

Madness Meter Guidelines

NEMESIS: Roleplaying in Worlds of Horror (c) Greg Stolze • Adapted by Shane Ivey

Failed Violence Notches

- 1 You're superficially fine. Perhaps you're a little edgy whenever a knife in the room happens to be pointing your direction.
- 2 You are very aware of violence, both as it exists and as it is depicted. It strikes you as odd that so many people don't realize that movie violence is very different from real violence.
- 3 You get alert or uneasy every time you see blood, even badly faked blood or when someone cuts a rare steak. Sometimes you have nightmares about the violence you've witnessed.
- 4 You instinctively take a defensive posture whenever there's a loud noise or raised voice nearby. Your nightmares are frequent, and you have a hard time looking at anyone without imagining (if briefly) what you would do at that moment if they attacked you.

Hardened Violence Notches

- 1-3 Superficially you're much like everyone else.
- 4-5 Your attitude toward violence shows on your face when the subject comes up in conversation, unless you work to keep it hidden. It might be intensity, or nervousness, or just a grim silence, depending on how you cope.
- 6-7 Violence is a common feature of your mental landscape. You show very little reaction when it is discussed or depicted in fiction.
- 8-9 Your callousness shows in every word and expression unless you make a conscious effort to suppress it. Again, the exact tone is up to you: It could be bitter and harsh, feverish and vehement, or icy cold.
- 10 It's easy for others to see that the deepest horrors of torture and brutality have become commonplace to you, unless you work very, very hard to keep it hidden—which means you come off as tense and guarded all the time. Death has no intrinsic significance. You might prefer to stay alive, but only as a matter of personal taste. Life, in the abstract, means nothing.

Failed Unnatural Notches

- 1 It's pretty hard to tell. Perhaps you become a little superstitious—reading your horoscope daily, watching for “lucky” numbers, avoiding cracks in the sidewalk, etc.
- 2 You have a few nightmares, and you are suspicious of and/or fascinated by occult and religious books, places, paraphernalia and people.
- 3 You frequently feel like you're being watched, even when there's no one around. Sometimes it seems like you hear voices in “white noise”—sounds like the wind in the trees, the sloshing of a washing machine or the noises of traffic.
- 4 The nightmares are frequent, and often you don't know you're dreaming until you jerk awake. Sometimes you feel like there's someone—or something—watching you and you can almost see it out of the corner of your eye. When you whip your head around, there's nothing there.

Hardened Unnatural Notches

- 1-3 There's little to distinguish you from the average person, except perhaps a tendency to snort derisively when someone mentions their “intuitions.”
- 4-5 You tend to listen intently when people discuss the paranormal or supernatural, trying to figure out if they really know something about it.
- 6-7 You know and accept that there are vast, incomprehensible forces governing the universe. It strikes you as odd when people act as if they're in control of their lives; you know better.
- 8-9 Things that average people consider “meaningless coincidences” strike you as deeply, intensely funny because you see the connections that they do not. You may develop a reputation for laughing inappropriately.
- 10 You are no longer surprised by violations of logic. Everything is “normal”—talking foliage, spontaneous combustion and stigmata are as ordinary and reasonable as cars, dogs and rain.

Failed Helplessness Notches

- 1 You're fairly normal. Perhaps you're a little finicky or meticulous, trying to eliminate the possibility of something going wrong.
- 2 You have a tendency to get unreasonably nervous and pessimistic when small things go wrong. You may be irritated if a bus is just a few minutes late or if your computer freezes up.
- 3 You have an intense dislike for surprises even good ones. They remind you of the essentially unpredictable nature of reality, and that scares and annoys you.
- 4 You find it very difficult to trust anything. Your friends, your own abilities, even your memories could be false, waiting to betray you. You have a tendency toward obsessive-compulsive behaviors such as checking the door to your house multiple times every time you leave to make absolutely certain it's locked. You attempt to be prepared for every eventuality.

Hardened Helplessness Notches

- 1-3 You don't have any major behavior or attitude shifts yet, just minor things. You tend to be pessimistic and fatalistic, perhaps.
- 4-6 Your fatalism has increased. When things go wrong in a big, bad way, or when trouble comes from a completely unexpected or unlikely source, you handle it with a remarkable lack of affect. (This is not necessarily incongruent with the behaviors of two or more failed notches; it's perfectly possible to be freakishly calm about big things and freakishly upset about little things.)
- 7-9 You have a boundless faith in the ability of chaos to screw you over. You can easily believe that even the most suspicious of mishaps is simple random chance. ("So my brake cable snapped and my gas pedal got stuck down to the floor. What makes you think someone tinkered with my car? Shit happens.")
- 10 The distinction between "intentional" and "accidental" is pretty much lost on you. Maybe you believe that everything is completely predestined, or maybe you believe that everything in the world happens due to chance. The one thing you find hard to swallow is the idea that we are the captains of our fates.

Failed Self Notches

- 1 You don't have any real kinks yet, but every now and again you feel a sense of dissociation, an eerie moment when you feel alienated from your own character and motivations. "Sure, I know I'm Greg Stolze," you might think, "but who's Greg Stolze?"
- 2 The "Who am I?" moments come more frequently. You tend to become introspective whenever someone mentions "truth" or "lies" or "promises."
- 3 Half the time your words and actions feel oddly forced, fake or rehearsed to you—as if, rather than yourself, you were an actor playing the role of you.
- 4 You frequently feel like you're watching your every action from the outside. You have little or no sense of will or volition; it's as if you're a passive observer, along for the ride while your body goes through the motions.

Hardened Self Notches

- 1-3 There are few external signs of your interior struggle. People may sometimes find you a little brittle or "phony"-seeming.
- 4-5 Even when you're telling the truth, people often think you're lying, unless you make a particular effort to act "natural."
- 6-7 You've lost a sense of connection to those who were previously close to you. You can predict the actions of your friends, relatives or lovers, but you no longer know exactly what you feel about them.
- 8-9 Half the time, you only know you're telling the truth if you take a minute to think about it. Truth and lies aren't nearly as important as they used to be—back before you quit lying to yourself. . . .
- 10 Life has been pared down to the essentials for you: You no longer have opinions about music, food, or fashion. You've lost the ability to enjoy or dislike things, because there's so little "you" there to interact.