

Gamemaster Tips

The rules are there for a reason!

When running a game based in Spring Crescent Middle School, keep these ideas in mind.

1. The Conspiracy is experienced in dealing with monsters and their kids.

Players might think that their monsters give them an unbeatable trump card, that no one will expect their supernatural powers. However, the Conspiracy has seen many monsters over the years and defeated most of them. They will react to the players intelligently, using their resources in the most advantageous way possible. Blatant use of monsters in public, especially acts of violence and vandalism result in a swift yet secret response. The wards of Spring Crescent protect the building from mystical attacks, so players can't devastate the school on a whim. Characters who act publicly will draw undue attention to themselves.

2. The Conspiracy prefers to isolate students by attacking their relationships.

Once they have identified a kid with a monster, the Conspiracy focuses on isolating the kid from everyone else. They diligently study the kid and will drive a wedge between the kid and his or her friends. They only use force when the kid has no other potential allies or if the kid attacks first.

3. The Conspiracy is relentless.

Once the Conspiracy targets a kid, they will not let go. They are obsessed with enslaving monsters and any potential quarry is too valuable to let go. At any given time, the Conspiracy will attempt to sabotage at least one relationship of every kid they know has a monster. The exact plan will depend on the cabal involved.

4. The Conspiracy depends on secrecy to survive.

Like all secret organizations, the Conspiracy cannot stand the light of exposure. While most adults won't believe in the supernatural aspects of the Conspiracy, there is plenty of evidence to dismantle them any way. Secret rituals, books of occult knowledge and other documents are necessary for the Conspiracy to conduct business, but if they were taken to the proper authorities it would mean the end of the Conspiracy.

Legitimate authorities or media figures who are shown Conspiracy documents (and convinced of their source) will interpret them as proof of a secret Satanic cult that abuses the students of Spring Crescent. Even a single letter or video of a ceremony shown to the right person will start an investigation.

Of course, this requires that the kids acquire the evidence and shows it to someone untouched by the Conspiracy. Then, the kids must protect the investigators if they want to see the Conspiracy stopped. The wizards will not take an investigation lightly and will do everything in their power to derail the investigators, including bribery, seduction or even murder.

5. Finding a kid with a monster is not easy.

Over 1,000 kids attend Spring Crescent. Of those, perhaps a dozen or fewer kids have monsters. Further compounding the search are the numerous troublemakers, goths, emos, and other malcontents. The Conspiracy wastes time investigating these ordinary kids and suppressing dissension and individuality. Even a kid who doesn't bother to hide the presence of his monster may be hard to detect, as the mystic wards do not always work. Finally, the Conspiracy has only a few dozen members at most and only a handful are devoted to searching for monsters at any given time.

Lately, the Conspiracy tends to set up traps that attract kids with monsters and observing who reacts to them.

6. The Conspiracy identifying a kid with a monster is a major turning point in the campaign.

Once the players are known to the Conspiracy, they should definitely know the stakes are raised. Cabalists will conduct surveillance on them, their relationships fall under attack and paranoia should soon set in. Unless the players are absolutely careless, only let the Conspiracy discover their identity when it is time to begin the final phase of the campaign.

The players should feel like they are under siege and that they need to smash the Conspiracy before the Conspiracy identifies them and it is too late. Emphasize that the adults the kids are supposed to trust are in fact waging war upon them and seeking to destroy everything that is precious to them.

7. Build tension as the campaign develops.

The opening sessions of the campaign should feel light and carefree, as the kids revel in the power of their monster friends. However, each session should raise the stakes at least a little bit. Remember, tension is anticipated action.

Hint at the dark clouds around the school. Have the players learn about the mysterious Big Fire of 1962. Let an NPC kid with a monster disappear halfway through the campaign, only to turn up in the psych ward of the local hospital, the monster gone. Punctuate a session with an intense encounter with a Gidim like Edward when the players least expect it. Have teachers like Mr. Forster give veiled threats.

This is a horror game and it requires a steady ratcheting of suspense.

