

GUTS & INSTINCTS

Based on [Lasers & Feelings](#) by John Harper and inspired by [Gut Instinct](#), a film by Doug Dillaman

YOU ARE ALIEN MICROBES who have successfully invaded human digestive systems. Your mission is to manipulate your human hosts through the gut-brain axis, harvest their dopamine, and prepare for the final phase of planetary conquest. The humans suspect nothing... yet.

THE CHEMICAL NETWORK: All badcrobes share a subdermal communication system—neurochemical pings that let you coordinate across different hosts through fleeting impressions, hijacked cravings, and emotional nudges.

CREATE YOUR BADCROBE

1. Choose your microbe type:

- **Serotonin Siphon** (mood manipulator)
- **Dopamine Drainer** (addiction specialist)
- **Cortisol Cultivator** (stress amplifier)
- **Memory Muncher** (cognitive disruptor)
- **Impulse Infector** (decision hijacker)
- **Social Symbiont** (relationship manipulator)
- **Metabolic Marauder** (energy harvester)

2. Choose your host's role: Corporate Executive, Social Media Influencer, Scientist, Teacher, Healthcare Worker, Politician, Artist

3. Choose your number (2-5):

- High number = better at **GUTS** (direct biological manipulation, chemical warfare, coordinated swarm behavior)
- Low number = better at **INSTINCTS** (psychological manipulation, emotional exploitation, subtle influence)

4. Name your collective (e.g., "The Gut Reaction" or "Bowel Movement #47")

5. Name your human host (they have no idea you exist)

YOUR ARSENAL

- **Neurotransmitter Production Facility** (your host's gut lining)
- **Vagus Nerve Access** (direct line to the brain)
- **Chemical Cocktail Kit** (various mood-altering compounds)

- **Dopamine Detection Array** (you know what makes your host happy)
- **Craving Command Center** (you control their appetites)

COLLECTIVE GOALS

Choose one primary objective:

- Convert more humans to badcrobe carriers
- Harvest maximum dopamine for the mothership
- Infiltrate positions of human power and influence
- Prepare humanity for Interself "purification"
- Discover human weaknesses for the invasion fleet
- Eliminate competing microbe colonies

THE HUMAN WORLD

Pick two advantages your host provides:

High Social Status, Wealthy, Scientifically Minded, Politically Connected, Emotionally Influential, Large Social Media Following, Access to Food Supply

Pick one complication:

Host is Suspicious (starting to notice changes), Already Infected (competing badcrobe colony), Health Conscious (fights back with probiotics), Medicated (antidepressants interfere with your work)

OPENING SCENARIO

Your hosts have just been exposed to Interself's Purification Protocol Beta Test—a "wellness program" that's actually designed to eliminate alien microbe infestations. You have 48 hours to manipulate, redirect, or neutralize this threat before your hosts become... clean.

Ask each player:

- What craving did you recently induce that made your host do something shocking?
- What part of your host's life is hardest for you to control?

- What other badcrobe do you secretly suspect is trying to hijack your host?

HOST RESISTANCE... AND COMBUSTION

Each host has two parallel 4-segment tracks that create escalating tension:

AWARENESS TRACK

Failed rolls, obvious behavior changes, or outside interference (antibiotics, therapy, Interself protocols) advance it:

- **1-2 segments:** Host feels "off" but dismisses it
- **3 segments:** Host actively investigates their symptoms
- **4 segments:** Host becomes self-aware and fights back

When a host reaches full awareness, they might become a player character with free will, seek medical help, or begin actively resisting badcrobe influence.

COMBUSTION RISK TRACK

Aggressive manipulation, competing badcrobe interference, or neurochemical overload advance it:

- **1 segment:** Host experiences unexplained irritability
- **2 segments:** Host's body temperature runs consistently high; they sweat profusely
- **3 segments:** Host reports feeling "like they're burning from the inside"
- **4 segments: FLASH POINT** - Spontaneous human combustion destroys both host and badcrobe colony

COMBUSTION TRIGGERS

The following situations advance the Combustion Risk Track:

- **Multiple badcrobe colonies** manipulating the same host simultaneously
- **Forcing chemical overrides** when the host is actively resisting
- **Emergency dopamine harvesting** at maximum extraction rates
- **Chemical warfare** between competing microbe factions
- **Host immune system fighting back** while badcrobes maintain control

THE COMBUSTION CASCADE

When a host reaches Flash Point:

- **Immediate incineration** - host burns completely within minutes
- **Colony death** - all badcrobes in that host are destroyed
- **Thermal signature** - combustion creates detectable heat patterns
- **Investigation trigger** - authorities investigate "mysterious death"
- **Panic spread** - other infected humans in the area become paranoid

BALANCING THE TRACKS

Smart badcrobe players must balance:

- **Awareness vs. Combustion Risk** - aggressive manipulation advances both
- **Individual control vs. colony survival** - competing for the same host is dangerous
- **Short-term gains vs. long-term sustainability** - burning through hosts literally

COMBUSTION INCIDENTS AS PLOT DEVICES

- **News reports** of unexplained deaths create public paranoia
- **Competing badcrobe factions** use combustion as biological warfare
- **Government agencies** investigate patterns in combustion victims
- **Human witnesses** spread conspiracy theories
- **Medical researchers** study combustion as potential defense mechanism

"The most successful badcrobe colonies are those that never let their hosts burn bright enough to combust."

ROLLING THE DICE

When you attempt to manipulate your host or the world around them, roll 1d6. Add +1d if you're well-prepared, +1d if you're an expert manipulator.

Using GUTS (direct biological control): Roll under your number

Using INSTINCTS (psychological manipulation): Roll over your number

RESULTS:

- **0 successes:** Your manipulation backfires. The GM says how your host notices something's wrong, or how you trigger their immune system.
- **1 success:** You barely pull it off. The GM adds a complication - maybe your host feels queasy, or another microbe colony notices your activity.
- **2 successes:** Perfect manipulation. Your host does exactly what you want.
- **3+ successes:** Critical success! You get bonus effects - maybe you convert a new host, or harvest extra dopamine.

ROLLING YOUR NUMBER = GUT FEELINGS: You get special insight into human behavior. Ask the GM:

- What does this human really crave?
- How can I make them more dependent on me?
- What memory would break their resistance?
- Who else is infected in their social circle?
- What's the best way to spread to new hosts?

CREATE A HUMAN CRISIS

A THREAT TO BADCROBE
OPERATIONS...

1. Probiotic Health Guru
2. Suspicious Doctor
3. Competing Alien Species
4. Interself Purification Program
5. Antibiotic Treatment
6. Host's Immune System

WANTS TO...

1. Expose / Eliminate
2. Study / Contain
3. Replace / Override
4. Cleanse / Purify
5. Heal / Restore
6. Control / Harvest

THE...

1. Human Population
2. Medical Establishment
3. Food Supply Chain
4. Social Media Networks
5. Government Health Agencies
6. Badcrobe Mothership

WHICH WILL...

1. Ruin the invasion plan
2. Eliminate all badcrobes
3. Alert humanity to the threat
4. Start a microbe war
5. Force premature conquest
6. Create unstoppable chaos

RUNNING THE GAME

Play to discover how the badcrobes achieve their goals while staying hidden from their human hosts.

Show the effects of badcrobe manipulation through subtle human behavior changes. Before rolling, describe the biological process: "You flood Sarah's system with stress hormones as her boss approaches. What do you make her do?"

Use failures to create complications - maybe the host's immune system fights back, or competing microbes interfere, or the manipulation was too obvious.

Ask questions about the human world from a badcrobe perspective: "What does this human do when they're stressed? How do they usually self-medicate? What social connections could we exploit?"

Use the Combustion Risk Track to ratchet pressure and to introduce intra-colony politics and outright warfare.

The Cortisol Cultivator and Dopamine Drainer are both trying to control the same Instagram influencer during a live stream. Her stress hormones spike while her reward pathways overload. The competing chemical signals create a feedback loop. The last thing her 50,000 viewers see is her suddenly bursting into flames mid-selfie.

Remember: The humans have no idea they're infected. The horror is in the slow realization that they're not in control of their own thoughts and feelings.

Never trust your gut... because your gut doesn't belong to you anymore.

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