

HOPELESS MAINE

The Hopeless Handbook for the lost and confused

Welcome to Hopeless, Maine. This document will hopefully help you find your way around.



Hopeless is a haunted island off the coast of Maine, in America. It has a curious relationship with the rest of time and space. People mostly come to it by shipwreck, and it is notoriously difficult to leave again. Some of this is because of the tides. Some of it is because the island exists within an unstable reality. Some of it is because the demons are jealous and possessive.

People on the island are an odd lot. Some of them are more closely related to each other than might be a good idea. Those who come from founding families are used to all the weird things that happen, while newcomers tend to struggle and do not always adapt well. This is a gothic place, but not always serious about it. A mix of actual horror, taking the piss out of Lovecraft, messing about with tropes and dabbling in dark comedy.

You may not know what's going on - and that is more likely to be because the author of any given story set out to bemuse you, than because you don't have the backstory. There are lots of contributors to island life, and they all like a bit of ambiguity and/or madness.

Hopeless unfolds itself to people in different ways, depending on where you start. A number of collaborations have happened because people saw gaps in the story and wanted to add their own ideas. We're always open to that. As much as anything, Hopeless is a community space where people come to play. If you're reading something and wondering what's going on, your take is valid, wherever you go with that. Island life grows organically, like some kind of fungal infestation.

The key thing to know about the island is that everything imaginable is real here. Folk magic, vampires, mad science, sensible science, werewolves, werewolves doing mad science, high ritual magic, religion, elder gods... everything works. All of these things and more are all going on at

the same time, which may make the setting confusing at first. It's more normal to have one system of magic or science in a story. But it's more entertaining to do it this way, and out here in the ostensibly real world, all those different things are at play in different people's beliefs, daydreams and lived experiences anyway.



If you've jumped in somewhere and don't know how it all fits, your best bet is to not worry about that and just try and go along with it all. Some places are better to start than others, however.

Here's a rundown of what exists and how they fit together.

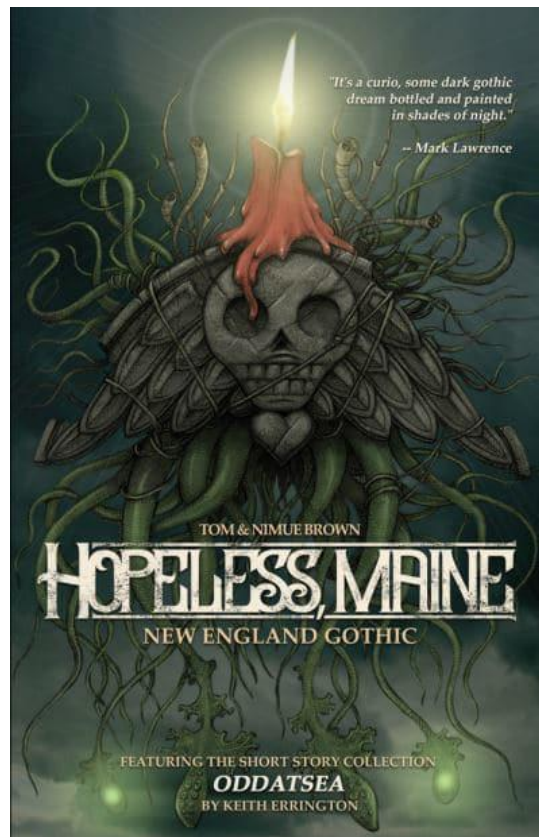
New England Gothic by Nimue Brown - novella with the earliest setting in the island's timeline. Stands alone.

Oddatsea by Keith Errington - novella set around the same time as the first two graphic novels. Stands alone.

You can get both of these in one volume from Outland Entertainment.

Semblance of Truth – also set around the same time as the first 2 graphic novels, but you do not need to have read them to follow the tale. Also published by Outland Entertainment.

You can get both of these in one volume from Outland Entertainment.



The graphic novel series needs reading in the right order, but you don't need to read the above novellas for it to make sense. We have hardback American editions and paperback UK editions to further complicate things. The reading order is... Personal Demons, Inheritance (these two are in The Gathering, published by Sloth Comics.) Sinners, Victims, Optimists, Survivors.



Graphic novels are by Tom Brown and Nimue Brown. Published in the UK by Sloth Comics and in the US by Outland Entertainment. There are stories set after the graphic novel series and these should stand alone and be readable without reference to the previous material: Necessity, The Book of Mrs Beaten and Hopeless, Mirage all exist but have yet to emerge.

The role play game (developed by Keith Healing) and tarot deck (developed by Laura Perry) exist in the same time frame as the graphic novels.

All of these can be found via online retailers.

We're also on Twitter <https://twitter.com/HopelessMaine>

And have a Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/hopelessmaine>

Bluesky - <https://bsky.app/profile/hopelessmaine.bsky.social>

Check out the Youtube playlist - <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLd-6bmI3UuPAWJrYIDrlMvpb0XuSR6jmM>