

# INTRODUCTION: A SPIRITED APPROACH



Curwin '13

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he cold, calm winds of Autumn. The promise of a chilling rain. Aziza clutched the busted top buttons of her jacket snug around her neck. Bitter wisps found their way inside anyway. The chilled air felt like water spraying her neck. She quickened her pace, from a stroll to a sprint, as the doors of the library drew closer.

Once inside, she set her bookbag onto a table in the far corner, one closest to the rattling baseboard heaters. A shiver wracked her from shoulders to shoes. She kept the jacket on.

Aziza slotted some books from her sack through the plexiglass return window and headed down the history aisles. Her report was due in two days and she still didn't have enough. "The Original American Colonies" was the topic. Well, that was everybody's topic. Mr. Owens said to break up into teams and choose one aspect of the colonies to write about. 1000 words, due in a week. Aziza didn't pair up with anybody. She didn't have any friends in Mr. Owens's class.

She didn't have many friends at all, really. Her sister, Sitara, and her neighbor, Frankie, but that was really it. And Sitara was at an age where she didn't spend all that much time at home. Mostly, she "studied" with Kestin. Her BFF, she claimed. But Aziza knew better. She knew Sitara really liked Kestin, in the way girls sometimes like boys, and Kestin really liked Sitara. In that way boys sometimes like girls.

And Frankie, well. Frankie was getting weird. Frankie never wanted to talk. She spent all her time inside her house and never invited Aziza to play. They were the same age, both in Fifth Grade, but Frankie was in Ms. Dunowitz's class. The "smart class" as kids liked to say. Mr. Owens got the rejects. Which is certainly how Aziza felt most of the time.

"The Founding of America: Early Relationships with the Tribes, 2nd Edition." The title seemed promising. And Aziza liked the fact the book didn't call them "American Indians." She much preferred "Native Americans" or "American Tribes." She especially hated how people would refer to her family as "Indians. Dots, not feathers." All that trouble because of one stupid explorer.

She took the book to her table. Even though she set it down as gently as she could, it still made a thump against the fake wood. Nobody seemed to notice. Nobody else looked up anyway. She flattened her spiral notebook and clicked out some lead from her mechanical pencil. Ready to work, she scanned the table of contents, looking for something interesting.

The table shook. Aziza ignored it. It shook again. Harder. Aziza looked around. The room was still, nobody was outside. No big trucks ever rambled down this small street. The third time, something in Aziza's stomach turned over. Her eyes went wide, her hands shuddered.

"Not now." Aziza's lips quivered. She felt a heat grow inside her, up her throat, toward her mouth. It became hard to breathe. "No. No, not now."

### What this Supplement Is

Souls are strange. Nobody really knows how to define what a soul is. To some, it's a divine spark, placed inside us by an otherworldly creator. To others, it's our connection to the world around us, the channel through which natural energy flows. Still to others, the soul is static energy, occasionally arcing through our mortal coils and making contact with the world around us—the errant energy floating about in the ether.

In Little Fears Nightmare Edition, you will find no definitive answer. Philosophers and scholars still debate and argue; many people think the soul doesn't exist at all. Of course, they say the same thing about monsters.

To the children in this world, the answer to "what is the soul?" doesn't mean a whole lot. Does it matter? Is it really so important that we need to define exactly what it is?

No. What matters in the world of Little Fears is that the soul is real. And that it is powerful. The soul is a core part of us, it defines how and how much we engage with the world around us. A strong soul makes a person vibrant, vivacious, and empathetic. As a soul weakens, the person loses their luster, starts to withdraw, and their interest in the world of others wanes.

Of course, for most kids, the soul is basically an appendix. You don't notice it—maybe you don't even know you have one—until it hurts and someone wants to take it out. In fact, unless the kid has ever had real experience with the soul, there's a fifty-percent chance they don't believe in souls, especially those kids who love to repeat the things that come out of their stubborn and narrow-minded parents' mouths.

If those kids ever met—or became—one of the characters you'll meet in this book, they'd have no doubts at all as to the existence of the soul. Because the kids you'll meet in here are different. Real different. And not because of a weird mole or a speech impediment or the amount of cash in their family's bank account.

No, the kids in this book have something different about their soul. For some, this gives them powers beyond Belief. For some, it means their soul may actually belong to someone else. You'll meet six different types in turn, starting with the next chapter, and each one puts a different spin on the term "blessed."

## What You Will Find in this Book

Book 3: Blessed are the Children is designed for both players and game moderators alike. While the characters described herein are suitable for any Little Fears campaign, they are especially designed for tales about the search for one's true meaning and purpose. Two of the recurring themes in this book is inner strength and identity, both of which are incredibly important reserves to develop and maintain, no matter your age.

### No Kid Should Be Too Many Things

"Can my kid be blessed and missing? I mean, blessed kids get kidnapped too, right?"

"Can my gifted kid also be faithful? With two souls, I bet she can really believe in God!"

You may get questions like these, and they're fair to a point. But they also lean more toward emulating reality than creating interesting characters for a game. While, yes, a gifted, faithful kid may be stolen by monsters, that's a lot of adjectives to throw on a player character. I find it best to limit each character to One Interesting Thing. Now, that interesting thing should be really interesting but it shouldn't be All Things.

A good Little Fears group, in my experience, is well-rounded and the characters are not super-awesome mega-kids. They're regular children, or mostly regular children, who are dealing with monsters. The less cloudy each kid, the stronger they are as a character.

Of course, your group is completely within its rights to throw this entire section out the window and do what they wish.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Chapters

This book is divided into ten chapters that start after this introduction. The first six chapters detail a specific type of blessed child, including how they're different, how that's good, and how that's bad. The next two chapters talk about the world around a blessed child including people, places, and things that can help them or hurt them. The final one is a complete standalone episode that focuses on the blessed. Here's the rundown:

### **Introduction: A Spirited Approach**

This is what you're currently reading. It discusses the scope of this book and briefly covers its contents.

### **Chapter One: A Light so Bright (The Gifted)**

This type of blessed has not one soul but two. While this gives them incredible power, it also means the child is never truly alone and sometimes isn't in control.

### **Chapter Two: A Belief so Strong (The Faithful)**

Some children attach their Belief to another power, an outside source, and are given extra abilities because of this connection. These children are the faithful.

### **Chapter Three: A Heart so Pure (The Innocent)**

The innocent have pure souls, ones capable of fighting off the deterioration of Belief. But that makes them a greater target for monsters and the Spirit Eaters.

### **Chapter Four: A Will so Intense (The Cursed)**

The cursed are the souls of children who have passed away. Like a ghost, something holds them to this earth—something which grants them insight beyond imagining.

### **Chapter Five: A Loss so Profound (The Soulless)**

When most children lose their souls, they become Dark. But when these children lost their souls, Belief took over to keep them going—but Belief doesn't last forever.

### **Chapter Six: A Life so Strange (The Changeling)**

Some Blessed are only children on the outside. The changelings have the souls of monsters and have to fight to keep from turning into them.

### **Chapter Seven: One of the Blessed**

How Blessed characters are made, alternate rules for Belief, the rules for Blessings, and a Questionnaire designed specifically for Blessed children.

### **Chapter Eight: Ghost World**

In this chapter, we talk about how the Blessed see the world, where they can go for help, who has their backs, and the multiple truths behind Imaginary Friends.

### **Chapter Nine: Spirit Monsters**

This chapter details the dark side of the spirit world including those who prey upon the Blessed such as Mr. Clutches, Helter & Skelter, and the dreaded Spirit Eaters.

### **Chapter Ten: My Soul to Keep**

This brand-new episode takes the players on a journey to track down a monster that is stealing the souls of children and using them to create *other things*.

## Final Note About This Book

The world presented in this book is highly fictionalized. Even though some very real situations are referenced, detailed, or used as inspiration for some of the material within this book, everything in here is fiction. I have kit-bashed, altered, repurposed, and flatly made-up things in order to create a world where children fight back against the creatures of Closetland and one where blessed kids play a particular role in that fight.

For the player and game moderator: Creating and portraying a child uncertain of his or her own power, touching on the veracity of spirituality and souls, and setting children put into very mortal danger can be sensitive subjects for some players and groups should use common sense when using this material. I urge groups to discuss the impact of such topics and themes, including the impact a Blessed character might have on the group, and to treat all this material and each other with respect.

With all this said, please turn the page and enter a world that is both magical and strange, one brimming with potential for wonder and threat of disaster. Welcome to the world of the blessed.