

IRON VEIL

IN WHICH A BORDER IS DESTROYED...

You live in the shadow of the Sleeping Giant—though the official maps call it the Iron Wall—an iron-veined mountain range that's been the lifeblood of this region since before you were born. And you thank the Lord Himself every day that He saw fit to have you be born when you were.

The Tower Mining Company is willing to hire any able-bodied man, woman or child to work these mines and get that ore on the rails. Any man, woman or child, even the ones that look like you: the weird and twisted ones that have sprouted horns or wings or feathers or claws. Had you been born before the mines, your parents would have saved themselves the shame and drown you in the lake.

Of course, maybe they should have. This life hasn't been easy. The Company assigns your kind the most dangerous jobs, the ones deepest in the mines where slithering things coil around inattentive bodies and echoes are swallowed up by the abyss. The mine operators hate you.

At least when you're down there you don't have to hear the whispers that follow you when you're surface-side. Some of the old timers—the ones who lived around here before the iron rush—tell stories about how babies never used to be born like you, at least not around

here. They say that since the rail and ships have been taking the iron away, the Iron Wall is acting less like a wall and more like a veil. It's all full of holes, letting the Fair Folk through to raid the city, burn down the churches until they're nothing but smoke and ash, and kidnap human babies to leave things like you in their place.

They say that you're really just another one of those monsters and your work in the mines is just more evidence that you're trying to destroy this town, destroy this country, and probably even destroy the Lord Himself.

FÆRIE TALES

Faeries steal babies and leave one of their own to be raised by humans. The replacements are called changelings and though their time in the human world has made them less powerful than faeries, they still have magical abilities.

Faeries can only be harmed by iron, and just being around it weakens them.

Faerie wings, horns and other body parts are known to have medicinal properties.

Demon, devil, ghost and monster are just other words for faerie.

Iron Veil is a tabletop roleplaying game for 3–5 players about people on the border between two worlds, fighting to figure out where they belong. Written, designed and illustrated by Jesse Ross.

Version 1.0. Visit IRONVEIL.COM for the latest version and more game materials.

With love to Trollbabe, Honey Heist, Cthulhu Dark, Lady Blackbird, Ghost Lines and Monsterhearts.

WORK TO BE DONE

There is much to be done in and around the city of Tower, the bustling metropolis that grew out of the earliest mining settlements.

Figure out what caused a recent cave-in.

Take down corrupt mine operators.

Spy on a rival mining company.

Form a labor union.

Defend the town against a faerie raid.

Locate a portal into the faerie realm.

Accompany a train shipment to the ports to ensure safe delivery.

Solve the brutal murder of a recently arrived changeling.

Eliminate a monstrous threat deep in the mines.

Celebrate payday with an evening out at the saloons.

Learn what you really are, and where you're really meant to be.

RUMORS

Many things are whispered about in Tower. Some are even true.

A traveling salesman is pitching a healing tonic he claims is made of troll blood.

Someone says they found a faerie portal outside of the mines.

A group of wealthy Tower residents secretly worship a giant serpent god.

Faeries are actually just humans who have been imprisoned by some malicious entity.

The "faerie" raids are actually being perpetrated by humans in disguise.

The mine was built here expressly to destroy the boundary between the human realm and the faerie realm.

The union organizers are under the spell of a powerful faerie.

The iron being mined is magic.

There is a shack deep in the woods that calls to changelings in their dreams.

HOW TO PLAY IRON VEIL

Iron Veil is a game for 1 GM and 2-4 Players.

To play Iron Veil you will need:

5 sheets of sturdy cardstock.

The 24 Character cards, which represent your character, abilities and motivations. Print the cards double-sided on 4 sheets of the cardstock and cut along the dotted lines.

The 6 Untethered cards, for revealing what happens when your character goes too far. Print the cards on 1 sheet of the cardstock and cut along the dotted lines.

Six-sided dice. Ideally, each Player should have 1 die, though dice can be shared. The GM does not roll dice and so doesn't need any.

When you play Iron Veil, you are playing a character that is one of four different types of changeling.

THE ELF

You are otherworldly and mysterious. This character is good for players who like having secrets and using deception and misdirection to get their way.

THE FAUN

You are charismatic and passionate. This character is good for players who like to inspire others and rush into action.

THE GOBLIN

You are playful and inquisitive. This character is good for players who like getting a laugh,

playing tricks and laying traps.

THE TROLL

You are loyal and nurturing. This character is good for players who like to use their strength to protect their friends and intimidate their enemies.

There are six cards associated with each of the characters. Decide which character you want to play and take all six cards for them. One card has only a Weird side. Keep that card and place it in front of you, Weird side up. The other five cards have both a Weird side and a Tethered side with different abilities. Place them in front of you, Tethered side up.

Each Tethered side has a special ability listed on it. When you use that ability, flip the card to Weird. Each Weird side has a condition that, if you meet during the game, will allow you to flip the card back to Tethered.

You have one stat to keep track of: \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} . Your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} is your number of cards with the Weird side showing. Because you have one card showing Weird at the start of the game, your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} starts at 1. Your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} will fluctuate throughout the game as you perform the actions which tell you to flip your cards.

Roll one six-sided die when you are trying to do something that a human is capable of, but where the outcome is in doubt, such as persuade someone, win a fight, remember a name, run away, or look for clues.

If you roll over your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} , you succeed and you narrate how it happens.

If you roll equal to your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} , you narrate

either how you succeed or how you fail, but if you want to succeed you must include a complication introduced by the GM into your narration.

If you roll under your \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} , then any player other than you can choose to narrate how you fail (but may not kill your character). If no players want to narrate, then the GM narrates your failure. If more than one player wants to narrate, then each player makes a roll. The player who rolls highest over their own \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} then narrates.

For example, Anna has 5 \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} and Jon has 3 \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} . Anna rolls 6 and Jon rolls 5. Even though Anna rolled higher, Jon gets to narrate because his roll of 5 minus his \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} of 3 equals 2, which is more than Anna's difference of 1 (6 rolled minus 5 \mathbb{W}_{EIRD}).

In case of a tie, players re-roll. As a bonus for narrating, the player who narrates can either flip one of their own cards from Weird to Tethered, or force you to flip a card from Tethered to Weird (and they choose whether or not the associated ability gets triggered). The reason for the flip must be connected to the narrative.

When you have 5 \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} and you flip your sixth card to Weird, you have become unrecognizable to those around you and are considered Untethered.

When you become Untethered, randomly draw a card from the Untethered deck. You must follow the script on the card. The script will give you a way to escape being Untethered. This is

your only way to flip any of your cards to Tethered; you are unable to use any of the conditions on your Weird cards to flip them. If you perform the escape condition on the Untethered card, you are free and can flip any three of your cards back to Tethered.

GM ADVICE

Make the character's lives interesting and increasingly tense. Pay attention to how their \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} is fluctuating and play off of that. When their \mathbb{W}_{EIRD} is especially high, push them into scenes where they have to win social contests against humans and watch the other players narrate dramatic and devastating failures.

Get the players to help you flesh out the world and its inhabitants. When the players meet someone new, ask them what that person does to relax or what that person might be hiding. When they go somewhere new, ask them to describe part of the setting.

Keep the faeries and other monsters hidden, but tease their presence throughout the game. Find a symbol, color, sound or other cue that can continually crop up, and use that to build tension and suspense.

Remember that this is your players' characters' story, not yours. Be willing to drop any of your preconceived plans and story arcs and follow your players' lead. You'll be surprised at how far that trust can go.

ELF



WEIRD

ELF

CRAFT

When you are on the run, you can flip this card to create an illusion that confounds your pursuers.

TETHERED

ELF

ASCERTAIN

When you think someone is lying to you, you can flip this card to force them to tell the truth.

TETHERED

ELF

MUSE

When you watch someone sleep, you can flip this card to see and manipulate their dreams.

TETHERED

ELF

MASK

When you wear someone's clothes or have something precious of theirs, you can flip this card to make yourself appear as them.

TETHERED

ELF

FORGET

When you have been told a secret by someone, you can flip this card to remove one of their memories.

TETHERED



ELF

ACQUIRE

When you leave unseen and come back with something needed, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

ELF

CONFIDE

When you share one of your secrets to get close to someone, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

ELF



WEIRD

ELF

CUSHION

When you lie to someone to keep them from being hurt emotionally, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

ELF

LIFT

When you say something poetic and uplifting, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

ELF

WONDER

When you help someone see some bit of beauty in the world, you may flip this card.

WEIRD



FAUN



WEIRD

FAUN

PLAGUE

When you face impossible odds, you can flip this card to summon a force of nature that will overwhelm your opponents.

TETHERED

FAUN

HUNT

When you are tracking someone, you can flip this card to know exactly how to find them.

TETHERED

FAUN

SHIFT

When you get angry or frustrated, you can flip this card to transform into a predatory animal.

TETHERED

FAUN

RAGE

When you injure someone, you can flip this card to make them and their allies run away in fear.

TETHERED

FAUN

GAMBLE

When you put others' lives at risk, you can flip this card to remove their fear.

TETHERED



FAUN

REWARD

When you credit someone else for something good you did, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

FAUN

RELENT

When you give up a selfish pursuit, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

FAUN



WEIRD

FAUN

LEAD

When you give a motivational speech, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

FAUN

LEAP

When you act hastily but it works out, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

FAUN

ENCHANT

When you flirt with someone or tell someone you love them, you may flip this card.

WEIRD



GOBLIN



WEIRD

GOBLIN

DISAPPEAR

When you are abandoned or ignored, you can flip this card to make yourself invisible.

TETHERED

GOBLIN

GAZE

When you see something confusing or terrifying, you can flip this card to ask the GM three questions about it.

TETHERED

GOBLIN

PASS

When you are afraid and run away, you can flip this card to become intangible and walk through solid objects.

TETHERED

GOBLIN

TRICK

When you sow chaos and discord, you can flip this card to cause small items to disappear and reappear somewhere else.

TETHERED

GOBLIN

GRASP

When you lurk in shadows, you can flip this card to turn the shadows into black tendrils that you can control.

TETHERED



GOBLIN

CLOWN

When you use humor to defuse a tense situation, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

GOBLIN

REPAIR

When you fix something for someone without them knowing, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

GOBLIN



WEIRD

GOBLIN

MARVEL

When you propose or create an overly elaborate trap, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

GOBLIN

COLLUDE

When you develop a plan as a group and it goes well, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

GOBLIN

INQUIRE

When you ask a question that lets someone show off their expertise, you may flip this card.

WEIRD



TROLL



WEIRD

TROLL

UNBIND

When you are trapped, imprisoned or otherwise contained, you can flip this card to create an escape.

TETHERED

TROLL

FORCE

When you make someone beg for their life, you can flip this card to compel them to help you with something.

TETHERED

TROLL

SCOURGE

When you vow to protect someone and they are harmed, you can flip this card to ignore injuries until they are avenged.

TETHERED

TROLL

JUDGE

When you see someone break a promise, you can flip this card to ensure they suffer some kind of punishment.

TETHERED

TROLL

RUMBLE

When you make a situation worse, you can flip this card to cause the earth to open and quake.

TETHERED



TROLL

FORGIVE

When you look past someone's mistakes to comfort them, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

TROLL

SHIELD

When you put yourself in harm's way to help someone, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

TROLL



WEIRD

TROLL

PACIFY

When you refuse to use violence to solve a problem, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

TROLL

AID

When you carry someone to safety, you may flip this card.

WEIRD

TROLL

FOLLOW

When you look to someone for direction and do what they say, you may flip this card.

WEIRD



UNTETHERED

SEEK

When you become untethered, your only goal is to find a way across the Veil into the land of the Fae. No person or barrier will stand in your way. You can re-tether yourself only when someone you care about gives up something important to help you find a way across the Veil. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered.

UNTETHERED

ECHO

When you become untethered, you lose your identity. You are only allowed to echo the words that others say and any action you take must be something that someone else just did. You can re-tether yourself only when someone begs you to do something that only you can do. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered.

UNTETHERED

TORMENT

When you become untethered, you pick a target who you think has wronged you in some way and try to make their life unbearable. You will not kill or even directly injure them, but you will find any other way to hurt and frustrate them. You can re-tether yourself only when they figure out what they did wrong and ask for your forgiveness. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered.

UNTETHERED

PURGE

When you become untethered, you try to eliminate all traces of humanity you see. You will burn houses, shred clothing, break tools and terrorize humans until they run away. You can re-tether yourself only when you destroy something man-made that reminds you of someone you care about. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered.

UNTETHERED

ENLIVEN

When you become untethered, your magic is no longer contained and it fills the world around you. Inanimate things come alive, animals begin talking, and everyone near you immediately flips one card to Weird (and may also trigger the card's ability). You can re-tether yourself only when you realize you're having a deep conversation with something strange. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered.

UNTETHERED

WAKE

When you become untethered, you wake up some ancient monster and it begins looking for you. You realize this has happened and you re-tether yourself out of fear. This immediately breaks the spell and you can flip any three of your cards to Tethered, but the monster will find you when you are at your most vulnerable.

