

Fear

Fear is not about sudden shocks. Surprises are the opposite of fear. Fear is not about the horrible- it is about the promise of horrible things. If you see or know something, you may be scared of it- but you can never feel true terror because of it.

- If you open a door and there is a monster behind it, there is no fear, only surprise.
- If you open a door and there is darkness, that can be fear if the build-up was tense enough.
- If you open a door and there is darkness and a quiet scratching noise coming from somewhere within it, that is fear.
- If you open a door and there is darkness and a quiet scratching noise, which then stops abruptly, you are well on the road to true horror.

The **UNNATURAL** is far from the only source of fear in the world. Mundane people are perfectly capable of doing terrible things without **UNNATURAL** interference. Equally, people who have encountered the **UNNATURAL** may develop horrific modes of behaviours as a result of derangement, or merely as a means of defending their psyche against the memory of the **UNNATURAL**.

Fear is also highly subjective- what may terrify one person may leave another unmoved. During the course of the game, attempts to create fear will inevitably fall flat from time to time. The GM can simply try again later.

On the other hand, taking advantage of a player's phobias is not good. Although thought of as fear, the reaction a person has to a phobia is not the reaction you want to produce- and more to the point it's cruel to the player in question. You don't want to be that kind of cruel.

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To create fear, the most reliable method is to build up slowly. It's the imagination of the victim that creates fear, so all you have to do is feed that imagination what it needs to do so. Wherever possible, be ambiguous. Always tell a player what his character sees, hears or feels. Never tell a player what is actually happening explicitly.

You may find that the players makes jokes or laugh at thing you hoped would make them tense. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as humour and fear are closely linked. People will naturally use humour as a means of dealing with tension, to help defuse the situation, and a little banter shows they're taking it in.

On the other hand, if there is nothing but jokes and mockery of the plot you've set out, something has gone awry somewhere. Don't be afraid to pack it in and do something else, or turn the game into an out and out comedy if that's what it takes to keep having fun.