

Blanc LaBelle in Your Home Games!



This is a basic outline that you can use to incorporate the world of The Under into your home games! Feel free to apply specific mechanics based on your system, but this guide is more relevant to how to build the Under into your game.

There is going to be a lot of breaking things and putting them back together! I'm a firm believer, as a Game Master, of "convince it works" rather than "show me in the rulebook". This document is by no means finished and by no means official for anything. If you're into RPGs, take this to help build your setting and work with your players to decide the rules based on your system. Happy hunting!

The Factions:

There are technically four factions in any Under City: the Fae, The Magi, The Beasts, and the Fold. Below are common species in each group, but feel free to use your best judgment. There are also some suggested mechanics and ideas, but feel free to make your own based on the game system.



The Fae:

The Fae are probably the oldest faction of any Under City. This is the faction for fairies, fauns, centaurs, satyrs, naiads, dryads, and so many more. Generally, they look human enough with one “wild” feature that connects them to nature or animals. They will always have a human-looking face, but that often distracts from their sometimes malicious nature.

Suggested mechanics: natural Charming abilities, affinity to elemental/nature magic. Fairies have flight and centaurs have hooves for speed or weapons.

The Magi:

The Magi have the unique privilege of looking human, or at least human enough. Magi is a broad term for any sort of human magic worker: wizard, witch, sorcerer, warlock, or mage. The terms have subtle differences in cultural context, but the term magi is an umbrella term for this group. Additionally, this group contains underfolk like vampires, dwarves, werewolves, and elves. If it could pass as human with a little luck and a simple disguise, it would fall under the class of magi.

Suggested mechanics: magical ability, human camouflage. Magi are able to pass easily between the Under and the Above. Many have a solid grasp of social behaviors and dressing to blend in.



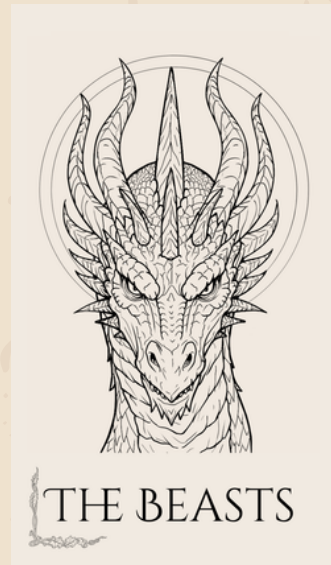
The Beasts:

The Beasts are what might be considered the ‘monsters’ of bedtime stories. Dragons, goblins, harpies, and—naturally—trolls! Unlike the other two factions, the Beasts have given up using magic. To that end, when playing a Beast, you would rely more on your strength and natural resistances.

Note: In the books, Beasts cannot typically use magic. If your beast does use magic, be aware this will make them a minority. As an alternative, you can replace certain types of spells with something that highlights their monstrous nature.

For Example: We’re playing in Kid’s on Brooms for our system, which has a magic dice function. One of our players is playing a harpy. After discussing it, we decided that in lieu of using her magic dice, the same mechanic will be applied for rolls where she would apply things like her claws, hunting instincts, or wings.

Suggested mechanics: Natural intimidation, physical strength. The Beasts lean into their natural aggression, usually acting before thinking. Even ‘negotiations’ pretty quickly devolve into fighting, so Beasts are not known for social abilities.



The Fold:

The Fold is where the Above meets the Under. The most common Underfolk who live in the Fold are Fae or Magi, but Beasts are not unheard of in the Fold. This is also where a lot of ‘hybrid’ underfolk live (such as half-trolls).

Suggested Mechanics: Any of the above mechanics apply, but an important thing to note is that Fae and Beasts will need some kind of glamour to pass in the human world. Glammers come in the form of something wearable such as necklaces, earrings, rings, and glasses. Get creative with the hybrid mixes from the Under and how that upbringing affects your characters.

Mapping the Above:

This can be based on real towns or cities—including your own!—or one that you and the players make together. If you are making your own world, figure out a few important factors:

Where Your Characters Will Be: Does your vampire lurk in graveyards? Does your mermaid swim in the pond behind the school? Does your minotaur hide in a barn, an abandoned firehouse, or down in the sewer?

Whether your characters live in the Under or the Above, there are going to be important locations for each character that inform the map of the Above.

Safe Spaces: Even if you have a glamour, it's good to have places for Underfolk to just be! Dolly's Diner is somewhere people can enjoy the conveniences of the Above without having to hide their true faces. This could be an office for some kind of organized group, a classroom for Underkids in the Above, a library, whatever fits your group's vibe! It helps to have one or two places that will be places they can discuss magic freely.

Under Doors: The knowledge of Under Doors will be a fun opportunity and a must-have! Under Doors are physical entrances between the Under and the Above. They might be in the bathrooms of 24-hour diners, between shelves of used bookstores, hidden beneath manhole covers, or through a dryer at a laundromat. Get creative with your Under Doors!

Oak Hand: Depending on your adventure, it may be necessary to locate where the Oak Hand in your town will have their base of operations. It can be an abandoned warehouse, a shack in the woods, or someone's basement. Decide if you want your players to know this or not. Will this be something they may inadvertently stumble upon? Do they need to find it?



Mapping the Under:

The unique aspect about the Under is that it is wherever there are people. This can mean any place in the world, any time period, real or imagined! The Under is usually split into the same basic structure of three concentric circles (like a target) for each faction. An artificial light source called a Sun Stone is often used to generate a day/night cycle for the population living underground. Below is a list of the three major districts in most Under Cities, as well as some descriptions.

Fae Town: The center-most part of an Under City is Fae Town. It is always called Fae Town, but those in the Above and other Under Cities will sometimes refer to Fae Town by where they're located, Fae Town London, for example. It is a place of crooked buildings, wild parties, frivolity and whimsy. There is almost always a celebration and any day that isn't celebrated publicly is often celebrated in private. When exploring a Fae Town, watch out for offers of Fae Wine and don't get swept up in any fairy dances.

The Magi City: Surrounding the Fae Town is the magi city. They will often be named something different to separate the Under from the Above. In Hedgefield, the magi city is called Brodal. Often, this is where you can really express the uniqueness of your slice of the Under. Maybe Under London has a tube running through it. Maybe Under Venice has canals instead of streets. Or maybe your Under City has something completely different. In terms of what the Magi City looks like, it is often influenced by the architecture of the Above.

The Outerlands: This is the domain of Beasts. Beyond the borders of a Magi City is the Outerlands. This is a wild place where monsters roam free. There are few buildings beyond more formalized caves. The Beasts tend to keep their possessions limited so they can remain on the move. Sometimes, camps will get established by certain groups, but they can quickly become contested sections. Think about what would make your group feel most at home and add those for some flair.



Playing the Game:

This is going to depend so much on your system, so I won't have any specific rules here. My friends and I used "Kids on Brooms" as our blueprint, but we also talked about how the mechanics would work for each of them. We had a good sampling from each faction: a necromantic magi specializing in expelling ghosts, a half-changeling fae with an obsession for Irish History and Culture, and a punk-rock harpy living in one of the towering pines of Acadia National Forest. Each one of them had different abilities for their factions and species. Talk with your players to decide what they can do and what dangers they'll face. This will be dependent on the game hook and the tone of your game. Make sure everyone is on the same page about what to expect going into your game.

Suggested RPG Hooks:

- A wild, magical creature is loose in the Above. Your team is tasked with locating and recapturing it.
- A magical artifact (necklace, stone, knife, etc.) has been stolen from the Under. Your team has to track it down.
- A citizen of the Under has gone missing. Did they escape? Or were they kidnapped?
- A human saw a Beast in the Above without a glamour. They're threatening to go public and your team has to prevent them from breaking the masquerade.

