



"It Was a Very Good Year" lyrics by Erwin Drake

For four players.

There doesn't need to be an official GameMaster. However, there will need to be a person who is familiar with the rules, can move the game along, and answer questions that may come up.

Setting:

Players are all playing characters who are residents of the Autumn Oaks Health Care Center, a nursing home that includes rehab and post-acute services. Each character is confined to a wheelchair, and generally not mobile at all. One of the requirements of the state to keep Autumn Oaks' accreditation (and funding) as a health care center is that all residents must be given ample social interaction time. So during the day, residents are often wheeled out into the hallways and the chairs are locked. The only way the residents can "move around" is by telling stories of their past, transporting themselves away from Autumn Oaks within those stories.

But reality keeps creeping back into their lives.

What you will need:

The four mini-booklets at the end of this document.
Some pencils or pens.
A 6-sided die.

*When I was seventeen, it was a very good year
It was a very good year for small town girls and soft summer nights
We'd hide from the light on the village green
when I was seventeen*

The booklets:

Each player will be given a random mini-booklet that helps to define the character that she will play. The four mini booklets are found at the end of the rules. These should be cut along the solid red lines, and then folded along the dotted red lines as shown in the little diagram on the bottom of page 8 of the booklets. The following link goes to a youtube video that shows the construction of the booklet in a more detailed manner.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21qi9ZcQVto>

Players should be instructed to avoid flipping ahead in in the booklet until it is time to do so!! When given the booklet, they should look at page 1 only. Avoid looking at the back of the booklet.

*When I was twenty-one, it was a very good year
It was a very good year for city girls who lived up the stair
With all that perfumed hair and it came undone
when I was twenty-one*

The start of things:

Each player is given a booklet at random, with page 1 being the only page that they can see.

The very first thing that the players should do is go through the list of traits on page 1. Each player is given 4 traits to help define their character. Each trait has three grey selections. Using a pencil, each player should circle 1 selection for each trait, and cross out the other 2 selections for each trait. Players should think about these selections that they have made, how they relate to each other, and how they create a history of the character that they are going to play.

It should be noted that these traits are how the characters feel about themselves...not necessarily exactly what had truly happened.

All players will then need to sit down, relatively close to each other. Once seated, they are not allowed to get up at all, unless noted by the rules. If the players are seated, they are in the hallway of Autumn Oaks during "social interaction time."

In general, the only way a player can get up and move around is through the process of making a connection.

Each player should also give their character a name.

*When I was thirty-five, it was a very good year
It was a very good year for blue-blooded girls of independent means
We'd ride in limousines. Their chauffeurs would drive
when I was thirty-five*

Making connections:

When players are instructed to make a connection, one player will need to reach out with their left hand to another player who then reaches out with their right hand (or vice versa). The players then place each other's palms and fingertips together.

The booklets have colored handprints in the background of the pages. After both players place their hands together, they will need to slip their booklets in between their hands, using the handprints on the booklets as a guide. Players should separate their fingers enough so that they can see the prompts on THEIR booklet between their fingers.

So, what you will have is a "hand sandwich" in this order:
player A hand, player A booklet, player B booklet, player B hand.

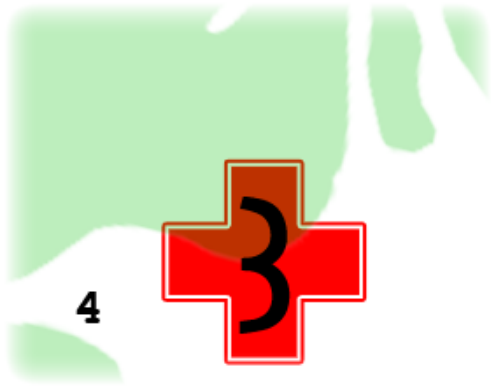
Once the players have gotten comfortable with this position, they are free to stand up and walk around, and talk to each other, exploring the scene away from Autumn Oaks, both in terms of location and time. Player should attempt to use the prompts that only they see between their fingers, and are encouraged to use elements of the background traits to add to the scene. Thing that are physically there in their space should also be interpreted as things that are representative in the scene; chairs in the room become park benches, a blinking fluorescent light becomes a neon sign, etc.

Connected players are free to walk around, and explore the scene, asking questions of each other to flesh it out. When there is nothing more to discuss about it, they should sit back down, and wait for the other players to finish.

*But now the days are short. I'm in the autumn of the year
and now I think of my life as vintage wine from fine old kegs
From the brim to the dregs, it poured sweet and clear
It was a very good year*

Breaking connections:

During a connection, if either booklet falls out from between the hands, the connection is immediately broken and the scene immediately stops. Between the players who broke the connection, the player with the lowest "emergency value" on the current scene's page (look at the number in the red cross) falls to the floor while the other player returns to their seat. Once all players have finished their scenes, the player with the highest "emergency value" must play the role of the nurse, helping the fallen player up and return them to their seat.




Author Notes:

I've spent too much time in the last few years dealing with nursing homes. Due to the 4 player restrictions, I've kept the circle of characters confined to the patients and residents. In a more perfect world, there would be set of characters that deal with the workers of Autumn Oaks.

The scenes:

Below is a list of scenes that the player will play through, and what pages they will reference in their booklets. A scene continues until everyone sits down. At which point the next scene on the list commences.

SCENE	What happens...															
1	All players turn to pages 2 and 3 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.															
2	<div>The nurses bring medication for you to take. Based on the emergency value on page 2, roll that many times for each medication you are taking on the table below. Explain to the others what this medication is for, if it's acting up, how you think the nurses may be poisoning you, etc. That second medication....you DEFINITELY don't want to take that (why would that be?)</div> <table><tr><td>ROLL</td><td>Med Type for...</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Ongoing physical injury</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Mental ailment</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Post-surgery</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Stimulant/anti-depressant</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Bathroom issues</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Mystery /experimental</td></tr></table>	ROLL	Med Type for...	1	Ongoing physical injury	2	Mental ailment	3	Post-surgery	4	Stimulant/anti-depressant	5	Bathroom issues	6	Mystery /experimental	
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3	All players turn to pages 4 and 5 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.															
4	<div>Dinner time! You have been wheeled into the dining room, and plates have been placed in front of you. Roll below to see what you are having.</div> <table><tr><td>ROLL</td><td>Your meal is...</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Not cooked the way you like it</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>The same thing for the last 5 days</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Something you are allergic to</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Reminds you of your childhood</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Not what you ordered</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>A gift from the chef</td></tr></table>	ROLL	Your meal is...	1	Not cooked the way you like it	2	The same thing for the last 5 days	3	Something you are allergic to	4	Reminds you of your childhood	5	Not what you ordered	6	A gift from the chef	
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5	All players turn to pages 6 and 7 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.															
6	All players turn to pages 8 in their booklets, and follow the instructions.															

<p>2</p> <p>4</p> <p>Player Green</p>	<p>3</p> <p>A gift</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>Player Green</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Why did they leave</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Green</p>	<p>7</p> <p>You know which nurse stole your jewelry</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>1</p> <p>Player Green</p>
<p>Failure to see the big picture</p>	<p>A friend in need</p>	<p>Connect with player Purple. Walk with them, you are familiar with what they describe, but they are interpreting things wrong. Try to correct them, but be civil. Help them understand; use examples from the first scene, your front page, or medications to help them. Use the prompts.</p>	<p>Accept the connection. If other players are not connected, connect to another with your free hand. Walk together in your environment. You are all some place else. Add to the scene, help make it your own. Use the prompts.</p>	<p>Sit in a circle. Hold out a hand, or stack your hand on another player's hand, or underneath the bottom player's hand.</p>	<p>If you are second to the top hand in the stack, stand up and quietly leave the room.</p>	<p>Don't come back.</p>
<p>Connect with player Blue or player Gold. Walk around your environment, recall a scene from the past, point out physical objects that could have meaning from the past. Use the prompts. Let your connection help recall the scene for you...maybe they were even there?</p>	<p>You have survived multiple wars : economic collapse : the disease.</p>	<p>You were/are never married : secretly married : married multiple times.</p>	<p>You wish you had not caused that pain : you stood up for the rights of others : not been involved.</p>	<p>You remember fondly the lake house : the party of the century : that one victory.</p>		

<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Purple</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Some-thing left behind</p>	<p>That you caught</p> <p>A "hello" welcome</p>	<p>Connect with player Blue or player Gold. Walk around your environment, recall a scene from the past, point out physical objects that could have meaning from the past. Use the prompts. Let your connection help recall the scene for you...maybe they were even there?</p> <p>Connect with player Green. Walk with them around your environment. Describe a magical moment of wonder that you couldn't explain. Why did fate show you this? Use examples from the first scene, your front page, or medications. Use the prompts.</p> <p>Accept the connection. If other players are not connected, connect to another with your free hand. Walk together in your environment. You are all some place else. Add to the scene, help make it your own. Use the prompts.</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Purple</p>
<p>4</p> <p>2</p> <p>Player Purple</p>	<p>5</p> <p>A forgotten voice returns</p>	<p>Some-thing that nature does</p> <p>Your funds run out</p>	<p>Who would you like to see again?</p> <p>A thing you gave up in the past is here</p> <p>You've worn the same clothes for a week</p> <p>6</p> <p>4</p> <p>Player Purple</p>



<p>2</p> <p>+</p> <p>Player Blue</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Sadness is revealed</p> <p>Some-thing is altered</p> <p>A thing of comfort</p>	<p>4</p> <p>+</p> <p>Player Blue</p>	<p>5</p> <p>The night the lights went out</p> <p>Your children never visit</p> <p>The scars still remain</p>	<p>Connect with player Green or player Purple. Walk around your environment, asking questions about where they are leading you. Point out physical objects that could have meaning from the past. Use the prompts. How does your past help evoke images of their past...maybe you were even there at some point.</p> <p>You have 2 children : many children : adopted children.</p> <p>Your nightmares recall that time in the city : the future : your loss.</p> <p>Your impairment was due to standing your ground : a freak accident : self-inflicted</p> <p>You remember fondly that cloud-less night : accepting the award : watching your children</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Blue</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Sit in a circle. Hold out a hand, let other players place their hands above or below yours.</p> <p>If no one leaves the room, you must leave the room. Don't come back.</p> <p>The scents are powerful</p> <p>They don't even call you on the holidays</p> <p>Some place far away</p> <p>7</p>	<p>6</p> <p>+</p> <p>Player Blue</p>	<p>Accept the connection. If other players are not connected, connect to another with your free hand. Walk together in your environment. You are all some place else. Add to the scene, help make it your own. Use the prompts.</p>
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<p>5</p> <p>A natural disaster</p>	<p>An agreement is made</p>	<p>You bed sheets are soiled</p>	<p>Connect with player Blue. Follow and listen to players Green and Purple. What are they talking about? What scene from your past does that remind you of? Can you help the player you are connected to recall a scene from their past that is similar to the other players? Use the prompts.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>3</p> <p>The look they gave you</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Player Gold</p>
<p>6</p> <p>2</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>8</p> <p>The colors are blinding</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Your favorite clothing goes missing</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Something breaks down</p>	<p>5</p> <p>They know that you can't eat the food served</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Don't come back.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>9</p> <p>2</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>	<p>6</p> <p>1</p> <p>Player Gold</p>