Mimicry World
Inspired by Vincent Baker’s Apocalypse World
by Mendel Schmiedekamp

What is Mimicry World?

World
Some things in the world we take for granted assuming them to be inviolate and unchanging. Perhaps the most fundamental of these is our notion of individual existence, of self.

In Mimicry World you play a creature that has lost this simple feature and has been cast out of their once familiar form. Now these beings wander between bodies trying to achieve an end to this state. Some how ever have chosen different paths and try to change the world around them, for better or worse.

The Mimics are the inspiration for werewolves, dryads, vampires, and demonic possession. They exist everywhere, struggling against the hidden forces of the world, fighting the Shells they leave behind into inevitable corruption, and occasionally finding their one true escape, joining or replacing one of the True Forms.

Game
Mimicry World is based on Vincent Baker’s Apocalypse World, borrowing several major concepts. Mimicry World is story-based game played by 3 or more players. At least one of these players needs to take on a role as Master of Ceremonies (MC), to help run the game, bring the world of the mimics to life, and to provide interesting situations to the other players. Any of the players, including the MCs can play a mimic, a body hopping protagonist of Mimicry World.

While playing a mimic or an MC, you will have the opportunity to describe what your mimic or threats are doing. As part of this, you have access to a variety of Moves – places where the rules and the story meet. When you describe using a move, use the rules for it. Sometimes moves don’t make sense in the story right now or require some resource you are lacking in that case, describe how you do something else instead.

Creating Your Mimic

To create your mimic, you first need to decide your original form. This form is connected to your Memory. Find the form you want and attach it permanently in the section under Memory, as you can never change this part your past.

Then select your current form, the one you inhabit now. This form is connected to your Intuition, your ability to grasp the differences of the new form. Attach this form underneath Intuition, although make sure you can remove it later, as you almost certainly will be changing current forms.

Lastly select two True Forms, your mystical connections with the forces that guide the world. One of these forms is your ideal, at least at first, while the other is your base, something you are trying to escape. These are connected to Abstraction your ability to understand things beyond the concrete world.

A True Form has two parts, the first is a series of moves (like a shorter Form sheet), the second represents a front (a source of trouble) to be given to an MC after you have made the choices listed at the top of the card. Attach the first half with the ideal on the top under Abstraction. While you can change True Forms later, it is unusual, indicating a real shift of the mimic’s personality and goals. Meanwhile, give the second half (after circling your choices) to an MC of your choice, who attaches it to their MC sheet.

The remaining section is Blatancy, which represents your ability to do things beyond the ken of your current or original forms. This section will be filled with moves cut from your past current forms and attached here as you gain experience and advance your mimic.

The last step in building your mimic is to take six pith and distribute it among the stats of Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, and Abstraction. This pith will move around during play, and the total number can increase by marking experience and advancing. The pith currently in a stat is the number used for that stat. Once each mimic has been created, you are ready to play!

Playing Mimicry World

Chapters
Chapters are a self-contained unit of playing Mimicry World, lasting about an hour. In between chapters, you can take a break, whether for a few minutes or until you next meet to play.

At the beginning of a chapter, the MCs get a number of free build moves equal to half the number of mimics being played, rounded up, to set up and evolve the situation for this chapter.

During a chapter, mimic players describe what their mimic is doing as part of a dialogue with the rest of the players. When they describe using a move, they follow the rules for that move. If two mimics both want to act, then the one who has acted less recently gets first chance unless preempted. An MC only moves if all the mimics are waiting or if a mimic misses on a roll.

At the end of a chapter, the MCs can spend their threat on hard moves to represent the twist of events that ends the chapter, as a cliff-hanger or other rise in tension. Alternatively, the chapter can end on a more sedate note, either because the MCs are low on threat, or because they want to save it for later.

Rolling
Mimicry world uses a pair of dice, one a 6-sided (d6) and one a 12-sided (d12). When a move instructs you to roll plus or minus stat or pith, you roll both dice and add or subtract the pith at whichever stat is related to the move. During a chapter there are two special numbers: the lower bound and the upper bound.

Compare the total of your dice modified by the stat:
- Equal or higher than the upper bound number, is a hit.
- Between the two bounds, is a mid.
- Equal or less than the lower bound number, is a miss.
One of the MCs (their choice) gets to make a move.

Each chapter the bounds start at 5 and 17, although for a shorter chapter 7 and 15 can be used instead. Each hit raises the lower bound and each miss drops the upper bound. After a move in which this would cause the bounds to meet, the chapter ends.
Experience

Either of:
• +1 Pith
• Steal a Move from Current Form
and check a box:
□□□□□□□□
2nd Circle
□□□□□□□
3rd Circle

Memory
- Original Form
- Shift
- Intuition
- Current Form
- Shift
- Blatancy
- Stolen Moves
- Shift
- Abstraction
- True Forms

Harm Stats
- Mendacity
  - Loss of Form
  - p-harm
- Oblivion
  - s-harm

Blatancy
- At Blatancy 1+
  • Sense the world with human-like sight, hearing, touch, and smell
  • Communicate basic ideas & feelings.
- At Blatancy 2+
  • Move under your own power
  • Manipulate objects around you
  • Use language.

When you draw upon the connection all mimics share to aid or hinder another, shift a Blatancy to give the mimic either a +2 or -3.

Attach Ideal True Form Here

Attach Base Stolen Moves Here

Attach Stolen Moves Here

Permanently Attach Your Original Form Here

Temporarily Attach Your Current Form Here

Attach Ideal True Form Here

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Harm:
When you take physical harm or p-harm while in a form, roll -p-harm. On a hit, you are shaken, suffering -2 forward, but your mimic nature prevents any lasting harm. On a mid, your mimic nature allows you to deflect much of the harm, shift one pith from Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, or Abstraction to Mendacity. On a miss, you are taken off-balance mentally or physically and your connection with your current form is weakened, shift one pith from Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, or Abstraction to your Mendacity and take -2 forward.

When you take spiritual harm or s-harm while in a form, roll -s-harm. On a hit, your connection to your host nature is too strong to be affected by the harm. On a mid, you are shaken and off-balance from the attack, taking -2 forward, but suffering no long term effects. On a miss, your inner nature is wounded by the attack, you are taken off-balance mentally or physically, shift one pith from Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, or Abstraction to Oblivion.

When your total pith among Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, and Abstraction is zero, you must leave your form.

Physical Harm (p-harm):
Physical harm can cause injury, incapacity, and death of the forms of Mimicry World. Mimics are largely resistant to it, although the more harm their current form takes the weaken their attachment to it becomes. Others are not so lucky.

Even 0 p-harm can wound, and 0 is the minimum from any physical attack or danger.
- If the source is a weapon (natural, improvised, or man-made), it gets +1 p-harm.
- If the source is particularly vicious (tearing, burning, puncturing), it gets +2 p-harm.
- If the source is particularly insidious (gas, poisoned, acid), it gets +2 p-harm.
- If the source comes from multiple directions, it gets +1 p-harm from a few, and +2 p-harm if it comes from everywhere.

Loss of Form and Oblivion:
When you leave a form (willingly or unwillingly), roll +Mendacity. On a hit, the form is left alive, with its original nature restored, though possibly forever wounded in its soul. On a mid, the form dies peacefully or painfully, your choice, at the MC's discretion its nature might become a mimic. On a miss, the form is left empty yet alive, an MC starts a shell clock for it, it could also become a mimic, as above.

You are not susceptible to p-harm while without a form.

When you take spiritual harm or s-harm while without a form, roll -s-harm. On a hit, your spirit is wounded and flailing, shift one pith from Mendacity to Oblivion and take -2 forward. On a mid, the injury is deep, but tolerable, shift one pith from Mendacity to Oblivion. On a miss, the injury is fleeting, you only suffer disorientation and confusion, causing -2 forward.

When you try to act or manifest without a form, roll +Mendacity. On a hit or mid, you may do so, use your Mendacity in place of the desired attributed and ignore any shifts. Also on a mid, if you choose to carry out your action you must shift one Mendacity to Oblivion, after you act. On a miss, you cannot act and you must shift one Mendacity to Oblivion.

Spiritual Harm (s-harm):
Spiritual harm can remove or alter the inner nature of things, it can be as effective a killer as physical harm and harder to protect against. Mimics are especially wary of s-harm, since it can force them out of their current forms in a weakened state.

Even 0 s-harm can pierce the soul, and 0 is the minimum from any spiritual attack or danger.
- If the source is a focus (mystical object or ceremony), it gets +1 p-harm.
- If the source is particularly vicious (tearing memories, ripping souls), it gets +2 p-harm.
- If the source is particularly insidious (mind control, possession), it gets +2 p-harm.
- If the source multifaceted, it gets +1 p-harm from a few, and +2 p-harm if it comes from everywhere.

Gaining a New Form:
When you attempt to take over someone or something in your presence as a new form, roll +Mendacity. On a hit, you ease into the form without much difficulty, choose 1. On a mid, your access to the form has complicated things, choose 2. When you take a new form, replace your current form and allocate your current pith among Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, and Abstraction.
- Your new form is in some sort of trouble
- You don't remember who you were until the next chapter.
- You don't remember anything as your host for the next two chapters.
- You don't have full control of your pith, the MC allocates it instead

On a miss, you cannot take over this form, whether through incompatibility, some eldritch protections, or external forces, shift one Mendacity to Oblivion.

When you have no form and all your pith is in Oblivion you may desperately seek out any form you can or cease to exist.

When you desperately seek out any form you can, roll -Oblivion. On a hit, through the confusion you can select the general type of form you join with, and choose 1. On a mid, the MC chooses your new form and you are in chaos, choose 2. When you take a new form, replace your current form and allocate your current pith among Memory, Intuition, Blatancy, and Abstraction.
- Your new form is in immediate danger.
- Your new form is in very far away from where you were.
- You don't remember who you were for the next three chapters.
- You'll never have access to anything your host remembers.
- You don't have full control of your pith, the MC allocates it instead and can allocate up to half (rounded down) to Mendacity. On a miss, you cease to exist.

Harm's Effects:
Mimic's have a resistance to harm (see the moves above). For one or more things roughly human-sized, harm does the following:
- 0-1 harm: those exposed are wounded or winded.
- 2-3 harm: a casualty – fallen victim to damage or magic
- 4-5 harm: several casualties
- 6+ harm: many casualties

The type of harm influences how these happen, so for s-harm the effects are more mind or spirit related rather than physical trauma.
**Master of Ceremonies**

**Mimic names:**

Build Moves - gives 1 threat
- Announce coming badness.
- Advance a front’s clock.
- Establish/Change possible harm.
- Tell possible consequences and ask.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost.
- Activate a downside.
- Put someone in a spot.

Hard Moves - costs 1 threat
- Establish or escalate a clock.
- Trade harm as established.
- Inflict harm as established.
- Separate or capture them.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Take away their stuff.
- Make them trade.

Threat

Chapter Clocks

- threat
- threat

Shell Clocks

- threat
- threat

Shell Moves - costs 1 threat from shell clock
- Strike insidiously
- Corrupt a form move
- Drain life or mind
- Inflict great s-harm

**Agenda:**
- Make Mimicry World a mixture of hard reality and unreal dreams.
- Make the mimics’ lives not boring.
- Play to find out what happens.

**Principles - How to Speak:**
- Speak honestly and openly what the rules/situations demand.
- Describing the real concretely, sensory, and practical.
- Describing the unreal emotionally, fancifully, and unreliable.
- Address yourself to the mimics, not the players.
- Make your moves, but do not speak their names.

**Principles - What to Do:**
- Make everything alive, give them names.
- Ask provocative questions, build on answers.
- After every move, ask “what do you do”.
- Make sure your NPCs evolve, or die.
- Be a fan of the player’s characters.
MCs, Agendas, and Principles:
In Mimicry World there can be more than one MC, indeed every player can play both a mimic and an MC, with each player choosing a different player who gets to use the Fronts created by their choices of True Forms. At times, all the MCs will divide among themselves a number of moves or choose who responds to a miss, in that case the MCs as a group should decide who gets dibs, with a preference to MCs who have spent the longest time since their last move. As MCs you have an Agenda to guide your actions toward the other players, as well as Principles to follow in those actions and a set of MC moves available to you for setting up a chapter and responding to misses.

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MC Moves:
MC moves come in two general kinds: build moves which increase the looming threat of the various fronts and hard moves which represent the impact of that threat.

Build Moves (each gives +1 threat):
- Announce coming badness.
- Advance a front's clock.
- Establish (or re-establish) possible harm.
- Tell them possible consequences and ask.
- Offer an opportunity, with or without cost.
- Activate a downside.
- Put someone in a spot.

Hard Moves (each costs 1 threat):
- Establish or escalate a clock.
- Trade harm as established.
- Inflict harm as established.
- Separate or capture them.
- Turn their move back on them.
- Take away their stuff.
- Make them trade.

Shell Moves (for use only when a shell appears, typically due to a shell clock having struck – each of these moves costs 1 threat from that generated by the shell clock):
- Strike insidiously
- Corrupt a form move
- Drain life or mind
- Inflict great s-harm

Chapter and Front Clocks:
Clocks are meant to forewarn of impending badness with a clear point of no return. All clocks have a threat total, which is doubled and spent on hard moves when the clock strikes. There are two types of clocks: chapter clocks which strike unless prevented at the end of the chapter they were introduced for, and front clocks which belong to a specific front and strike after being advanced (using a build move) 5 times.

Front clocks represent the slow building trouble which span several chapters. Chapter clocks represent an immediate negative outcome which can only be stopped by direct intervention. Clocks are created by using one of the build moves available before a chapter begins. A chapter clock starts with 1 threat and a front clock starts with 3 threat. Both clocks can be escalated (using a hard move) by increasing the stakes they represent and adding 1 threat, typically maxing out at 3 for chapter clocks and 6 for front clocks. Either type of clock can be stopped by the actions of the characters. Any actions which would derail the sequence of events on the clock will do, so while the MC should have a concrete notion of how the clock could be stopped that should not be only option.

Shell Clocks:
A special kind of front clock is the shell clock. Not associated with a particular front, these clocks represent the consequences of mimics jumping from body to body. Sometimes what is left behind has no core nature left, only a living physical remnant. Invariably these beings become destructive and dangerous, especially for mimics.

When a mimic leaves a form and it is left vulnerable to becoming a shell, a shell clock is started for that form, representing the slow corruption of that form into something truly inimical to life and existence, for example: humans turn into vampires or ghouls and wolves turn into twisted dire wolves of unquenchable bloodlust.

The only ways to stop a shell clock is to fully destroy or purify the form. Once the process has begun, the form cannot be taken back by a mimic or other spirit.
**Hawk**

**Hawk Senses:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you have basic senses of smell, hearing, touch, and an impressive of sight. Shift 1 Pith for an answer to a question related to vision.

**Winged Hunter:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can move yourself and roughly manipulate. While this Pith is 2+, you can fly.

**Predator's Tongue:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can communicate with predators.

**Focus:** When you focus yourself, or lend that focus to another, roll +Pith. On a hit or a miss, you or your target get +2 forward for this course of action, and -2 forward to any other. On a miss, or at your option on a hit, you or your target cannot waver without outside intervention.

**Beak and Claw:** When attacking with your natural weapons, roll +Pith. On a hit, you strike swift and deep, inflicting the d6 in p-harm at no risk. On a miss, you hesitate or accept risk, inflicting and taking the d6 in p-harm.

**Quick:** Shift 1 Pith to preempt the action of another, unless they are using Quick.

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**Sword**

**Vibrations:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you have an impressive hearing. Shift 1 for an answer to a question related to hearing.

**Sword Speech:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can communicate in seismic and radio waves (stone and metal tongues respectively).

**Anger:** When you draw others to anger, roll +Pith. On a hit, choose 2. On a miss choose 1.

- They ignore their own safety
- They strike even at friends
- They attack physically

**Reduce Judgment:** When you weaken the minds around you, roll +Pith. On a hit, they act inebriated, those attempting to act coherently take the d6 in s-harm. On a miss they are momentarily confused or dazed.

**Sharpened Steel:** When attacking with your natural ammunition, roll +Pith. On a hit, you strike swift and deep, inflicting the d6 in p-harm at no risk. On a miss, you hesitate or accept risk, inflicting and taking the d6 in p-harm.

**Sturdy:** Shift 1 Pith to reduce your p-harm to zero before a harm roll (you still make the roll).

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**Wolf**

**Wolf Senses:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you have basic senses of sight, hearing, touch, and an impressive of smell. Shift 1 Pith for an answer to a question related to smell.

**Hunter's Body:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can move yourself and roughly manipulate.

**Predator's Tongue:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can communicate with predators.

**Empathy:** When you appeal to the emotions of others, roll +Pith. On a hit, choose 2. On a miss choose 1.

- They do something dangerous
- They forgo concrete assurances
- They do something atypical

**Tooth and Claw:** When attack with your natural weapons, roll +Pith. On a hit, you strike swift and deep, inflicting the d6 in p-harm at no risk. On a miss, you hesitate or accept risk, inflicting and taking the d6 in p-harm.

**Pack Instinct:** Shift 1 Pith to aid a pack-mate in your presence, they get +2 on a roll. Anyone you trust can be your pack-mate.

**Rabbits**

**Rabbit Senses:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you have basic senses of sight and touch, and impressive senses of smell and hearing. Shift 1 Pith for an answer to a question related to smell.

**Rabbit's Body:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can move yourself and roughly manipulate.

**Rodent Tongue:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can communicate with rodents.

**Empathy:** When you appeal to the emotions of others, roll +Pith. On a hit, choose 2. On a miss choose 1.

- They do something dangerous
- They forgo concrete assurances
- They do something atypical

**Reduce Judgment:** When you weaken the minds around you, roll +Pith. On a hit, they act inebriated, those attempting to act coherently take the d6 in s-harm. On a miss they are momentarily confused or dazed.

**Quick:** Shift 1 Pith to preempt the action of another, unless they are using Quick.

**Burrow:** Shift 1 Pith to travel underground or make a tunnel.

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**Tree**

**Sap Sense:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you have impressive chemical sense (like a sense of smell). Shift 1 Pith for an answer to a question related to this sense.

**Whispering of Leaves:** While this Pith is 1 or higher, you can communicate with plants.

**Empathy:** When you appeal to the emotions of others, roll +Pith. On a hit, choose 2. On a miss choose 1.

- They do something dangerous
- They forgo concrete assurances
- They do something atypical

**Calm:** When you calm hostility around you, roll +Pith. On a hit, violence and anger become difficult, those attempting take the d6 in s-harm. On a miss there is a momentary lull in intensity, enough to hear a voice.

**Weather Manipulation:** Shift 1 Pith to make the weather change in a plausible way.

**Sturdy:** Shift 1 Pith to reduce your p-harm to zero before a harm roll (you still make the roll).

**Grounded:** Shift 1 Pith to reduce your s-harm to zero before a harm roll (you still make the roll).