

DEFENDERS IN THE MIST

A Backstory Cards Setting Grid for use with your favorite RPG
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You're ghosts who for some reason linger around today, and who inhabit animals to protect those still living from otherworldly peril.

Some of us are chosen when we die, not to move to a great reward or punishment beyond, but to dwell in the Mist—a twix-place shielding the Unknowable Light and Darkness from the living world. We battle to protect those we've left behind from horrors we can perceive by possessing the bodies of animals; we're Mistriders. ([Idea originally from Ryan Macklin's blog.](#))

PLAY NOTE

Your former living selves never appear in a backstory prompt or answer. Save such memories for play.

COSMOLOGY IN BRIEF

Possessed animals heal faster and seem stronger, and have the Mistriders' cleverness. They can't speak or do anything it couldn't normally do, and no mortals can speak with the dead (no matter what one claims). If a Mistrider spends too long possessing the same animal, they lose their Way and become fused with the animal, transforming into a horrific avatar of the Unknowable Light or Darkness.

INSPIRATIONS

Ghost stories, John Wick's *Cats*, *Wraith: the Oblivion*, various Neil Gaiman stories.

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INDIVIDUALS

- 1 Milos, the Stalker**
An old Mistrider who tried to save his best friend from a wolf attack by possessing that wolf, but was too late, so he swore to never let that wolf roam free. He's long since lost his Way, becoming an avatar of the Wild.
- 2 Stefan**
Kind young shepherd who's caught on that some animals are quite clever. He talks to them like they're people, though doesn't suspect anything of their true nature.
- 3 Anya**
A mentor to new ghosts. She prefers to inhabit agile animals, notably rabbits and deer. The town's mayor was her granddaughter in life.

GROUPS

- 1 Harvester's Crows**
A cult of ghosts that revere an Unknowable being the call the Harvester. They claim the Harvester speaks to them from Beyond, but only while they inhabit corvids.
- 2 Hunters from Town**
Those from the town who venture into the wilds for meat and glory, to protect their kin from the wild's dangers. Some hunt Mistriders for sport, not knowing what they are.
- 3 Angels**
Beings that call themselves angels are emissaries from the Unknowable Light. They reap the souls of the "deserving dead"—which sometimes includes hunting Mistriders and dragging them to the Light.

PLACES

- 1 Town**
The center of your former life and the lives of loved ones. It's more than buildings and people; it's the center of hope and life.
- 2 Deep in the Wild**
The Mist is strong here, and many spirits roam freely—ghosts, sprites, dryads, wisps, etc. It's a necropolis, and not every spirit is a friend to Mistriders.
- 3 Black Stump**
To the living, this is just an old tree stump on a farm. But now as a Mistrider, you see it's true nature: as a portal to the Unknowable Darkness.

EVENTS

- 1 Terrifying Raid**
Marauders from the mountains struck the town in the dead of night, aided by Mistriders dogs and horses, to steal supplies. They've left some small trinkets behind that burn to the touch, and the living can't see them.
- 2 The Storm**
That torrential rainstorm held a supernatural element. Ghosts within felt the rain pierce like needles, even while possessing animals. *[Each time this element is selected, name a friend who died, living or spirit.]*
- 3 Sorcerous Theft**
Elemental spirits that dance and play in fire were stolen by a sorcerer for some foul purpose, leaving the town freezing when no fires would stay burning. *[Consider leaving opportunity for the sorcerer to return as an ongoing nemesis, or to be just one in a cabal yet unseen.]*

Other facts and notes on the Mists and being a Mistrider:



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	INDIVIDUAL	GROUP	PLACE	EVENT
1	<i>Milos, the Stalker</i>	<i>Harvester's Crows</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Terrifying Raid</i>
2	<i>Stefan</i>	<i>Hunters from Town</i>	<i>Deep in the Wild</i>	<i>The Storm</i>
3	<i>Anya</i>	<i>Angels</i>	<i>Black Stump</i>	<i>Sorcerous Theft</i>