's "Interview with the Vampire",

"House of Leaves" by Mark Z. Danielewski, "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson, "I am not a Serial Killer" by Dan Wells (which will now be adapted into a movie) and Patrick Süskind's "Perfume: The Story of a Murderer". All these books explore a panoply of scenarios that make our hearts beat faster and cold sweat run through our bodies.

Although it is not easy to create a horror ambience, it is easy enough to imagine that creating an atmosphere of terror in board games or RPGs can be a very difficult task.

If you think about it, one of the things that really kickstarts our imagination is being alone at home, with the wind howling outside and only small clicks and cracks breaking the silence that surrounds us.

Of course, these conditions are harder to achieve in the middle of a group of people laughing and talking. So, in addition to the suggestions of games and RPGs we have for you, we also suggest that you use eerie ambience music and talk to your players so that the noise is reduced to a minimum to make it easier for your players' senses to be alert.

The right ambient music and atmospheric lighting are two very effective tricks for a terror

campaign.

And speaking of campaigns that call for a healthy party that can be the target of several heart attacks and sleepless nights, these are some of the examples we found for you: “[Carrion Crown](#)”, “[Ravenloft](#)”, “[Carnival of Tears](#)”, “[Hangman’s Noose](#)” and “[Tomb of Horrors](#)”.

Each of these campaigns explores terror in a different way. While the “[Carrion Crown](#)” and “[Ravenloft](#)” point more towards gothic horror, with gothic architectural elements and a more medieval and darker ambience, “[Carnival of Tears](#)” features gore elements, with a major focus on the description of grotesque forms, physical torture and blood. Finally “[Hangman’s Noose](#)” and “[Tomb of Horrors](#)” explore suspense as a way to unsettle players, keeping them with their hearts on their hands and always wondering what will happen next.

Moving on to a system that is slightly different from Dungeons & Dragons or Pathfinder, we have also “[Vampire, the Masquerade](#)” which is set in a gothic-punk version of the modern world, where players assume the role of vampires that have to deal with vampire hunters, monsters and their own bestial nature. There is also a [LARP \(live action RPG\)](#) of this system happening in Lisbon.

Another system that also allows us to play

a RPG in a scary environment is the “[Dread](#)” system. Instead of relying on dice rolls, players use a Jenga tower to see if they were able to do the action they want, or not. The adventures in this system are usually suspenseful and allow (with the right GM) the creation of a good atmosphere of terror.

We also saw some webseries that may be interesting for the theme of terror and that can be a good company for more lonely nights in some abandoned house. For example “[Spooked - a Paranormal Comedy](#)”, “[Morganville: The Series](#)” and the short-film “[Werewolves](#)”, all from [Geek & Sundry](#).

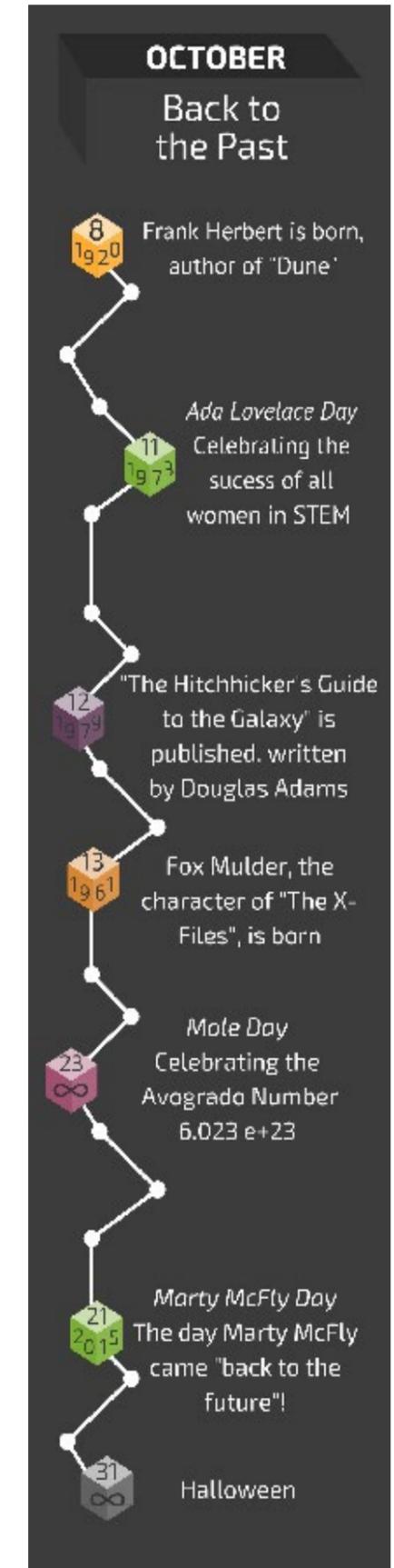
There are several board games which fall into the horror category, but perhaps the best known among them are “[Arkham Horror](#)”, “[Mansions of Madness](#)”, “[Betrayal at the House on the Hill](#)”, “[Touch of Evil](#)” and “[Last Night on Earth](#)”. One of the features that almost all of these games have in common is that they are mainly cooperative, perhaps to emulate the importance of numbers in order to survive the attacks of otherworldly beings. These games, like we’ve seen in RPGs, also explore different perspectives of terror. While “[Arkham Horror](#)” and “[Mansions of Madness](#)” reflect the slow spiral

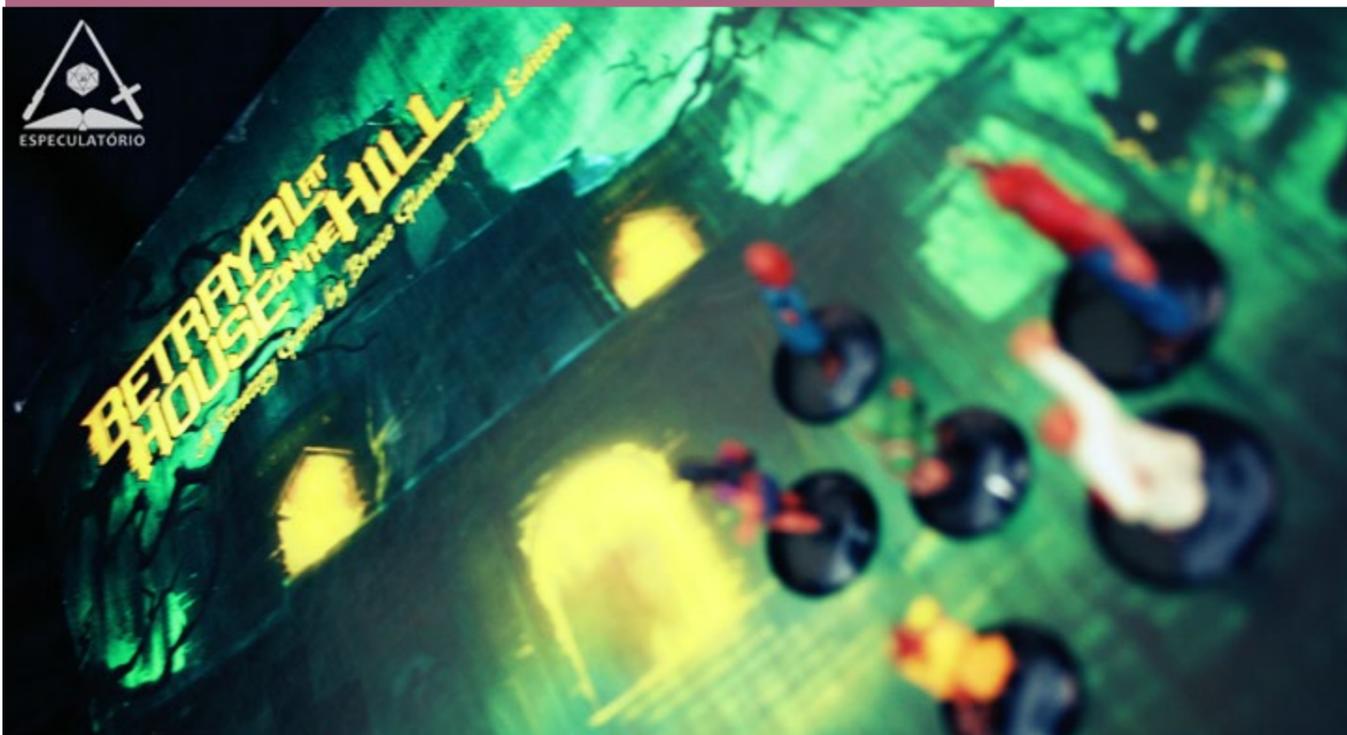
into insanity when facing the constant threat of terror and suspense, “[Betrayal](#)” and “[Touch of Evil](#)” are faster games, very unpredictable and that focus more on the scenario and its villain, than in the dark ambient of the game. Finally “[Last Night on Earth](#)” focuses more on the end of the world scenario and is a typical survival game, where terror is transmitted through the zombie hordes catching up with the heroes, who don’t have anywhere to run. If you want to see some more good games to play during Halloween you can always take a peek at these lists from [BoardGame Geek](#).

As you can see the terror is present (and well represented, by the way) in various sections of fantasy and fiction. Spooks, jumps, screams of terror and suspense are within your reach this Halloween, just grab a good book or join your preferred party and enter a haunted mansion or fight the zombies during the apocalypse. Whatever you choose, do not forget to explore every corner, lest something sneaks behind your back to surprise you ...

Have fun!

Inês





# MYSTERY, BETRAYAL AND 50 VILLAINS

*You and your friends are inside a car in one of those dirt roads through the countryside. You had a long day at the picnic, but the energy is still vibrant. With everyone laughing and talking, nobody notices the thick splash of raindrops falling outside or the wind howling while the sun goes down...Until the car stops!*

*The jokes about the driver and lack of gasoline start in seconds, until everyone starts to realize that, by the faces of the two people outside, the situation is not joke material... Of course, following Murphy's Law, the rain intensifies, becoming a water curtain that does not let you see anything beyond the dim light of the car headlights. "Help will take a few hours to come" says the soaked driver as he gets in the car "We are quite in the middle of nowhere..."*

*At that moment lightning illuminates the sky and you see in the near distance the outline of a house. "That's cliché..." says someone in the back seat "An old, decrepit house on a hill in a stormy day." After some debate and argument about the pros and cons, the "At least we are not holed up inside the car and I need to go to*

*the bathroom!" statements wins.*

*You climb up the hill slowly, using the weak light provided by your mobile phones, with the rain pouring hard on you. When you reach the house, someone knocks on the door, but no one answers. "It's probably one of those houses that is only used during the holidays" says someone from the wet group of people standing on the front porch. "For this to be really scary, the only thing missing is for the door to be unlocked" says the guy in front as he turns the handle on the door. No one speaks as the door slowly opens and all of you can see the hall inside...*

*One by one, you enter the dark hall, sneakers leaving footprints on the old wooden floor and small puddles forming where people stop to look around ...*

*Thunder resounds outside and the door closes in a crash.*

## WELCOME TO "BETRAYAL AT THE HOUSE ON THE HILL"!

**T**his game is one of the revelation games of recent years, with a really big legion of fans! One reason for this is that "Betrayal" has a high level of repeatability, meaning that we can play several times without feeling that we are only replaying the same game over and over again. Moreover, it also provides several different types of games in one box, by varying the victory conditions. How, you ask? Just keep on reading ...

### HOW TO PLAY

In the beginning of the game, everyone starts in the entrance hall and each player chooses a character to represent him. Each character has four distinct abilities: two physical - Speed

and Strength - and two psychological - Sanity and Knowledge. The speed of the character defines how many dice each person rolls to move each turn, strength is used in combat, sanity is the resolve that allows you to resist the visions of terror that appear in front of you, and knowledge corresponds to the ability to distinguish what is real and what is an illusion.

Each of these skills will be useful throughout the game in order to help you surpass the different challenges.

During each turn the active player has to perform several actions. First, he has to roll a number of dice equal to his speed to see the number of moves available on his turn. Then he

## A Box Full of Tokens

has to decide whether to explore an unexplored area of the house or to go to a room already on the board. If they choose the first option, the player takes one tile from the room pile, making sure it corresponds to the floor where he is located (the house has a basement, a ground floor and an upper floor). After that, he connects the tile to the room where he is, so that both door openings face each other and, to the best of his abilities, harmonize openings between new and old tiles surrounding it. Then he moves his character token to the newly



discovered tile.

At this time one of two things can happen:

- If the tile does not have a symbol and the

player still has some movement left, he can explore a new tile or move to an old one (he can also decide to stop moving and end his turn).

- If the tile has a symbol depicted, the player chooses a card that matches this symbol from the card piles.

The various symbols are: Items, Events and Omens.

The first (Items) usually corresponds to an item that can be used by the player, for example to increase an ability or to peek at tile or card

piles.

The second symbol (Events) corresponds to an event happening in that room, putting him

## A Box Full of Tokens

to the test. If the player is successful, it can enable him to get an extra item or increase his abilities. In any of these cases the player's turn ends, even if he still has movement left.

If the symbol is a raven (Omens) then the game can change dramatically. The Omen is the core concept of the game and usually



corresponds to an item or (non-playable) character which may (or not) trigger a series of events. After revealing his Omen, the player must roll six dice. If the total is equal to or greater than the number of already revealed Omens, nothing special happens, the player ends his turn. But if the total is lower, something very bad happens inside the house and the players will have to find out what.

It is now that the game becomes even more interesting. Players have to check the story

book and depending on the room where the Omen was revealed and what Omen it was, the players will face a different challenge (there are fifty in total).

One of the players (usually the one that reveals the Omen) is the traitor, which was corrupted by one of the many

terrible things roaming in the house and his mission is now to try to kill or convert or absorb other players (yes, you read it correctly, absorb!). The mission for the rest of the group is to stop it somehow, either by fleeing, destroying the monster or even the house.

Each of these scenarios has a different mechanic: there are some where you need to enter in direct combat with monsters, and others where you need more strategy

or luck.

The game ends when either the traitor or the players meet their victory goals.

As you can see, with fifty different scenarios and with the traitor being revealed at different time points, every game is a different experience. Even when the scenario is the same, which rooms have already been explored, how many items were already discovered or which characters are playing, will make the game unique.

“Betrayal” is a cooperative game and can be played even by people who are not used to playing board games. It takes between forty minutes to an hour and is guaranteed fun.

It is one of the games most played with our group of friends.

We recommend playing this game in especially cold and rainy nights, with a thunderstorm as soundtrack, to experience some spooks! You can always make a scary ambience with low light and by using the playlist we choose for you...

Have some nice board game time!

Inês

## TERRIFYING MUSIC

**Haunted House Sound Effects: The Haunting Of Spooky Manor** - Haunt Former

**Darkness Descends** - Midnight Syndicate

**Main Theme** - Stranger Things Soundtrack

**Nocturnal Me** - Echo & the Bunnymen

**Elegia** - New Order

**Creepy Organ Music** - Unkown

**Stone Guardians** - Midnight Syndicate

**Sonata No 2: Funeral Mach** - Frédéric Chopin

**Danse Macabre** - Camille Saint-Saëns

**Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor** - Johann Sebastian Bach

**Ride the Valkyries** - Richard Wagner

**Carmina Burana: O Fortuna e Fortune plango vulnera** - Carl Orff



# INTERVIEW WITH “OS LOUCOS DE LISBOA”

This month, dedicated to the Horror genre, we got together with Isaque Sanches, creator of the game “Os Loucos de Lisboa”.

If you relish in the opportunity to experience moments of angst and paranoia through the city of Lisbon, then this is the game for you.

1) WHAT IS “OS LOUCOS DE LISBOA”?  
 “Os Loucos de Lisboa” is a game I created that is partly a role-playing game (RPG) in a live-action format (the players embody their characters instead of describing them, as in a theatre), partly an ARG (alternative reality game), and sometimes even a boardgame.

The reasoning behind this is that this project is a prototype for a game that will be called “Madness” and that will, hopefully, be published this year.

“Os Loucos de Lisboa” started three years ago, but the rules have been changing almost every month, as it started from an ambitious, and difficult to test, idea.

After all this time, looking back at the



results, it is undeniable that this was the path to follow (no matter how hard it was).

“Os Loucos de Lisboa” works as a kind of “Madness” campaign in Lisbon, since the game can take place in any world city and in any urban setting. The basic principle is centered on the collective fears of the contemporary world (2010’s): mass disinformation, power intrigues and conspiracies, surveillance and digital espionage, media and intelligence agencies

corruption. The protagonists (characters created by the players), are dropped in the middle of all this, unsure if what they know is a secret, if they are involved in a conspiracy or if they are simply going crazy.

Is your wife a KGB spy? Are you creating an elaborate fantasy? Maybe you just want to justify her lies and the fact that she is hiding things from you? Has your son been abducted by aliens? Or do you simply don’t want to accept that he’s dead? Has the wife of another character lied about the death of another character’s child because they are both working for the KGB? Are they both aliens?

Every protagonist’s deliriums coexist in the same universe. It’s a kind of *folie à deux* with a

lot of people.

In its current version, the game can be played around a table as well as in a live-action format. It has three classes and subclasses (a total of nine archetypes) and is mechanically centered around bluff and investigation/deduction.

We are planning to publish a free version with the basic structure of the game and a paid version (with a symbolic cost, as we are not in this for the money) with some extra modules. Even so, “Os Loucos de Lisboa” continues to exist and whoever is interested in playing or watching can contact us through our Facebook page, because our sessions remain free of charge.

2) WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THIS IDEA?

Curiously this all began with a niche RPG called “Don’t Rest Your Head”. A few years ago I experimented with the live action format and decided it would be interesting to adapt this game, which is usually played with cards and dice, to a more “theatrical” form.

Today, after three years of hard work, although there is still a connection to the insomnia and paranoia themes, the result is not even remotely similar, neither in its aesthetics

nor, more importantly, in its mechanics. I quite like the psychological side of roleplay and I wonder: if this is the sort of game that focuses on projecting and empathising with characters created by us and in exploring our own minds, why do we spend so many hours killing all sorts of beasts with magical swords? For me that always seemed a waste of time.

That was what drew me to this project: the fact that it is contemporary and closer to our reality as players, allowing us to form stronger bonds with the characters and explore different themes.

3) WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS GENRE OF SPECULATIVE FICTION (SINCE YOUR STORIES REVOLVE AROUND PSYCHOSIS, DELIRIUM AND PARANOIA)?

In my opinion there are few roleplay games that are really based in roleplay.

I have nothing against pure escapism and power fantasy, but stepping into the shoes of someone else has little to do with that. I am close to people who suffer from mental illnesses and I too suffered from them.

That complex side of the human mind has a strong personal importance to me. It would be impossible to explore it in any other game conditions than those existing in live-action.

And it would also be hard for the player to imagine a world completely different from his own (as in Dungeons & Dragons), which explains why the game setting is contemporary.

The key points are involvement and impact. The more conspiracy-based side of the game (in “Os Loucos de Lisboa” everything happens in a real city and follows its real changes) forces the players to commit fully to their characters and to completely embody the psychological fear.

4) IN YOUR OPINION, WHY DOES THE HORROR GENRE HAVE SO MANY FANS?

I have no idea. But I do know that the number of people that went this year to the cinema to watch “Don’t Breathe” was not the same that watched “The Conjuring 2”. For me there are those horror fans that have seen “The Shinning” seven times and like to read Poe at the beach and there are those fans that have watched all seven movies of the “Saw” series. There are a lot less people in the first category (personally I know one or two) than in the second. If the question is why there are so many people in the second, I have no idea and I am not sure I want to find out.



5) WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE OF THIS KIND OF PROJECT?

Theatre has always been a niche, for those who attend as well as for the actors. Small side note: I believe that in a few years we will replace actors in movies with 3D models, like what happens in videogames (see “Uncharted 4”), and from there to generate or reuse animation is a small leap. Theatre actors do it for the love of the art, which often does not cover expenses.

In general, people do not enjoy entertainment that defies them emotionally

or cognitively. It is no coincidence that I love the live-action format, for it is the opposite end of the spectrum.

RPG is a conceptual (niche) and theatrical (even a more specific niche) game.

The live-action RPG is a super-niche of a super-niche. In Portugal and other Mediterranean and Latin countries you can forget about it. It isn’t and will never be a movement.

There was a time when I believed it would be, but I am more sceptical today.

6) IF YOU COULD MEET ANY CHARACTER FROM ANY SPECULATIVE FICTION (FANTASY, SCIENCE FICTION AND/OR HORROR) BOOK OR GAME, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Albus Dumbledore. Nothing in the world of Harry Potter is consistent with the other elements. How does money work in a world where magic can accomplish all? Is there a spell to clean glasses? Does that mean that there is a spell for each object but with a different formula? If you can travel through fireplaces why is there a train to Hogwarts? If you can travel through fireplaces why don’t owls just travel that way, wouldn’t it save time? If Harry is a millionaire why does he live with his aunt and uncle through several books? Why does the trio of kids spend “The Prisoner of Azkaban” running around when they have a time machine?

It almost seems like the author made things up as she wrote, right? However, in the middle of all these and other existential doubts, the strangest thing in the Harry Potter universe is the character of Dumbledore. I grew up never understanding what was going on inside this man’s head. And today, looking back, in the great scheme of things, I understand even less his intentions, motivations, and objectives

– what does he want? Why does he do the things he does? Why does he leave clues for children that lead to mortal dangers but does not give them sufficient information so that they can survive those risks? Was it really so important that he died? Snape managed to stay undercover – great and now what? Was it worth the sacrifice of a powerful wizard? What was the logic behind that plan?

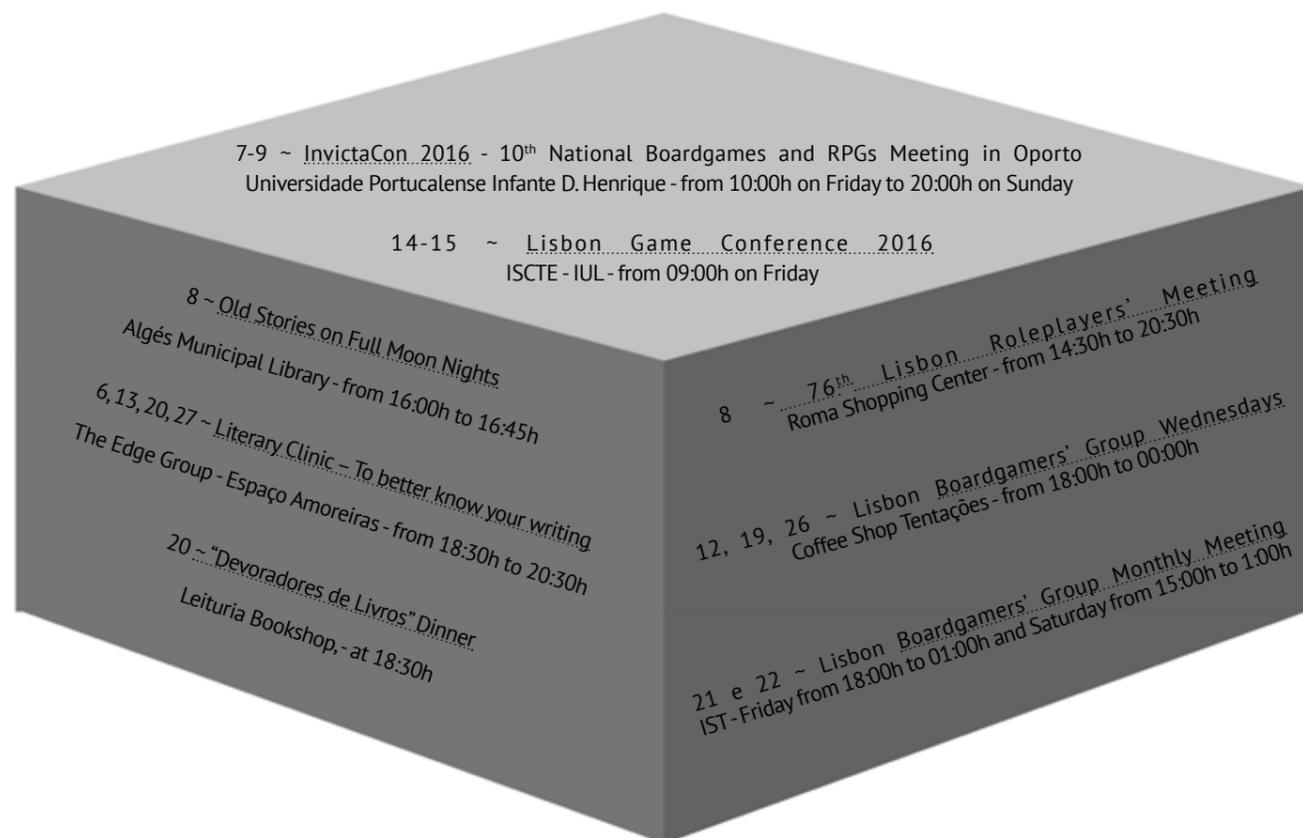
In short, I would love to have two hours to talk to this person and get to know him.

7) IF YOU LIVED IN THE WORLD OF THE LAST SPECULATIVE FICTION BOOK OR GAME YOU READ/PLAYED, WHERE WOULD YOU BE AT THIS EXACT MOMENT?

If “Mr. Robot” counts, I would be in the centre of a digital revolution or in a complex delirious space of a person with multiple personalities.

(This article - and the words of our interviewed guest - was translated by the Especulatório team)

## EVENT CALENDAR



# H O R R O R L I T E R A T U R E : F O U R I N D I V I D U A L S W H O D E F I N E D A G E N R E

When we think about Horror literature, each of us thinks of something different: we think about this or that author, this or that title, from the classical to the contemporary.

As a genre it spans from the gothic to the supernatural, can have more mystery or more blood, goes from such known titles as “The Mysteries of Udolpho” to practically every book by Stephen King, with a million other authors in between, from the least known to the more celebrated.

Well, at Especulatório, when we started to think about writing about Horror, we began reflecting about which names we identified as the classics... and the list got very very quickly.

So, we decided to agree on four names that for us were the most significant: Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker and H.P. Lovecraft.

As such, we give to you a glimpse into the lives of the parents of Horror literature!

## Pages that Make you Fly



**Name:** Mary Shelley  
**Birth:** August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1797,  
 London  
**Death:** February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1951,  
 London  
**Relevant Works:** The Last  
 Man, Frankenstein, Mathilde

regard today as Mary Shelley's most famous book: "Frankenstein".

Following the suicide of Percy Shelley's first wife, Mary and Percy were finally wed in 1816 and, two years later, in 1818, "Frankenstein" was published, anonymously and with an introduction by Percy himself.

However, Mary and Percy did not have an easy marriage. She suffered through several miscarriages, with only one son surviving until adulthood, and in 1822 Percy died while travelling with a friend. Mary was a widow by the age of 25. From then on, Mary dedicated her life solely to her work in order to support her son, having, in the course of almost 30 years, written tales such as "Valperga" or "The Last Man". At the same time she continued to promote her late husband's literary work.

Mary Shelley died on the 1st of February of 1851, in London, being buried in St. Peter's Church near her parents.

One century later another of her books – "Mathilde" – publicada. was published.

However, "Frankenstein" continues to be her most classical and memorable tale (at least for us).

[More information here.](#)

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, born in London in 1797, was the daughter of the philosopher and writer, William Godwin, and of the famous women's rights advocate and writer, Mary Wollstonecraft.

Although she never received a formal education, from a young age she took advantage of her father's library (for our immense benefit), which encouraged her already big imagination and fondness for writing.

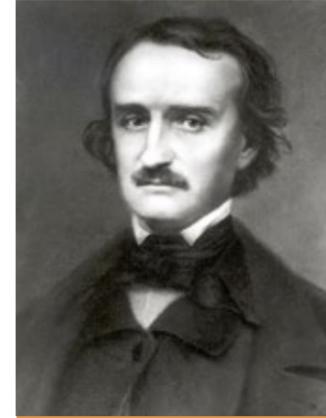
In 1814 she began a relationship with the, then still married, Percy Shelley, her father's student, and nothing stopped them from eloping and travelling around Europe.

It was during those trips that Mary Shelley met, among others, Lord Byron, with whom they spent time reading ghost stories.

One day an idea emerged: why didn't every member of the group write a horror story?

That was the first step towards what we

## Pages that Make you Fly



**Name:** Edgar Allan Poe  
**Birth:** January 19<sup>th</sup>, 1809,  
 Boston  
**Death:** October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1849,  
 Baltimore  
**Relevant Works:** The Fall  
 of the House of Usher, The  
 Raven, Tamerline

Edgar Allan Poe was born to traveling actors and had a sister and a brother. He was never able to have a relationship with his parents as they died before he completed his third birthday. At that time he went to live with John and Frances Allan, in Richmond.

It was by that time he began writing his first poems, in an attempt to follow in his idol's footsteps – Lord Byron – having sufficient material to publish a book by the age of 13 (alas, he was convinced not to do it).

In 1826 he started studying at the University of Virginia, which proved to be a total failure. With little money to support himself, he started gambling as a way to settle his debts but only managed to increase them. Forced to return to Richmond, he discovered his fiancée – Elmira Royster – had become engaged to another during his absence.

With a broken heart and an increasingly difficult relation with John Allan, Poe decides to leave Richmond and try to publish his first book, which he accomplishes by the age of 18: "Tamerlane and Other Poems".

At the same time he joined the US Army and afterwards moved to the Military Academy, where his stay was short-lived, ending with him being expelled after just one year. He had, however, been able to publish another book by this time.

Edgar Allan Poe met his future wife in Baltimore and the two were married in 1836 (when she was merely 13 years of age). He gained a reputation as a literary critic, having worked for the "Southern Literary Messenger", among others.

The 1830's proved to be productive years for Poe, with the publishing of his collection "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque", where one of his most famous short stories is included – "The Fall of the House of Usher" – as well as becoming the father of modern detective stories – for example with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue".

However, Poe only became a distinguished Horror literature author with the publishing of his poem "The Raven", where he explores

themes such as death and loss. Unfortunately, these themes would become part of his own personal life. With the death of his beloved wife in 1847 Poe suffers a great shock, which has an enormous negative impact on his health as well as on his work.

His last days remain a mystery: he was found roaming through Baltimore on the third of October of 1849 and was transported to the hospital where he died of causes still unknown.

To this day the name Edgar Allan Poe conjures images of assassins and mysterious women, scary short stories and poems of terror.

[More information here.](#)



**Name:** Bram Stoker  
**Birth:** November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1847, Dublin  
**Death:** April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1912, London  
**Relevant Works:** Dracula, The Primrose Path, The Garden of Evil

Abraham (or Bram) Stoker, born in Dublin in 1847, was one of the 7 children of Abraham Stoker and Charlotte Matilda Blake Thornley Stoker. He studied at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, from 1864 until he graduated

with honours, six years later, with a degree in mathematics.

Immediately after leaving school he started to work at Dublin Castle, where he stayed for about 10 years. It was there that he discovered another passion – writing – having begun to write for the “Dublin Evening Mail”. It is when writing a review of a theatrical production of “Hamlet” that Bram Stoker meets someone that will influence and motivate him immensely: Sir Henry Irving.

Irving offered him a manager position at the famous Lyceum Theatre, in London, where Stoker ended up working for more than 30 years.

This post at the theatre allowed Stoker to travel the world, which amplified his dedication to the arts. And that was how he completed and published his first horror novel – “The Primrose Path”, published in 1875 – and in the following years others followed.

Only in 1897 did his most acclaimed story take form – “Dracula”. If it was a success when published, it has not stopped gathering fans to this day, still being considered as one of the greatest classics of the Horror genre.

Following this success, Stoker continued to publish until the end of his days, with titles such as “The Mystery of the Sea” (1902), “The

Jewel of Seven Stars” (1904) and “The Garden of Evil” (1911).

Bram Stoker died in London on the 20th of April, 1912, seven years after the death of his esteemed colleague and friend Henry Irving. His status as one of the greatest classical authors of the Horror genre remains unchallenged.

[More information here.](#)



**Name:** H.P. Lovecraft  
**Birth:** August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1890, Providence  
**Death:** March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1937, Providence  
**Relevant Works:** The Call of Cthulhu, At the Mountains of Madness

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born in 1890 at his family’s house, in Angell Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

His father passed away when he was barely 9 years old, having developed a mental disorder, which left the education of young Howard to his mother, aunts and grandfather.

He was a sick but precocious child: he could recite poetry by the age of two, read by the age of three and write by the age of six.

He became interested in weird fiction early on, with his grandfather encouraging his taste

for gothic literature. He also had an interest in astronomy, having published some articles on the subject as an adult.

H.P. Lovecraft suffered a nervous breakdown in his youth, never being able to finish his formal studies. Instead, he dedicated himself to read and write at home, living as a recluse until 1913. However, he was recognized as a great self-taught student.

In 1914 he started his career as a journalist at the “United Amateur Press Association”, having also launched his own magazine – “The Conservative”. Years later, in 1917, he started to develop his career as a fiction writer, being influenced (as we are) by Edgar Allan Poe.

He was married in 1924 to Sonia Haft Green, but the marriage was short-lived.

His first big success arrived with the publication of some of his stories by “Weird Tales” Horror magazine, which in 1928 publishes the novel that would define his career as a supernatural horror writer – “The Call of Cthulhu”.

Apart from this tale, his bibliography is characterised by more than 60 stories, like “At the Mountains of Madness” (1931) and “The Shadow out of Time” (1934).

His last years were of grave financial difficulties and he died in 1937, victim of cancer.

However, his work was never forgotten, with two colleagues, with whom he used to correspond, creating the "Arkham House" company in order to promote his literary work.

H.P. Lovecraft is seen, to this day, as a classic author of horror tales, inspiring contemporary authors such as Neil Gaiman and Stephen King.

More information [here](#) and [here](#).

We understand perfectly that these four names do not represent everything that was, and is, achieved in Horror literature and we recognize that we gave but a glimpse into the lives of these authors. We also are not trying to devalue all other authors that continue to foster our fears through the written word.

But trust us – if you would like to experience different options and read tales of distinct styles, why not start by those individuals that set the pace for a whole genre?

Frightening readings!

*Maria Inês*

## TOP 5 - "Characters from our Nightmares"



## JOURNALS OF AN INTERNAUT LOST IN SPECULATIVE SPACE

Continuing on my journey through the speculative space, I found myself face to face with a new way of celebrating Edgar Allan Poe, as well as several other renowned authors. I speak, of course, of the webseries "Edgar Allan Poe's Murder Mystery Dinner Party". Could it be possible to ally Horror and Comedy? This show proves that it is indeed!

Edgar Allan Poe decides to invite a group of friends for a Murder Mystery Dinner Party, where each person will embody a different character and together they will have to solve a crime. In this group are authors like H.G. Wells, Mary Shelley, among others.

However, as soon as (almost) everyone gathers at the dinner table something unheard-of happens. The murder that was

supposed to be fictional becomes a reality. And not just once! Every Monday a new episode comes out at the [Shipwrecked Comedy](#) channel and we get more and more involved in the mystery and Horror.

This project, which started in August, was made possible by a campaign launched in February on [Kickstarter](#)) and for those, like myself, that are not new to the webseries world, brings a lot of familiar faces.

We recommend you follow this [#PoeParty](#) as the crime(s) unfold!

*Maria Inês*



In this section, we will give some tips to all Game Masters, new or experienced, to better their games.

# GM'S CORNER: HORROR ADVENTURES

**H**orror is one of the hardest themes for any Game Master (GM).

Adding ghosts and zombies to an adventure is easy, but to really scare your players is an enormous challenge. In other mediums, horror depends of a level of control that a GM simply doesn't have.

Directors tweak every single aspect of their work to scare their audience, while authors rely on pacing and well written descriptions. It's very hard for a GM to use these tools, because we're playing with other people in real time.

Players will make jokes in inopportune moments, will need to go to the bathroom during a tense scene, or just get distracted at

the wrong time.

Luckily there is something that we, as GMs, can do to make a horror adventure successful.

These adventures are really fun when correctly executed and, deep down, who doesn't like to spend their nights wide awake because of that horror movie they just saw?

## GET HELP FROM YOUR PLAYERS

Although this is an important tip for any kind of adventure, it's doubly so for horror adventures.

From the start, we should warn our players about the genre we want to play, because we will not be able to scare players that don't want to be scared.

This way, players will walk away from our game if they don't like horror, or they will join our game because they want to be scared, and not to be super-heroes that think of shoggoths as nothing more than mutant octopi.

## ISOLATE YOUR PLAYERS

When you get your players in the horror frame of mind, it's time to play with their brains. One of the most important parts of horror adventures is to toy with the players' minds and, to do so, the first step is to separate them.

Threats that seem trivial for a group of adventurers are much more serious when faced alone. This works mostly due to the mechanics of the game, since it's easier to face an obstacle with help than alone.

A monster that is hard for a player is more easily defeated by two or three and, as such, is less scary.

This is also true if the monster can't be defeated by the whole party. Jason Vorhess doesn't attack large numbers of victims at once, even though he can't be killed.

Our brains associate large groups with safety, even when numbers might not help our survival. Players will feel the effects of fear a lot more when they're alone and we, as GMs,

should make use of that. In the practical sense, a horror adventure should have less players than a normal adventure, making it easier to split them up.

## KEEP THREATS FRESH

When something works, it's tempting to use it again and again and again. Overuse of elements is wrong in any kind of fiction, but even more so in horror.

As something becomes more and more familiar, the less scary it becomes, until we are buying cute Cthulhu plush toys on Etsy...

Fear of the unknown is the driving force of horror, and rightly so. The unknown is scary exactly because we don't know what it is. When something has a name, it can be studied and defeated, and so becomes less scary.

That doesn't mean that we can't have a large horror campaign, we just need to leave some room for variety.

In a horror campaign, it's important to change the overarching theme, not just details.

If last week's enemy was a ghost, we shouldn't use a wraith this time. Although they are technically different monsters, the idea behind them is pretty similar.

Sometimes we can just change the details: after defeating an evil spirit, the players may find a tormented soul that is victim of something much more sinister.

#### UNWIND EVERY SO OFTEN

Horror is draining.

As much as your players love horror, it is important to relax from time to time. Hordes of easy monsters for the slaughter, puzzles without an immediate threat or even a funny side-quest are good ways for players to relax again before they are again dragged into darkness and suffering.

*Carlos*



## KICKSTARTER OF THE MONTH - RUN ZOMBIES RUN!

For those of you who don't know, "Zombies, Run!" is a smartphone application that provides you with a little extra motivation to get you running.

Basically, it tells you a story of a post-apocalyptic world with hordes of zombies attacking small communities of people who are joined by fear and the need for survival.

In this app you are Runner 5 and your mission is to race around to collect survivors, provisions, information and, in general, explore the area around Abel Township. The app provides you with bits of history and motivation to continue your run, as well as the occasional sound of zombies catching up to you, to nudge you for a little sprint. This application was "born" on Kickstarter and so it seems only reasonable that the creators are now resorting to it again to fund the board game "Zombies, Run!".

This game promises to be hectic and quite fun. The basic premise is that all players are runners who have multiple missions, which they should be able to complete by working together. An interesting feature is that the rhythm of the game is marked by a mobile application, which will provide the soundtrack, the story telling, random zombies appearing while also storing the information of who

attacked who, who stole what, and where you are going. The creators promise that all of this will not require you to pay a lot of attention to the phone itself.

I usually use the application to keep me company while jogging and I am quite puzzled as to how the board game will turn out. The combination between smartphone and board game seems to be a very interesting idea, as well as the fact that the way you play will influence where the story unfolds, all in real time! I wonder how the application will be able to remember what the players did and implement the changes in the story. Will it be predefined or is there some sort of algorithm to generate new missions?

Well, we'll only know for sure after the October 20th, which is when this game is going to be financed (at this time it has exceeded 150% financing, and they did not ask for small amount!)

If you do not know the smartphone app and like to run (or don't like to run and need an incentive) I recommend the experience. And if you like board games, take a look at the [Kickstarter!](#)

*Inês*

# WRITING: HOW TO WRITE HORROR?

I should start by stating that I have never been a huge fan of the horror genre and, as such, it was never a speculative fiction genre that I have read in, or written in, extensively.

But, since learning is one of the most important things in life, I have tried to submerge myself in the horror genre and its writing, and see what I could dig out.

I should start with noting the obvious: the horror genre, as with all other speculative fiction genres, is varied and can include such things as Dark Fantasy, Lovecraftian Horror, Gothic Horror and Dark Urban Fantasy, and it is very difficult to separate from such genres as Thriller or Suspense.

Horror could also be simply a facet of your Fantasy or Science-Fiction story.

Every month we will talk to about writing. Not being masters on the subject, we wish to offer inspiration and motivation for every writer who, like us, wish to put their ideas on paper.

## HOW TO WRITE CHARACTERS FOR HORROR?

One of the things that distinguishes horror is that the main character is usually not very qualified in the areas he would need to be to defeat the villain, be it an Elder God or any other supernatural being.

We can also create a character who is apparently very competent but who, in the face of our villain or situation, so much bigger than she is, sees her chances of survival drastically reduced.

By reducing the competence of our protagonist in the face of the horror they face we increase the probability, and the fear, that they might not survive.

But, to provoke this physiological reaction on our readers we must first make them identify with the characters we are going to traumatize throughout our story. We must, therefore, give them “normal” flaws and problems that anyone can relate to, so that the readers create an emotional connection that we, the writers, can then exploit.

One good idea is to create some internal emotional conflict for our character which can, somehow, even reflect the external conflict central to our plot.

Technically, a horror story will have more impact if it is written in first person.

However, rules were made to be broken, so write in third person if it suits the story you want to tell. Do try to steer away from an omniscient narrator, which would make keeping the mystery really difficult.

Don't say that your protagonist is scared. Show their horrified expression and their reactions to their surroundings. That will create a much stronger response on your readers.

## HOW TO WRITE SETTING FOR HORROR?

For those of you who are already fans of this genre this might be the easy part, since you already have a stock of never ending examples from books or movies to get your ideas from!

For those of you who, like me, don't have that much of a knowledge base, I'll leave some pointers.

Stories in this genre are usually set in some place from which escape is impossible, so as to force the characters to face the element of horror that scares them.

It is also a good idea to create characters that, for some reason, are not very knowledgeable about the world around them, and the more they discover about it, the worse their situation gets.

Isolation is also very important to increase the level of threat that your characters feel.

The best definition of horror I have ever read came from the great Stephen King, who once said:  
«*Horror is an unknown actress, perhaps the girl next door, cowering in a cabin with a knife in her hands we know she'll never be able to use.*»

In horror stories the way the situations and environments surrounding your protagonists are described is very important.

Try to show (not tell) the contrast between situations described as almost completely normal and that aberrant, only slightly off, element that shows that there is something behind the facade of normality, the threat in the darkness.

Use your own primal fears as a starting point for your story. You only have to figure out what scares you.

#### HOW TO WRITE PLOT FOR HORROR?

A good idea here is to keep things personal, to create a character that your reader will like and then put the character, and your readers, through hell.

At each step in the conflict, or mystery, resolution, the situation should get worse for your character.

The lack of information, both for your character and your readers, is a good way to create horror. Everything is more scary if you don't know exactly what is happening and only have the character's reactions as a sign of how bad the situation is.

It's the same reason why we usually only see the monster at the end, if at all. It's always more terrifying not knowing.

The lack of control over the situation is also very important in horror stories. A lot of the times the scary situation of your story could be your protagonist going mad over the conflict he faces.

There is usually a turning point, when the character does something to unleash the horror, even if it's just buying the wrong object or stepping into the wrong house.

It is common to include a final resolution for your conflict in which it seems all is resolved for the best and your protagonists survive.

And then we find out that they only just made the situation many times worse and everything ends in the worst possible way for them. It's what we call surprising yet inevitable!

Just don't forget to incorporate moments of light that make the hope that your characters will make it in the end, grow. The quiet before the storm can give your readers the necessary illusion that all will end well...

So you can destroy all their dreams and end with death, chaos and destruction.

#### CONCLUSION

In horror stories it isn't a question of whether the end result will be bad or not, but what kind of terrible ending you will create for your characters. That's where you can really surprise your readers!

And remember: death isn't always the worst that could happen...

*Catarina*





In this section, we analyze our favorite characters through the eye of a player, breaking them down and rebuilding them using the RPG system *Pathfinder*.

# CHARACTER WORKSHOP: VAN HELSING

Welcome to the Character Workshop. With the forces of evil drawing near, let's talk about the prime vampire hunter: Van Helsing.

For those who've never heard of him, Van Helsing is a monster hunter, focused mainly on

vampires and werewolves.

The version of Van Helsing that we'll analyze here is the one played by Hugh Jackman in the 2004 movie of the same name.

Let's start with the breakdown of the basis for Van Helsing:

**Race:** Human.

**Class:** Ranger, with the Divine Marksmen archetype, so we can remove the ranger's magic from Van Helsing while giving him some extra options for ranged attacks.

**Multiclass:** So that he can be even more focused in crossbows, we're also gonna take a level in Bolt Ace Gunslinger to have access to a Masterwork Heavy Repeating Crossbow at level 1.

Now for the main abilities.

## LEVELS 1-7

Classes: Bolt Ace Gunslinger 1 / Divine Marksman Ranger 6

Feats: Point-blank Shot (1<sup>st</sup>), Weapon Focus (Heavy Repeating Crossbow) (Human Bonus), Bullseye Shot (Divine Marksman Bonus), Deadly Aim (3<sup>rd</sup>), Precise Shot (Ranger Bonus), Endurance (Ranger Bonus), Rapid Shot (5<sup>th</sup>), Snap Shot (7<sup>th</sup>), Crossbow Mastery (Ranger Bonus)

Main Abilities: Crossbow Maven, Grit, Deeds (Sharp Shoot, Vigilant Loading, Gunslinger's Dodge), Track, Bullseye Shot, Archery Style, Endurance, Vicious Aim, Hunter's Bond (Companions), Favored Enemy (Undead, Humanoid (Shapechanger)), Favored Terrain (Forest)

Van Helsing's weapon of choice is his repeating crossbow, that almost seems more like a machine gun in the movie.

In Pathfinder, the repeating crossbow lets us attack 5 times before reloading, making it the closest we can get to that.

This way, we can leave the feat Rapid Reload behind and just take Crossbow Mastery, which lets us reload the repeating crossbow as a free action.

Everything about Van Helsing's feat selection drives him towards ranged combat and, with the help of Snap Shot, we can make attacks of opportunity using our crossbow.

For favored enemies, we can start with Undeads and Shapechangers – the werewolves' creature type – and, for favored terrain, we choose Forest, for it was a common enough terrain type in his day and age.

## Roll for Initiative

LEVELS 8-14

Classes: Bolt Ace Gunslinger 1 / Divine Marksman Ranger 13

Feats: Point-blank Shot (1<sup>st</sup>), Weapon Focus (Heavy Repeating Crossbow) (Human Bonus), Bullseye Shot (Divine Marksman Bonus), Deadly Aim (3<sup>rd</sup>), Precise Shot (Ranger Bonus), Endurance (Ranger Bonus), Rapid Shot (5<sup>th</sup>), Snap Shot (7<sup>th</sup>), Crossbow Mastery (Ranger Bonus), Weapon Focus (Longsword) (Divine Marksman Bonus), Combat Reflexes (9<sup>th</sup>), Improved Snapshot (11<sup>th</sup>), Point-blank Master (Ranger Bonus), Pinpoint Targeting (Divine Marksman Bonus), Clustered Shots (13<sup>th</sup>)

Main Abilities: Crossbow Maven, Grit, Deeds (Sharp Shoot, Vigilant Loading, Gunslinger's Dodge), Track, Bullseye Shot, Archery Style, Endurance, Vicious Aim, Hunter's Bond (Companions), Woodland Stride, Divine Influence, Evasion, Pinpoint Targeting, Camouflage, Favored Enemy [Undead, Humanoid (Shapechanger), Monstrous Humanoid], Favored Terrain (Forest, Mountain, Underground)

We continue to focus on ranged combat and we can now make multiple attacks of opportunity per turn, up to a distance of fifteen feet.

With Point-blank Master, we avoid that hardship of firing ranged weapons in melee called attacks of opportunity.

As a new enemy we choose Monstrous Humanoids, since it basically includes everything that one would call a "monster".

As for favored terrain, we chose Mountains and Underground, so we can fight our way up

the mountain towards the creepy castle and fight in crypts and dungeons against undeads.



## Roll for Initiative

LEVELS 15-20+

Classes: Bolt Ace Gunslinger 1 / Divine Marksman Ranger 19

Feats: Point-blank Shot (1<sup>st</sup>), Weapon Focus (Heavy Repeating Crossbow) (Human Bonus), Bullseye Shot (Divine Marksman Bonus), Deadly Aim (3<sup>rd</sup>), Precise Shot (Ranger Bonus), Endurance (Ranger Bonus), Rapid Shot (5<sup>th</sup>), Snap Shot (7<sup>th</sup>), Crossbow Mastery (Ranger Bonus), Weapon Focus (Longsword) (Divine Marksman Bonus), Combat Reflexes (9<sup>th</sup>), Improved Snapshot (11<sup>th</sup>), Point-blank Master (Ranger Bonus), Pinpoint Targeting (Divine Marksman Bonus), Clustered Shots (13<sup>th</sup>), Iron Will (15<sup>th</sup>), Shot on the Run (Ranger Bonus), Improved Initiative (17<sup>th</sup>), Toughness (19<sup>th</sup>), Improved Precise Shot (Ranger Bonus)

Main Abilities: Crossbow Maven, Grit, Deeds (Sharp Shoot, Vigilant Loading, Gunslinger's Dodge), Track, Bullseye Shot, Archery Style, Endurance, Vicious Aim, Hunter's Bond (Companions), Woodland Stride, Divine Influence, Evasion, Pinpoint Targeting, Camouflage, Improved Evasion, Hide in Plain Sight, Quarry, Favored Enemy [Undead, Humanoid (Shapechanger), Monstrous Humanoid, Humanoid (Human)], Favored Terrain (Forest, Mountain, Underground, Urban)

We've managed to get most of the important feats before, so let's just concentrate on helping Van Helsing to survive, with feats like Iron Will, Improved Initiative and Toughness.

We also get another favored enemy and terrain, which we respectively choose Humans – we all know that behind all monster attacks there are humans trying to profit from them – and Urban – which includes buildings and, by extent, castles.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although it's not the most optimized character – power-gamers consider crossbows inferior to bows when it comes to ranged

attacks – Van Helsing seems like a very flavorful and fun character to play, especially in horror adventures, like the Adventure Path "Carrion Crown".

To optimize the crossbow, you can always consider the weapon enchantments Huntsman and Holy.

*Carlos*

# FÓRUM FANTÁSTICO 2016: NEW GUESTS, THE USUAL QUALITY

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September we walked in the Municipal Library Orlando Ribeiro, in Telheiras (Lisbon). The time had arrived for another Fórum Fantástico.

Its organisers define it as an event that aims at informing the general public of the work done by creators and academics, at the national or international levels, in the field of Fantasy, as well as promoting and enriching the study and debate around Fantasy in Portugal.

This event is led by Rogério Ribeiro, Safaa Dib, João Campos and Épica – Associação Portuguesa do Fantástico nas Artes

As we entered the hall just before the main auditorium of the library, we were welcomed

by several book and merchandising stands, which we could hardly wait to discover. Different Portuguese projects were represented here, showing a little of their work, such as Imaginauta, Sci-Fi Lx, Editorial Divergência or the Lisbon's Steampunk League.

It was a great way to start the event and we could not wait for the lectures, debates and other activities that would soon start.

Unfortunately, we could not be present at every moment, spectacular as they certainly were. However, we can relay what happened on those sessions we were able to attend.

They were few but once again they were enough to show us the quality and scope of Fórum Fantástico.

We began by attending the “Planets: Science and Fiction” panel. With the presence of Nuno Galopim (geologist, journalist and writer), Joana Lima (astrobiologist) and João Barreiros (a household name) and moderated by Rogério Ribeiro, this panel was an homage to science and its important role in ensuring realism in science fiction.

As Joana Lima stated, it is quite challenging to escape Earth and think about the other planets with their varied features. And how many times have we read books in which the story took place in Mars or Jupiter or even Mercury and felt how inhospitable and different from Earth they are? Or realised that, without the progress of science and its recognition, none of it would be possible?

On the other hand, the panel “Another History, Another Portugal” didn't discuss exact sciences, but it was a scientific and serious talk nonetheless.

With Miguel Vale de Almeida and Miguel Real (both writers) and once again moderated by Rogério Ribeiro, as well as by André Ribeiro, it was an opportunity to reflect about Europe and utopias-turned-dystopias.

In their books (“Euronovela” and “O Último Europeu” respectively) Europe plays a central role and, although represented in opposing terms, the opinion of its writers was now rather similar.

After all, fiction ends up mirroring the European reality, with walls and political discourses openly dystopian.



However, the potential for fiction as a stereotype-breaker was not forgotten, nor was it left out its ability to show us that the way we live is the product of mere change.

As Miguel Vale de Almeida stated, science fiction allows us to look at similar things with different eyes, allows the readers to understand that things we may find familiar can be strange and, on the other hand, what is exotic can be seen as familiar.

If this does not demonstrate the transformative potential of speculative fiction, what does?

But, since Fórum Fantástico is the space of excellence to showcase all the good things

being developed in Portugal in the genres of fantasy, science fiction and horror, we could not miss the two next presentations.

First, at the “To Fandom or not to Fandom” panel, we went on a quest to unveil the mysteries around three initiatives – *Sci-Fi Lx*, *Imaginauta* and *Sustos às Sextas*.

With their three representatives – André Silva, Carlos Silva and António Monteiro – we got to know a little bit more about the path these projects have travelled, the reasons behind the organisation’s choices of dates and locations for their events, but also their opinions on the future of these kinds of projects.

Three initiatives we will continue to follow, without a shadow of a doubt.

Last, but not least, we attended the release of *Editorial Divergência*’s new anthology – *Proxy* – totally dedicated to the cyberpunk subgenre.

We talked with its editor – Anton



At last we reached the end of another Fórum Fantástico.

We left the Municipal Library with a heavy heart for not being able to stay for those activities that are already a reference to us – like the panel of books and movies suggestions – but also for those that were an interesting addition to the programme this year – like the introductory workshop on 3D printing.

But we left with the certainty that in the future the path of Especulatório will lead to Fórum Fantástico once again.

*Maria Inês*

Stark – as well as with all of its six authors, namely: Júlia Durand, José Castro, Vítor Frazão, Carlos Silva, Marta Santos Silva and Mário Coelho.

It was the perfect moment to find out a bit more about each short story and the inspiration behind it.

It was magnificent to follow *Editorial Divergência* as they continue their excellent work and we promise that this book will certainly be reviewed in a later chapter of the *Especulatório* magazine.

Of course we could not leave the panel without getting all the authors and editor to sign our own copy of “Proxy”!



# “A SOMBRA SOBRE LISBOA”: A REVIEW

“

«- Tell me Eça, do you notice how people are tense and irritated?(...) It is as if they sense something.(...)»

-And these clouds that won't lift - Eça notes, letting himself to be contaminated by the ominous atmosphere - are like an oppressive shroud that smothers the city. I would gladly rip my soul apart to scour the celestial dome if it would clean these accursed shadows that loom over Lisbon.»

- Translated by the EspeculatórioTeam

Vasco Curado, João Ventura, João Barreiros e Fernando Ribeiro - and was edited by Luís Corte Real.

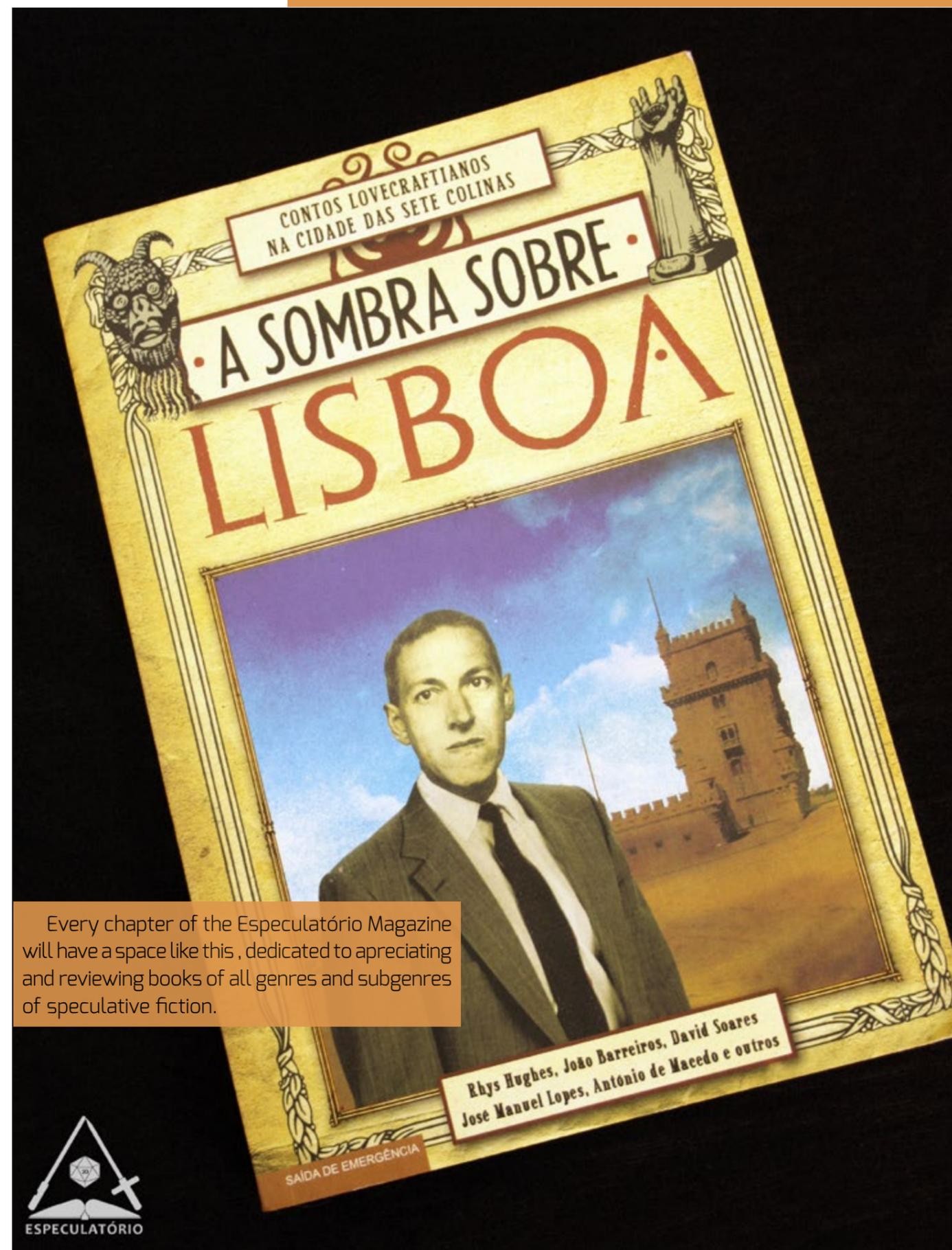
I must also highlight the beautiful illustrations on this volume, created by Miguel Vieira.

Before I address some of my favourite stories, I must confess that I know more about H. P. Lovecraft's universe and mythos by the board games created in this world - like “Arkham Horror” and “Elder Sign” - than by the writings of his own hand (if you wish to know more about the creator of Chtulhu, Azathoth and Yog-Sothoth amongst others, take a look at page 23 and our article on the parents of Horror literature).

That didn't stop me from choosing this book for our monthly review, nor even from having lots of (terrified) fun with it.

It is this dark tone that reaches over all the lovecraftian stories chosen for this anthology, and speaks to us of the shadowy secrets interwoven into the history of the “city of the seven hills”

This anthology, published in 2006 by Saída de Emergência, includes an excellent list of authors - Rogério Ribeiro, Safaa Dib, João Henrique Pinto, Luís Filipe Silva, David Soares, António de Macedo, João Seixas, Rhys Hughes, José Manuel Lopes, Yves Robert,



Every chapter of the Especulatório Magazine will have a space like this, dedicated to appreciating and reviewing books of all genres and subgenres of speculative fiction.

Rhys Hughes, João Barreiros, David Soares  
José Manuel Lopes, António de Macedo e outros



“AQUELE QUE REPOUSA NA ETERNIDADE” BY LUÍS FILIPE SILVA.

The author of “O Futuro à Janela” and the “A Galxmente” cycle - now published in a single volume - gave us one of the bigger stories of this anthology where you will find well known names such as Fernão de Magalhães and the one and only Howard P. Lovecraft.

A story with layers upon layers, which can be at times somewhat confusing and disorienting. That feeling, however, does not detract from the story itself! On the contrary, it helps in creating the chaotic surroundings of dreams and glimpses into chapters centuries apart, but which are so intertwined.

No doubt an excellent work by Luís Filipe Silva.

“AS SOMBRAS SOBRE LISBOA” BY JOÃO SEIXAS

A lawyer by profession and a frequent writer of speculative fiction, João Seixas has published short stories in magazines such as “BANG” or “Ler”, was the editor for the anthology “Com a Cabeça na Lua”, published by Saída de Emergência, and now created one of my favourite tales of this collection.

If you thought zombies, Cthulhu and ghouls could never mix with Eça de Queirós, Antero de Quental and Fradique Mendes (the collective heteronym created, in real life, by “Cenáculo”, the group of writers which actually included Eça and Antero) you would be oh so very wrong!

A story full of twists and turns, worthy of any mystery, loads of action and supernatural beings, and the waters of the Tagus river almost like a character on their own.

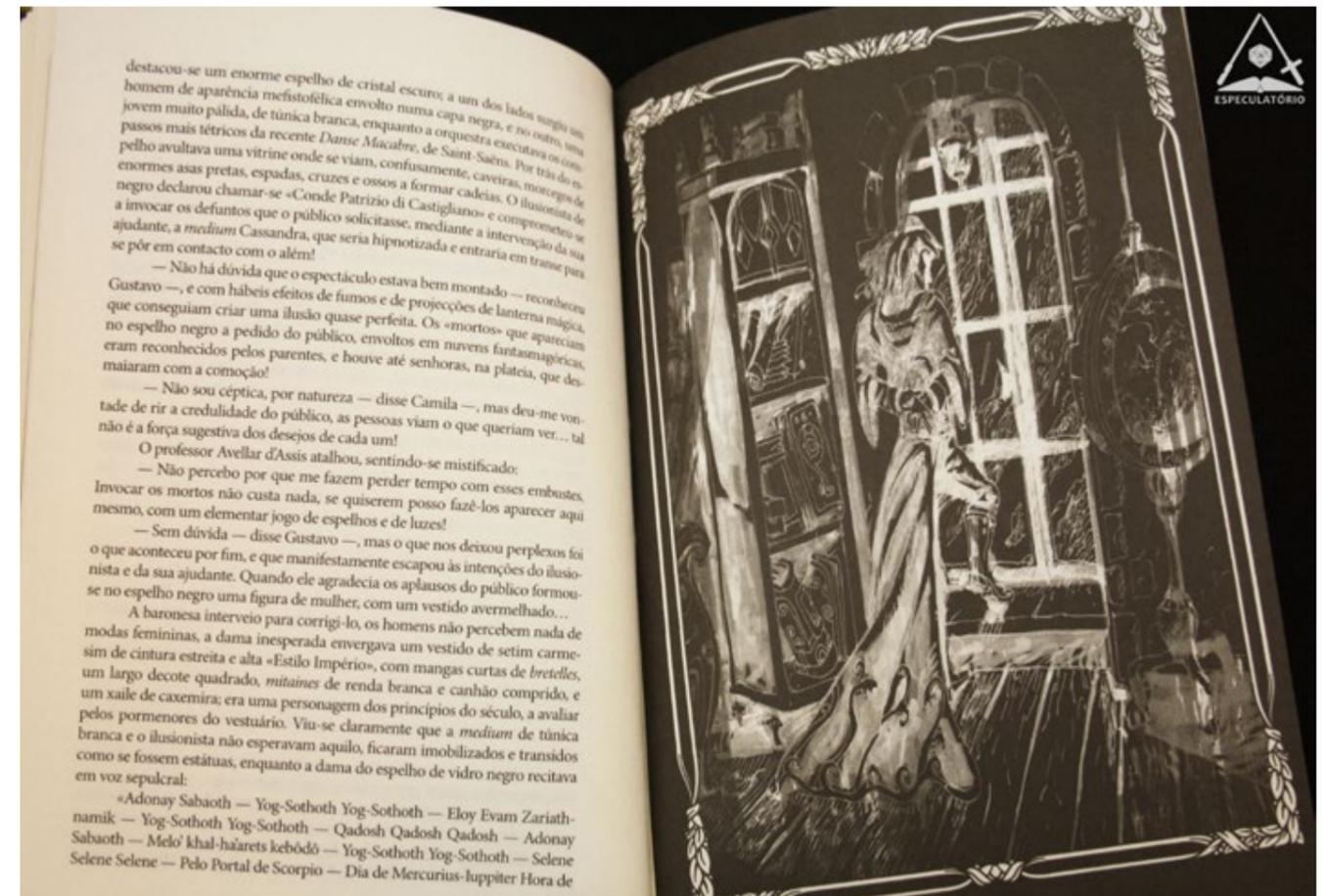
I highly recommend this one!

“A DAMA DO ESPELHO NEGRO” BY ANTÓNIO DE MACEDO

A prolific writer, film-maker and professor, António de Macedo has directed eleven movies, published an assortment of essay books and science-fiction books, such as “O Sangue e o Fogo”, “A Conspiração dos Abandonados” or “O Limite de Rudzky”.

In this anthology he presents us with a story, perhaps shorter in pages and smaller in scope, but no less fascinating and engaging.

A family mystery with something a lot more obscure behind it, in the midst of dinner parties, soirees and theatre plays,



typical of the D. Luís I period.

“MASTODON” BY FERNANDO RIBEIRO

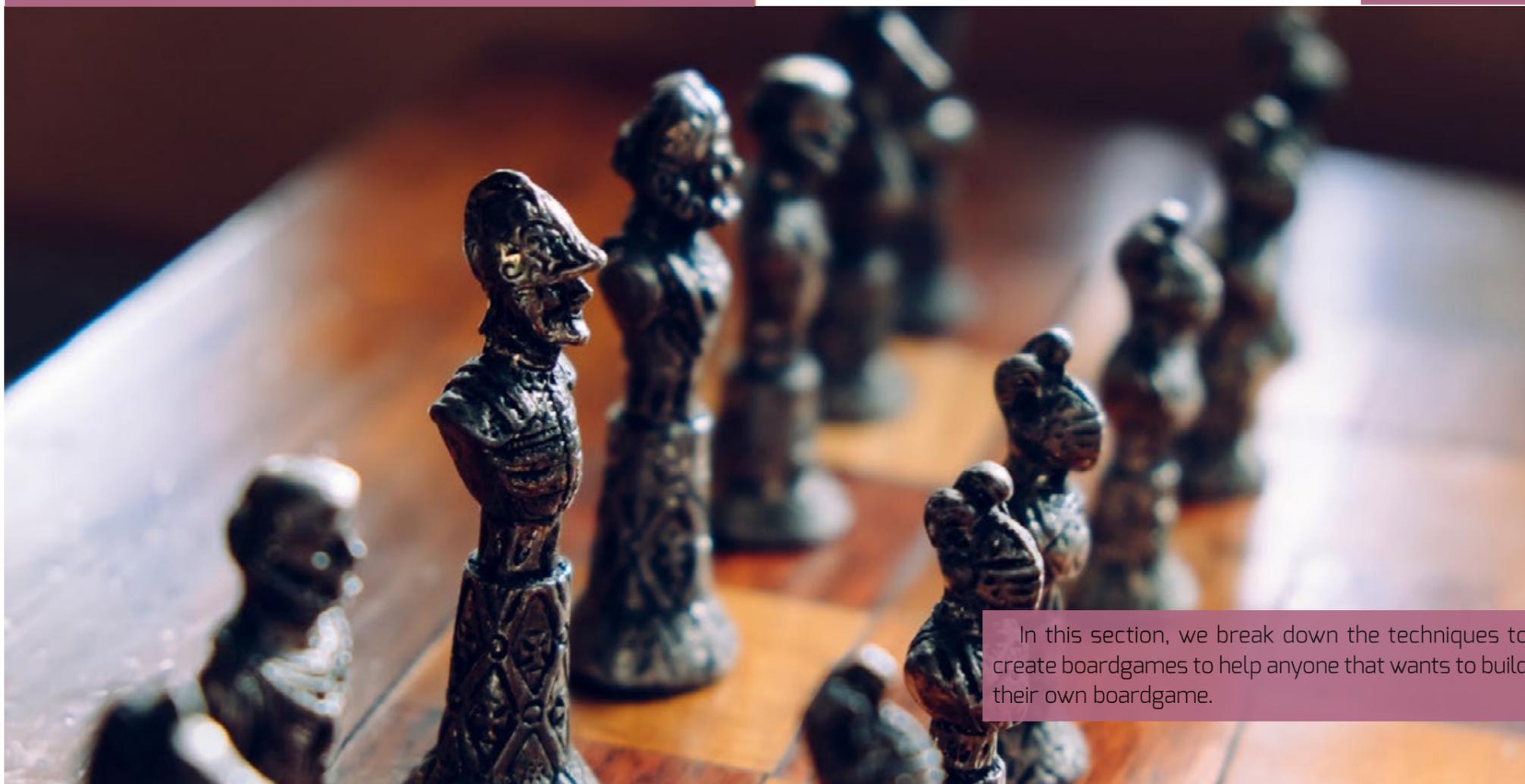
A name known to all fans of metal, the lead singer for Moonspell, author of two poetry books - “Como escavar um abismo” and “As feridas essenciais” - and already working on his next one, created one of the shortest stories of this collection, which is, regardless of size, quite remarkable.

Almost more like a song than a short story, in its regular meaning, it is a mythological and dark view of Lisboa, and no doubt one

of the most poetic examples of this anthology.

I hope that this little *amuse bouche* opens your appetite to seek out this portuguese anthology and indulge in its varied visions over a city haunted by the cosmic entities created by H. P. Lovecraft.

Catarina



In this section, we break down the techniques to create boardgames to help anyone that wants to build their own boardgame.

# CREATE A GAME: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

**B**oard games have a long history, with some dating back up to 3500 years BC in Egypt. Despite the fact that there has been a great evolution in board games since their origins, it was only recently (around 2010) that the board game fever started, mostly motivated by the advent of online sales, which allowed games to be played throughout the world.

Nowadays, with the advent of sites like [Kickstarter](#), not only is it easier to find new

board games, but also to get funding to showcase your ideas around the world.

But creating a board game is not an easy process: it requires a lot of work, research and hours of frustration...

There are several websites (see the links at the end of this article) that talk about various tips on creating your own board game. Of course, not all of them describe exactly the same process, but in general, these are the steps they highlight more frequently:

## WRITE YOUR IDEA!

Did you have an idea for a board game? Do not waste your time! Write it in a notebook, a piece of paper (do not lose it!), or in a document on your computer. What do you want for the players to experience? What is the most important facet of your game? Mechanics, flexibility, to be played by few or many players?

There are several opinions on what is the most important thing to decide first when creating a game. In general, there is a consensus that the two most important decisions during this process is to set the mechanics and the theme of the game. However, which one of these should you start with is up to you to

decide, and it seems to be a very personal choice.

The mechanics refer to how players interact with the game and each other, while the theme or thematic is more related to the story behind the game, namely, what is the ambience that players will experience during the game.

### OUTLINE YOUR IDEA!

If you know what the main mechanics will be, the theme you want the players to experience and you have a general idea of how your game is going to roll, now is the time to transform it in a set of rules.

Do not forget to think about: what is the goal of the game, what are the initial conditions, which rules will govern the players during the game and how the game ends.

This is a very important step, mainly because it's when you start to see and understand several quirks of the game: is it too complex or too simple, what is the minimum of players needed and what is the maximum number of players that will be able to play it, do you think the players need to have a specific age to be able to play the game? Don't worry about having something already final at this point. The truth is, as soon as you start playing, you will realize that the game is terrible and you'll

have go back and forth and redo and rethink a number of things in the rules and mechanics.

### LET'S PLAY!

It's time to start playing your game. Do not worry about art or materials. Create the game parts or game cards out of paper. What you really need is to create simple pieces that allow you to focus exclusively on seeing the flaws and strengths of the game, what components are not interacting well, what is missing or what is actually too much. The first time you play, be prepared! You will probably only see flaws, it will be terrible...

It's normal, don't despair! Play often and change anything you need to change, don't get too attached to any specific element. Perfect the game as much as you can before taking it to the next stage.

### SHOW YOUR GAME TO OTHER PLAYERS!

Now it's time to put your game to the test. Take it to your friends and family for them to play and experiment. Remember to put them at ease to criticize and give their opinion. And don't forget, since this is your creation, sometimes there are things that other people see that you don't. Take advantage of the

criticisms and use this opportunity to modify the game and make it better and better! When you are already satisfied, show it to other experienced players. For example go to forums like Boardgame Geek (<https://boardgamegeek.com/>) or Boardgame Design Forum (<http://www.bgdf.com/>) to talk to other players and check out what they think.

### BUILD PROTOTYPES!

It's time to create a prototype of the game to show to the publishers, to put it in kickstarter or even just to play with your friends. There is a cool website that allows you to build a prototype, but also to leave the idea online to see if more people want to buy it: Gamecrafter (<https://www.thegamecrafter.com/>).

Usually it's good to have a prototype to show off, especially if you want to try and sell your game idea to some publishers, and of course, if you have the time (and money) you can always make a first version of the game and then redo it as more people give you feedback!

Be prepared for the bumps and unexpected twists, but if you believe in the game... go forward, that is the only way to go!

*Inês*

WEBSITES WITH USEFUL TIPS ON HOW TO CREATE BOARD GAMES

<http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Your-Own-Board-Game>

<https://gamedevelopment.tutsplus.com/articles/how-to-learn-board-game-design-and-development--gamedev-11607>

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/culture/gaming/a11376/stop-reading-this-and-go-build-your-own-board-game-17314604/>

<http://geekandsundry.com/6-must-know-game-design-tips-from-the-creative-director-of-fluxx/>

<http://www.nerdsandnomsense.com/diy-2/10-tips-for-making-your-own-board-game/>

In *Fantastic Adventures*, we follow Irwer's adventures, but it is you that decide our next steps! To do that, just vote on the option that you like more and, in the next month, you'll see the results of your choices.



## FANTASTIC ADVENTURES CHAPTER 2 - SAND CLOUDS

**A**bruptly changing direction, Irwer drives away from the path to Trenkell. A short while later, clouds of dust left by the orc's vehicles start to rise in the horizon. Irwer stops atop a small hill and grabs his binoculars.

"A jeep... four... five solar bikes..." Irwer mumbles to himself. "And here I was thinking this was going to be a challenge."

Irwer stores his binoculars, puts on his rarely used helmet and drives towards the service area. The orc's jeep has stopped while the five solar bikes drive circles around the

service station, making dust rise from the ground to block the station's guards' field of vision. In the jeep, one of the orcs is standing, barking orders all around, and Irwer identifies him as the leader.

Irwer keeps accelerating in the jeep's direction. A compartment opens up in the side of the bike and Irwer draws from it a sword. Approaching the Jeep, the bike brakes suddenly, launching Irwer through the air, sword upraised. The poor orc doesn't even know what's happening, as his head falls down to the floor, separated from his body with a clean slash. The other orcs in the jeep

look around, terrified, to their headless leader and even more terrified to the grenade on the floor of the jeep. When Irwer lands, the jeep explodes into a ball of fire, launching a searing wind all around and scattering bits of jeep and orcs through the sand, alerting the orcs in the solar bikes.

One by one, the orcs drive away from the service station towards Irwer, weapons drawn, shooting at the elf. Irwer easily dodges the projectiles, spinning and twisting as though dancing alone, every attack missing him. "Now it's my turn" Irwer says, jumping at the approaching orc, stabbing him cleanly through the chest, making him fall from his bike. Never losing momentum, Irwer grabs his fallen enemy's weapon and shoots at another orc's bike. The bike starts to lose its balance and falls to the ground, dragging its driver with it and slamming against two other bikes in a storm of metal and bodies. The last orc, seeing his odds of survival falling hard, changes direction to flee.

Determined not to let a single enemy escape, Irwer climbs atop one of the fallen bikes and draws a collision course with the

fleeing orc. The orc, his mind in flight mode, doesn't notice the other bike approaching, slamming into his and throwing him to the floor. Raging, the orc gets up and draws his enormous axe, charging towards Irwer. Luckily, the brute is clumsy, and Irwer quickly breaks through the orc's defenses, who succumbs to Irwer's sword.

When the dust settles, Irwer returns to his bike and cautiously approaches the service station. There was no help from the station's guards during the fight and, right now, there is not a sound or movement from the service station.

WHAT WILL IRWER DO? THAT DEPENDS ONLY ON YOU!

JUST FILL OUT THIS FORM AND CHOOSE WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT. THE MOST POPULAR OPTION WILL BE THE WINNER!

BUT HURRY UP! YOU JUST HAVE UNTIL OCTOBER 22<sup>ND</sup> TO ANSWER!

QUEST OF THE MONTH

Search for the chosen words amidst the chaos created by the otherworldly creatures that have took our magazine hostage.

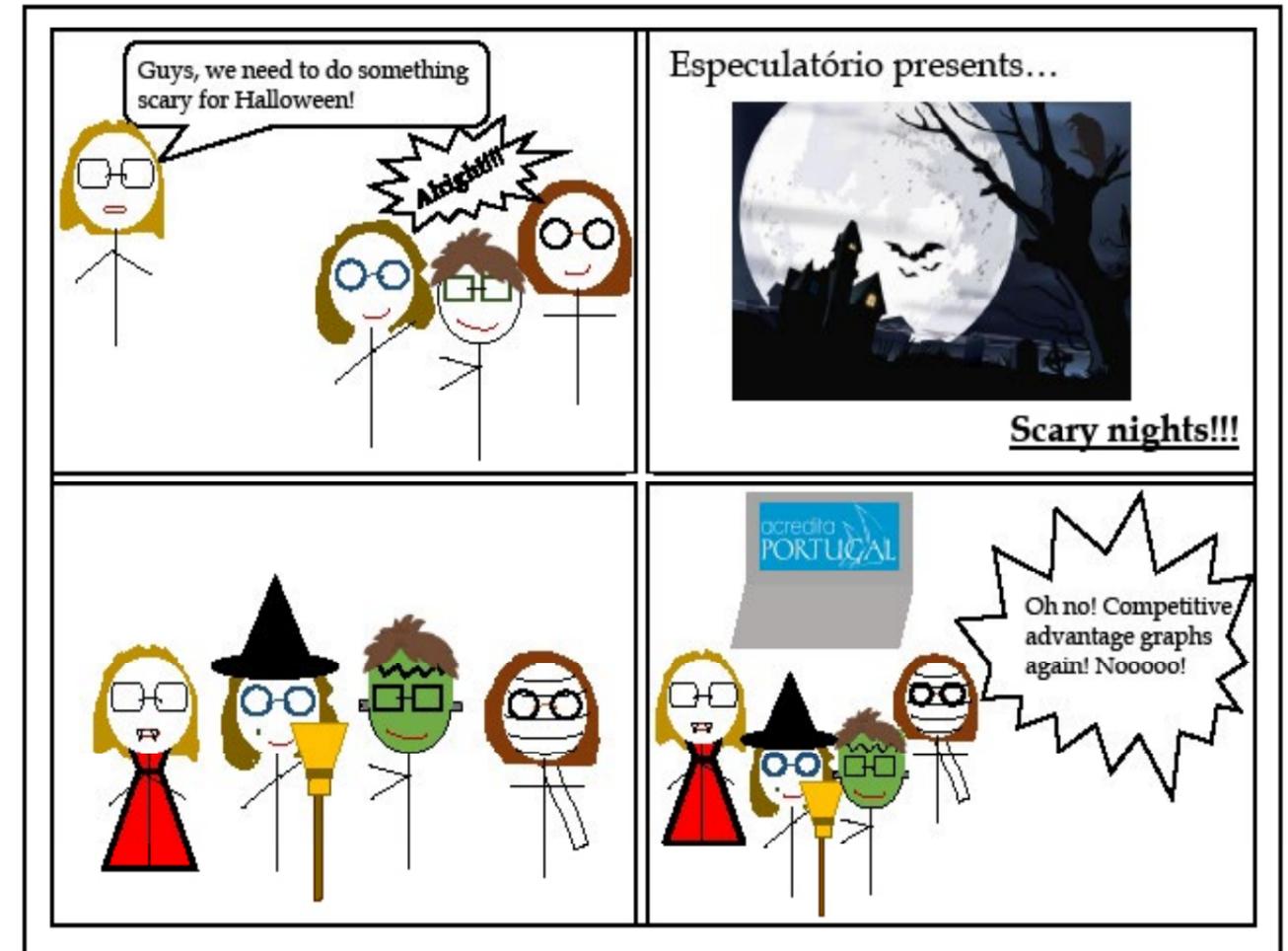
X N Q P R M O K Z V L K D C X  
 H F A N T A S T I C J N W B G  
 D D N P P T H H E I S I N G C  
 Y J U I A D R E N A L I N B C  
 A W Z B C Y V O V N N J K X O  
 C C M E C M B T R W D Z N F P  
 T T C T Z M C E E O W O S N N  
 H O Z R P A L R V U N M K A U  
 U P D A F D W R Y T W B E N N  
 L I H Y U N M O Q O N I I K  
 H L G A M E C R A F T E R I I N  
 U B V I K S B B R C G S Q D O  
 F T I H F S K A H Y J Y G Z W  
 S M I B R I A L I O W L E N  
 D A I C H E Y A R E W D A J I

ADRENALIN	BETRAYAL	CTHULHU
FANTASTIC	GAMECRAFTER	HALLOWEEN
HELPSING	MADNESS	TERROR
UNKNOWN	ZOMBIES	

Fictional Conversation Guide - Help!

High Valyrian	Dohaeragon [do'haɣ.ɾaɡon]
Dothraki	Rhellaɣa [rheʎ.ʎaɣa]
Sindarin	Edraith enni ['ed.ɾajθ 'en.ni]
Quenya	Rehta ['ɾex.ta]
Klingon	QaH [kaa]
Ewokese	Chyasee [chy-ah-see]
Goa'uld	Keest'ra [kee-straa]

FRIGHTENING NIGHTS...



This blank space could be yours!

Especulatório supports projects in the Fantasy, Science-Fiction and Horror genres.

Tell us your tale and send us your short-stories, illustrations, comics or anything else really, and you could see them on a future chapter of the Especulatório Magazine.

Will you let this opportunity pass you by?

[ESPECULATORIO@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ESPECULATORIO@GMAIL.COM)  
OR THROUGH OUR FACEBOOK

# NEXT CHAPTER...

As expected, we are already working hard on the next chapter of Especulatório Magazine and we want to give you a glimpse of what is to come.

November will be dedicated to writing, its importance to speculative fiction and its influences.

In a time of the year is marked by NaNoWriMo (you will also discover more about this event) we want to serve as an inspiration for every writer out there. We will give you suggestions, best practices and, hopefully, motivation to keep writing speculative fiction.

Want to find out more?

Then stay with us until November and don't forget, keep exploring those new worlds through old media!



