

I Am The Fourth Wall



Stick together. Close the gates. Don't lose your marbles.



1. Investigator Tome
Playtest beta 5.02

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Credits

Game Designer - Damien Schneide
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Components

130 cards



Investigator Cards (12)



Marble Cards (54)



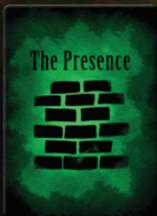
Wall Cards (6)



Horror Cards (36)



Turn Tracker Cards (2)



Presence Cards (9)



Street Cards (5)



Investigator Reference Cards (6)



The Wall Reference Card (1)

15 Tokens



Doom Tokens (6)



Enhancement Tokens (8)



Target Token (1)



The Scourge Token (1)

Depending on the type of game that you are playing you may not use all the pieces shown here.

Two Ways to Play

In games of I Am The Fourth Wall you have two different ways to play.

Conflict Mode - All vs. One

In Conflict Mode one player assumes the roll of The Wall - an ancient and powerful being whose aspirations and motivations are far beyond human comprehension - while the other players are the Investigators, scrambling to keep their world from plunging into madness.

Investigator Tome

This includes all the rules for playing as an Investigator.

Grimoire of The Wall

This includes all the rules for playing as The Wall.

For **Conflict Mode** games you will need the **Investigator Tome** (this rulebook), and also **The Wall's Grimoire**. You will not need the **Presence Manuscript**.

Alliance Mode - Full Co-Op

In Alliance Mode all players are Investigators trying to stave the influx of horrid creatures while closing supernatural gates to prevent The Wall - controlled by an AI deck - from tearing through into our dimension.

Investigator Tome

This includes all the rules for playing as an Investigator.

Presence Manuscript

This includes all the rules for generating the AI of The Wall.

For **Alliance Mode** games you will need the **Investigator Tome** (this rulebook), and also the **Presence Manuscript**. You will not need **The Wall's Grimoire**.

Narrative

The bleak, yet interesting narrative piece that explores the madness of the Lovecraftian Mythos cannon yet still appeals to those who think that Cthulhu is the most powerful being in existance. Spoilers. Sorry.

Investigator Cards

The Investigators were recently ordinary citizens of jiving 1950s suburbia. In their own way, they have discovered something amiss, something fundamentally wrong and twisted about the world around them. Curiosity caused them to track down other like-minded individuals and band together. Seeking further truths, they have delved deeper, their minds warping, seeing formless shapes in the night that might otherwise be deemed paranoia. As they teeter on the brink of madness, they find themselves gifted with inhuman abilities, insight to the looking glass beyond. It would almost be a blessing if it wasn't for the nausiating feeling that something was staring back. Unblinking.

Name



Sanity

Unique Action
Cost

Unique Action

Exploit the Rift Action

Marble Cards

Symbols

Name



Marbles are items that are anything from guns to hats to vials of suspicious liquids. Investigators cling to these petty objects as a grounding to the material world and their sanity.

Familiarity is key to holding out against the horrors of one's mutating perception of the world. However, these mundane items also prove to be useful in ingenious situations, as investigators attempt to stave off the onslaught of unspeakable happenings on the streets outside.

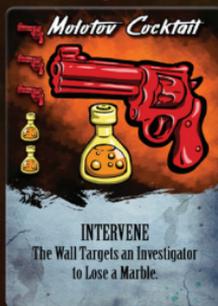
But parting with these items poses a grave risk. The fewer Marbles an Investigator has, the closer they are to drinking tea with the March Hare.

Instructions



Elder Sign

A rare and powerful card that can be used to close a Gate by itself or used to remove a Horror without the danger of retaliation. Use it wisely.



Molotov Cocktail

A very destructive item that heavily damage monsters on the streets - but also other Investigators.



Holy Symbol

A quick use item that prevents an Investigator from losing a marble of value or potentially going insane.



Adrenaline

A quick use item to improve the effectiveness of powerful abilities or allow Investigators to act out of sequence.

Setup

Sort the Decks

Separate and shuffle the **Marble** and **Investigator** decks. Take out the **Investigator Reference** cards.

If this is your first time playing, we recommend removing **The Street Magician** card from the **Investigator** deck.

Determine the Roles

Refer to *Grimoir of The Wall* for a **Conflict** game or the *Presence Manuscript* for an **Alliance** game.

Games with one or two Investigator players

It is recommended that there be at least three **Investigators** in a game. In a game with only one **Investigator** player they are advised to play as three different **Investigators**. In a game with two **Investigator** players each should play as two **Investigators**. If this is the case, the game will play in exactly the same way except that a player will act as if they are multiple different players, so make sure you keep the turns and the **Marbles** for each **Investigator** separate.

Investigators get Ready

Deal two **Investigator** cards to each **Investigator** player. Each **Investigator** player chooses to keep one of their cards face up in front of them and returns the other to the **Investigator** deck. This choice may be openly discussed as the players select the best team to tackle the situation.

All **Investigators** are dealt a number of **Marbles** equal to their **Sanity**. This is the maximum number of cards they can hold. **Sanity (Hand Limit) - see page 16**

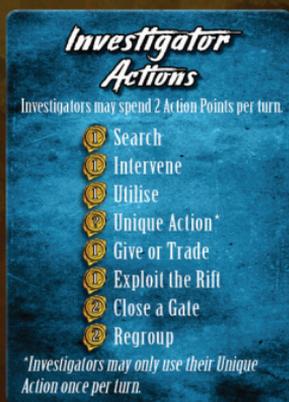
All **Investigators** are on the same team, so they may freely look and discuss each other's hands (just keep in mind that **The Wall** is probably eavesdropping).



Building The Wall

Refer to *Grimoir of The Wall* for a **Conflict** game or the *Presence Manuscript* for an **Alliance** game.

Marbles (hand of cards)



Investigator
Reference Card



Investigator Card

Winning the Game

The **Investigators** win the game if all the **Gates** are closed.

The Wall wins if either:

- there are five **Open Gates** after 'An Eye Opens' on the **Turn Tracker**
- or the **Turn Tracker** reaches 'The Ancient One Awakens'

Gameplay

Overview

You are Investigators. Ordinary people who have stumbled into the knowledge of the veiled secrets of our world. Although the full extent of what is happening is beyond your comprehension, you understand one thing. You must close the ominous gates that have begun to open on the streets.

Your arsenal is a hand of 'Marbles' - a collection of seemingly mundane items that represents the sanity of your character. They can also be used to close gates, defeat eldritch anomalies and otherwise aid yourself and your allies. But the streets have become a dangerous place since the gates started to appear and many of the horrors you encounter will force you to lose your marbles. If you lose all your marbles, you are driven insane.

When an Investigator is driven insane, that player will take on the roll of a new Investigator to aid in the struggle against The Wall. It is sometimes necessary to watch your comrades succum to the throws of madness.

Turn Order

The Wall's turn happens before each **Investigator's** turn.

Investigators take turns in a clockwise order starting with the **Investigator** to the left of **The Wall**.

For example the turns would be as follows: The Wall, Investigator 1, The Wall, Investigator 2, The Wall, Investigator 3, etc.

The Turn Tracker

When the **Investigator** to the right of **The Wall** finishes their turn (ie all **Investigators** have had a turn), progress the **Turn Tracker** one rank by pushing the **Wall** card up (decreasing the number on the **Turn Tracker** by one).

There are several different events on the **Turn Tracker** which prompt certain phases of the game.



8

SLUMBER

Turn Tracker

(3 Investigators)

Slumber

Something stirs. It is no where in sight, but may be glimpsed, writhing in obscurity, in the corners of your mind. The gates are a sign. Something sinister this way comes. The **'Slumber'** is when you first notice the gates, although whatever is behind them has not yet awoken to its full strength. During this phase of the game many of **The Wall's** more powerful abilities lay dormant.

An Eye Opens

The ground shakes. Or is it the sky? The ocean begins to lash out with an almost sentient fury. Something has awoken, its demented image melds into the details of everything that was once familiar. It must be stopped.

When **'An Eye Opens'** on the **Turn Tracker**, the **Wall** card is turned face up, revealing the identity of the card to the **Investigators**. **The Wall** may now use the **Unique Action** and **Aura Ability** stated on the card.

The Crescendo

Voices, of an alien tongue. A chant growing louder. And louder. Although the dialect is beyond comprehension, you understand their meaning; the end is imminent.

'The Crescendo' is the final rounds of the game where the stakes are at their highest. All **Horrors On the Streets** are no longer **Drained** and **The Wall** may not take a **Brood** turn during **The Crescendo**.

The Ancient One Awakens

The screams - an echo of the flooding madness. They seem to come from all around. You listen and as you empathise their anguish you realise their origin is you.

When **'The Ancient One Awakens'** on the **Turn Tracker**, the game ends and **The Wall** wins. It is assumed that all the **Investigators** meet a mind-bendingly gruesome end in the ensuing chaos.

Ending the Game

The game ends when one of three conditions are met:

All the Gates are Closed - Investigator Victory

The Investigators seal off the Ancient One from our world and the Horrors that roam the streets vanish away like midnight smoke (for now).

Five Open Gates after 'An Eye Opens' - The Wall Victory

Horrors flood the streets and the Ancient One breaks through the Gates, plunging the world into madness.

'The Ancient One Awakens' - The Wall Victory

The Ancient One wakes from its slumber and tears its way through the veil between dimensions. Reality splutters and flails, as the earth is consumed and replaced by demented alien landscapes.

Investigator Turn

Remember: *The Wall* will take a turn before each Investigator Turn. See other book for more details on *The Wall* Turn.

Take Actions

During your turn you may spend two **Action Points** on any Actions or combination of Actions listed below:



Close a Gate (2 Action Points)

Closing a Gate is no easy feat. It requires both time and the sacrifice of material possessions to get the job done. But it must be done. The Gates must be closed.

Select any number of **Marbles** from your hand that collectively contain at least one of each **Symbol** (*Clue, Force and Science*) and discard

them. Any additional **Symbols** are not used and you may not use any of the Instructions on the card. Then discard an **Open Gate**. It is now closed (but not necessarily forever - *The Wall* may yet open it again).

If the last **Gate** is closed, then **The Wall** has been sealed off from the world (for now) and the **Investigators** win.



Clue



Force



Science



Exploit the Rift (1 Action Point)

Since your discovery of the Gates, you have felt a surge of energy. Something supernatural. You find yourself able to tap into this rift of power to do things that would normally be seen as impossible. But with such power there is always a price.

Your **Exploit the Rift** Action is described on your **Investigator** card. Immediately after using your **Exploit the Rift** Action add a **Doom Token** to **The Wall's Action Pool**.

Exploit the Rift Actions will be a variation on the Actions described here or in the **Common Terms and Phrases** (page 14).



Unique Action (cost stated on the card)

This is what you do best. Everyone has a shtick and this is yours.

The **Unique Action** and its **Cost** are described on your **Investigator** card. A **Unique Action** may only be used once per turn.

Many **Unique Actions** will be a variation on the Actions described here or in the **Common Terms and Phrases** (page 14).



Search (1 Action Point)

Rummaging blindly you grab whatever you can.

Draw a card from the **Marble** deck and put it into your hand.



Intervene (1 Action Point)

You confront the eldritch anomalies with whatever you have on hand.

Choose a **Marble** from your hand and place it next to a **Horror On the Streets**. The Marble is now **Attached** to the **Horror**. You may **Attach** a **Marble** to a **Horror** that already has a **Marble Attached** to it.

Defeating a Horror - see page 17

If there are any **Intervene** Instructions on the **Marble** they are resolved as soon as it is **Attached** to the **Horror** (before the **Horror** is **Defeated**).



Utilise (1 Action Point)

Some items can be used in ingenious ways.

Choose a **Marble** card from your hand that has a **Utilise Instruction** and reveal it. Follow the **Utilise** Instruction on the card, then discard it.



Give or Trade (1 Action Point)

If you don't need it, give it to someone who does.

You may **give** a **Marble** to another **Investigator** or you may **trade** a **Marble** for another **Marble** from another **Investigator**. You may not **take** a **Marble** from another **Investigator**.



Regroup (2 Action Points)

At times it's necessary to take a moment to get your head back in the game.

Rotate your **Investigator** card sideways to show you have '**Regrouped**'. You remain **Regrouped** until the start of your next turn (remember to rotate your card back at the start of your next turn).

You may then draw two **Marbles** or draw **Marbles** until you reach your **Sanity (Hand Limit) - page 16**. If this takes an Investigator above their **Sanity** they must immediately discard any excess **Marbles**. You may now freely **Give** and **Trade** with any other **Investigator/s** that have also **Regrouped**.

Remember: When the Investigator to the right of The Wall finishes their turn, move the Turn Tracker up one rank.

Additional Rules

Investigator Sanity (Hand Limit)

Investigators can hold a maximum number of cards equal to their **Sanity**. If at the end of any Action (**The Wall** or **Investigator**), you have more cards than you can hold, you must immediately discard cards until you are within your **Hand Limit**.

Going Insane

At the end of any Action (**The Wall** or **Investigator**), if an **Investigator** has no cards in hand then they are driven **Insane**. **Investigators** can even drive themselves **Insane** by playing their last **Marble** - although this is ill-advised.

If you have gone **Insane** turn your **Investigator** card face down to represent your insanity. While you are **Insane** you cannot be the **Target** or **Elected Investigator** and will otherwise not interact with the game until your next turn.

If you are driven **Insane** during your turn, then your turn immediately ends.

When an **Investigator** goes **Insane**, **The Wall** must **Open a Gate** (see below).

If you are **Insane** at the start of your turn you must take a new **Investigator** card at random from the **Investigator** deck and draw **Marbles** equal to their **Sanity**. Shuffle the **Insane Investigator** card into the **Investigator** deck. You may then take your turn as normal.

Opening a Gate

There are multiple ways for **The Wall** to **Open a Gate**. This is usually done by driving **Investigators Insane** or by **Sacrificing Cultists**.

To **Open a Gate**, take an unused **Wall** card and place it face down, lining up the pentagram formation on the back of the cards.

If there are already five **Open Gates** and you have not yet reached **An Eye Opens** on the **Turn Tracker**, then **The Wall** may instead place a **Doom Token** in the **Action Pool** to use on their next turn.

If the fifth **Gate** opens after **An Eye Opens** (or there are already five **Open Gates** when **An Eye Opens**), then **The Wall** has achieved victory. The game ends and the world is plunged into perpetual madness.

Out of Cards

If the **Horror** or **Marble** deck ever runs out, shuffle their respective discard piles and make a new deck.

Defeating a Horror

Each **Clue**, **Force** and **Science Symbol** on a **Marble Attached** to a **Horror** negates a **Symbol** of that type from the **Defeat Cost** of the **Horror**. If a **Horror** has all of its **Symbols** negated, then it has been **Defeated**. Any additional **Symbols** do nothing.

When a **Horror** is defeated, follow its **Deathrattle** Instructions (if any), then discard the **Horror** and all **Marbles Attached** to it.



Card Instructions

Instructions refer to any block of text on a card that describes how it is used within the game. This can be anything from an **Investigator Unique Action** to the **Deathrattle** of a **Horror**.

Unless otherwise noted, whoever played the card decides how any options on the card are resolved. You must always complete a set of Instructions, you may not choose to complete only part of the Instruction.

If an **Investigator** cannot complete an **Instruction**, **The Wall** may place a **Doom Token** in the **Action Pool** to use on their next turn. If **The Wall** cannot complete an Instruction then an **Elected Investigator** may **Regroup**.

Pro Tip - Interpreting lots of Instructions

Make sure you resolve each sentence of an instruction before moving on to the next. This means that each sentence can affect a different Investigator or a different card. For instance, the Trigger Action on the Restless Spirit Horror card can Target a different Investigator with each sentence. You may still choose to have it Target the same Investigator twice.



Common Terms

Some of the definitions here will say 'see other book'. When this is the case, refer to **The Wall's Grimoire** if you are playing a **Conflict** game or the **Presence Manuscript** if you are playing an **Alliance** game, as these terms will differ depending on the type of game being played.

Attach(ed) - the **Marble** is placed on top of a **Horror On the Streets** usually after the **Marble** has been used to **Intervene**. **Attached Marbles** negate **Symbols** from the **Horror's Defeat Cost**.

Anchor to the Streets - do not discard this card after it is **Utilised**. Instead, place the card face up **On the Streets**. Its **Instructions** remain active until it is removed from the **Streets** (usually by **The Wall** taking the **Destroy a Marble** Action).



Blitz - reveal the specified number of cards from the top of the **Marble** deck (this number can be increase by any **Investigator** discarding an **Adrenaline** card from their hand). Any of these cards that share one or more **Symbols** with those shown on the **Blitz** must immediately be used to **Intervene** as if they had all been played from your hand. You may choose the order in which they are played. All other cards are discarded.



Blitz (5)

Drain - See other book

Delve - See other book

Defeat(ed) - a **Horror** is **Defeated** when all of its **Symbols** have been negated. When a **Horror** is **Defeated** use its **Deathrattle** Ability then discard it.

Elected - the **Investigators** collectively choose who or what will be affected.

Find - Search the discard pile, then the deck for a card with the described name. If the deck was searched, shuffle it. If the card cannot be found then the Action spent trying to find the card is lost.

Give - pass a **Marble** from your hand to another **Investigator**. You may **Give a Marble** to yourself unless otherwise stated.

Intervene - **Attach a Marble** from your hand to a **Horror On the Streets**.

Intervene with a Marble - This functions in the same way as a normal **Intervene** Action, although the card being used to **Intervene** must contain at least one of the **Symbol/s** listed. It may still contain other **Symbols**.

Intervene with
a  Marble.

Lose a Marble - the **Investigator** chooses a card to discard from their hand. This can be ignored by a *Holy Symbol*.

Lose a Random Marble - randomly take a card from the **Investigator's** hand and discard it. This can be ignored by a *Holy Symbol*.

Lose a Marble Chosen by The Wall - See other book

Manifest - See other book

On the Streets - See other book

Return a Horror to the Wall - See other book

Rush - you may play a card for its **Rush** Instructions at any time during your turn or someone else's (even **The Wall's**). This does not cost an **Action Point**.

Sacrifice - See other book

Search - draw a **Marble** from the deck.

Symbols - **Symbols** are pictures that determine the properties of **Marbles** and **Horrors**. There are three different types of **Symbols**: *Clue, Force and Science*.

Clue
Symbol



Force
Symbol



Science
Symbol



Target - See other book

Trade - pass a **Marble** to another **Investigator**. They must pass a different **Marble** back to you.

Utilise - play a card from your hand and follow the **Utilise** Instructions, then discard the card. If a card does not have any **Utilise** Instructions, then you may not **Utilise** it.

x Gates - the **Defeat Cost** of the **Horror** is multiplied by the number of **Open Gates**.

I Am The Fourth Wall

Setup

Separate and shuffle the decks.

Investigators get Ready - Investigators choose a card from two random Investigator cards. Each Investigator is dealt Marbles equal to their Sanity.

Building the Wall - Deal a random Wall card to The Wall player. Place the Wall card face down on the relevant Turn Tracker. Create four Open Gates with the unused Wall cards. The Wall draws five Horrors.

Game Play

The Wall takes a turn before each Investigator. The Investigator to the left of The Wall will go first. Every time all players have completed their turn, move the Turn Tracker up one rank.

The Wall Turn

The Wall may Wrath or Brood. They may never Brood twice in a row, on their first turn or during 'The Crescendo'.

Wrath

Doom - Add a Doom token to the Action Pool. Add an extra Doom token on first turn.

Take Actions - Spend Doom tokens to complete Actions

Brood

Doom - Add 1 Doom token to the Action Pool.

Undrain Horrors - All Horrors On the Streets are no longer Drained.

Unleash the Scourge - Horror On the Streets becomes The Scourge.

Investigator Turn

Make Actions worth up to two Action Points.

Ending the Game

All the Gates are Closed - Investigator Victory

Five Gates are Open after 'An Eye Opens' - The Wall Victory

'The Ancient One Awakens' - The Wall Victory